NEWCOMERS AS BYSTANDERS OF WORKPLACE BULLYING

A Dissertation

by

GABRIEL ESTEBAN PANTOJA

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Chair of Committee,	James Kevin Barge
Committee Members,	Robert Kirby Goidel
	Richard L. Street jr.
	Nance Algert
Head of Department,	Hart Blanton

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ABSTRACT

Workplace bullying is a destructive behavior that affects everyone in an organization including those who witness it as bystanders. A vulnerable bystander group influenced by bullying are organizational newcomers. Witnessing bullying as a newcomer can put newcomers in sensitive positions where they must make sense of the bullying and consider their responses to it. Neophyte newcomers (newcomers with little past work experience) or veteran newcomers (newcomers with a history of work experience) may engage with workplace bullying differently. Additionally, situational variables and individual differences influence how newcomers will make sense of the situation, how they gather information and respond as bystanders.

An online survey was administered to college students (representing neophyte newcomers) and full-time employees (representing veteran employees). Through an experimental design, participants read a vignette that detailed a situation where they are witnessing a manager bullying a coworker and are then asked to put themselves in the position of a newcomer bystander. Based on the stimuli of the vignette, participants responded to a questionnaire that asked questions relating to how they interpret the bullying and how they would react.

The results determined that situational variables such as social cost and psychological contracts did not influence information seeking tactics, but did influence the type of bystander veteran newcomers would become. Individual differences such as work experience, knowledge of workplace bullying and conflict management styles influenced information seeking tactics and bystander roles for both samples. College students are more likely to engage with bullying scenarios more directly while full-time employees took more indirect routes by reporting the bullying to human resources.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife Kristine Anne Pantoja, my parents Linda and Juan Pantoja and my overly rambunctious dog, Robin.

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I want to thank my family. I am forever grateful for my family's love and support during my time as a graduate student. My mother and father always encouraged me to seek the best educational experience possible and to always follow my aspirations.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There is a high prevalence of reported workplace bullying in the United States. Namie (2017) conducted a national survey of 1008 adults on the current status of workplace bullying in the United States and argued that the frequency of workplace bullying that occurs in the U.S is alarmingly high. His research estimates that 30 million American workers have been, or are now being, bullied at work. Porter, Day and Meglich (2018) suggest that overall estimates for exposure to bullying in American workplaces vary considerably. For example, studies examining reported or perceived levels of exposure to workplace bullying range from a low of 15% up to nearly 50% (Keashly & Jagatic 2011; Namie, 2016). In other studies, 95% of employees claim to be involved in workplace bullying (Fox & Stallworth, 2005; Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper, 2011). Kowalski, Toth and Morgan (2018) surveyed 3699 employees and found that 30% reported being bullied in the workplace. Despite the variance in reported bullying, the negative outcomes of bullying are severe for both the employee and organization.

I have firsthand experience witnessing workplace bullying as a newcomer in an organization. During a summer internship, I witnessed the negative effects of workplace bullying. As a newcomer to the organization having only been employed a few weeks, I became a bystander of a bullying event involving a manager and peer in a work meeting. During that meeting, the manager was berating and insulting my peer about the lack of sales the employee made that day. As a newcomer, I did not know the working relationship the two held, nor did I have a grasp of how conflict was managed in the organization. The other employees attending the meeting did not signify any verbal or non-verbal dissent to the actions of the manager. As a newcomer and bystander, I did not know how to interpret the scene nor how to respond. I stayed silent and let

the bullying continue. Later that week, the bullied employee quit and in the following month, I too left the organization. The experience only reaffirmed that bullying has negative effects for employees and the organization itself (Vartia, 2001).

Organizations need to address the psychological and physical harm bullies incur on its members. Workplace bullying can cause health issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression (Fox & Stallworth, 2010; Hoel, Faragher & Cooper, 2004). Bullying is present within numerous interactions that employees have revolving around verbal abuse, public humiliation, social ostracism, or even destructive gossip (Namie & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010). In severe cases, workplace bullying has resulted in identity crises, emotional damage, humiliation, and counterproductive work behavior (Fox & Stallworth, 2010; Hoel, Faragher & Cooper, 2004). Extreme embarrassment is among the most reported unpleasant emotional work experiences (Waldron, 2012). Often times organizational members feel they have to accept it, and manage it on their own, because the organization will not take initiative to resolve it in any way.

In addition to the negative affects bullying has on employees, bullying can have destructive effects for the organization and put it at risk. Workplace bullying can damage a company's reputation and decrease loyalty and employee commitment to the organization and its culture (Fox & Stallworth, 2010). Workplace disruption can be seen in absenteeism, employee turn-over, and reductions in efficiency, work quality, and job satisfaction (Moayed, Daraiseh, Shell & Salem, 2006). The financial stability, general productivity, and corporate reputation of organizations can be threatened if they fail to effectively address workplace bullying (Harvey, Heames, Richey, & Leonard, 2006). There are also monetary consequences as a result of workplace bullying. Monetary loss can occur as workplace bullying causes a decrease in productivity and performance as well as increased legal costs (Hoel, Faragher & Cooper, 2004;

Glambek, Matthiesen, Hetland & Einarsen, 2014). Even with the intervention of human resources to develop preventative and counteractive measures to bullying, the measures often take time and money to accomplish (Fox & Cowan, 2015).

This dissertation investigates the experiences of how college students and full-time employees, taking the perspective of an organizational newcomer, make sense of and engage with workplace bullying. The term bystander in relation to bullying situations "is used to delineate a role which is greater than simply witness or observer, and to imply a choice, or choices, on the part of the individual" (Paull, Omari & Standen, 2012, p. 3). Bystanders in this context are employees who witness bullying but are not bullies themselves or the target of bullying (Van Heugten, 2011). The lack of bystander research in organizations has led scholars to call for further research in this area (Rai & Agarwal, 2016; Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013; Paull, Omari & Standen, 2012). Current research into workplace bullying typically concerns itself with either the bully or the target while research into bystanders of bullying is far less explored (Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013). It is important to fill this gap so that practitioners, trainers and management can develop effective preventative bullying initiatives. This dissertation focuses on bystanders of workplace bullying rather than the target or bully.

A particularly vulnerable group of organizational members that may be challenged when responding to bullying behavior as bystanders are organizational newcomers. In general, organizational newcomers are individuals who have typically been members of an organization for 13 months or less (Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Tucker, 2007). Organizational newcomers do not have extensive information about the culture and relationships that veteran employees may have (Louis, 1983), because they are still in the socialization process learning what their responsibilities and roles are in the organization (Kramer & Miller, 2014). Newcomers

can be classified into different categories such as neophyte newcomers (employees with little to no work experience) and veteran newcomers (employees with previous work experience) (Carr, Pearson, Vest & Boyar, 2006). Given the intensity of bullying behaviors and its associated negative effects, organizational newcomers may be particularly vulnerable when experiencing bullying episodes as they do not have sufficient knowledge about how their current organization works which limits their ability to respond.

Understanding the newcomer role and what factors lead to a bystander becoming either active or passive in their response to witnessing a bullying episode has not been thoroughly investigated. Researchers who do study the experiences of organizational newcomers tend to focus on newcomers as targets of bullying (Porter, Day & Meglich, 2017; Berry, Gillespie, Gates & Schafer, 2012; Alexander, MacLaren, O'Gorman & Taheri, 2012) but spend far less time on newcomers as bystanders of workplace bullying. The focus of the dissertation is to better understand how college students and full-time employees, who play the role of organizational newcomers, respond to workplace bullying situations. The sample of college students was selected as they represent neophyte newcomers, individuals with relatively little experience, whereas the sample of full-time employees was selected in order to have them play the veteran newcomer roles. An experimental study where the participants played the role of the organizational newcomer was designed to examine how neophyte and veteran organizational newcomers engaged bullying. Regardless of whether they are a neophyte or veteran newcomers, they may not know how to interpret the bullying behaviors they are seeing due to the lack of knowledge they have about the specific organization (Kramer & Miller, 2014). Depending on whether an organizational newcomer is a neophyte or a veteran, they may compensate for a lack of knowledge by seeking information on what to do and how to interpret the bullying behaviors

they have witnessed (Miller & Jablin, 1991) or possibly use their previous organizational experiences. It is important to explore the experiences of different types of newcomers in order to understand how organizational newcomers make sense of workplace bullying when they witness it, seek out information to help them understand the situation, and make choices as how to respond as a bystander to workplace bullying.

Overall, the goal of the dissertation is to gain a greater understanding of how college students and full-time employees respond to workplace bullying in a simulated environment where they are asked to play the role an organizational newcomer witnessing workplace bullying. Specifically, the dissertation seeks to better understand what influences a newcomer to become a certain bystander and how neophyte and veteran newcomers seek information and become different types of bystanders. The information gathered from this dissertation can aid in improving socialization practices and training in organizations to help newcomers become better informed and become better organizational citizens. Furthermore, this dissertation adds to the growing field of conflict management by investigating how workplace bullying influences organizational newcomers and bystanders. The following sections in this chapter expand on the concepts being examined, the research questions being asked, the methodology and research design, as well as the structure of the dissertation.

Bullies, Targets, and Bystanders

Workplace bullying is important to investigate, because the consequences of bullying have drastically negative effects for both the organization and employee. The literature on workplace bullying tends to focus on workplace bullies, targets of bullying and bystanders (Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013). My focus is on bystanders as they are in position to directly intervene into bullying episodes and make choices as to how they will respond to bullying (Paull, Omari &

Standen, 2012). The following section reviews the literature on workplace bullying, targets, and bystanders.

Workplace Bullying and Bullies

Negative communication in the workplace can take many forms. The negativity of those forms vary in degree and frequency, and those variations can be all the difference in whether the communication is experienced as an act of incivility or workplace bullying. To understand the impact and severity of workplace bullying, it is important to define and understand incivility in the workplace. Incivility is constituted by communication behaviors that demean, demoralize, and degrade others (Gill & Sypher, 2009). Incivility like bullying varies in intensity such as passive-aggressive face-threats to physical and psychological attacks (Gill & Sypher, 2009; Kassing & Waldron, 2013). Similar to bullying, Gill and Sypher (2009) suggest that low-intensity forms of incivility lower organizational trust even more than acts of pure aggression. Even incivility that occurs unintentionally can diminish the strength of mutual respect for members of an organization.

Workplace bullying is often thought as a more extreme and destructive form of incivility. Workplace bullying is defined as a pattern of repeated hostile behaviors that is actual or perceived harm that accompanies the inability to defend the self from another party from varying organizational members and groups (Keashly & Nowell, 2011). Unlike incivility, bullying is determined by intensity, repetition, duration, and power disparity (Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy & Alberts, 2007). Power disparity leaves the target feeling unable to prevent or stop the continued abuse. In the workplace, bullying is rarely just one instance of a negative act or message. Most bullying in the workplace escalates from subtle indirect insults to more direct and abusive physical or verbal discrimination that occurs repeatedly (Adams & Crawford, 1992). Factors that

prompt individuals to bully often relate to work stress, an attempt to gain resources or power, and personal prejudices (Crawshaw, 2007; Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013). Bullying can occur across all levels of an organization as well as all types of organizations and industries (Branch, Ramsay & Barker, 2013).

The kinds of bullying behaviors that an organizational newcomer may witness or become aware of may vary. Waldron and Kassing (2011) identified six types of bullying tactics that can occur in organizations and in public. The first two types are *aggressive behaviors* and *physical aggression* which include overt tactics that include shoving, invading personal space, physical intimidation, and verbal abuse such as shouting. Though both aggressive and physical aggression are similar, physical aggression is characterized as bullying that involves physical force. Aggressive behaviors can be physical, but is characterized as more verbal aggressions towards a target. *Self-esteem/confidence* attacks involve spreading rumors, making belittling remarks, persistent criticism, stigmatizing, highlighting mistakes, humiliation, ridicule, and positioning the victim as a scape goat. The *work/capacity to perform* tactic is when a manager purposely sets unrealistic targets, provides excessive workloads, removes responsibilities, and assigns meaningless tasks to disrupt an employee's ability to perform their job. *Ostracizing/isolating* employees is a tactic that involves ignoring, excluding, and engaging practical jokes as a mock form of socialization. The last type of bullying tactics are *threats* which can be personal, professional, or physical. The type of bullying behavior that may be witnessed or the type of bullying tactic that is used can influence whether or not an individual seeks out additional information to make sense of the situation or pursue a particular bystander role. For example, physical aggression from a manager to employee may prompt a drastically different set of responses by bystanders than attacks on self-esteem.

Workplace bullying occurs in a variety of settings in organizations and usually involves the participation of multiple individuals and parties to make it happen and make sense of it. Bullying acts are often displayed by individuals or groups in public or private settings (D'Cruz, 2015). Research into workplace bullying has also demonstrated that workplace bullying is not the result of a lone aggressor, but typically involves multiple individuals and parties (Namie & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010). In fact, communication scholars suggest that the existence of bullying is often the result of mismanaged and destructive communication amongst the many parties involved (Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012). Communication is not only central in the rise and persistence of bullying but is also an important tool for helping targets make sense of it. Targets often realize that they are being bullied through conversations with coworkers (Lutgen-Sandvik & McDermott, 2011; Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, & Alberts, 2006).

Scholars have identified several organizational characteristics that tend to facilitate bullying. The presence and level of bullying is influenced by organizational culture and depends on factors such as normative expectations regarding civility, workplace norms, rules of conduct, and adherence to standard operating procedures. Work environments where the organizational culture assumes a victim of bullying is only a victim due to a victim's dispositional inability to tolerate and manage harassment often is accompanied with a workplace with higher levels of bullying (Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012). Additionally, organizational cultures that are competitive and view employee mistreatment as tolerable and expected behavior that is needed to enable organizational productivity, also foster an environment suitable for workplace bullying (Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012). Specifically, organizations that are internally competitive, rank and compare employees, and have performance-based rewards associated with competitive metrics are environments that invite workplace bullying (Salin, 2003). Workplace bullying

typically occurs in organizations that are large, related to the public sector, or are male dominated (Vartia, 1996; O'Moore, McGuire & Smith, 1998).

Workplace bullying is also prevalent in organizations when power is centralized through hierarchical structures that impose many regulations and restrictions (Vartia, 2001; Salin, 2003). Lewis (2006) found that targets and bystanders feel they have no control over instances of bullying due to either the size of the organization or the power structure of the organization. Managers are typically identified as bullies given their higher power positions in the organizations. Namie (2017) reports that bosses in general have been reported to be the perpetrator of bullying 61% of the time according to national surveys (Namie, 2017). Bullying becomes more likely when supervisors treat their staff poorly, leading employees to become accustomed to poor treatment and more likely to tolerate and practice bullying behavior in the hierarchy of the organization (Harvey, Heames, Richey, & Leonard, 2006).

Targets

Targets are the individuals or groups that bullies exact negative behavior upon. The literature suggests that the targets of workplace bullying can be grouped into three categories: (1) provocative, (2) submissive and (3) rigidly conscientious (Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013; Aquino & Lamertz, 2004; Fast & Chen, 2009). Each target category is associated with particular employee characteristics that make them more prone to bullying.

Provocative targets are broken into two types, communicatively aggressive and communicatively assertive individuals (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004; Fast & Chen, 2009). Aggressive targets are individuals that have a tendency to be conflict prone and irritate other employees. Aggressive targets tend to not readily agree with others and often induce arguments. Assertive targets are those that consistently speak their minds and raise their own opinions

publicly. Assertive targets tend to be those who have higher levels of experience or expertise that can be perceived as a threat to other employees (Fast & Chen, 2009). *Submissive* targets are those that are high in conflict avoidance and tend to be less independent socially in the organization. *Submissive targets* appear weak, anxious, unassertive and less likely to defend themselves from bullies (Coyne, Seigne & Randall, 2000). *Rigidly conscientious* targets are those that are perceived as “infuriatingly condescending due to their apparently inflexible, perfectionist approach to work and the adherence to work related rules” (Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013, p. 356). Rigidly conscious targets in general are those that communicate their work ethic and enforce that others follow the formal rules and policies designated to the workplace.

Targets can take many shapes and forms, but research has suggested that there are certain features that targets of bullying share. Targets of bullying tend to be employees who are socially isolated and are viewed as particularly vulnerable. The vulnerability of targets increases when already isolated employees become further physically and socially disconnected from their coworkers (Harvey, Heames, Richey & Leonard, 2006). Each of the three types of targets mentioned above all have traits relating to being socially isolated either voluntarily or involuntarily. Targets do not always realize they are being bullied, even when they experience feelings of shame, inadequacy, self-blame, and low self-esteem (Corney, 2008).

The targets described above all respond to bullying in different ways. Provocative aggressive targets respond to bullying by being communicatively forceful and enticing direct communication with parties involved in bullying (Aquino, 2000). The goal is gain influence over bullies by dominating them verbally typically through passive aggressive approaches. Provocative assertive targets will respond to bullying by quickly speaking their minds and

engage the bully in disagreement and argue with the parties involved without employing verbal aggression. Submissive targets generally respond by doing nothing in order to not disturb the social dynamics of the workplace. Submissive targets stay silent in order to not upset anyone and hope the bullying goes away on its own (Ayoko, Callan & Hartel, 2003). Rigidly conscientious targets are proactive in managing bullying. If a rigidly conscientious target feels that managing the bullying will provide results, they will engage in problem solving, accommodating and compromising. Since rigidly conscientious targets are policy and rule driven, they will seek third-party assistance to resolve issues.

Unfortunately, most organizations attribute bullying behaviors to the target's misinterpretation of the situation (Omari & Sharma, 2016) and a bully's verbal denial of committing abusive acts is often effective in discouraging the bully's supervisor from reprimanding them for their behavior (D'Cruz, 2015). This scenario is often seen in situations of manager to peer bullying. Power imbalances often encourage those in positions of power to persistently target employees of lower-rank and as a result, bystanders are discouraged from intervening (Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012). Acts of power are often portrayed as bullying, emotional abuse and harassment while targets are grouped into positions of powerlessness (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper, 2011). In the dynamics of organizations, bullies and their allies are seen as powerful and bystanders are viewed as significantly less powerful (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006).

Organizational newcomers, like other employees, experience workplace bullying as well. Often in organizational scholarship, newcomer bullying is associated with hazing rituals. Organizational newcomers are targeted more frequently as a rite of passage to become members of a work group than longer-term employees (Nielsen, Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2010). However,

the primary difference between bullying and hazing is that bullying is meant for keeping targets *outside* of a group rather than testing the target to be initiated into one. Nonetheless, hazing can be both acts of bullying and abuse. Newcomers can be both targets and bystanders of bullying behaviors; however, often times newcomers end up being targets.

Unfortunately, newcomers are especially prone to encountering workplace bullying. Porter, Day and Meglich (2017) conducted a study of a public sector organization investigating work environment factors that could influence workplace bullying. After conducting interviews and surveys, they found that newcomer status had a positive relationship with reported bullying. The senior employees would tease or make the newcomer perform work related tasks that would cause embarrassment. Berry, Gillespie, Gates and Schafer (2012) found that over 75% of nurses on their first year on the job were bullied by nurses in higher positions of power. The nurses who were bullied showed a decrease in productivity due to the high level of abuse they received by their seniors. Similar to nurses, newcomer bullying has been found to occur in restaurant settings. Alexander, MacLaren, O'Gorman and Taheri (2012) found that high stress and competitive environments like that of restaurant work can lead to cultures where co-workers bully newcomers.

Bystanders

Bullying behavior can affect all members of an organization including those who witness it as bystanders. When bullying occurs and is witnessed by others, the negative effects of the situation pushes employees into varying bystander groups. Bystanders are individuals who witness bullying or become aware of its occurrence (Paull, Omari & Standen, 2012). Namie (2017) found that 19% of reported bullying comes from those who have witnessed bullying behaviors. These groups can vary from bystanders who support the bully, bystanders who

support the victim, and bystanders who try to distance themselves from the bullying situation (Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013). Bystanders, like targets of bullying, experience distress and other negative symptoms after bullying episodes. In the workplace, when bystanders observe others being bullied they can feel emotionally distraught, angry and have a higher desire to leave the organization (Waldron, 2000). Additionally, as coworkers share what they have witnessed, the discussion of workplace bullying often prolongs the embarrassment for the target as the subject is repeatedly brought up to the victim (Kassing & Waldron, 2013).

Employees often have difficulty recognizing and admitting that workplace bullying occurs and that they or others in the workplace are suffering as a result of it (Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik & Alberts, 2006). A key aspect of a bystander is that there are choices that they have to make after witnessing or becoming aware of bullying. Bystanders may either support the target, support the bully or do nothing in response by being active or passive (Paull, Omari & Standen, 2012). Unfortunately, often a bystander’s response makes the situation worse. Namie (2017) observed that 60% of bystanders provided no help, betrayed their coworker by supporting the bully’s behavior, ostracized the target, or did nothing at all.

Researchers who investigate school bullying have identified bystander roles that fit K-12 environments (Paull et al., 2012; Salmivalli, 1999; Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Bjorkvist, Osterman & Kaukianien, 1996; Twemlow, Fonagy & Sacco, 2004). The categories developed by these researchers have helped other researchers develop bystander categories for the workplace (Paul, Omari, Standen, 2012). Much like those who experience bullying in the workplace, students experience distress, isolation, hopelessness and lower productivity (Janson, Carney, Hazler and Oh, 2009). Witnesses to school yard bullying feel like they will be bullied if they intervene and find that there are a large range of social pressures to not intervene (Rivers, Poteat, Noret &

Ashurst, 2009). Bystanders in school bullying have been portrayed as bully assistants, reinforcers, and defenders (Salmivalli, 1999). Twemlow et al. (2004) identified several roles that include bully bystander, puppet-master, and victim bystander among others.

Based on the close association between the types of bystanders and bystander responses between school bullying and workplace bullying, Paul et al. (2012) sought to develop a typology representing workplace bystanders. The workplace typology lays out the varying types of responses bystanders may have while witnessing a bullying event. The categories are situated on the premise that there are active or passive bystanders and whether or not the bystander has ill intent for the situation (destructive bystander) or desire to help the target (constructive bystander). Ultimately, the typology ended up with thirteen categories that are based on previous typologies of bystanders in school settings and the various ways a bystander can respond. For example, bystanders who are "constructive" can be labeled a *defusing bystander* where the bystander tries to mitigate the situation and help resolve it on behalf of the target. On the other end of the spectrum, bystanders that are "destructive" can be labeled an *instigating bystander* where they are encouraging the behavior to continue in some way.

Lutgen-Sandvik and Fletcher (2013) identified three major bystander roles organizational members may take: (1) bully ally bystander, (2) target ally bystander, and (3) silent bystander. These three roles are differentiated as to whether the bystander is active or passive in their response and who the bystander supports in the situation. The categories are derived from past research into workplace bystanders and general workplace bullying research (Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013). *Bully allies* do not directly target a victim but support the bully's behavior in some way. The allies are bystanders by situating themselves in alliance with the bully either by encouraging their actions, helping the bully reach a status of power, or committing bullying

behavior on behalf of the original bully to targets. *Target allies* are bystanders that support the target either because they find the bullying morally wrong or have long-standing friendship with the target (Lutgen Sandvik, 2006). Witnesses who remain neutral or choose to not intervene are considered *silent bystanders* (Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013). Bystanders in this context are employees who witness bullying but are not bullies themselves or the target of bullying (Van Heugten, 2011). Silent bystanders do not vocalize their dissent or assent during bullying episodes. The specific communication and conflict management tactics used by silent bystanders is to attain a position that is neither supporting either party and is considered a safe zone (Namie & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010).

Due to the emotional and organizational impact of workplace bullying, the bystander's expectations of the work environment and its members negatively change (Barling, 1996). When bystanders observe others being bullied, the bystander can feel emotionally distraught as well as angry (Waldron, 2000). These emotions suggest that the nature of workplace bullying goes beyond just the verbal aggression and has infiltrated a deeper part of organizational life and processes. Fortunately, workplace bullying once initiated, does not always lead to the destruction of an organization. When targets and bystanders resist bullying, bullying can cease to continue (Sandvik, 2006). However, bystanders are economically and resource driven (Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013). Bystanders want to keep their jobs and maintain positive relations with varying organizational members and groups. Bystanders fear the threat of losing a job, if they get involved in a bullying conflict (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2007; Namie, 2007).

Whether a bystander is passive or active in their response to witnessing bullying, bystanders tend to lack competency in managing a bullying scenario (Namie, 2017). Most bystanders do not know how to get help or feel confident in the help they want to seek. Van

Heutgen (2011) conducted interviews with social workers who have experience with workplace bullying. The major theme from the interviews was that bystanders unintentionally signaled assent to the bully in their work place by being silent or passive. The reason they were silent is that they had inadequate information on how or when to vocalize their dissent. D'Cruz and Noronha (2011) interviewed bystanders who were in the presence of workplace bullying within their organization. The bystanders reported that they had every intention to help, but due to organizational restrictions such as HR policies, management and power differentials, the bystanders felt restrained. The bystanders claimed they experienced regret, guilt, and confusion due to their inability to be an effective support person. Uncertainty about the processes and outcomes of intervening stalled bystanders from acting immediately. Djurkovic, McCormack and Casimir (2005) found that bystanders would formally help (e.g., report to HR, or directly intervene) the target primarily when the bullying act was violent in nature which showed that only the most extreme bullying cases were associated with seeking formal help.

Bystanders in the workplace occupy a unique position in the complex dynamic of bullying. The environment in which workplace bullying occurs puts bystanders at a disadvantage. These disadvantages come from the imbalance of power, fear of losing their job, and even fear of becoming a target themselves. There are many variables that bystanders have to consider when deciding what to do after witnessing someone be bullied over time. Not only are bystanders externally pressured, they are internally pressured as well. Bystanders are managing the stress of a toxic work environment and the stress of seeing coworkers being abused. Despite the many factors that can influence a bystander, bystanders may either opt to support the target of the bullying, support the bully, or avoid the situation by remaining silent. However, many bystanders may get into a self-preservation state of mind which could lead them to be in a

position of “helpless helpfulness” (D’Cruz & Noronha, 2011). “Helpful helpfulness” refers to the idea that the supporting actions that a bystander wants to offer when they see their friend or coworker in harm conflicts with their need for self-preservation in the workplace. The “helpless helpfulness” position is due to most bystanders holding back intervening responses in order to save face or not be fired given that they perceive there is no safe or available means for helping the target.

Training and Interventions

Researchers and practitioners have investigated ways of properly intervening and preventing workplace bullying. Lutgen-Sandvik and Tracy (2012) suggest that the most common ways of responding to bullying fail to remedy the situation and will most likely make the situation even worse. Employees typically do not utilize or trust human resource departments to manage conflict and usually resolve to take no action at all (Di Pietro & Di Virgilio, 2013). Further evidence suggests that only 17% of bystanders seek formal resolution within the organization when instances of workplace bullying occur (Namie, 2017). In general, management of bullying is dependent on employees feeling comfortable in reporting issues to authority figures (Carter, Thompson, Crampton, Morrow, Burford, Gray & Illing, 2013).

Carter et al. (2013) suggests that bullying policies need to be perceived as effective, and when bullying is reported, that the case will be taken seriously. The most important aspect of taking a report seriously is that there is observable change in regards to the situation which leads to increased confidence by other employees that their report will be taken seriously, making it more likely that they would file a report as well. Most companies do not have a policy in place, and even those that do have a policy, the personnel in charge of those policies do not thoroughly understand the policy, nor enforce it (Bryant, Buttigieg & Hanley, 2009).

In terms of training and intervention, the most effective interventions for workplace bullying are communicative in nature (Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013). Vartia and Leka (2011) suggest that training alone is not enough to effectively teach employees how to manage workplace aggression, there needs to be deliberate change in the way employees interact on a day-to-day basis. Vandekerckhove and Commers (2003) suggest that communication is a key area that members in positions of power need to be trained in, so they can have stronger interpersonal communication, listening skills, and have the competency to engage in reciprocal behavior rather than manipulative behavior. Hodgins, MacCurtain and Mannix-McNamara (2014) found that facilitative-based interventions help both the prevention and management of workplace bullying. Facilitative-based trainings involve developing dialogic interactions with employees to understand in-depth the issues of bullying either before, during or after bullying incidents. The facilitative strategy allows employees to be actively involved in the training, speak their mind, and listen to others which ultimately allows the training to be specific to the needs of the organization and its employees.

Bystanders are employees of the organization, and whether it is prevention, training, or intervening, bystanders need to be equipped to manage workplace bullying situations. Workplace bullying research needs to investigate how bystanders, especially organizational newcomers, respond when witnessing workplace bullying. Such information may prove valuable for developing future training and interventions.

Rationale and Research Questions

Lutgen-Sandvik and Tracy (2012) suggest that one way to improve the research on workplace bullying is to encourage researchers to explore and address workplace bullying from multiple perspectives such as those of the bystander. This dissertation focuses on bystanders who

are organizational newcomers. Studying the experience of organizational newcomers is particularly important in relation to witnessing bullying as newcomers are typically unclear on the rules, regulations and appropriate responses to manage various situations given their limited tenure in an organization (Louis, 1983). In order to adequately study newcomers, it is important to recognize that newcomers may come to the organization with different backgrounds, experiences, and amount of work experience. Neophyte newcomers, have typically never held a career-oriented job before making them relatively unfamiliar with the culture and norms associate with professional workplaces (Beyer & Hannah, 2002). On the other hand, veteran newcomers, who have previous job experience, may have a better understanding of the workplace environment, along with the socialization process (Carr, et al., 2006). When neophyte and veteran employees are exposed to the same organizational environments, different interpretations and actions can occur (Carr et al., 2006). Most research has not examined the difference between neophyte and veteran newcomers during the entry phase (Carr et al., 2006; Beyer & Hannah, 2002), and to the best of my knowledge, no one has examined the experience of neophyte or veteran newcomers who witness organizational bullying. There are three major arguments that inform the rationale for the dissertation.

First, relatively little research has been conducted that explores the bystander role in the bullying literature. Currently, workplace bullying literature largely consists of gathering empirical data to examine who perpetrates the bullying and why bullies enact bullying behaviors along with how targets respond to it (Rai & Agarwal, 2016). Specifically, research into bullies largely examines issues in how organizations are affected by bullying, factors that drive workplace bullying, and how to manage bullying. Research into targets has explored how bullying affects the perception and stresses of witnesses and targets of workplace bullying

(Vartia, 2001). Relatively little research has explored bystanders and the research that does explore this issue tends to focus on the general decision making and reasons as to why employees become passive or active bystanders (D'Cruz, & Noronha, 2011). The dearth of research into bystanders poses a significant gap in fully understanding the effects and causes of workplace bullying on organizational members.

Second, relatively little research has explored the experience of organizational newcomers who witness bullying and how they make sense of what bystander role to adopt. Newcomers are in a unique circumstance where they not only lack general information about the organization and its members, but are also in a position where their reputation and first impressions toward other organizational members is forming (Kramer & Miller, 2014). Newcomers are still in the socialization process learning what their responsibilities and roles are in the organization (Kramer & Miller, 2014). Researchers tend to focus on newcomers as targets of bullying (Porter, Day & Meglich, 2017; Berry, Gillespie, Gates & Schafer, 2012; Alexander, MacLaren, O'Gorman & Taheri, 2012) as opposed to bystanders of workplace bullying. Due to the vulnerable position of a newcomer, newcomers may feel that being a certain type of bystander may lead to unintended negative consequences (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2007; Namie, 2007; D'Cruz & Noronha, 2011). For example, a newcomer who reports their manager to HR may encounter negative repercussions such as mistreatment, not getting future promotions or even getting fired. Furthermore, the initial experiences that newcomers have with other coworkers (e.g., witnessing workplace bullying) can often determine the chances of a newcomer quitting (Josefowitz & Gadon, 1989).

Third, relatively little research has looked at the role of information seeking as it relates to how bystanders manage witnessing bullying. Current research focuses on categorizing the

differing types of bystanders and providing descriptions of the types (Paul, Omari & Standen, 2012; Lutgen-Sandvik & Tracy, 2012) but does not study the experiences of newcomers as witnesses of workplace bullying, and the dynamics that are associated with witnessing workplace bullying such as information seeking. The literature is clear that organizational newcomers seek information to help understand their roles within the organization (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Miller, 1996) and learn about the organization's culture and norms (Morrison, 1993). Yet, we know relatively little regarding how organizational newcomers seek information (or not) after witnessing bullying in order to make sense of their experience and determine what bystander role to adopt.

There are three arguments that form the rationale for this study: (1) bystanders of workplace bullying need to be further investigated (2) newcomers who witness bullying represent an important population to examine as they may be particularly vulnerable given their job status, and (3) it is important to examine how organizational newcomers seek out information to make sense of situations where they have witnessed bullying and determine what kind of bystander role they wish to assume. The main research questions center on exploring the responses of neophyte and veteran newcomers after witnessing workplace bullying in terms of the bystander roles they create, and how they seek information to help them make sense of bullying episodes. There are two general research questions that are derived from the rationale:

RQ1: What influences how organizational newcomers seek out information when witnessing organizational bullying?

RQ2: What influences organizational newcomers who witness organizational bullying to adopt particular bystander roles?

Chapter 2 unpacks these two general research questions in more detail by offering specific research hypotheses and questions focused on the situational and individual difference variables of interest for this dissertation.

Methodology

A survey methodology was used to answer these two general research questions centering on how organizational newcomers respond to workplace bullying as bystanders and how they seek information to make sense of the bullying situation. Participants read one of four vignettes where they assumed the role of a team member in an organization. Each vignette instructed the participant to assume the hypothetical role of a newcomer. Each vignette placed the participant in work a situation where they witnessed their team manager bullying another team member. Vignettes depicting manager to subordinate bullying were selected because manager to subordinate bullying has been found to be the most common type of bullying situation (Carter et al., 2013; Namie, 2017). Participants were asked to play the role of organizational newcomer and then complete items that measured their disposition toward conflict, information gathering behaviors they might use to understand more about the bullying situation, and what possible bystander role they might assume. The items included questions from Miller's (1996) information seeking survey as well as various open-ended questions. In addition to information seeking, the dissertation also assessed the participant's conflict management style via the ROCI-II (Rahim & Magner, 1995). The ROCI-II helped in understanding the level of concern participants have for the target or for themselves in manager to peer bullying situation. They also completed a series of demographic items. The goal of the survey was to analyze how situational and individual variables may influence how participants gather information about the situation and determine what bystander role to foster.

College students (N = 270) and full-time employees (N = 599) constituted the two samples for the current study. For college students, 36% (n = 98) were currently employed and those who self-identified as currently employed had been working at their current job on average 18.75 months (n = 98). Employees had been working at their current job an average of 6.60 months or longer with the employees having worked at their current job within a median of 5.0 years. Furthermore, the employees have been employed in their life time an average of 19.05 years (n = 599).

College students served as neophyte newcomers given their limited career-related work experience while full-time employees normally have had more extensive career-related work experience. Considering college students as representative of neophyte newcomers and full-time employees as veteran newcomers also makes sense given their stage of organizational socialization. College students are in the anticipatory stage of what their careers and roles in those careers may be like. In the case of college students, their anticipatory socialization is based on their educational background, and the experiences they have encountered before graduating. The socialization literature suggests that during the anticipatory socialization phase, individuals form expectations on how they will respond to conflict and how the organization will respond to conflict. Full-time employees have been at some point newcomers in their current organization and would presumably have more hands-on experience with the realities of the newcomer status and organizational life given that they have previously experienced the encounter stage of organizational socialization in organizations.

Organization of Dissertation

The current study is designed to address the question of how neophyte and veteran organizational newcomers respond to witnessing workplace bullying in terms of the information

they seek to understand the situation, and the bystander role they create. Chapter 1 has provided an overview of the literature on bullying and bystanders, a rationale for the focus of the dissertation, a statement of the general research questions informing the study, and a brief overview of the dissertation's methodology. The remainder of the dissertation is organized into five chapters.

Chapter 2 distinguishes between situational and individual difference variables and details their possible influence on how organizational newcomers seek information regarding bullying and what bystander role they assume. Situational variables include the social costs associated with intervening in the bullying situation and the psychological contract between the participant in the role of a bystander and the manager. Individual difference variables include information seeking motivation, workplace bullying knowledge and experience, and conflict management style. The information seeking variables center on information seeking tactics information source, and type of information sought. Three bystander roles are focused on in the present study: (1) silent bystander, (2) target ally, and (3) bully ally. The literature informing the selection of these specific situational and individual difference variables is presented and an explanation and rationale for their relationships with information seeking and bystander roles provided. Specific research questions and hypotheses are presented.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology and research design for the study. The chapter explains the design that was employed and discusses the development of the online survey for both samples. Detailed rationales for the choice of the two samples (college students and full-time employees), the usage of four vignettes, and the development of the online survey including operationalizations is provided. The data analysis involved a content analysis of open-ended questions as well as multiple regressions and one-way ANOVAs for the quantitative data. The

rationale underlying the data analysis and choice of analytical tools is highlighted. Furthermore, a factor analysis was conducted to assess the structure and reliability of a set of items relating to bystander role that participants will answer in the survey. The factor analysis helped determine the reliability of items categorizing the likely bystander role of participants.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the analyses and results from the college student and full-time employee sample. Chapter 4 details the analysis results of the college students, and Chapter 5 details the analysis results of the full-time employees. The analyses in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 presents the results of the hypotheses tests and research questions discussed in Chapter 2. Aside from the statistical analysis, the chapter consists of the content analysis results for the open-ended questions. In general, the results indicate that situational variables do not influence information seeking tactics for both samples. However, there are significant differences in how situational variables influence the adoption of bystander roles for the full-time sample. For both samples, individual differences were shown to influence both information seeking tactics and bystander roles. In the content analysis, it was found that both samples have a strong preference for seeking information and being a target ally. However, the motivation and method for engaging in information seeking and being a target ally differ.

Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation with a discussion of the results in Chapters 4 and 5. The discussion explores how the literature in workplace bullying explains the results found for the hypotheses and research questions. The discussion also details how the results of the college student sample compares to those in the employee sample. The discussion primarily discusses how the varying level of experiences, motivations and self-efficacy of college students and full-time employees play role in information seeking tactics and bystander roles. Chapter 6 includes a discussion on the limitations of the dissertation as well as the implication of the results. The

implications addressed some of the main goals of the dissertation, which was to discover ways to better the livelihood of newcomers in organizations. The implication section goes into detail of how organizations can change, intervene, or train their employees to better improve the conflict cultures of the organization. Chapter 6 explored the implications of the results for future research. The last portion of Chapter 6 overviewed the dissertation and offers final thoughts on the results of the dissertation and what the results mean in general for newcomers.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 1 highlighted the need to better understand what organizational newcomers do when they witness a workplace bullying situation with a specific argument to explore the experiences of neophyte and veteran newcomers. The two general research questions posed in Chapter 1 focused on investigating how organizational newcomers seek information to make sense of bullying situations and to explore the influences that lead organizational newcomers to adopt particular bystander roles.

Chapter 2 builds on the general research questions presented in Chapter 1 by: (a) identifying specific variables that are anticipated to influence how organizational newcomers seek information after witnessing a bullying episode and what bystander roles they adopt, and (b) offering a specific set of research and hypotheses and questions that are informed by the selection of those variables. I begin Chapter 2 by highlighting two general types of variables that may influence the experience of organizational newcomers when witnessing bullying: (1) situational variables and (2) individual difference variables. I then identify specific situational and individual difference variables that are expected to influence information seeking and the adoption of particular bystander roles which become the focus for this dissertation. I conclude the chapter by presenting a specific set of research questions and hypotheses based on the selected variables of interest.

Situational and Individual Difference Variables

The idea that context influences the performance of communication behaviors and roles is widely accepted within the organizational communication discipline (Putnam & Mumby, 2014). This holds true for workplace bullying, as the type of workplace bullying that occurs and the

experience of workplace bullying by bullies, bully targets, and bystanders are influenced by a variety of contextual factors. These contextual factors can be related to the situation itself such as workplace characteristics and relational dynamics as well as the individual differences of the parties involved in the bullying situation such as drives, motives, traits, knowledge, and experience.

Contingency models of social behavior typically include situational variables as well as individual difference variables when accounting for the experience and performance of certain types of social activity. Contingency models have engaged a variety of types of social behavior including leadership (Yukl, 2011) and group decision making (Poole, Seibold & McPhee, 1985). Although a contingency model for bystanders who witness workplace bullying has not been proposed, much of the bullying research has examined how a variety of situational and individual difference variables influence the experience and performance of workplace bullying. For example, Kacmar, Carlson and Bratton (2004) explored how the workplace (e.g., work culture, norms and leadership) and employee disposition (e.g., motivation, ambition, extraversions or introversion etc.) influenced employee ingratiation behavior which are attempts to be on "good terms" with employers with expectations of future rewards. The results suggested that an employee's disposition was more influential regarding the display of ingratiation behaviors than situational characteristics of the workplace.

Situational Variables

Situational variables are characteristics of the work environment such as work relationships and organizational procedures and practices (Kacmar, Carlson, & Bratton, 2004). Situational variables strongly influence communicative behaviors in the workplace (Eder & Buckley, 1988; Ferris & Judge, 1991) as well as create changes in job attitude and affective

responses (Quarstein, McAfee & Glassman, 1992). For example, in terms of workplace bullying, Keashly and Nowell's (2011) research on employees demonstrate that a number of situational variables influence the experience and management of bullying including the parties involved outside of the bullying, the history of the parties involved in the bullying, and the current status of the bullying situation. Simply, situational variables have an impact on employees of an organization and those variables influence their communication – especially in workplace bullying situations—for targets of bullying, bullies, and bystanders.

Targets and bullies

As discussed in Chapter 1, bullying research suggests that the presence and level of bullying is influenced by situational variables such as organizational culture and normative expectations regarding civility, workplace norms, rules of conduct, and adherence to standard operating procedures (Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy, & Alberts, 2007). Several situational variables influence how bullying targets respond to bullying. For example, power disparity, which is a situational dynamic of the workplace, leaves the target feeling unable to prevent or stop the continued abuse associated with bullying. Power disparity is also greatly influenced in organizations where power is centralized through hierarchical structures that impose many regulations and restrictions (Vartia, 2001; Salin, 2003). Furthermore, situational factors that can encourage workplace bullying are organizations that are internally competitive, rank and compare employees, and have performance-based reward systems (Salin, 2003). Bystanders often feel they have no control over the occurrence of workplace bullying, especially if the power structure or size of the organization is not well balanced (Lewis, 2006).

Similarly, several situational variables influence whether individuals engage in bullying behavior. Situational factors that prompt individuals to bully others often relate to work stress,

an attempt to gain resources or power, and personal prejudices (Crawshaw, 2007; Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013). Matthiesen and Einarsen (2007) found that in environments where workplace bullying is prevalent there is often a heightened level of stress among the employees. These stresses often stem from the ambiguity and violation of expectations around work tasks. Furthermore, a stressful working environment is not only a breeding ground for bullying; it also allows bullying to thrive (Hauge, Skogstad & Einarsen, 2009). For example, Hauge et al. (2009) wanted to study the situational and individual factors that could predict why perpetrators bully others. In terms of situational factors, the study found that overall, perpetrators bully due to a stressful environment, but more specifically because of role and interpersonal conflicts with others.

Bystanders

A primary antecedent that shapes bystander experience and what kind of bystander role they assume is their awareness of the bullying situation and how they make sense of what kind of action is required (Hellemans, Cason, & Casini, 2017). Situational elements play an important role in driving the interpretation and responses to workplace bullying and can influence the sensemaking of employees who witness the behavior. Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld (2005) explain that sensemaking is focused on action based on the interpretation of a situation more so than choice. These interpretations are based on the labels and characteristics of the situation that an organizational member uses and gives attention. The actions and interpretations made by newcomers project how they view workplace bullying in relation to themselves as bystanders.

The probability that a bystander will intervene in a workplace bullying situation drastically varies, and the likelihood that a bystander will intervene is dependent on their interpretation of the situation, which ultimately comes down to "their perception of the severity and causality of

the situation" (Hellemans et al., 2017, p. 136). The situation guides how they respond despite their personal views of morality or justice. For example, silent bystanders often stay silent not to show assent to bullying, but to keep their jobs, social status, or reputation in the workplace (Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013). This can occur even when blatant bullying occurs. Mulder, Pouwelse, Lodewijkx and Bolman (2013) suggest that even if a bystander perceives the target as being responsible for the bullying situation, it is unlikely that the bystander will intervene.

Individual Difference Variables

Individual differences generally revolve around the personal traits or characteristics of an individual. Richmond, McCroskey and Davis (1982) argue that when all other factors in an organizational setting are constant, differences relating to behavioral responses often stem from an individual's personality, background, and experience. They suggest that trait-like orientations like individual differences are factors that are consistent over time. Similarly, in their model of communication competence, Cupach and Spitzberg (1983) argue that individual differences or dispositional measures reference behavioral tendencies in communicative events over time. In other words, "dispositional measures assess a person's proclivity to behave in a certain way and are thus tendency-focus" (p. 366). In the bullying literature, researchers have tended to examine whether individual differences related to personality as well as how knowledge and experience influence the experience and management of bullying.

Personality variables. Persson, Hogh, Hansen, Nordander, Ohlsson, Balogh, Osterberg and Ørbæk (2009) argued that a more comprehensive examination of the influence of personality traits on targets and witnesses of workplace bullying is warranted. In their study, they distinguished between trait-based characteristics and state-based characteristics viewing traits as generally stable characteristics of an individual that result in consistent behavior, feelings and

thoughts and state-based characteristics as the individual emotional and cognitive reactions that result from a specific situation.

Trait-based variables have been shown to influence the frequency, intensity, and potentially the type of bullying that occurs as well as the bystander role employees adopt. Lonigro, Schneider, Laghi, Baiocco, Pallini and Brunner (2015) conducted a study examining whether trait or state-based anger influenced cyberbullying among adolescents. Their study found that bullies are often influenced by trait-based anger more so than the situational factors around the bullying environment. Persson et al. (2009) found that targets who are dispositionally predisposed to be irritable and mistrusting or have a sensitive personality could result in bullies being more likely to target them. They also found that witnesses who show signs of extraversion may be more likely to detect bullying and seek potential solutions.

Bystander research suggests that people's predispositions to morality may play a factor in determining the type of bystander they will become. For example, the moral intensity of the bullying—harm, self-efficacy, emotional reactions, social and moral evaluation—are the most influential factors for bystanders when deciding whether or not to intervene (Thornberg, Tenenbaum, Varjas, Meyers, Jungert & Vanegas, 2012; Bowes-Sperry & O'Leary-Kelly, 2005). This is similar to research focused on target allies which suggests that a target ally intervenes either because they find the bullying morally wrong or have long-standing friendship with the target (Lutgen Sandvik, 2006).Though there is an argument that bystanders with high levels of moral sensibility can predict individuals becoming target allies, research has also shown that moral competence and a lack of moral sensibility has resulted in both active and passive bystanders (Bachia & Bussey, 2011; Obermann, 2011).

Knowledge and experience. In terms of experiential factors, the skills and knowledge of the employee is an important indicator of the type of bystander they may become. It is important to take into consideration the knowledge, experience and skills of individuals to determine how they will engage with workplace bullying. Knowledge and skill of workplace bullying and what to do can be individual factors that can influence bystander action. While situational characteristics like management attitudes and organizational culture can inhibit the interventions of bystanders, a lack of skills or strategies to know how to intervene safely and effectively can also influence a bystander's ability to intervene into the situation (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2011; Paull et al., 2012). Despite an employee's sense of responsibility or personal ethics, if bystanders have to determine what to do on their own without knowing whether or not the intervention can work, then bystanders may distance themselves from the situation. Using a community based participatory approach, Strandmark and Rahm (2014) developed, implemented and evaluated their own bullying prevention and intervention training. The researchers wanted to take a more holistic view on training and thus, implemented focus groups, lectures and interviews to teach employees about workplace bullying. The results of the training showed that employees were more aware of how to identify bullying, prevent it and intervene when it occurs. Organizationally, the training improved the culture, teamwork, and leadership of the work group.

Situational and Individual Difference Variables' Influence on Organizational Newcomer's Experience of Witnessing Bullying

In this section of Chapter 2, the specific situational and individual difference variables that are the focus of this dissertation are presented. Research into workplace bullying have identified situational characteristics such as social cost and psychological contracts as directly affecting employee responses to workplace bullying (Parzefall & Salin, 2010; Lutgen-Sandvik &

Fletcher, 2013). Studies have also identified several individual differences that significantly influence employee interpretation and response to workplace bullying such as information seeking motivation, knowledge, experience and conflict management style (Hodgins et al., 2014; Leon-Perez, Medina, Arenas, & Munduate, 2015). These variables have not only been identified as being influential in employee responses to workplace bullying, but have been directly involved in how employees react to bullying as bystanders.

Situational Variables

The situational variables of interest for this dissertation are: (1) social cost, and (2) psychological contract. The following will describe in detail what these variables are and how they relate to the general research questions.

Social Cost

Deciding to become an organizational member involves individuals weighing a combination of economic and social exchanges such as an exchange of money, goods, services, information, affect (friendship) and status (Foa & Foa, 1980). When evaluating whether to enter, maintain, or exit an organizational relationship, organizational members consider the cost and benefits of that relationship. The idea that individuals account for the costs and benefits when making decisions to enter, maintain, and end social relationships is central to Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Kramer & Miller, 2013). SET has already been linked to the information seeking patterns of organizational newcomers (Miller, 1996) and it makes sense that it may be applied to decisions regarding what kind of bystander role an individual may choose to adopt. For example, witnesses of workplace bullying may opt to become "silent" bystanders to avoid highly negative consequences such as getting fired which may be associated with the social cost of reporting the behavior.

Seeking information and the information tactics used have social costs that could result in negative or positive outcomes for the information seeker (Miller, 1996; Roloff, 1981). Depending on the situation, the transaction can prove to be risky. For example, opting for a more overt method of seeking information can put the information seeker in a vulnerable position if there is high social cost. Seeking information directly from a manager or coworker if the social cost is high can result in negative consequences (e.g., loss of reputation, getting fired or becoming a target of bullying etc.). Miller (1996) suggests that if the social cost is too high more discrete methods of seeking information will be utilized in order to avoid the potential negative consequences.

The consideration of cost and rewards is especially influential in the manager-subordinate relationship. Managers have control over a newcomer's role, serve as role model, and have authority to reward or sanction actions the newcomer may take (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Given the power that managers may exercise over subordinates, subordinates frequently take into account the impact their behavior may have on their relationship with their manager. Diminishing the relationship with the manager, or no longer having a relationship with the manager can result in both positive and negative outcomes. SET suggests that the organizational members will take into consideration the costs and rewards of reporting negative information about their manager such as bullying behavior given their assessment of the cost associated with reporting.

It is also likely that individuals will weigh the social cost of the rewards and risks associated when adopting a particular bystander role (Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013). We should anticipate that bystanders would weigh the consequences of their actions in the form of social cost when deciding on a response to the bullying they witnessed. Even if a bystander has a

strong intention and desire to support the target, if the social cost associated with supporting the target is high, this could diminish the likelihood that a bystander will provide support if they see their friend or coworker being bullied. Social cost becomes a factor due to an employee's need to save face, not be fired, or become a target of bullying (Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013). The employee will have to evaluate whether the social cost of helping and seeking information outweighs the potential negative repercussions.

An example of high social cost undermining bystander desire to support bullying targets can also be found in the literature regarding employee perceptions of organizational anti-bullying policies. Vickers (2006) found that anti-bullying policies can backfire on employees who report bullying. Even though the policies provide an outlet for victims and bystanders to report concerns, it causes a major risk for potential alienation, ostracism, career disruption and possibly unemployment. Communicating assent or dissent to the actions of another whether it is a manager or peer can have positive or negative repercussions.

Psychological Contracts

Similar to social cost, psychological contracts are based on the social exchange perspective that assumes there is a "resource" transaction between employees and the organization (Parzefall & Salin, 2010). Psychological contracts also serve as an important situational variable that can influence newcomer decisions to seek information and adopt particular bystander roles. *Psychological contracts* are the implicit belief of how well an organization or manager keeps their promises in the perspective of an employee (Conway & Briner, 2005). In other words, the psychological contract is the belief regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between the employee and the employer (Conway & Briner, 2005). The contract consists of largely implicit beliefs about the promises and

commitments made in the exchange relationship of the employee and organization (Rousseau, 1995).

Psychological contracts are unspoken promises that employees make with the organization and its representatives. A manager is often the primary "representative" of the employer and is the face of the organization for an employee (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008). If managers fail to uphold their promises such as to not bully a coworker from the perspective of the employee, the employee may feel that the contract has been breached or violated (Parzefall & Salin, 2010). The result of such failure is a *psychological contract breach* that is a perceived failure on part of the "representative" to fulfil obligations of the psychological contract (Conway & Briner, 2005).

Robinson (2008) suggests that bystander perception and response to bullying is directly related to how colleagues are treated within the specific context of their work environment. Bullying often violates the social norms of an exchange relationship and can result in negative changes of mental (Parzefall & Salin, 2010) and emotional states of employees (Conway & Briner, 2002; Parzefall & Coyle-Shaprio, 2006). Witnessing or being a target of bullying violates the expectations of fair treatment in the exchange relationship, and thus, leads employees to evaluate their employer in a negative light.

Parzefall and Salin (2010) suggests that along with witnessing a representative (i.e. manager) bullying a coworker, an organization's general lack of "interference" in workplace bullying can cause perceived violations. A perceived contract breach can cause an employee to develop negative attitudes and behaviors toward the organization if the "representative" or organization itself does not involve themselves positively in manners concerning workplace bullying. When breaches occur the attitude and organizational citizenship of an employee can be

negatively influenced (Parzefall & Salin, 2010). A perceived breach can result in an employee having lowered trust, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior and increased cynicism (Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003; Lo & Aryee, 2003; Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowsky, and Bravo, 2007). Keashly (2001) argued that employees not only have expectations of being treated fairly, they also have expectations that organizations will be responsive to their needs or the needs of others. When these expectations are violated either by the organization not responding to a situation, or failing to respond competently, an employee may feel the organization is failing in their "promises."

Individual Differences

Spitzberg's (1983; 2015) communication competence model suggests that an individual's communication competence is a function of an individual's motivation, knowledge, and skill. Communication competence is a perception of the appropriateness and effectiveness of one's performance that depends on an individual being motivated to deliver a competent performance, having the knowledge to create a competent performance, and possessing the skill to enact a competent performance. Though no workplace bullying studies have examined the communication competence of bystanders, it makes sense that this model would hold for bystander competence.

Though this dissertation does not specifically examine the communication competence of a bystander, Cupach & Spitzberg (1983) provide a useful typology to identify and organize the individual difference variables of interest for this dissertation. The types of individual difference variables associated with workplace bullying cluster into four areas: (1) newcomer roles (2) information seeking motivation, (3) knowledge of workplace bullying, and (4) skills in managing workplace bullying. The particular skill of interest for this dissertation is conflict management

style. Conflict management styles can be viewed as a skill in the sense that a particular style can be beneficial for differing situations and knowing which style to use can help manage conflict in a variety of contexts. Conflict management styles vary from individual to individual and the behaviors associated with conflict management styles have shown to influence targets, bullies and bystanders (Baillien, Bollen, Euwema & De Witte, 2014). Conflict management styles are often viewed as a dispositional trait (Rahim & Magner, 1995) and provide insight into the skills that an individual would typically use in situations.

Newcomer Roles

Two different kinds of organizational newcomers have been identified in the literature: (1) neophyte newcomers, and (2) veteran newcomers.

Neophyte Newcomers. Neophyte newcomers are those who enter an organization with little to no prior occupational experience (Beyer & Hannah, 2002; Carr, Person, Vest, & Boyar, 2006). As a result, neophyte newcomers have limited experience with organizations which means the "socialization process is likely to expose them to their first experiences relative to the work skills and abilities, role behavior requirements, and normative adjustment needs of their new organization" (Carr, et al., 2006, p.345). For most neophytes, expectations of how to manage the workplace is primarily derived from the knowledge, experiences and messages attained in the anticipatory phase. Powers and Myers (2017) argue that throughout a college student's education, the student receives messages from a variety of sources (i.e. teachers, family members, educational institutions, part-time job experiences, peers and friends, and the media [Jablin, 1984]) that inform them of what being an employee of an organization constitutes in the form of vocational anticipatory socialization (VAS). VAS is the communicative process by which college students receive socializing messages that affect their career expectations (Jablin,

2001). College students often find these messages as both significant and encouraging, because they appreciate hearing about what they should expect in a particular career environment and culture (Jahn & Myers, 2014). Powers and Myers (2017) further suggest that the information students receive assist in understanding the lifestyle associated with their career, and the people they will eventually work with (i.e. managers and coworkers etc.).

Veteran newcomers. Newcomers with previous work experience who have been through the socialization process in a previous organization are what Carr et al. (2006) call *veteran newcomers.* Veteran newcomers draw on their past experiences in other organizations as they engage in the socialization process for their new organization where they are "resocialized" (Beyer & Hannah, 2002). Veteran newcomers are already familiar with the dynamics of the job and relational aspects that come with the workplace and are better able to fill in information gaps (Kirschenbaum, 1992; Meglino, DeNisi, & Ravlin, 1993). Since veteran newcomers already have a foundation of what organizational life is like, they are often active in filing in uncertainties about the new environment and will use a variety of avenues to gain information about the new work setting (Brett et al., 1990). Veteran newcomers have been shown to also have improved information-processing capability since everything they are witnessing and interpreting is not completely new (Kirschenbaum, 1992; Meglino, DeNisi, & Ravlin, 1993).

Veteran newcomers have internalized the beliefs, values, and job expectations unique to their career experience, and will base their organizational expectations and actions on how they made sense of past experiences (Weick, 1995). Their experience in previous organizations have allowed employees to develop identities that will guide their interaction in new organizations (Brett, Feldman, & Weingart, 1990). The past identities make the employees feel they already have a familiarity with how to effectively attain information and navigate the workplace

(Kirschenbaum, 1992; Meglino, DeNisi, & Ravlin, 1993) as they have developed "self-insight" to inform themselves of how to make sense of the new work environment (Carr et al., 2006). Veteran newcomers are able to utilize their identities, experience and self-insight to make sense of the new organizational environment.

Information Seeking Motivation

Information seeking motivation is a salient variable for organizational newcomers. Newcomers must learn about what policies are in place, and what the social norms are for an organization in order to be able to interpret a situation like workplace bullying. Newcomers, compared to other types of employees, tend to be proactive and motivated to figuring out their roles or responsibilities within the organization (Kramer & Miller, 2013). Proactive information seeking is often due to organizational newcomers not having a lot of information about the culture, responsibilities, and norms of a workplace (Louis, 1980). Newcomers in the entry phase are motivated to seek information in specific ways due to a variety of environmental contexts found in an organization (Miller & Jablin, 1991).

The motivation to seek information comes from a need to understand the job and organization. The most sought-after information for newcomers is information related to tasks and responsibilities (Morrison, 1995). De Vos and Freese (2011) conducted a study comparing the information seeking behaviors of newcomers with psychological contract development over the first year of employment. The first finding was that during the first three months of employment, newcomers were evaluating the psychological contract fulfillment. The evaluation was done by observing the work environment and seeking information from superiors such as managers. Newcomers were more likely to seek information surrounding the promises of organizational inducements (job content, career advancement, training, work-life balance and

rewards). However, seeking information regarding psychological contracts significantly decreased within the first year of employment.

Knowledge and experience

Organizational newcomers often use prior knowledge and experience to make sense of the situations they engage within their new organizational environment. Due to newcomers being in heightened states of awareness as they learn more about the organization, newcomers are more sensitive to new experiences and often use past experiences to interpret and analyze the meaning behind a novel stimulus such as workplace bullying (Miller & Jablin, 1991). The kind and depth of experiences that newcomers may use to interpret and respond to workplace bullying may vary as a result of their being either a neophyte or veteran newcomer.

The previous experience of newcomers can entail trainings or experiences that resulted in having knowledge on what to do during workplace bullying situations (Keashly, 2010). These experiences can facilitate bystanders interpreting and reacting to workplace bullying differently than individuals who lack the knowledge or experience in managing such situations. Research has shown that employees who have been trained or taught on what to do during workplace bullying incidents are often able to navigate the situation more competently (Hodgins et al., 2014). Trained employees are more knowledgeable on how to report and intervene as target allies if they feel the action is appropriate.

Conflict management skills

Conflict management skills and its relation with workplace bullying have been a frequently studied area within organizational communication (Namie & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013; Leon-Perez et al., 2015). Conflict management skills have often been conceptualized as particular conflict management styles such as integrating, compromise,

accommodate, avoid and dominate (Rahim & Magner, 1995; Thomas, 1992). When explored in organizational contexts, conflict management styles are often researched with the premise of how a style relates to organizational factors like incivility and climate (Friedman, Tidd, Currall & Tsai, 2000; Trudel & Reio Jr, 2011). For example, Trudel and Reio Jr. (2011) conducted a study on the relationship of employee conflict management styles and the prevalence of incivility in the workplace in terms of perpetrators and targets of the incivility. They found that when employees manage conflict in integrating and dominating styles, employees exhibiting those styles were predicted to be either the perpetrator and eventual target of incivility. In terms of organizational climate, Friedman et al. (2000) examined hospital workers to see if conflict management styles impacted the social environment of the workplace. The study found that hospital workers who have integrating styles experienced less task conflict, less stress and less conflict with others, while those with dominating or avoiding styles experienced the opposite effect.

An individual's predisposition toward the use of particular conflict management styles can influence whether employees take on active or passive roles in seeking information and supporting the target of bullying. Simply, employees will engage in some sort of action based on their dispositional styles of managing workplace conflict (Baillien, Bollen, Euwema & De Witte, 2014) and these actions can have varying effects on the bullying situation. Leon-Perez et al. (2015) specifically highlights the significant relationship conflict management has with workplace bullying. In their study, they found that when employees attempt to manage conflict with problem solving styles it slowed or stopped the escalation of the bullying. On the other hand, conflict escalated when employees used conflict management styles such as dominating.

The Dual Concerns Model of conflict is frequently used when studying conflict management styles that characterizes conflict management styles using two dimensions: (1) concern for other, and (2) concern for self (Thomas, 1992). Concern for other highlights that the employee wants to meet the needs and desires of the opposing party in conflict. The outcome sought by the employee would benefit another rather than themselves. Concern for the self implies that employees will engage in conflict with a mindset of seeking the best outcome for themselves even if the outcome for the other party is less than adequate.

The Dual Concerns Model depicts the style of managing conflict as a combination of the level of concern for other or the level of concern for self (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Rahim and Magner (1995) identify five conflict management styles that individuals may exhibit in organizational settings: (1) integrating, (2) compromising, (3) obliging, (4) dominating, and (5) avoiding. *Integrating* is high in both concern for other and self. Persons employing an integrating style seek a win-win situation that requires few concessions from both parties. *Compromising* is moderate in concern for self and other. Like integrating, a compromising style moves individuals to seek a win-win situation, but the outcome requires more concessions that typically result in 50/50 resolutions. An *obliging* style high in concern for other and low in concern for other. Individuals using an obliging conflict management style often concede the most to manage the conflict and focus on providing an optimal outcome for the other party rather than themselves. *Dominating* styles are those with high concern for self and low concern for others. Individuals using a dominating style seek resolutions to conflict that benefit themselves the most with little concern about the outcome of the other party. *Avoiding* styles are low in concern for self and other. People who employ an avoiding conflict management style care little for their outcome

and the outcome of others. The result of low concern for self and others is for the employee to simply avoid and not engage with conflict.

The relationship between conflict management styles and workplace bullying has been explored (Baillien et al., 2014; Trudel & Reio, 2011), but I have not found any literature that directly explores how the conflict management styles of bullying bystanders influences their experience and engagement. Research that does investigate the relationship of conflict management and bullying often focuses on how the management style can either determine the probability of bullying to occur or if the conflict style can mitigate bullying (Baillien et al., 2014). Baillien et al. (2014) found "conflict management styles that reflect a high concern for the self may relate to being a perpetrator of bullying behaviors." (pg. 10). In other words, individuals with dominating styles will have a strong likelihood to be bullies.

Selected Hypotheses and Research Questions

As outlined in Chapter 1, two samples were created to explore the experience of neophyte and veteran organizational newcomers when they witness bullying. The following hypotheses and research questions guided my exploration and data collection in both samples. The research questions and hypotheses are organized according to three possible consequences for organizational members after witnessing a bullying episode: (1) information seeking, (2) development of bystander roles, and (3) sensemaking. A comparison of the results generated by the two samples is presented in Chapter 6.

Information seeking

Organizational newcomers typically seek out information regarding the workplace, particularly in difficult situations such as bullying, in order to make sense of the situation and determine their next actions. Based on Miller's work (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Miller, 1996) three

information seeking strategies were of interest: (1) overt tactics, (2) third-party tactics, and (3) observing tactics which includes surveillance.

Miller and Jablin (1991) explain that seeking information *overtly* involves employees asking for information directly from a desired source. In most cases, overt tactics are associated with an employee perceiving the social cost of information seeking to be low (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Miller, 1996; Walther, 1978). However, there are some instances where overt tactics will be used in high social cost scenarios. For example, newcomers may risk the social cost and potential negative effects of using an overt tactic if they feel the information sought is vital in situations where needing direct information can be highly beneficial to them or to the parties in involved.

Miller and Jablin (1991) defined *third-party* tactics and sources as substitutes for a primary information source such as their direct supervisor where organizational newcomers seek information from co-workers or other members of the organization. Third-party tactics are more likely used when supervisors or managers are the main source of information for a newcomer with newcomers often utilizing third party tactics to seek information from other coworkers (Jablin, 1984). The major benefit of using a third-party source is to avoid the high social cost of asking a primary source for information who has the ability to negatively impact a newcomer's work life. Seeking information from a third-party is often used when a supervisor sends unclear messages, is not an expert on the subject matter or provides information that the newcomer cannot understand due to a lack of experience, or is not trusted (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Miller, 1996).

Observing tactics of information-seeking are tactics where the employee gathers information in a covert and discreet manner. Miller (1996; Miller & Jablin, 1991) originally

theorized two tactics for seeking information without asking individuals directly for the information: (1) observing, and (2) surveillance. However, later research suggested the two tactics could be combined into the observing tactic (Miller, 1996). The observing tactic involves paying attention to what people say and do and putting oneself in situations where they can monitor what occurs. Observing can function as an indirect and low cost means for newcomers to check their assumptions regarding how the organization works. Observing tactics are typically used when the cost of seeking information is high, because a newcomer may feel there is risk in (1) coworkers knowing they need information and (2) information sought may be a sensitive topic that others may not view favorably in giving or discussing. Observing is used because if direct means were utilized, there may be negative consequences to the newcomer seeking the information from primary sources.

Situational variables. H1, H2, H3, and H4 focus on the impact of the two situational variables—social cost and psychological contract—on information seeking. Based on Miller and Jablin (1991) and Parzefall and Salin's (2010) research, it is anticipated that that social cost and psychological contract will influence the selection of information seeking tactics for newcomers. Early in the socialization process, newcomers often consider the social cost of their actions (Miller, 1996), because they are forming their relationships and reputation within an organization (Kramer & Miller, 2013). Psychological contracts are also developed in the entry phase and employees are influenced by the strength of the contract. If employees feel a psychological breech of the contract has occurred, an employee may not readily trust the organization or its leadership (Conway & Briner, 2005) which may influence their selection of a particular information seeking tactic.

Based on Miller's (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Miller, 1996) research on information seeking, we would anticipate overt information seeking tactics would be used more frequently in low social cost conditions and third-party and observing information seeking tactics would be used more frequently in high social cost conditions. We anticipate a similar pattern for psychological contracts where (1) more overt information seeking tactics would be used more frequently in strong psychological contract conditions and (2) third-party and observing information seeking strategies would be used in weak psychological contract conditions. If a strong psychological contract is in place, an organizational newcomer may feel safe directly asking for information as the manager or organization is viewed as trustworthy. On the other hand, an organizational newcomer may be more likely to use third-party and observing information seeking tactics if a weak psychological contract is in place due to lack of trust given repeated psychological breeches. This line of reasoning informs H1-H3:

H1a: Overt tactics will be used more frequently in low versus high social cost conditions.

H1b: Overt tactics will be used more frequently in strong versus weak psychological contract conditions.

H2a: Third-party tactics will be used more frequently in high versus low social cost conditions.

H2b: Third-party tactics will be used more frequently in weak versus strong psychological contract conditions.

H3a: Observing tactics will be used more frequently in high versus low social cost conditions.

H3b: Observing tactics will be used more frequently in weak versus strong psychological contract conditions.

The interaction of social cost and psychological contracts produce different levels of risk, or potential negative consequences for engaging in the bullying situation, which I would hypothesize influences the selection of information seeking tactics. The highest risk combination would be high social cost and weak psychological contract with the lowest risk combination being low social cost and strong psychological contract. The conditions of high social cost/strong psychological contract and low social cost/weak psychological contract would be of moderate risk since one of the variables would suggest a high risk to seeking information and the other a low risk. For example, in the high social cost/strong psychological contract condition the high social cost suggests a high level of risk to seeking the information. On the other hand, a strong psychological contract would suggest lower social cost and risk given the level of trust within the relationship. Similarly, in the low social cost/weak psychological contract condition, low social cost would suggest minimal risk in seeking information whereas the weak psychological contract would suggest a high risk give the lack of trust and support in the relationship. This line of reasoning leads to the following hypotheses:

H4a: Overt tactics will be used most frequently in the low social cost/strong psychological contract condition, followed by low social cost/weak psychological and high social cost/strong psychological contract conditions, followed by high social cost/weak psychological contract condition.

H4b: Third-party tactics will be more frequently used in high social cost/weak psychological contract conditions, followed by low social cost/weak psychological and high social cost/strong psychological contract conditions, followed by the low social cost/strong psychological contract condition.

H4c: Observing tactics will be used more frequently in high social cost/strong psychological contract conditions, followed by low social cost/weak psychological and high social cost/weak psychological contract conditions, followed by the low social cost/strong psychological contract condition.

Individual difference variables. H5 and H6 as well as RQ1 focus on the influence of the three individual difference variables—motivation, knowledge, and skill—on information seeking. The specific individual difference variables are information seeking motivation, their knowledge of workplace bullying (e.g. perception of knowledge level, bystander's experience of witnessing bullying in the past, years of work employment), and conflict management skills.

Logically, organizational newcomers who are highly motivated to seek information would be more likely to use overt, third-party, and indirect information-seeking tactics than organizational members who are lower in information seeking motivation. However, the relationship between knowledge and information seeking is less clear especially for those in the neophyte and veteran newcomer role. Miller and Jablin (1991) argue that newcomers use their past experiences from their working lives to inform their actions in an organization they joined which could include whether they have directly witnessed or experienced bullying. Furthermore, both the organizational socialization literature (Chao, O'Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994; Jablin, 1984; 2001) and occupational socialization literature (Coffey & Atkinson, 1994) highlights that as individuals progress through their career and have a variety organizational experiences (such as veteran newcomers), they will develop a deeper understanding of an organization's work, which may also include their knowledge of workplace bullying. This may occur, in part, to them also receiving anti-bullying or bystander training (Hodgins, MacCurtain & Mannix-McNamara, 2014) as part of their organizational training which is designed to provide

knowledge to employees regarding ways to prevent and manage bullying themselves. However, little empirical research is available that suggests how organizational newcomers who have witnessed bullying, have more work experience, or have participated in anti-bullying training would seek information. Therefore, the following research hypothesis and research question are posed for the motivation and knowledge/experience individual difference variables:

> H5: Information seeking motivation is positively correlated to the use of overt, third-party, and observing information-seeking tactics.
>
> RQ1: How does knowledge of workplace bullying influence the use of information seeking tactics?

As described earlier, skill is defined in terms of conflict management style. Individuals may feel more or less skilled at using the following conflict management styles: (1) avoiding, (2) dominating, (3) obliging, (4) compromising, and (5) integrating. We can group these five conflict management styles into conflict management styles that are either passive or active. Passive conflict management styles are characterized by a lack of engagement with a laissez-faire attitude toward conflict where individuals are willing to forego their own needs. Avoiding and obliging styles of conflict management could be characterized as passive. Active conflict management styles can be characterized as styles where individuals are engaged in advocating for their own needs or working collaboratively with others in order to manage the conflict. Active conflict management styles would include dominating, compromising, and collaborating.

It is likely that conflict management styles are related to the information seeking tactics used by organizational newcomers. I would anticipate that passive conflict management styles would predict third-party and observing tactics as these tactics use more indirect means to seek information. On the other hand, I would anticipate that more active conflict management styles

would predict overt information seeking as such the use of direct questions are associated with being highly engaged with the individuals involved in the conflict situation. Asking overt questions to seek information is more likely when individuals are intent on pursing their own interests or actively engaged in trying to create a compromise or integrative solution for the conflict. This line of reason leads to the following research hypotheses:

H6a: Active conflict management styles will be the strongest predictor of overt information seeking tactics.

H6b: Passive conflict management styles will be the strongest predictors of third-party and observational information seeking tactics.

Bystander roles

Lutgen-Sandvik and Fletcher (2013) identified three major bystander roles organizational members may take: (1) bully ally bystander, (2) target ally bystander, and (3) silent bystander. Bully allies are individuals that support the bullying behavior actively or passively. Target allies support the employee being bullied in a variety of ways such as offering emotional support, defending the target against the bully or reporting the bully in some capacity. Silent bystanders are those that take on a passive role in bullying situations even if they feel the bullying is morally wrong or even if they want to support the target. The following hypotheses and research questions are based on the situational and individual difference variables and their relationship to bystander roles.

Situational variables. Lutgen-Sandvik and Fletcher (2013) suggests that a bystander's decision on how to respond to bullying can result in a variety of negative or positive consequences. On one hand, we might anticipate that social cost and psychological contract would predict different kinds bystander roles. For example, if the social cost is low and there is

strong psychological contract, an organizational newcomer may feel very comfortable and safe becoming a target ally given the relatively low risk of going against their manager. Similarly, if there is a high social cost and weak psychological contract, the organizational newcomer may perceive such high levels of risk given the social cost and a lack of trust with their manger that they become bully allies or silent bystander. On the other hand, the very act of witnessing bullying may be perceived as so harmful, egregious, or immoral, that an organizational newcomer might stand up and become a target ally regardless of the social cost or psychological contract. Given the lack of research and competing explanations regarding the adoption of bystander roles, the following research question is posed:

> RQ2: How do social cost and psychological contracts influence what bystander roles organizational newcomers adopt?

Individual difference variables. It is difficult to predict the precise effect knowledge about workplace bullying might have regarding what bystander role organizational newcomers might adopt. For example, an individual with a history of negative experiences with workplace bullying may adopt a neutral bystander role in order to avoid negative repercussions while an individual who has experienced the successful management of workplace bulling might adopt a target ally role. Instances of how experience affects future engagement with workplace bullying has been correlated with how HR responds to reported bullying (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2011). Individuals who discredit and distrust HR due to their seeming ineffectiveness in managing conflicts in the past, may perceive that reporting bullying with HR is not a productive response. However, if HR was responsive and attentive to a bullying situation that a bystander reported, that bystander may have more initiative to report instances of bullying to HR and be a target ally. Given the lack of research in this area, the following research question is posed:

RQ3: How does information seeking motivation and knowledge of workplace bullying influence the adoption of bystander roles?

Similar to conflict management styles, the three types of bystander roles can be differentiated by their level and type of engagement. Silent bystander roles may be characterized by a lack of engagement with the bullying situation that leads to organizational newcomers avoiding intervening into the situation. As a result, we might hypothesize that passive conflict management styles would be positively associated with the silent bystander role. However, while the obliging conflict management style may be more passive given its laissez-faire nature, there is strong concern for the other, in this case, the manager. Therefore, we would anticipate that an obliging style would be positively associated with a bully ally.

Being a bully or target ally involves some level of active support. Intuitively, we might expect that an organizational newcomer who is skilled at dominating might adopt a bully ally bystander role given their self-interest. However, if their concern for self, involved a high commitment to justice and equity, they might advocate for the bully target and become a target ally. Similarly, we might expect that moderate or high levels of concern for other that are present in the compromising and integrating styles could lead organizational newcomers to adopt target ally roles. However, given that both styles emphasize finding collaborative solutions, it is conceivable that some organizational newcomers may instead adopt bully ally roles giving some weight to the bully's position (e.g., there is some underlying truth to the bully's concern). This line of reasoning leads to the following hypotheses:

H7a: Passive conflict management styles will be positively associated with silent bystander roles.

H7b: Active conflict management styles will be negatively associated with silent bystander roles.

H8a: The passive conflict management style of avoiding will be negatively associated with bully ally and target ally roles.

H8b: The passive conflict management style of obliging will be positively associated with bully ally role and negatively associated with the target ally role.

H8c: Active conflict management styles will be positively associated with bully ally and target ally roles.

Sensemaking

The way that neophyte and veteran newcomers make sense of the bullying situation influence how they will act. Ng, Niven and Hoel (2019) utilized a sensemaking model to inform their research into bystanders of workplace bullying. They found that when employees appraise workplace bullying, they consider the severity of the bullying in terms of how deserving the target was of being bullied, the efficacy of the behavior in the work context, and how the social context of the work environment shapes the meaning of the bullying. These factors influence whether they appraise the episode positively or negatively. However, in their study they did not account for certain employees being newcomers, types of newcomers and the organizational realities that affect newcomers.

Four open-ended questions were included to assess how organizational newcomers made sense of the situation in terms of how they would act, what factors drove the selection of their actions, what kind of information they would seek, and how they would define workplace bullying. These questions are designed to provide qualitative data that can be used to examine whether Miller's (1996) model of informational seeking is sufficiently comprehensive or

whether new information seeking tactics should be added to the model and whether other variables beyond social cost drive information seeking. These open-ended questions provide insight into how specific situations such as workplace bullying may require a revision of the model. This leads to the final research question:

RQ4: How do organizational newcomers make sense of organizational bullying?

Summary

The primary factors this study investigates are situational variables and individual difference variables. Chapter 2 argued that these two variables provide a strong relationship to how newcomers will (1) seek information, (2) determine a bystander role and (3) make sense of a workplace bullying situation. Situational and individual difference variables may show differing levels of influence based on the type of newcomer an employee is for an organization. Neophyte and veteran newcomers having varying levels of experience, and that experience may involve the bullying to be interpreted differently, information to be sought in different ways and for bystander roles to vary.

In order to investigate how situational variables and individual difference variables relate to newcomers, a series of hypotheses and research questions are developed. The hypotheses posed are areas associated with how information seeking tactics relate to social cost and psychological contracts. Social cost and psychological contracts are also hypothesized to investigate the relationship with bystander roles. Additionally, individual difference variables such as experience, knowledge and conflict managements styles are investigated. The hypotheses and research questions for individual differences are also related to information seeking tactics and bystander roles. It is also important to establish a research question to inquire on how employees are making sense of the bullying situation.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This dissertation uses a survey methodology to measure the experience of bystanders who witness bullying. Cowie, Naylor, Rivers, Smith and Pereira (2002) found that survey questionnaires have been largely developed to measure the experience of being a victim of workplace bullying and surveys that involve bystanders are not abundant nor well developed. The survey that has been developed for this dissertation uses an experimental design to assess what organizational newcomers (college students and full-time employees) might do in response to witnessing bullying. Participants read vignettes describing bullying scenarios and then responded to a mix of closed and open-ended items. This chapter presents the details of the methods including: (1) participants, (2) procedures, (3) operationalization of variables and scale reliability, and (4) analyses.

Participants

The study draws samples from two populations of individuals who were either in the anticipatory or encounter phase of organizational socialization: (1) college students and (2) full-time employees.

College student sample

College students are viewed as neophyte newcomers who are in the anticipatory phase of socialization. This is because college students generally have little to no work experience in the career they intend to have upon graduating. College students may be considered vulnerable due to their lack of knowledge regarding work environments which can include bullying and other negative situations. Peddle (2000) noted in a study on workforce deficiencies that many graduates tend to lack the basic skills and knowledge needed to be competent in the workplace.

The college sample was drawn from a large southwestern university. Students were solicited from the university's Department of Communication subject pool. The subject pool consisted of undergraduate students who were enrolled in a communication class for the current semester that were required to participate in a specific number of studies in order to earn credit for their classes. Students signed up to participate in research studies using an online research participation portal called SONA. The inclusion criterion for the college student sample was that participants be 18 years of age or older.

270 college students completed the survey. The number of males (49.6%, n = 133) and females (50.0%, n = 134) were nearly equal with 97.8% (n = 264) of the students being 18-24 years of age. 86.6% (n = 232) of the sample indicated they had previous work experience and 12.3% (n = 33) did not. 36% (n = 98) of the student sample were currently employed and those who self-identified as currently employed had been working at their current job on average 18.75 months (n = 98). The average length of time students had been employed in their life time was 2.88 years (n = 201). In regards to race and ethnicity, 73.5% (n = 197) are white, 18.7% (n = 50) are Latino/Hispanic, 9.3% (n = 25) are Asian, 3.7% (n = 10) are Black/African American, 1.1% (n = 3) identified as being "other".

Full-time employees

The second sample was generated through MTurk and was comprised of participants identifying themselves as current full-time employees. The purpose of utilizing experienced full-time employees was to evaluate how the employees would make sense of a hypothetical situation in the position of a newcomer. These employees have already been through the socialization process in previous jobs. Analyzing the employee sample sheds light onto how employees with experience would engage as hypothetical newcomer bystanders in a new organization. In

comparison to neophytes, who have little experience and working knowledge of being employed in an organization, veteran employees are coming in with a different set of expectations of how to manage the working environment.

MTurk is an online portal where users are paid to participate in online studies and surveys. Participants were recruited from MTurk to take the online survey. The inclusion criteria for the full-time employee sample were: (1) participants must be 18 years of age or older, and (2) participants must be full-time employees. MTurk provides many options to filter who can and cannot participate in a survey in order for a researcher's stated inclusion criteria to be met. Participants in their personal MTurk profiles identify whether they are full-time employees or not and whether they are over the age of 18. Participants must be 18 years or older to use MTurk. Only those participants who selected "Employment Status – Full-time 35+ hours per week" were able to see and participate in the survey.

Several studies have provided advice on how to use MTurk for experimental designs. Cheung, Burns, Sinclair and Sliter (2017) offered several suggestions and strategies when conducting experimental designs using MTurk. The primary strategy is to monitor subject inattentiveness which implies that participants are simply answering the survey questions without reading the instructions. In order to address this, the present study had attention check questions such as asking "are you currently employed" which instructed employees to answer if they are currently employed even though they have already pre-selected they were full-time. Another tactic used for this study to account for inattentiveness is that the first question of the survey asked, "Are you using MTurk to participate in this survey" (yes and no answer choice). The final tactic to address inattentiveness was to determine if participants finished the survey in under three minutes. In the pilot test, the survey took participants roughly 5-15 minutes to

complete, thus, a three-minute completion was used as a cut off for the full-time employees. No participants needed to be removed from the study. Not needing to take out responses due to quick completion times match's Hauser and Schwarz (2016) conclusion that MTurk workers are more attentive than other more traditional sample pools.

The full-time employee sample consisted of 599 participants. The sample consisted of more females (54.9%, *n* = 329) than males (44.6%, *n* = 267). The demographics for age were collected using an item that measured age range with ages ranging from the category of "18-24" to "75 years or older." The largest number of participants were between 35-44 years old (33.7%, *n* = 20) followed by 25-34 years old (32.6%, *n* = 194), 45-54 years old (16.4%, *n* = 98), 55-64 years old (10.6%, *n* = 63), 18-24 (4.4%, *n* = 26), 65-74 (1.8%, *n* = 11), and 75 years or older (.2%, *n* = 1). Employees had been working at their current job an average of 6.60 months (*n* = 564) with a median of 5.0 years. Employees had been employed in their life time an average of 19.05 years (*n* = 591) with a median of 17 years. In regards to race and ethnicity, 80.4% (*n* = 479) are white, 10.4% (*n* = 62) are Black/African American, 6.5% (*n* = 39) are Asian, 4.9% (*n* = 29) are Latino/Hispanic, 1.5% (*n* = 9) are American Indian/Alaskan Native, 5% (*n* = 3) identified as being "other".

Procedures

Participants in the college student sample accessed SONA to complete the survey and participants in the full-time employee sample accessed MTurk to complete the survey. Both samples were given the same survey with the same set of directions. Participants were randomly given one of four vignettes that portrayed a bullying episode that occurred between a manager and employee. Participants then completed a series of closed and open-ended items pertaining to the vignette. The survey was constructed using a combination of existing scales and scales

developed by the researcher for this study. Participant's predisposition to using particular conflict management styles was operationalized using the ROCI-II organizational conflict style inventory (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Information seeking tactics were operationalized using Miller's (1996) scale on information seeking tactics. A bystander role measure was developed specifically for this study. A series of open-ended questions were also included in the survey that addressed factors on the bystander role choice of participants.

Operationalization of Variables

The following section presents details regarding the operationalization of the variables used in the survey: (1) the development of the vignettes in which the situational variables of social cost and psychological contract were embedded, (2) the operationalization of variables related to the participant's individual differences and open questions regarding the experience of the vignette , and (3) the operationalizations of information seeking strategies and bystander role.

Bullying Vignettes

Vignettes that are used in an experimental format "consist of presenting participants with carefully constructed and realistic scenarios to assess dependent variables including intentions, attitudes, and behaviors, thereby enhancing experimental realism and also allowing researchers to manipulate and control independent variables" (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; p. 1). The vignettes were used to operationalize the situational variables of social cost and psychological contract. The vignettes for the dissertation were designed to: (1) establish a specific organizational context in which participants could situate themselves, (2) present a specific type of bullying episode for participants to respond, and (3) to assess how different levels of social cost and type of psychological contract would influence participant responses to bullying.

The context selected for the bullying episode was a team meeting that occurred between team members and a manager. The participants reading the vignette were asked to interpret the situation in the hypothetical perspective of a newcomer to that organization. The context of the vignette asked participants to envision themselves participating in a meeting led by the manager. The primary reason this context was chosen was due to the prevalence of managers or those in higher power positions tending to be bullies in work environments (Namie, 2017). In order to capture the likelihood that a bystander would witness workplace bullying, a team meeting context was selected. Workplace bullying can be both public acts and private acts, and describing the scenario as occurring in a public setting allowed participants to more easily take the bystander role. The directions of the vignette ask participants to visualize themselves as a newcomer to the organization as they observe the situation.

The type of bullying episode presented in the study's vignette was based on the category of *self-esteem/confidence* that Waldron and Kassing (2011) offered as a type of workplace bullying behavior. This type of bullying centers on spreading rumors, making belittling remarks, persistent criticism, stigmatizing, highlighting mistakes, humiliation, ridicule, and positioning the victim as a scapegoat. Each vignette described the manager's behavior as follows: "You have witnessed your manager continually crossing the line and intimidating another team member by inappropriately teasing the team member, dismissing the team member's ideas, and aggressively criticizing the team member's performance."

The theoretical description of *self-esteem/confidence* bullying aligns with the communicative behaviors the manager holds toward the coworker in the bullying situation described in the vignette. This type of bullying was selected to construct the vignettes because experience of public embarrassment by a manager is often seen as an impactful form of

destructive behavior for an employee (Waldron, 2012). Additionally, the bullying description in the vignette matches the definition of workplace bullying by the bullying being a repeated behavior that is actual or perceived harm.

Situational variables manipulated in vignettes. Two situational variables were manipulated in the vignettes: (1) social cost, and (2) psychological contract. A 2 (high/low social cost) x 2 (strong/weak psychological contract) factorial experimental design was used to generate four vignettes. The four vignette manipulations are as follows: (1) strong psychological contract and high social cost, (2) weak psychological contract and high social cost, (3) strong psychological contract and low social cost, and (4) weak psychological contract and low social cost. Social cost and psychological contract were manipulated and operationalized in the vignettes as follows.

Social cost referred to the risk of reporting the bullying behavior as a bystander. Vignettes with *high* social cost contained the following statement: "Given the culture of the organization, you feel intervening or reporting your manager could harm your relationship with your manager and decrease your advancement in the organization." Vignettes with *low* social cost used the following statement: "Given the culture of the organization, you feel the risk of intervening or reporting your manager is minimal and would not harm your relationship with your manager or decrease your advancement in the organization."

Psychological contracts are the implicit beliefs of how well an organization or manager keeps their promises from the perspective of an employee (Conway & Briner, 2005). The strength or weakness of the contract can help participants gauge the relationship they have with their manager in the vignette. A *strong* psychological contract was operationalized by inserting the following statement into the vignette: "Your manager is someone who consistently keeps and

follows through on promises made to you." A *weak* psychological contract was operationalized using the following statement: "Your manager is someone who consistently breaks and doesn't follow through on promises made to you."

The following four vignettes were used in this study.

Strong Psychological Contract and High Social Cost

> You are a new team member in an organization having been hired only three months ago. You have witnessed your manager continually crossing the line and intimidating another team member by inappropriately teasing the team member, dismissing the team member's ideas, and aggressively criticizing the team member's performance. However, your manager is someone who consistently keeps and follows through on promises made to you. Given the culture of the organization, you feel intervening or reporting your manager could harm your relationship with your manager and decrease your advancement in the organization.

Weak Psychological Contract and High Social Cost

> You are a new team member in an organization having been hired only three months ago. You have witnessed your manager continually crossing the line and intimidating another team member by inappropriately teasing the team member, dismissing the team member's ideas, and aggressively criticizing the team member's performance. Additionally, your manager is someone who consistently breaks and doesn't follow through on promises made to you. Given the culture of the organization, you feel intervening or reporting your manager could harm your relationship with your manager and decrease your advancement in the organization.

Strong Psychological Contract and Low Social Cost

You are a new team member in an organization having been hired only three months ago. You have witnessed your manager continually crossing the line and intimidating another team member by inappropriately teasing the team member, dismissing the team member's ideas, and aggressively criticizing the team member's performance. However, your manager is someone who consistently keeps and follows through on promises made to you. Given the culture of the organization, you feel the risk of intervening or reporting your manager is minimal and would not harm your relationship with your manager or decrease your advancement in the organization.

Weak Psychological Contract and Low Social Cost

You are a new team member in an organization having been hired only three months ago. You have witnessed your manager continually crossing the line and intimidating another team member by inappropriately teasing the team member, dismissing the team member's ideas, and aggressively criticizing the team member's performance. Additionally, your manager is someone who consistently breaks and doesn't follow through on promises made to you. Given the culture of the organization, you feel the risk of intervening or reporting your manager is minimal and would not harm your relationship with your manager or decrease your advancement in the organization.

Manipulation checks. Manipulation checks were performed in a pilot study to determine if participants perceived the variables of social cost and psychological contract as intended. The pilot study used a sample of college students drawn from a large southwestern university. Students were solicited from the university's Department of Communication subject pool. The subject pool consisted of undergraduate students who were enrolled in a communication class for the current semester that were required to participate in a specific number of studies in order to

earn credit for their classes. Students signed up to participate in research studies using an online research participation portal called SONA. The inclusion criterion for the college student sample was that participants be 18 years of age or older. 62 college students completed the survey. More females participated in the pilot study (69%, n = 43) than males (29%, n = 18) and all were between the ages of 18 and 24. Each participant was randomly assigned to read a single vignette.

Participants rated the vignette they were assigned to read using two sets of 7-point Likert scales (strongly agree-strongly disagree) to operationalize perceived social cost and psychological contract. Four items for the social cost manipulation check were developed by the researcher and were: (1) “I feel reporting the behavior is risky to me”, (2) “I feel that reporting the behavior will have negative consequences to me”, (3) “I feel intervening will negatively affect my career”, and (4) “I feel intervening will negatively affect the relationship I have with my manager.” The internal reliability for these four items were analyzed based on whether the vignette was in the social cost high or low condition. For the social cost the Cronbach alpha was $\alpha = .92$.

Three items for psychological contract were developed by the researcher. The questions for the manipulation check were: (1) “I feel that the manager consistently follows through on promises made to employees”, (2) “I feel that the manager makes and keeps promises”, and (3) “I trust the manager to keep promises made to employees.” The internal reliability for these three items were analyzed based on whether the vignette was in the psych contract strong or weak condition. The Cronbach alpha for the psychological contracts was $\alpha = .96$.

Two independent t-tests were computed to assess whether participants perceived difference between the high/low social cost and strong/weak psychological contract conditions.

Both t-tests were statistically significant indicating participants perceived differences between the two conditions. The manipulation check for social cost demonstrates participants perceived a difference between high and low social cost conditions (high [M = 5.14, SD = .94] vs. low [M = 4.54, SD = .22]). The Levene's test of inequality of variance was significant (F = 3.49, p < .05), so equality of variance cannot be assumed, $t(60)$ = 2.04, p < 05. The manipulation check for psychological contract also demonstrated a significant difference between conditions (strong [M = 4.62, SD = 1.24] vs. weak [M = 2.75, SD = 1.30]). Levene's test of inequality of variance was significant (F = .29, p < .05), so equality of variance cannot be assumed, $t(60)$ = 5.76, p < 05.

Participant Individual Differences

Participants were asked to complete a set of closed and open items that concerned their reactions to the vignette they were presented and their predisposition to manage conflict. Participants completed a set of closed items measuring their motivation to seek information, workplace knowledge and experience, and conflict management style. They also answered a set of open-ended items that had them state what they would do in this situation and what factors guided their choice.

Information seeking motivation. A single 5-point item anchored by "not at all important" to "extremely important" was used to operationalize information seeking motivation, "How important is it for you to seek out additional information before deciding what to do?"

Workplace bullying knowledge. In order to capture the level of knowledge a participant had about workplace bullying a two-item measure was developed. The two items are, "How knowledgeable are you about workplace bullying?" and "How knowledgeable are you in knowing what to do if bullying occurs in the workplace?" The answer choices ranged from 1 (not

knowledgeable at all) to 5 (extremely knowledgeable). For the college sample the Cronbach alpha was .79. For the full-time sample, the two-item measure of knowledge had an alpha of .83.

Two other indicators for experience was used. First, total years of employment was used as a proxy for workplace knowledge as one might assume that the longer one was employed, the individual would have a deeper knowledge of how organizations work. This proxy variable was measured using the following item: "How many years in total have you been employed? Second, it was assumed that an individual who might have witnessed a bullying incident may have greater or different knowledge about bullying than an individual who did not. Each participant was asked to answer the following questions using either a "yes" or "no" response: "Have you ever witnessed bullying in the workplace?"

Conflict Management Style. The ROCI-II (Rahim, 1983; Rahim & Magner, 1995) assesses individuals' disposition to use particular styles to manage conflict. The measure presumes that individuals may perform any of the following conflict management styles: (1) problem solving, (2) compromise, (3) accommodation, (4) competitive, and (5) avoiding. One version of the ROCI-II focuses on the conflict management style that employees use with peers while the second version focuses on the conflict management style employees are predisposed to use with managers or supervisors. The second version was used for the study.

The wording on specific items for the ROCI-II differed slightly between the college student and full-time employment samples. For the college student sample, the questions were phrased in a way that asked them what they "would" do in conflict situations. Consistent with students being in an anticipatory stage of socialization, the items asked the students how they might manage conflict with an organizational manager. For the full-time employment sample, the questions were directly drawn from the original ROCI-II instrument which asks how the

participants previously managed conflict with an organizational manager. Rahim (1983) tested the reliability of the instrument by calculating the scale scores of the conflict styles of integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising. Based on the original publication of the scale, the alphas of those categories are as follows respectively .83, .81, .76, .79, and .60. Based on the college student sample, integrating was α = .92, oblige was α = .87, avoid was α = .84, compromise was α = .83, dominate was α = .85. Based on the employee sample, integrating was α = .83, oblige was α = .87, avoid was α = .77, compromise was α = .82, dominate was α = .85. See Appendix A for measure items.

Open-ended Questions. The purpose of these open-ended questions was to explore the choices the participants made when responding to the vignette and why as well as to ask them for their definition of workplace bullying. The four open-questions were: (1) "What would you do in this situation?", (2) "What factors influenced the choice that you made?", and (3) "If you had a desire to seek additional information regarding the situation, what information would you seek?", and "Please define 'workplace bullying' in your own words."

The open-ended answers were categorized by utilizing a thematic analysis of participant responses for each question. By thematically analyzing the answers, the data can show us broadly what the common responses are to witnessing bullying by the participants. The first step was to achieve a set of connected themes by categorizing the answers into their own theme. This was accomplished by reviewing all of the responses by the participants, and develop themes that go with each answer. Participant responses are tallied into the themes due to multiple answers belonging into the same theme. The second step was to cluster the established themes into larger categories and document the frequency of responses for the larger category. These larger themes

are used to express the types of responses that the participants are conveying. The characteristics of these larger clustered themes are built upon the smaller themes found.

Information Seeking Tactics

The items operationalizing information seeking were drawn from Miller's (1996) scale measuring the use of overt, observing/surveillance and third-party information seeking strategies. The original scale developed by Miller (1996) consisted of 14 items measuring the use of overt, observing/surveillance, third-party information seeking strategies and used a 5-point Likert-type response format ranging from "a very little extent" = 1 to "a very great extent" = 5. Based on the original publication of the scale, the Cronbach alpha levels for overt, third-party and observe ("observing" and "surveillance") were respectively: .80, .77, and .80. The college student sample had the following Cronbach alphas: observe α = .79, third-party α = .77 and overt α = .80. The employee sample had the following Cronbach alphas: observe α = .77, third-party α = .80 and overt α = .79

Overt information seeking tactic was operationalized using four items drawn from Miller's original scale: (1) I would ask specific, straight to the point questions to get the information I wanted, (2) I would identify what I didn't know and ask for information about the matter, (3) I would not "beat around the bush" in asking for the information, and (4) I would go directly to my manager and ask for information about the matter.

Third-party information seeking tactic was operationalized by four items drawn from Miller's original scale: (1) I would find someone else besides my manager to serve as a sounding board for the topic, (2) I would ask somebody who I knew was acquainted with my manager's feelings on the subject than ask my manager, (3) I would check with someone else before

speaking to my manager, and (4) I would find another source other than my manager who could tell me the same information.

The observe information seeking tactic is combined with the items in surveillance in Miller's original scale to create the tactic "observe" with a total of 6-items. Observe information seeking tactic was operationalized by three items drawn from Miller's original scale: (1)I would consciously make mental notes about what my supervisor tells others about the topic, (2) I would look for the "answers" in the behaviors of others, and (3) I would pay close attention to how my supervisor acts toward me and try to relate these actions to the topic. The following are the 3-items for surveillance: (1) I would go about my tasks, but if any new information came my way, I'd be sure to pay attention to it, (2) I'd find out the information by keeping my eyes and ears open to what was going on around me, and (3) I would walk around just to see "what was up" and think about what it might mean in relation to the topic when I had more time.

Bystander Role

The bystander role scale was developed by the researcher to assess three types of bystander roles that participants could assume after witnessing a bullying episode. A 9-item scale was developed based on Lutgen-Sandvik and Fletcher's (2013) typology of bystander roles: (1) silent bystander, (2) target ally, and (3) bully ally. Participants responded to series of items using a 5-point Likert response format ranging from "very unlikely" to "very likely." *Silent bystander* roles were operationalized using three items: (1) I would respond to the situation by ignoring the behavior, (2) I would respond to the situation by staying away from the situation, and (3) I would respond to the situation by not concerning myself with the individuals involved. *Target ally* roles were operationalized using three items: (1) I would respond to the situation by comforting my co-worker, (2) I would respond to the situation by reporting the behavior, and (3) I would

respond to the situation by trying to stop the behavior. *Bully ally* roles were operationalized using three items: (1) I would respond to the situation by silently letting the behavior continue, (2) I would respond to the situation by showing loyalty and support toward my manager despite his/her behavior, and (3) I would respond to the situation by silently encouraging the behavior. The factorial structure for the proposed scale was explored using factor analysis.

Bystander Role for College students

A factor analysis was conducted to determine the structure of the proposed scale since the measure or its factors have not been empirically tested in any context (Wrench, Thomas-Maddox, Richmond & McCroskey, 2013). Items from the scale were factor analyzed to determine whether the measure needed to be adjusted and to find problematic item loadings. The nine items from the scale were subjected to principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation. There was a loading criterion of .6 or greater with no loading on another factor greater than .4 to assess the factor structure (Mertler, & Vannatta, 2005; Miles & Shelvin, 2000). The Kaiser-Myer-Okin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) is .813 showing that the sampling ($N = 270$) for the set of bystander role is sufficient. A KMO less than .5 would signify inadequate sampling. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showed to be significant $p < .001$. Due to the results of the factor analysis, items in the measure needed to be adjusted. Table 1 shows the factor analysis results for the measure items.

Table 1

Factor Structures of Bystander Roles: Student Sample

Bystander Role Items	F1: Silent Bystander	F2: Target Ally	F3: Bully Ally
I would respond to the situation by staying away from the situation.	**.849***	-.183	.028

Bystander Role Items	F1: Silent Bystander	F2: Target Ally	F3: Bully Ally
I would respond to the situation by ignoring the behavior.	**.743**	-.193	.296
I would respond to the situation by silently letting the behavior continue.	**.711**	-.146	.286
I would respond to the situation by not concerning myself with the individuals involved.	**.627**	-.002	.345
I would respond to the situation by showing loyalty and support toward my manager despite his/her behavior	.472	.045	**.469**
I would respond to the situation by reporting the behavior.	-.160	**.667**	.052
I would respond to the situation by trying to stop the behavior	-.056	**.664**	.061
I would respond to the situation by comforting my co-worker.	-.045	**.532**	-.246
I would respond to the situation by silently encouraging the behavior.	.367	-.069	**.812**
Eigenvalue	3.80	1.67	.88
Percentage of Variance	42.11	18.60	9.77

*Numbers in bold are items significant in the factor

For the college sample the three items loaded on to target ally with a Cronbach alpha of .65 (α = .91 for the pilot study). Four items loaded on Silent Bystander factor with an α = .85 (α = 74 for the pilot study). Two items loaded on the Bully Ally factor. Although only one item loaded on the factor at .469, it was the second highest loading for the factor and fit conceptually with the Bully Ally factor. The two items had an α =.70 (α =.54 for the pilot study).

Bystander role for full-time employees

Table 2 shows the factor analysis results for the items in the full-time employee sample. Due to the results of the factor analysis, items in the measure needed to be adjusted. Similar to

the student sample, the nine items were subjected to principal axis factoring with varimax rotation along with using a loading criterion of .6 or greater with no loading on another factor greater than .4 to assess the factor structure (Mertler, & Vannatta, 2005; Miles & Shelvin, 2000). The Kaiser-Myer-Okin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) is .866 showing that the sampling (N = 599) for the set of bystander role is sufficient and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity showed to be significant $p < .001$. For the employee sample the three items loaded on to target ally with a Cronbach alpha of .77. Four items loaded on silent bystander factor with a Cronbach alpha of .89. Two items loaded on the bully ally factor and had a Cronbach alpha of .60.

Table 2

Factor Structures of Bystander Roles: Employee Sample

Bystander Role Items	**F1: Silent Bystander**	**F2: Target Ally**	**F3: Bully Ally**
I would respond to the situation by staying away from the situation.	**.868***	-.174	.119
I would respond to the situation by ignoring the behavior.	**.709**	-.264	.405
I would respond to the situation by silently letting the behavior continue.	**.788**	-.258	.325
I would respond to the situation by not concerning myself with the individuals involved.	**.691**	-.146	.410
I would respond to the situation by showing loyalty and support toward my manager despite his/her behavior	.301	-.025	**.702**
I would respond to the situation by reporting the behavior.	-.554	**.593**	.225
I would respond to the situation by trying to stop the behavior	-.530	**.632**	.142
I would respond to the situation by comforting my co-worker.	-.102	**.919**	-.173

Bystander Role Items	F1: Silent Bystander	F2: Target Ally	F3: Bully Ally
I would respond to the situation by silently encouraging the behavior.	.089	.039	**.855**
Eigenvalue	4.33	1.59	.68
Percentage of Variance	48.16	17.76	7.5

*Numbers in bold are items significant in the factor

Summary

An online survey was constructed to assess how college students and full-time employees responded to workplace bullying. A 2x2 experimental design was used where participants read one of four bullying vignettes. Social cost (high, low) and psychological contract (strong, weak) were manipulated in the vignettes. Participants completed a set of survey scales that measured their predisposition to use particular conflict management styles, their information seeking tactics, the social cost of obtaining information, and the bystander role they would assume. Participants also completed four items that asked participants to articulate what they would do in the situation, what factors influenced their decision, and what information they would seek, as well as provide a definition of workplace bullying.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Chapter 4 presents the results from the analysis of the college student sample. It is organized by the research hypotheses and questions presented in Chapter 2 that center on: (1) information seeking, (2) adoption of bystander roles, and (3) sensemaking. The first two sections explore the influence of selected situational (social cost, psychological contract) and individual difference (knowledge, motivation, skill) variables on information seeking and bystander role. The third section summarizes a thematic analysis regarding bystander sensemaking.

Information Seeking

H1-H6 and RQ1 center on the influence of the selected situational and individual difference variables on information seeking.

Effects of situational variables on information seeking

H1-H4 hypothesized the main and interaction effects of social cost and psychological contract on the use of overt, third-party, and observing information seeking tactics. A 2x2 ANOVA was conducted to test the hypotheses associated with social cost (high/low) and psychological contract (strong/weak) serving as independent variables and information seeking tactics as dependent variables.

H1 was not supported. H1 stated that overt tactics would be more frequently used in the low social cost condition (H1a) and more frequently used in strong psychological contract condition (H1b). No main effects were statistically significant for either social costs $F(3, 267) = .27$, $p > .05$ or psychological contracts $F(3, 267) = .23$, $p > .05$. The mean for high social cost

was 3.08 (*SD* = .90) and 3.02 (*SD* = .94) for low social cost. The mean for strong psychological contract was 3.08 (*SD* = 1.01) and 3.02 (*SD* = .82) for weak psychological contract.

H2 was not supported. Hypothesis 2 stated that third-party tactics would be used more frequently in high versus low social cost conditions (H2a) and would be used more frequently in weak versus strong psychological contract conditions (H2b). Proposed main effects due to social cost $F(3, 267) = .16$, $p > .05$ and psychological contracts $F(3, 267) = .16$, $p > .05$ were nonsignificant. The mean for high social cost conditions was 3.45 (*SD* = .86) and 3.41 (*SD* = .91) for low social cost. The mean for strong psychological contract was 3.41 (*SD* = .87) and 3.46 (*SD* = .90) for weak psychological contract.

H3 was not supported. Observing tactics were shown to not be used more frequently in either high social cost (H3a) or weak psychological contract conditions (H3b). The main effects for social cost $F(3, 267) = 1.60$, $p > .05$ and psychological contracts $F(3, 267) = .14$, $p > .05$ were nonsignificant. The mean for high social cost conditions was 3.66 (*SD* = .67) and 3.54 (*SD* = .83) for low social cost conditions. The mean for strong psychological contract was 3.63 (*SD* = .66) and 3.59 (*SD* = .70) for weak psychological contract.

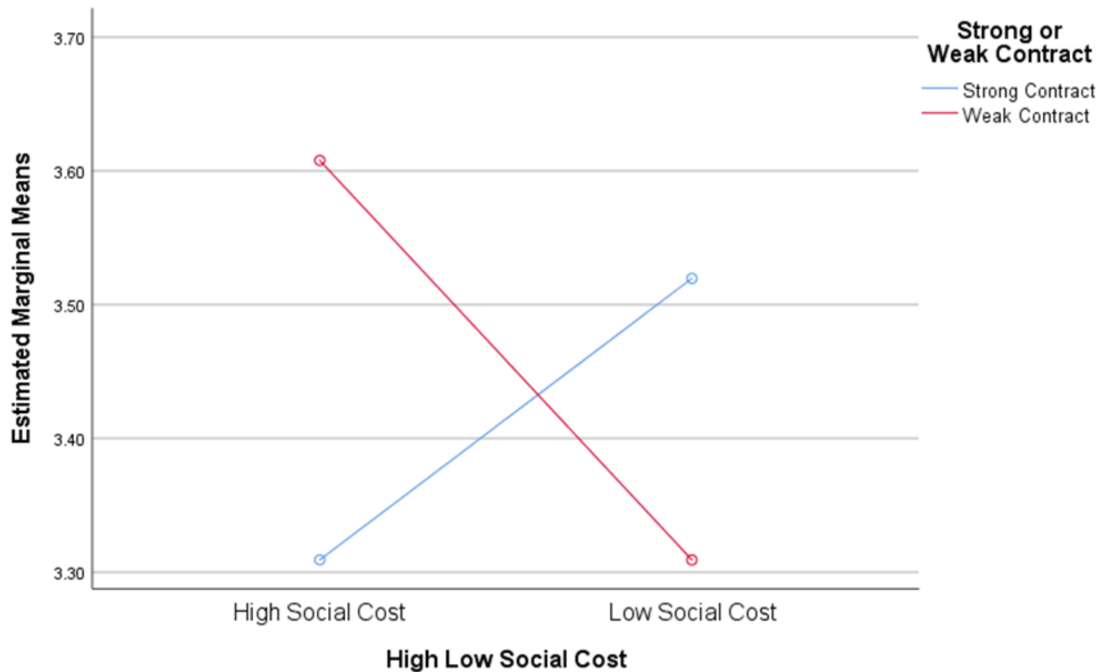
H4a and H4c were not supported but H4b was supported. The interaction effect for overt tactics $F(3,267) = .35$, $p > .05$ and observing tactics $F(3,267) = .86$, $p > .05$ were not statistically significant.

H4b was supported in hypothesizing that the interaction effect between high social cost/weak psychological contract condition would prove to be the condition where third-party tactics are most used. The interaction effect for third-party tactics was statistically significant $F(3,267) = 5.53$, $\eta^2 = .02$, $p < .05$ (see Figure 1). An LSD post hoc analysis found a significant difference between the high social cost and strong psychological contract vignette with the high

social cost and weak psychological contract vignette. Third-party tactics were more frequently used in the high social cost and weak psychological contract vignette (*M* = 3.61, *SD* = .88) and less frequently in the high social cost and strong psychological contract vignette (*M* = 3.30, *SD* = .82).

Figure 1

Interaction Effect with Third-party Information Seeking Tactics



The means of the tactics in order are observe (*M* = 3.60, *SD* = .75), third-party (*M* = 3.43, *SD* = .88) and overt (*M* = 3.05, *SD* = .92).

Effects of individual difference variables on information seeking

Analyses of the influence of information seeking motivation (H5), knowledge of workplace bullying (RQ1), and conflict management styles (H6) on information seeking was conducted using a combination of simple correlations, ANOVAs, and t-tests.

H5 was supported as information seeking motivation was positively correlated to the use of all of three information seeking tactics. Information seeking motivation was found to be

positively correlated to the use of overt $r(267) = .15$, $p < .05$, observing $r(267) = .31$, $p < .05$, and third-party information seeking tactics $r(267) = .28$, $p < .05$. The results affirm the rather commonsense notion that the more that bystanders are motivated to seek further information relating to the bullying situation, the more likely they are to use a variety of information seeking tactics.

An important question is whether the level of information seeking motivation was influenced by the situational variables of social cost and psychological contract. A 2x2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of social cost (high social cost and low social cost) and psychological contract (strong contract and weak contract) on information seeking motivation. A significant main effect for social cost $F(3,267) = 7.17$, $\eta^2 = .02$, $p < .05$ emerged where participants were more motivated to seek information when the social cost was high $M = 4.07$, $SD = .78$ versus low $M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.03$. The main effects for psychological contract $F(3,267) = .04$, $p > .05$ and the interaction effect $F(3,267) = 5.53$, $p > .05$ were both nonsignificant.

RQ1 utilized three operationalized measures to test with information seeking tactics: (1) self-perceptions of workplace bullying knowledge, (2) directly witnessing or experiencing an instance of workplace bullying, and (3) length of job experience. Independent t-tests were utilized to determine the relationship between the variables.

For perceived level of workplace bullying knowledge, participants were divided into high versus low knowledge groups using a median split technique. Differences between the two groups regarding the use of information tactics was analyzed with a series of independent t-tests. Two of the three independent t-tests were statistically significant with high knowledge participants more likely to use overt [$t(218) = -3.88$, $p < .05$, $M_{high} = 3.27$, $SD = .88$, $M_{low} = 2.80$, $SD = .91$] and observing information seeking tactics [$t(218) = -2.33$, $p < .05$, $M_{high} = 3.70$, $SD =$

.70, M_{low} = 3.46, *SD* = .84]. There was not a significant difference between high and low knowledge groups for third-party information seeking tactics [$t(218) = -.95$, $p > .05$, M_{high} = 3.48, *SD* = .83, M_{low} = 3.36, *SD* = .97).

The degree to which the knowledge gained from witnessing workplace bullying in the past may influence information seeking was tested using a series of independent t-tests. 92 participants indicated they had witnessed bullying in the past (yes) and 171 had not (no). All three t-tests were statistically significant as individuals who had witnessed bullying previously were more likely to use overt [$t(261) = 2.43$, $p < .05$, M_{Yes} = 3.24, *SD* = .94, M_{No} = 2.89, *SD* = .90], observing [$t(261) = 2.47$, $p < .05$, M_{Yes} = 3.76, *SD* = .72, M_{No} = 3.52, *SD* = .76], and third-party information seeking tactics [$t(261) = 2.43$, $p < .05$, M_{Yes} = 3.61, *SD* = .85, M_{No} = 3.34, *SD* = .89].

High versus low work experience groups were established using a median split technique to examine the effect of length of work experience on the use of information seeking tactics. A series of independent t-tests were conducted analyzing the effect of work experience on the use of overt, observing, and third-party information seeking tactics. All three t-tests were statistically nonsignificant demonstrating that participants were just as likely to use overt [t (185) = 1.03, $p > .05$, M_{high} = 3.02, *SD* = .84, M_{low} = 3.16, *SD* = 1.03], observing [t (185)= -1.05, $p > .05$, M_{high} = 3.67, SD = .67, M_{low} = 3.55, *SD* = .82], and third-party [t (185) = -0.66, $p > .05$, M_{high} = 3.43, *SD* = .88, M_{low} = 3.34, *SD* = .98] information seeking tactics regardless of length of work experience.

H6 hypothesized that active and passive conflict management styles would predict the use of specific information seeking tactics. Active conflict management styles (dominating, compromising, and integrating) were hypothesized to predict overt information seeking tactics

(H6a) and passive conflict management styles (avoiding and obliging) were hypothesized to predict the use of third-party and observational information seeking tactics (H6b). A series of stepwise multiple regressions for conflict management styles and information seeking tactics are detailed below.

H6a was partially supported as dominating and obliging conflict management styles were significant predictors of overt tactics while compromising was not a significant predictor. The overall model was significant $F(3, 263) = 14.60$, $R^2 = .25$, $p < .001$ (see Table 3). The stepwise multiple regression analysis indicated that dominating is the highest contributor to the variance (19%) for the use of overt tactics followed by integrating (2%) and obliging (4%). Active conflict management styles showed a positive relationship to using overt tactics while obliging styles showed a negative relationship to overt tactics. Compromising and avoiding conflict management styles are not significantly related to overt tactics.

H6b was not supported which hypothesized that passive styles would be strong predictors of observing tactics. A stepwise multiple linear regression was conducted to evaluate how well the independent variables (integrating, obliging, avoiding, dominating and compromising) would predict the dependent variable (observing information seeking tactic). The overall model was significant $F(2, 264) = 8.43$, $R^2 = .31$, $p < .001$ (see Table 3). The stepwise analysis showed that integrating accounted for 28% of the variance for predicting observing tactics followed by obliging tactics (2%). Integrating and obliging had a positive relationship with observing tactics.

H6b also hypothesized that passive styles would be strong predictors of third-party tactics. It was partially supported. A stepwise multiple linear regression was conducted to evaluate how well the independent variables (integrating, obliging, avoiding, dominating and compromising) could predict the dependent variable (third-party information seeking tactic. The

overall model was significant with a $F(4, 262) = 6.50$, $R^2 = .22$, $p < .001$ (see Table 3). The resulting model showed that the obliging conflict management style contributed 14% of the variance in predicting third-party information seeking tactics followed by dominating (4%), avoiding (2%), and integrating (2)%.

Table 3

Stepwise Regression for Information Seeking Tactics: College Students

		Adjusted R^2	R^2 Change	β	*t*
Overt					
	Dominating	.19	.19	.38	6.39
	Integrating	.21	.02	.31	4.44
	Obliging	.25	.04	-.25	-.25
Observe					
	Integrating	.28	.28	.42	6.69
	Obliging	.30	.02	.18	2.90
Third-party					
	Obliging	.14	.14	.08	1.00
	Dominating	.18	.04	.19	3.11
	Avoiding	.20	.02	.20	3.02
	Integrating	.22	.02	.18	2.55

N = 267

Bystander Roles

The analyses for RQ2, RQ3, H7 and H8 are presented in this section. These analyses focus on the relationship between the bystander roles adopted by participants and the situational and individual difference variables.

Effects of situational variables on bystander roles

RQ2 centers on the influence of social cost and psychological contracts on the bystander role newcomers adopt. A series of 2x2 ANOVAs were performed to test the influence of social cost (high/low) and psychological contract (strong/weak) bystander roles (bully ally, target ally, silent bystander).

The ANOVAs for bully ally, target ally, and silent bystander were statistically nonsignificant. For bully ally, no significant main effects emerged for either social cost F(3,267)

= .14, $p > .05$ or psychological contract $F(3,267) = .50$, $p > .05$ and the interaction affect was also nonsignificant $F(3,267) = 2.21$, $\eta^2 = .00$, $p > .05$. For target ally, no main effects were statistically significant for either social cost $F(3,267) = .16$, $p > .05$ or psychological contract $F(3,267) = .56$, $p > .05$ and the interaction affect was also nonsignificant $F(3,267) = .06$, $\eta^2 = .00$, $p > .05$. For silent bystander, no main effects for either social cost $F(3,267) = .14$, $p > .05$ or psychological contract $F(3,267) = .12$, $p > .05$ were statistically significant and the interaction effect was statistically nonsignificant $F(3,267) = .00$, $\eta^2 = .00$, $p > .05$. While no significant effects emerged due the situation variables, the mean scores for bystander role suggest that participants were more likely to adopt the bystander role of target ally ($M = 3.64$, $SD = .75$) followed by silent bystander ($M = 2.44$, $SD = .88$) and bully ally ($M = 2.15$, $SD = .93$).

Effects of individual difference variables on bystander roles

RQ3 seeks to understand the influence of information seeking motivation and workplace bullying knowledge on bystander roles. In order to assess the relationships, independent t-tests and correlation analyses were used. H7 and H8 examined whether conflict management style predicted bystander roles.

Information seeking motivation. For motivation to seek information, participants were divided into high versus low levels of motivation groups using a median split technique. Differences between the two groups regarding bystander roles used were analyzed using a series of independent t-tests. One of the three independent t-test were statistically significant with participants with high levels of information seeking motivation more likely to be a target ally [$t(127) = -3.35$, $p < .05$, $M_{high} = 3.88$, $SD = .71$, $M_{low} = 3.41$, $SD = .85$]. There was not a significant difference between high and low levels of motivation for silent bystanders [$t(127) =$

1.41, $p > .05$, $M_{high} = 2.26$, $SD = .93$, $M_{low} = 2.49$, $SD = .86$] and bully allies [$t(127) = 1.38$, $p > .05$, $M_{high} = 2.02$, $SD = .86$, $M_{low} = 2.25$, $SD = .98$).

Perceived level of workplace bullying knowledge. The participants for the perceived level of workplace bullying knowledge were grouped into high versus low knowledge groups using a median split technique and were analyzed through an independent t-test. One of the three independent t-tests was statistically significant with high knowledge participants more likely to be a target ally [$t(205) = -3.02$, $p < .05$, $M_{high} = 3.78$, $SD = .67$, $M_{low} = 3.47$, $SD = .84$]. There was not a significant difference between high and low knowledge groups for silent bystanders [$t(218) = .22$, $p > .05$, $M_{high} = 2.47$, $SD = .85$, $M_{low} = 2.50$, $SD = .92$] and bully ally [$t(218) = -1.19$, $p > .05$, $M_{high} = 3.48$, $SD = .83$, $M_{low} = 3.36$, $SD = .97$).

Witnessing workplace bullying in the past and its relation to bystander roles were tested using a series of independent t-tests. All three t-tests were statistically nonsignificant as individuals who had witnessed bullying previously were just as likely to be a target ally [$t(261) = .46$, $p > .05$, $M_{Yes} = 3.67$, $SD = .73$, $M_{No} = 3.62$, $SD = .77$], silent bystander [$t(261) = 1.73$, $p > .05$, $M_{Yes} = 2.57$, $SD = .91$, $M_{No} = 2.37$, $SD = .86$], and bully ally [$t(261) = .60$, $p > .05$, $M_{Yes} = 2.20$, $SD = 1.00$, $M_{No} = 2.13$, $SD = .90$].

High versus low work experience groups were established using a median split technique to examine the effect of length of work experience on the adoption of bystander roles. A series of independent t-tests were conducted analyzing the effect of work experience on the use of target ally, silent bystander, and bully ally. All three t-tests were statistically nonsignificant demonstrating that participants were just as likely to be a target ally [$t\ (185) = -0.77$, $p > .05$, $M_{high} = 3.68$, $SD = .67$, $M_{low} = 3.59$, $SD = .86$], silent bystander [$t\ (185) = -1.02$, $p > .05$, $M_{high} =$

2.45, SD = .85, M_{low} = 2.31, *SD* = .91], and bully ally [*t* (185) = .44, $p > .05$, M_{high} = 2.06, *SD* = .83, M_{low} = 2.12, *SD* = .96] regardless of work experience.

Conflict management styles. H7 and H8 proposed that passive and active conflict management styles were positively or negatively associated with specific bystander roles. These hypotheses were tested using a series of stepwise multiple linear regressions (see Table 4).

H7a predicted that passive conflict management styles would be positively associated with the silent bystander role and H7b hypothesized that active conflict managements styles would be negative predictors of silent bystanders. The overall model for the stepwise regression was significant with a $F(4, 262) = 11.52$, $R^2 = .23$, $p < .001$ (see Table 4). The strongest predictor of silent bystander role was avoiding (11%) followed by integrating (4%), dominating (5%), and obliging (3%). H7a was confirmed as both avoiding and obliging had a positive relationship with silent bystander role. H7b was partially confirmed as integrating had a negative relationship with silent bystander role but dominating had a positive relationship.

H8 was tested using two stepwise multiple linear regressions to evaluate how well the independent variables (integrating, obliging, avoiding, dominating and compromising) predicted target ally or bully ally. Both stepwise multiple regressions were statistically significant. The overall model for target ally was significant $F(1, 265) = 112.00$, $R^2 = .30$, $p < .001$ accounting for 30% of the variance. The overall model for bully ally was also significant $F(3, 263) = 6.22$, $R^2 = .18$, $p < .001$ accounting for 18% of the variance.

H8a hypothesized that avoiding would be negatively associated with bully ally and target ally roles. It was not supported as avoiding did not enter into either stepwise multiple regression for bully ally or target ally roles. H8b stated that obliging would be positively associated with the bully ally role and negatively associated with the target ally role. It was not supported as

obliging did not enter into the stepwise multiple regression for target ally and was positively predictor of bully ally, though it only accounted for 2% of the variance. H8c was partially supported as integrating was the only predictor for target ally (30%) and dominating (7%) and integrating (9%) were the only two conflict management styles to predict bully ally. Dominating was positively related to becoming a bully ally and negatively related to becoming a target ally.

Table 4

Stepwise Regression for Bystander Role: College Students

		Adjusted R^2	R^2 Change	β	*t*
Silent Bystander					
	Avoiding	.11	.11	.24	3.70
	Integrating	.15	.04	-.45	-6.30
	Dominating	.20	.05	.22	3.11
	Obliging	.23	.03	.27	3.40
Target Ally					
	Integrating	.30	.30	.54	10.58
Bully Ally					
	Dominating	.07	.07	.40	6.50
	Integrating	.16	.09	-.44	-5.99
	Obliging	.18	.02	.17	2.49

N = 267

Sensemaking

RQ4 focused on how college students playing the role of a newcomer made sense of organizational bullying. A thematic analysis was performed for the following open-ended questions for the vignette: (1) What would you do?, (2) What information would you seek?, and (3) What factors influenced your decision? and (4) Define workplace bullying in your own words. Themes for each question were developed and response frequencies for each theme calculated. Responses could be coded as representing multiple themes.

What would you do? The following are the themes generated for the open-ended question, “What would you do?” Specific examples of each theme and their percentage of the

total number of responses for each theme are presented in Table 5. The themes are listed in descending order of frequency.

1. *Investigate and gather information (n* = 100*).* This theme represents behaviors associated with information gathering by the participant. Information gathering in this theme implies that the participant has a desire for more information about the situation. The theme is about what actions they will take to find the information and what they would do once they have that information.
2. *Engage coworker (n* = 65*).* This theme represents behaviors associated with the participant wanting to communicate with the coworker being bullied. Communicating with the target includes wanting to talk about the situation or provide support in some way. Participant responses that mention this theme describe wanting to interact or engage with the employee with the primary purpose of providing some kind of verbal or emotional support.
3. *Engage manager (n = 63).* This theme represents behaviors associated with the participant communicating with the manager by confronting them or talking to them in general. Participants in this theme want to discuss the bullying behavior they have witnessed with the manager.
4. *Not engage (n* = 28*).* This theme represents behaviors associated with the participant choosing inaction as a bystander. The participant does not want to take action or get involved in the situation. The motivation for staying silent varies from fear of losing a job, losing face, and harming one's own reputation, but nonetheless, the participant is not willing to take any action regarding the situation.

5. *Resolve* the *issue (n* = 21*)*. This theme represents behaviors associated with the participant wanting to resolve the issue in some way. The method of resolving it can be through mediating a conversation between the manager or coworker or directly solving the problem by reporting it to HR or higher authorities (manager's boss).
6. *Seek help from others (n* = 21*)*. This theme represents behaviors associated with the participant wanting to seek help or advice from others. Participants are wanting to follow the advice or actions of third-party's not directly involved. This can involve seeking advice from higher ups.
7. *Report behavior (n* = 15*)*. This theme represents behaviors associated with the participant reporting the bullying without feeling the need to seek information or gather information for evidence. Participants varied on a designated source they would report to. Some mentioned HR, while others just generally indicated they would report it to someone.

Table 5

"What would you do?": College Students

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
Investigate and gather information	100	37.0	"Gain more information about why the manager is treating my coworker this way before reporting the behavior. I would also talk to the coworker to make sure that the situation is what it actually looks like." "I would gather more information and try to find out if this is a pattern."

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
Engage target	65	24.1	"Most likely, I would comfort the person being bullied, but I would might be too scared to actually confront the person bullying them." "I would ask the coworker how he feels about the matter, and if he would like me to report it."
Engage manager	63	23.3	"Talk to the manager about his attitude and how it makes me uncomfortable." "I would confront my manager and address the situation face to face."
Not engage	28	10.4	"I would be nervous to say anything to my manager, but would stay on the lookout for any other odd situations around the office." "Mind my own business"
Resolve the issue	21	7.8	"Think of the best possible solution to make everyone happy." "Try to serve as an intermediate and problem solve."
Seek help from others	21	7.8	"Talk to a close friend in work and outside of work to see their opinions." "Reach out to the coworkers in the situation and have them explain what they're feeling towards the manager."
Report behavior	15	5.5%	"I would immediately report this behavior because I have absolutely no tolerance for bullying. "I would contact HR with a report of the situation and address my concerns considering that this is potentially a harassment issue."

What information would you seek? This question focused on the kind of information college students felt was important to seek in order to better understand and engage the bullying situation. Specific examples for each theme and their percentage of the total number of

responses for each theme are presented in Table 6. The following themes are listed in descending order of frequency.

1. *Details on both parties involved (n* = 101*).* Participants in this theme signify that they need more information about both the manager and the employee, their relationship, and their past. Participants state that they need information on both the manager and victim collectively, not individual information on either the manager or the employee.
2. *Information on the manager (n* = 93*).* Responses for this theme reflect participants specifically wanting more information regarding the manager. The information participants want range from the manager's personal life and demeanor to how the manager conducts themselves in the workplace.
3. *Resolving the issue (n* = 33*).* Participants in this theme want to seek additional information on how the incident can be reported to authorities that can handle the issue. Participants want information about how to directly report the incident as well as information that allows them to understand the general reporting process. Participants want to know how to report anonymously as well as learn what their options are for reporting. Additionally, some participants did not want to report but wanted to learn how they can help the parties involved in the situation.
4. *Coworker perceptions (n* = 31*).* Participant responses for this theme reflected participants wanting to learn more about what their coworkers think about the situation. Coworkers are anyone who is an employee of the organization who is not the manager or target. Participants wanted to gain the perspective of others to see if the behavior is interpreted as bullying by others.

5. *Information about the victim (n* = 24*)*. Participant responses for this theme indicate a desire to learn more about the target. Participants are interested in learning about how the target feels about the bullying and whether or not the victim feels it needs to be reported. Additionally, participants want to know if the target deserved the bullying by invoking the behavior or deserved it by other means.

Table 6

"What information would you seek?": College Students

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
Details on both parties involved	101	37.4	"The background relationship between the supervisor and coworker." "I would want to know the back story if there was one. I would want to know the reasons why the individuals in the situation feel the way they feel, like if there were things or situations that made them think the way they think."
Information on the manager	93	34.4	"How the manager treats other employees, if he has always been like this with that specific coworker, trying to ask the manager why he picks on the coworker so much." "I would want to know more specifics about what the manager is doing to the coworker, and the extent of how serious the behavior was."
Resolving the issue	33	12.2	"How I can help resolve the problem. If I can report my manger, and how."

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
			"I would seek information on the correct way to report this and who I should go to in order to do so."
Coworker perceptions	31	11.4	"I would ask my other co-workers and try to see if there is a reason my supervisor is acting this way."
			"Probably the opinions of my friends and coworkers on what would be the best course of action."
Information about the victim	24	8.9	"I would like to know more about the coworker to see if they deserve or can handle this type of behavior that is performed by the manager."
			"I would ask the coworker being targeted to see how long its been going on and how they feel about the situation."

What factors influenced your decision? The following themes identify factors that influenced participant decisions on how they would respond to the workplace bullying incident. Specific examples for each theme and their percentage of the total number of responses for each are presented in Table 7. The themes are listed in descending order of frequency.

1. *Personal characteristics (n* = 55*).* Personal characteristics refer to participants' individual factors such as morals, ethics, and personality that influenced their decision regarding what to do. For example, some participants described themselves as having an upfront personality or one that is non-confrontational.

2. *Risk Assessment (n* = 40*)*. Participant responses for this theme highlighted that there were potential consequences for getting involved in the situation. These responses involve participants feeling that either supporting the target or getting involved in some way could lead to negative consequences. Such negative consequences revolved around employment status, reputation, and potentially becoming a bullying target.
3. *Workplace expectations (n* = 28*)*. Participants responses for this theme centered on the influence that workplace norms, rules, and procedures had on participant decisions to engage the situation. Workplace expectations revolve around what is acceptable and unacceptable workplace behavior in the workplace. Simply, there is an expectation that employees should be treated in accordance with certain organizational standards.
4. *Perceptions of the manager (n* = 26*)*. This theme represented participant responses regarding how their perception of the manager's behavior would influence their decision to engage the situation. Participants indicated that the behavioral norms outside of the bullying situation would be an influential factor.
5. *Newcomer status (n* = 22*)*. This theme highlighted how participants perceived the way their hypothetical newcomer status would influence their decisions. Newcomer status implies that they are still learning the ropes of the organization and are not sure about their place within the organization and among the employees. As a result, participants may feel that they may not understand the whole situation, or feel it is not their place to act since they are new.
6. *Past experience with bullying (n* = 22*)*. Participant responses for this theme centered on how their past involvement with workplace bullying influenced their decision to

respond to the bullying situation. Prior involvement included participants being either being a bystander or being the target of bullying.

Table 7

"What factors influenced your decision?": College Students

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
Personal characteristics	55	20.3	"These factors are influenced by my personal values and high morals. If I see something ethically wrong, I will do something about it." "My ethics and morals"
Risk Assessment	40	14.8	"I would strongly consider that my career progression was at risk if I tried to intervene or report my supervisor." "I wouldn't want to overstep boundaries and lose the job or be labeled as a "snitch"
Workplace expectations	28	10.3	"I am in business ethics right now and we learn every week how employees in higher positions feel that they have the right to treat their employees in a less than manner. It's despicable and should never be tolerated in the workplace." "You have to remember you're in a professional work environment, and need to conform to both parties to get the best outcome."
Perceptions of the manager	26	9.6	"Who/how the manager is most of the time." "The personality trait of my manager"

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
Newcomer status	22	8.1	“Since I'm new, I can't throw myself into the mix right away.” “Being a newcomer and not knowing the full dynamics of the workplace yet.”
Past experience with bullying	22	8.1	“I know what it’s like to be targeted and wouldn't want it for anyone else.” “I have been on the receiving end of the conversation. Somebody stood up for me.”

Define workplace bullying. The following themes identify themes that describe how participants characterize workplace bullying. Specific examples for each theme and their percentage of the total number of responses for each are presented in Table 8. The themes are listed in descending order of frequency.

1. *Negative behaviors inflicted onto another (n* = 164*)*. Participants in this theme define workplace bullying as general negative behaviors. The definitions define bullying as abuse, harassment, being disrespectful, and the general mistreatment of others. The focus of the definitions is on general behaviors and terms associated with unethical behavior.
2. *Bullying with harmful intentions (n* = 75*)*. Participant responses for this theme highlighted that bullying is often associated with specific goals for the bully. Bullying in this theme is associated with making the target feel unsafe, ashamed

or belittled. Bullying behaviors have intent to cause mental harm and social harm such as making a target feel alone.

3. *Abuse of power (n* = 55*)*. Participant responses for this theme centered on the manager and authorities of an organization. The definitions associated workplace bullying to abuse of power that leads to the mistreatment of those without power. Participants indicate that the power abuse is often meant to take advantage of others as well.

Table 8

"Define workplace bullying": College Students

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
Negative behaviors inflicted onto another	164	61.1	"Being rude, mean, or condescending to a coworker." "Harassment of employees and excessive teasing and or making fun of."
Bullying with harmful intentions	75	28.0	"Intentionally being vile, demeaning, and belittling someone." "Harassing somebody for personal or economic gain."
Abuse of power	55	20.5	"Using a position of authority to flex power and not face consequences." "The use of your position to make other coworkers feel inferior."

Discussion

This chapter focused on the college student sample that was representative of individuals who were in the anticipatory socialization stage. Anticipatory socialization encompasses all the learning that takes place prior to graduation and the attainment of a student's first job (Garavan & Morley, 1997) and this will ultimately develop expectations on how people communicate in particular occupations and work settings. Vocational anticipatory socialization (VAS) is a specific type of anticipatory socialization that is tied to an individual's career expectations. Powers and Myers (2017) argue that throughout college, students receive messages from a variety of sources (e.g., teachers, family members, educational institutions, part-time job experiences, peers and friends, and the media [Jablin, 1985]) that shape their career expectations and help them understand the lifestyle associated with their career, and the people they will eventually work with such as managers and coworkers. College students often find these messages to be both significant and encouraging, because they appreciate hearing about what they should expect in a particular career environment and culture (Jahn & Myers, 2014).

Information seeking

The analyses suggest that situational variables have very little effect on information seeking tactics and motivation. The results of H1-H3 showed no significant main effects for social cost and psychological contract on overt, observing, and third-party information seeking tactics and only one significant interaction effect for third-party information seeking tactics (H4). While information seeking motivation was positively correlated to the increased use of information seeking tactics (H5), only the situational variable for social cost emerged as significant determinant of information seeking motivation where participants were more motivated to seek information in the high social versus low social cost condition. In sum, the

participants were more motivated to seek information in high social cost situations but the tactic they used to seek information was not overly influenced by the situational variables.

One possible reason for the lack of significant effects for information seeking tactics could be that college students may have heightened levels of self-confidence and efficacy which negate the effects of situational variables. We would anticipate that neophyte newcomers, individuals with limited organizational or occupational experience (Beyer & Hannah, 2002), entering the organization for the first time (Carr, Pearson, Vest, & Boyar, 2006) would be particularly sensitive to situational variables as they are trying to make a good impression on management and their co-workers. However, some research suggests that neophytes, such as college students, are more independent and confident in communicating what they feel is necessary, regardless of organizational climate and norms (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Kuron, Lyons, Schweitzer & Ng, 2015). This heightened level of confidence and self-efficacy may partially explain why the situational variables had relatively little impact on the use of information seeking tactics.

While situational variables did not exhibit an effect on information seeking tactics, the use of information seeking tactics were influenced by the individual difference variables. RQ1 showed that the more perceived knowledge that a person had on how to manage workplace bullying as well as whether they had previously witnessed a bullying incident, the more likely they were to use overt tactics and observing tactics. This result may be due in part to self-efficacy, an individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Jahn and Myers (2014) highlight that direct experience can influence an individual's frameworks for making sense of situations and acting. In this instance, having prior experience with bullying or feeling you have more knowledge about bullying,

provides a framework that makes individuals feel more confident in knowing how to seek information.

The hypotheses associated with the individual difference variable of conflict management styles were partially supported. Morrison (1995) observes that newcomers often obtain information actively rather than passively. Thus, it makes sense that those with active conflict managements styles like dominating and integrating would seek information overtly which was confirmed (H6a). H6b was partially confirmed as passive conflict management styles, in this instance, the obliging conflict style was the largest influencer for using third-party tactics. Obliging, in reference to the ROCI-II, suggests that the employee is primarily interested in satisfying the outcomes of the manager. As a result, collecting information using third-party tactics versus overtly questioning the manager may be closely tied to the obliging conflict management style. Third-party information seeking tactics allows the newcomer to gain information about the situation without potentially offending the manager by questioning their goals and motives.

However, H6b also suggested passive conflict management styles would be the strongest predictors of observational information seeking tactics. This part of the hypothesis was not confirmed as integrating emerged as the strongest predictor. One possible explanation for this surprising finding is that the observing information seeking strategy may be the most direct way to collect actual relational information between managers and employees. Miller and Jablin (1991) observe that studies which have examined observational behaviors demonstrate that individuals like to observe others in informal conditions where they interact with other organizational members rather than formally controlled conditions such as engaging in task related activities or working in isolation. This can provide more detailed and rich relational

information about the way individuals interact with each other. Given the integrating style is associated with creating win-win solutions for both parties, observing either the bully or target interacting with each other or other employees might provide richer information, and the way they manage interaction and relationships that allow them to be more likely to create win-win situations.

Bystander roles

Like information seeking, no main or interaction effects emerged regarding the influences of social cost and psychological contract on bystander roles (RQ2), but participants did indicate a preference for wanting to become target allies. The means for bystander roles showed a trend of participants choosing to become target allies, followed by silent bystanders, then bully allies. The notion that participants gravitate toward becoming target allies is also reflected in the analyses for information seeking motivation (H7) and bullying knowledge (RQ3) with higher levels of information seeking motivation and perceived knowledge of bullying are associated with becoming target allies. The overall pattern of results suggest that individuals prefer to adopt the bystander role of target ally and that their ability to create this role is facilitated by higher levels of motivation and knowledge.

The hypotheses regarding conflict management style and bystander roles were confirmed. Avoiding was the strongest predictor of silent bystander roles (H7a) and negatively associated to target ally and bully ally (H8a). This was an expected result since silent bystanders tend to be those individuals who enact behaviors of avoidance and withdraw from bullying and conflict (Namie & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013). As anticipated, active styles of conflict management were associated with bully and target ally as dominating was the strongest predictor of being a bully ally (H8c) and integrating was positively associated with target ally

(H8c). This suggests that having a high concern for the other, in this instance employees, is positively associated with becoming a target ally.

Motivation, bully knowledge, and an integrating style of conflict management enable participants to adopt target ally bystander roles. Bystanders are often motivated to become target allies, because they find the behaviors to be morally wrong, have a positive relationship with the target such as being a friend, and are most often motivated by social justice goals where they feel they need to advocate against negative behavior and restore fairness to the workgroup (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2006). However, to successfully enact the target ally bystander roles requires more than motivation, it also requires the knowledge and skills to perform that role. Namie (2007) observes that employees who are competently trained in how to manage workplace bullying are more active in identifying what is and is not bullying, and knowing what to do about it. Lutgen-Sandvik (2006) suggests that dominating conflict management styles often correlate to bystanders being target allies, because they often try to submit the bully to disciplinary actions. Integrating was the most significant style for those becoming a target ally in this study. Rahim (2002) argued that integrating styles encouraged open communication, exchange of information, looking for alternatives and reaching an effective solution that is acceptable to all parties. For college students, if a bystander has the motivation to want to be a target ally, they are more likely than not to actually attempt to intervene in that capacity – especially if they are knowledgeable in knowing what to do as a bystander of workplace bullying.

Sense making

The four open-ended questions were originally designed to provide insight into the way that participants made sense of the bullying vignettes and how they will engage in information gathering based on their hypothetical newcomer status. The role of a newcomer for neophyte

newcomers showed a variety of themes that shed light on how college students interpret bullying situation.

The three most frequently mentioned themes for "What would you do?" center on: (1) information seeking, (2) engaging the target, and (3) engaging the manager. Action oriented themes such as resolving the issue and reporting the behavior are mentioned much less frequently. This confirms the importance of information seeking for organizational newcomers and communicating with parties directly involved in the bullying situation. Miller and Jablin's (1991) model may need to be extended in two important ways. First, it may need to become more comprehensive by expanding beyond organizational information seeking behaviors to include other kinds of communication behaviors that are more action oriented. Second, it may need to take a more process-oriented view toward organizational newcomers' experience. It makes sense that most organizational newcomers would begin with seeking information to make sense of the situation and then to take any number of interventive actions. Miller and Jablin's (1991) warrants expansion that links information seeking tactics, the organizational newcomers' sensemaking, and subsequent action.

The themes emerging from "What information would you seek?" affirm the kinds of information that are listed in Miller and Jablin's work. Miller and Jablin (1991) suggest organizational newcomers typically seek three major types of information: referent, appraisal and relational information. *Referent* information relates to the actual job functions and responsibilities of the newcomer's position. *Appraisal* is information relevant to how well the newcomer is doing at his/her job. *Relational* information pertains to learning about coworker relations, and the informal and formal relationships that occur in the workplace. Relational information is the most important information for college students to attain as indicated by their

desire to seek information regarding how well the target and bully got a long, their relational history at work and overall behavioral norms.

For the question, "What factors influenced your decision?," the second most frequently mentioned theme is "risk" which aligns with Miller and Jablin's (1991) model. Though social cost and psychological contract did not emerge as significant influences in the quantitative assessment, risk emerged as a significant influence within the qualitative analysis on individuals' decisions on what to in bullying situations. However, other factors such as morals, ethics and personality also emerged. Based on the thematic analysis, Miller and Jablin's (1991) model needs to also include individual differences and workplace expectations in determining the type of information a newcomer wants. For example, Tidwell and Sias (2005) showed that individuals who tend to be extraverted are more prone to seek relational information and found that "extroverts were less likely to perceive social costs associated with seeking relational information" (p.77). Extensions of the Miller and Jablin (1991) model, need to further examine the individual differences of newcomers such as their personality and possibly the degree of extroversion and introversion.

The themes from "Define workplace bullying," seem to track with the original definitions offered in Chapter 1. The definitions provided by participants clearly identify workplace bullying and not just general bullying. The definitions relate to ideas of repeated hostile behaviors that are actual or perceived, the inability to defend the self from another party, and that the bullying coincides with intensity, repetition, duration, and power disparity (Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy & Alberts, 2007; Keashly & Nowell, 2011).

Summary

The focus of Chapter 4 was to investigate the college student sample by answering the hypotheses and research questions presented in Chapter 2. Through a series of statistical tests and a thematic analysis, the hypotheses and research questions were addressed. Situational factors (social cost and psychological contracts), despite one interaction effect with third-party information-seeking tactics, had little effect on the choice of information seeking tactics and bystander role. However, individual differences such as bullying knowledge and conflict management styles did influence participant choice of information seeking tactic and bystander role.

The thematic analysis found several significant findings that contribute to answering how college students playing the role of an organizational newcomer engage in sensemaking. Through a series of four open questions, the results found out what college students would do in response to witnessing a bullying episode, what information they would seek, what factors will influence their decisions and their definitions of workplace bullying. Generally, college students have a strong desire to seek more information regarding the situation with relational information being the most sought-after information. The factors that influence the decisions being made are largely based on the college student’s personal sense of moral, justice, and personality. The definitions provided were relatively the same to those described in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS FOR FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

Similar to Chapter 4's analysis of the student sample, Chapter 5 analyzes the results of the full-time employee sample. The chapter is organized according to the following research questions and hypotheses relating to: (1) information seeking, (2) adoption of bystander roles, and (3) sensemaking. The relationships found among situational (social cost, psychological contract) and individual difference (knowledge, motivation, skill) variables with those of information seeking and bystander role will be discussed in the first two sections. The third section details the results generated by the thematic analysis of the open-ended questions.

Information Seeking

The first section of the analysis focuses on H1-H6 and RQ1 which center on the influence of the situational and individual difference variables on information seeking.

Effects of situational variables on information seeking

H1-H4 were tested utilizing a 2x2 ANOVA. The goal was to assess whether the main and interaction effects of social cost and psychological contract on the use of overt, third-party, and observing information seeking tactics were statistically significant.

H1 was not supported. Overt tactics were hypothesized to be more frequently used in low social cost conditions (H1a) and in strong psychological contract conditions (H1b). No main effects for either psychological contract $F(3,596) = .18$, $p > .05$ or social cost were statistically significant $F(3,596) = .37$, $p > .05$. The means for four conditions were similar (high social cost and strong psychological contract: $M = 2.84$ and $SD = .95$, high social cost and weak psychological: $M = 2.93$ and $SD = 1.07$, low social cost and strong psychological contract: $M = 2.94$ and $SD = .90$, and low social cost with weak contract: $M = 2.92$ and $SD = .92$).

H2 was not supported. Third-party tactics were hypothesized to be used more frequently in high versus low social cost conditions (H2a) and in weak versus strong psychological contract conditions (H2b). No main effects for either psychological contract $F(3,596) = .67$, $p > .05$ or social cost were statistically significant $F(3,596) = .02$, $p > .05$. The means across all four conditions were similar (high social cost and strong psychological contract: $M = 3.53$ and $SD = .99$, high social cost and weak psychological contract: $M = 3.44$ and $SD = .97$, low social cost and strong psychological contract: $M = 3.52$ and $SD = .91$, low social cost and weak psychological contract: $M = 3.48$ and $SD = .87$).

H3 was not supported. Observing tactics were not shown to be used more frequently in high social cost conditions (H3a) or in weak psychological contract conditions (H3b). The ANOVA for observing tactics revealed nonsignificant main effects for psychological contracts $F(3,596) = .65$, $p > .05$ and social cost $F(3,596) = .15$, $p > .05$. The means across all four conditions were similar (high social cost with strong psychological contract: $M = 3.75$ and $SD = .76$, high social cost with weak psychological contract: $M = 3.83$ and $SD = .70$, low social cost and strong psychological contract: $M = 3.77$ and $SD = .73$, and low social cost with weak psychological contract: $M = 3.76$ and $SD = .65$).

H4a, H4b and H4c were not supported. H4a hypothesized that the interaction effect of the conditions would lead to overt tactics being most frequently used in low social cost and strong psychological contract conditions. H4b hypothesized that the interaction effect between high social cost/weak psychological contract condition would prove to be the condition where third-party tactics were most used. H4c hypothesized that observing tactics would be used more frequently in high social cost/strong psychological contract conditions. The interaction effects

were nonsignificant for overt $F(3,596) = .45$, $p > .05$, observing $F(3,596) = .65$, $p > .05$, and third-party information seeking tactics $F(3,596) = .76$, $p > .05$.

The results of the ANOVA suggest that situational variables do not influence the use of information seeking tactics. However, the mean scores do indicate a pattern in the way participants used information seeking tactics. Member of the full-time sample used observing information seeking tactics most frequently ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .71$) followed by third-party ($M = 3.50$, $SD = .94$) and overt information seeking tactics ($M = 2.91$, $SD = .96$).

Effects of individual difference variables on information seeking

The following research questions and hypotheses examine the effects of motivation, knowledge, and skill on regarding the use of information seeking strategies. H5 focuses on how information seeking motivation influenced information seeking tactics. RQ1 centers on the influence of knowledge of workplace bullying and H6 examines how conflict management styles relate to information seeking.

Information seeking motivation. H5 was supported as information seeking motivation was positively correlated to all three information seeking tactics. Information seeking motivation was found to be positively correlated to the use of overt tactics $r(596) = .10$, $p < .05$, observing tactics $r(596) = .33$, $p < .05$, and third-party tactics $r(596) = .27$, $p < .05$. This suggests that the more a bystander is motivated to seek information relating to the bullying situation, the more likely they are to use information seeking tactics.

To supplement the correlational analysis for H5, a 2x2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the effects of psychological contract (strong contract and weak contract) and social cost (high social cost and low social cost) on information seeking motivation. The ANOVA indicated nonsignificant main effects for both social cost $F(3,596) = .58$, $p > .05$ and psychological

contract $F(3,596) = 1.9$, $p > .05$. The interaction effect was also nonsignificant $F(3,596) = .02$, $p > .05$. The results suggest that the motivation to seek information regarding the bullying situation is not influenced by the situational variables of social cost and psychological contract.

Bullying knowledge and experience. RQ1 focused on the individual relationship that self-perceived knowledge of workplace bullying, witnessing workplace bullying in the past, and job experience had with information seeking tactics. Independent t-tests were used to determine the relationships.

The participants were divided into high versus low knowledge groups using a median split technique for perceived level of workplace bullying knowledge. Two of the three independent t-tests were statistically significant with high knowledge participants more likely to use overt [$t(594) = -6.06$, $p < .05$, $M_{high} = 3.18$, $SD = .92$, $M_{low} = 2.71$, $SD = .95$] and observing information seeking tactics [$t(594) = -2.17$, $p < .05$, $M_{high} = 3.85$, $SD = .72$, $M_{low} = 3.72$, $SD = .70$]. There was not a significant difference between high and low knowledge groups for third-party information seeking tactics [$t(594) = .57$, $p > .05$, $M_{high} = 3.46$, $SD = .99$, $M_{low} = 3.51$, $SD = .89$).

Witnessing workplace bullying in the past could provide experience and knowledge that might influence the use of information seeking tactics. 445 participants indicated they had witnessed bullying in the past (yes) and 148 had not (no). All three t-tests comparing participants who have previously witnessed bullying (or not) were statistically nonsignificant for overt [$t(591) = -.67$, $p > .05$, $M_{Yes} = 2.90$, $SD = .98$, $M_{No} = 2.96$, $SD = .90$], observing [$t(261) = .54$, $p > .05$, $M_{Yes} = 3.80$, $SD = .71$, $M_{No} = 3.75$, $SD = .72$], and third-party information seeking tactics [$t(591) = -.75$, $p > .05$, $M_{Yes} = 3.48$, $SD = .94$, $M_{No} = 3.54$, $SD = .92$].

Work experience was operationalized by length of time spent working. A median split was used to create one group with high work experience and one group with low work experience. A series of independent t-tests were conducted analyzing the effect of work experience on the use of overt, observing, and third-party information seeking tactics. All three t-tests were nonsignificant demonstrating that participants were just as likely to use overt [t (588) = -1.14, $p > .05$, $M_{high} = 2.84$, $SD = 1.00$, $M_{low} = 2.97$, $SD = .92$], observing [t (588)= 1.94, $p > .05$, $M_{high} = 3.84$, $SD = .73$, $M_{low} = 3.72$, $SD = .69$], and third-party [t (588) = -0.70, $p > .05$, $M_{high} = 3.47$, $SD = 1.03$, $M_{low} = 3.52$, $SD = .84$] information seeking tactics regardless of work experience.

H6 hypothesized that active and passive conflict management styles would predict the use of specific information seeking tactics. Stepwise multiple regressions were used to determine whether certain conflict management styles predicted information seeking tactics (see Table 9).

H6a predicted that active conflict management styles would be the strongest predictors of overt information seeking tactics. It was confirmed. A stepwise multiple regression was conducted to evaluate how well the independent variables (integrating, oblige, avoiding, dominating and compromising) predicted overt information seeking tactic. The overall model was significant with a $F(3, 590) = 12.53$, $R^2 = .20$, $p < .001$. The resulting model showed that dominating contributed 15% of the variance in predicting overt information seeking tactics followed by avoiding (4%) and integrating (1%). Dominating and integrating conflict management styles were positively associated with the use of overt information seeking tactics while avoiding was negatively associated.

H6b asserted that that passive conflict management styles would be the strongest predictors of third-party and observational information seeking tactics. It was not confirmed.

The overall model for observing tactics was significant $F(2, 591) = 25.09$, $R^2 = .17$, $p < .001$ with integrating contributing 13% of the variance in predicting overt information seeking tactics followed by avoiding (4%). The overall model for third-party tactics was significant $F(3, 590) = 5.17$, $R^2 = .07$, $p < .001$ with integrating contributing (5%) of the variance in predicting overt information seeking tactics followed by avoiding (1%) and dominating (1%). Surprisingly, the active conflict management style of integrating was the strongest predictor for both observing and third-party information seeking tactics with avoiding only accounting for a small percentage of the variance in each regression analysis.

Table 9

Stepwise Regression for Information Seeking Tactics: Full-time Employees

		R^2	R^2 Change	*β*	*t*
Overt					
	Dominating	.15	.15	.34	9.10
	Avoiding	.19	.04	-.18	-4.94
	Integrating	.20	.01	.13	3.54
Observe					
	Integrating	.13	.13	.37	10.07
	Avoiding	.17	.04	.18	5.01
Third-party					
	Integrating	.05	.05	.20	5.01
	Avoiding	.06	.01	.12	3.06
	Dominating	.07	.01	.09	2.27

N = 593

Bystander Roles

The analyses associated with RQ2, RQ3, H7 and H8 focus on the relationship between bystander roles and the situational and individual difference variables.

Effects of situational variables on bystander roles

RQ2 investigated the relationship between the situational variables and bystander roles. Overall, for organizational newcomers, target ally was the most common role adopted (M = 3.42, SD = .97), followed by silent bystander ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.09$) and bully ally ($M = 2.11$, $SD =$

.99). Three 2x2 ANOVAs were conducted to analyze the relationship of social cost (high/low) and psychological contract (strong/weak) for the three bystander roles.

The first analysis assessed the relationship between the situational variables and target ally. The ANOVA for target ally indicated a nonsignificant main effect for psychological contracts $F(3,596) = 2.74$, $p > .05$ as well as a nonsignificant interaction effect $F(3,596) = .54$, $p > .05$. The main effect for social cost was significant $F(3,596) = 4.55$, $\eta^2 = 01$, $p < .05$. Participants in low social cost conditions (*M* = 3.51, *SD* = .94) were more likely to be target allies than participants in high social cost conditions (*M* = 3.36, *SD* = .98).

The second analysis assessed the relationship between the situational variables and the silent bystander role. The ANOVA for silent bystander indicated a nonsignificant main effect for psychological contracts $F(3,596) = 1.86$, $p > .05$ and a nonsignificant interaction effect $F(3,596) = .41$, $p > .05$. The main effect of social cost for silent bystander was significant $F(3,596) = 4.09$, $\eta^2 = .007$, $p < .05$ with participants in the high social cost condition (*M* = 2.73, *SD* = 1.10) more likely to be silent bystanders than participants in the low social cost condition (*M* = 2.55, *SD* = 1.07).

The third analysis assessed the relationship between the situational variables and the bully ally role. The ANOVA for bully ally indicated a nonsignificant main effect for social cost $F(3,596) = .009$, $p > .05$ and a nonsignificant interaction effect $F(3,596) = .57$, $p > .05$. The main effect for psychological contract was significant $F(3,596) = 11.43$, $\eta^2 = .02$, $p > .05$ with participants in the strong psychological contract condition (*M* = 2.25, *SD* = .98) more likely to become bully allies than participants in the low psychological contract condition (*M* = 1.98, *SD* = .97).

Effects of individual difference variables on bystander roles

RQ3 was designed to investigate how information seeking motivation and knowledge of workplace bullying related to bystander roles. The relationships being tested in RQ3 utilized simple correlations and independent t-tests. H7 and H8 examined the how conflict management styles predicted bystander roles.

Information seeking motivation. For RQ3, a median split technique was used to group participants into high versus low levels of motivation groups. Independent t-tests were conducted to examine the relationship between the two groups and bystander roles. The independent t-tests were statistically nonsignificant for the target ally [$t(594) = -5.29$, $p > .05$, $M_{\text{high}} = 3.44$, $SD = .95$, $M_{\text{low}} = 3.39$, $SD = 1.02$], silent bystander [$t(594) = .43$, $p > .05$, $M_{\text{high}} = 2.63$, $SD = 1.08$, $M_{\text{low}} = 2.68$, $SD = 1.11$] and bully ally roles [$t(594) = .81$, $p > .05$, $M_{\text{high}} = 2.09$, $SD = .99$, $M_{\text{low}} = 2.17$, $SD = .99$).

Perceived level of workplace bullying knowledge. For RQ3, a median split technique was used to divide participants into high versus low knowledge groups. Differences between the two groups regarding bystander roles used were analyzed using independent t-tests. Two of the three independent t-tests were statistically significant with high knowledge participants more likely to be target allies [$t(594) = -5.76$, $p < .05$, $M_{high} = 3.68$, $SD = .94$, $M_{low} = 3.23$, $SD = .95$] and silent bystanders [$t(594) = 3.91$, $p < .05$, $M_{high} = 2.44$, $SD = 1.13$, $M_{low} = 2.80$, $SD = 1.03$. There was not a significant difference between high and low knowledge groups for bully ally [$t(594) = -.56$, $p > .05$, $M_{high} = 2.14$, $SD = 1.08$, $M_{low} = 2.09$, $SD = .91$).

The degree of witnessing workplace bullying in the past in relation to bystander roles were analyzed using a series of independent t-tests. All three t-tests were statistically nonsignificant as individuals who had witnessed bullying previously were just as likely to be a

target ally [$t(591) = -.50$, $p > .05$, $M_{Yes} = 3.41$, $SD = .96$, $M_{No} = 3.46$, $SD = 1.00$], silent bystander [$t(591) = -.53$, $p > .05$, $M_{Yes} = 2.63$, $SD = 1.07$, $M_{No} = 2.69$, $SD = 1.13$], or bully ally [$t(591) = -1.32$, $p > .05$, $M_{Yes} = 2.08$, $SD = .97$, $M_{No} = 2.20$, $SD = 1.02$].

A median split was used to divide participants into high versus low work experience groups to analyze the relationship between work experience in terms of length of time to bystander roles. Independent t-tests were utilized to analyze the influence of work experience to the three bystander roles. The t-tests for target ally [t (588) = -3.00, $p < .05$, $M_{high} = 3.30$, $SD = 1.01$, $M_{low} = 3.54$, $SD = .92$] and bully ally [t (588) = -3.52, $p < .05$, $M_{high} = 1.96$, $SD = .90$, $M_{low} = 2.25$, $SD = 1.04$] were statistically significant. Participants with less work experience were more likely to become target and bully allies. The t-test for silent bystander was not significant [$t(588) = -.84$, $p > .05$, $M_{high} = 2.60$, $SD = 1.12$, $M_{low} = 2.68$, $SD = 1.06$].

Conflict management styles. H7a and H7b were shown to be partially supported. H7a predicted that passive conflict management styles would be positively associated with the silent bystander role while H7b hypothesized that active conflict management styles would be negative predictors. The overall model for the stepwise regression was significant with a $F(3, 590) = 7.57$, $R^2 = .13$, $p < .001$ (See Table 10). Avoiding (7%) was the largest predictor of the silent bystander role. Integrating was the second strongest predictor accounting for 5% of the variance and was negatively related to silent bystander role. Surprisingly, dominating was a positive predictor of silent bystander role, but it only accounted for 1% of the variance.

H8a hypothesized that the passive conflict management style of avoiding would be negatively associated with the bully ally and target ally roles while H8b hypothesized that the passive conflict management style of obliging would be positively associated with bully ally role and negatively associated with the target ally role. H8c hypothesized that active conflict

management styles would be positively associated with bully ally and target roles. The stepwise multiple linear regression for target ally was statistically significant $F(3, 590) = 5.11$, $R^2 = .08$, $p < .05$ with integrating contributing 5% of the variance in predicting target allies followed by dominating (2%) and avoiding (1%). H8a and H8c were confirmed but not H8b as obliging did not enter into model. The stepwise multiple regression for bully ally was statistically significant $F(2, 593) = 40.60$, $R^2 = .13$, $p < .05$ with dominating being positively related to bully ally contributing (7%) of the variance followed by integrating (6%) which was negatively related to bully ally. H8a and H8b were not confirmed for bully ally while H8c was partially confirmed (See Table 10).

Table 10

Stepwise Regression for Bystander Role: Full-time Employees

		R^2	R^2 Change	β	t
Silent Bystander					
	Avoiding	.07	.07	.25	6.63
	Integrating	.12	.05	-.24	-6.18
	Dominating	.13	.01	.11	2.75
Target Ally					
	Integrating	.05	.05	.12	4.85
	Dominating	.07	.02	.12	3.08
	Avoiding	.08	.01	-.09	-2.26
Bully Ally					
	Dominating	.07	.07	.33	8.30
	Integrating	.13	.06	-.25	-6.37

$N = 593$

Sensemaking

The purpose of RQ4 was to identify how full-time employees engaged in sense-making as they interpreted and responded to workplace bullying. Four questions were answered by participants in the thematic analyses: (1) What would you do?, (2) What information would you seek?, (3) What factors influenced your decision? and (4) Define workplace bullying in your

own words. Similar to Chapter 4, the responses were categorized into themes with frequency counts noting that responses can be categorized into multiple themes.

What would you do? The following themes were generated for the open-ended question of "What would you do?" In Table 11, examples of the responses are provided along with the number of responses as percentages of the total are found. The themes below are explained in descending order of frequency.

1. *Report behavior (n* = 156*)*. This theme represents behaviors associated with the participant reporting workplace bullying. Participant responses constituting this theme highlight reporting the situation to HR or to employees in position of power above the manager.
2. *Not engage (n* = 134*)*. Responses reflecting this theme highlight participants not wanting to take action or get involved in the situation. This theme does not necessarily mean that the participant disengages with the bullying all together. The participant is just choosing to not take any intervening actions. This theme also correlates to the bystander role of silent bystander though the motivation for staying silent varies. Some participants report not getting involved in order to reduce the likelihood of getting fired or getting bullied by the manager. Other participants report wanting to save face in the organization and manage their reputation, and some just do not feel the situation deserves their attention.
3. *Investigate and gather information (n = 124)*. This theme represents behaviors associated with information gathering by the participant. The purpose of information gathering can be to inform decisions on what to do or to simply learn more about the situation.
4. *Engage target (n* = 97*)*. This theme represents behaviors associated with the participant wanting to communicate with the coworker being bullied. Participant responses coded

into this theme describe wanting to interact or engage with the employee with the primary purpose of providing some kind of verbal or emotional support.

5. *Seek help from others (n* = 76*)*. This theme represents behaviors associated with the participant wanting to seek help or advice from others. Participants are interested in and want to follow the advice or actions of party's not directly involved with the bullying situation.
6. *Engage manager (n* = 60*)*. This theme represents behaviors associated with the participant communicating with the manager by confronting them or talking to them in general. Participants in this theme are willing to discuss the situation with the manager. Specifically, participants want to discuss the bullying behavior they have witnessed with the manager.

Table 11

"What would you do?": Full-time Employees

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
Report behavior	156	26.1	"I would report the manager to HR" "I would go to HR or an ombudsman and try to anonymously report the behavior."
Not engage	134	22.4	"Until I had worked there longer, and maybe talked with some other co-workers, I would keep my mouth shut." "I would probably stay out of it so that I don't cause myself problems with my manager."
Investigate and gather information	124	20.8	"I would find out what was going on behind the scenes. I'd be very concerned"

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
			"I would try and get more information not just by asking little questions but by watching everything that's going on around me. I think more times than not you can find out a lot by watching people and how they act. I wouldn't want to jeopardize my new position by doing something before I have all the information."
Engage target	97	16.2	"I would talk to my team member and ask him or her how she deals with, how often it happens, has she reported it, would she like me to report or be a witness to what I saw and heard." "Openly be friendly and supportive to the victim"
Seek help from others	76	12.9	"I would seek out the advice of others who has been in the company for longer than myself." "I would seek help from someone I trusted."
Engage manager	60	10.0	"Talk to the manager directly about the situation and gauge their reaction" "I would tell the boss to be nicer to people"

What information would you seek? This question references what additional information full-time employees wanted to know regarding the bullying situation. The themes are presented in descending order based on the number of responses found within a theme. Table 12 provides examples for each theme.

1. *General information on the situation and advice (n* = 205*)*. Responses comprising this theme highlight the need for more information about both parties (manager and victim) and their relationship. Participants wanted to learn more about their relationship and

relational history, gathered additional information that would help them interpret the behaviors, and sought advice about what to do.

2. *Information about the manager (*n = 182*)*. Responses in this theme suggest participants specifically want more information about the manager. Knowing more about who the manager was and how the manager generally behaves was viewed as important to know. The information desired in this theme is based on better understanding the managers' normal behavior in the workplace. It was also important to know the manager's history of fostering healthy or unhealthy professional relationships with employees.
3. *Reporting and resolving the issue (n =* 83*)*. Responses in this theme highlight participants wanting additional information on how to report the situation. Participants were not all seeking ways on how to directly report, but generally wanted to understand more about the reporting process. Participants wanted to know how to report anonymously as well as learn what their options were for reporting. Some participants did not want to report but wanted to learn how they can help the parties involved in the situation. Additionally, the participants want to seek information on how to resolve the issue.
4. *Information about the target (n =*55*)*. Responses in this theme center on participants feeling they needed more information about the target of the bullying. The respondents wanted to assess the feelings of the target and determine if reporting the behavior is necessary. Participants also wanted information on whether or not the target was at fault for being bullied.
5. *No information or undecided (n =* 47*)*. Responses in this theme indicated that participants did not feel a need to seek additional information or were unsure regarding what information they needed to seek.

Table 12

"What information would you seek?": Full-time Employees

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
General information on the situation and advice	205	34.4	"The nature of their relationship, the length of this behavior, the history of the two involved, the incidents that led up to this." "I would want to know if this is something that has been going on for a long time, if something is going on with the manager recently, and if something happened in the past between this manager and co-worker."
Information on the manager	182	30.5	"I would like to know through both watching and asking other employees if this was typical behavior from the manager to some people." "I would ask around if the manager has a history of behaving this way and what their relationship is like with the co-worker."
Reporting and resolving the situation	83	13.9	"How I can help resolve the problem. If I can report my manger, and how." "I would look into company ethics and policies. I would speak with someone outside the company who is well versed in handling such situations. Perhaps there is something I can do without directly confronting my boss."

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
Information on the target	55	9.2	"Is the employee being bullied unfairly? That is, are they somebody who kind of invites this on themselves? Why are they putting up with it?" "I would like to know more about the coworker to see if they deserve or can handle this type of behavior that is performed by the manager."
No information or undecided	47	7.8	"Not sure but probably wouldn't." "I don't really have this desire. I might take mental notes of what I observe, but only so I could use it for my own benefit should the manager suddenly start treating me the same way."

What factors influenced your decision? The responses in this question reference what full-time employees considered as influential factors when determining what to do in response to the bullying. Specific examples for each theme and their percentage of the total number of responses for each are presented in Table 13. The themes are listed in descending order of frequency.

1. *Risk Assessment (n* = 142*)*. Responses coded in this theme recognize that there are potential negative consequences for getting involved in the situation. Participant responses acknowledged that either supporting the target or getting involved in some way could lead to negative consequences which could revolve around their employment status, reputation, or even make them a target of subsequent bullying.

2. *Personal characteristics (n* = 120*)*. This theme highlights how participant personal characteristics influenced their decisions regarding what to do. Personal characteristics were described by participants as revolving around their sense of morals, ethics, and personality. Personality tended to focus on how their personality type would influence how they confronted others. For example, some participants described themselves as having an upfront personality type where they did not mind engaging others in a potential conflict or one that was non-confrontational.
3. *Perceptions of the bullying within the workplace (n* = 110*)*. Responses in this theme related to how participants associated bullying behavior to a workplace context. For example, some participants found that bullying in the workplace is unethical, while others found it justified if the victim deserves it. In other words, participants had varying perceptions of how to view bullying in workplace contexts.
4. *Newcomer status (n* = 103*)*. Several responses centered on participants acknowledging that their hypothetical newcomer status influenced their decisions. By taking on the role of a newcomer, full-time employees are probably still learning about the organization, its norms and the responsibilities of the job which influence how they engage bullying. Participants indicated that they felt that they may not understand the whole situation, or felt it was not their place to act on the situation since they were new. Being a newcomer also makes participants worry about their status in the organization which could influence how they engage the bullying situation.
5. *Not enough information (n* = 52*)*. Responses comprising this theme highlighted participants feeling they did not have enough information to make an informed decision. The lack of information revolved around the participant not having enough information

about the parties involved, the situation in general or that the information provided in the vignette was insufficient. For example, some participants felt that information about the why the manager bullied the target was important to know before making a decision.

6. *Past experience with bullying (n* = 41). This theme highlights how the participants' past experience with workplace bullying influenced their decisions to act. Their past experience included either being a bystander or being a target of bullying.

Table 13

"What factors influenced your decision?": Full-time Employees

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
Risk assessment	142	20.3	"Keeping my job safe and secure" "I was thinking about the consequences of me getting involved"
Personal characteristics	120	14.8	"The fact that I'm not a risk taker and don't like confrontation." "My moral responsibility drove me to seek answers and address what is happening in front of me."
Perceptions of bullying within the workplace	110	10.3	"Bullying in the workplace- especially by a superior is never okay." "This type of behavior is probably against company policy."
Newcomer status	103	9.6	"My newness at the job, not knowing the people and their history, lack of facts" Being new and not knowing the history.

			Without knowing more, I would not feel comfortable acting until I did.
Not enough information	52	8.1	“I don't want to jump the gun or hurt my position in the company. Especially without having all the information first. there could be a fairly decent reason behind this treatment.” “The amount of information I get would influence what choice I make.”
Past experience with bullying	41	8.1	“I've had experience with this sort of toxic behavior from managers and it makes me sick to see. Like described above, it's just gross behavior from supposed adults in an uneven power dynamic. It's just bullying and I hate it.” “Actually, it feels like a situation that happened to me recently at work and my experience there is what helped me make the choice in this scenario.”

Define workplace bullying. The definition of workplace bullying for full-time employees encompassed the characteristics, factors and examples of what constituted workplace bullying. Aside from the order of the themes, it is important to note that the themes below were identical to the themes found in Chapter 4. The themes are listed in descending order of frequency (see Table 14).

1. *Abuse of power (n* = 273*)*. Participant responses for this theme centered on the manager and other authorities within the organization. These definitions associated

workplace bullying to an abuse of power exercised by managers or organizational authorities that leads to the mistreatment of those without power. Participants indicate that such an abuse of power is often meant to take advantage of others.

2. *Negative behaviors inflicted onto another (n* = 210*)*. Workplace bullying was defined as the performance of negative behaviors. Participants viewed bullying as similar to the definition found in Chapter 1 which suggested that workplace bullying encompassed abuse, harassment, being disrespectful, and the general mistreatment of others. Such behaviors are typically associated with unethical behavior.
3. *Bullying with harmful intentions (n* = 92*)*. Participant responses for this theme highlighted that bullying is often associated with bullies wanting to harm the target with a specific purpose. Bullying behaviors were perceived as intentionally causing mental harm and social harm such as making the target feel alone. The behaviors were associated with making the target feel unsafe, ashamed, or belittled.

Table 14

"Define workplace bullying": Full-time Employees

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
Abuse of power	273	45.8	"Intimidation or abuse of power by somebody in a position of power to a subordinate." "When the managers or higher up people are looking down upon lower people in the workplace and being mean based on pay and hierarchy.
Negative behaviors inflicted onto another	210	35.4	"Someone being harassed or picked on or even delegated crappier assignments or things like that.

Theme	Frequency	Percent of Total	Example
			"Bullying in the workplace is the mistreatment or harassment of one or more coworkers no matter rank.
Bullying with harmful intentions	92	15.4	"Workplace bullying is the targeted harassment of an individual or individuals by a colleague or superior." "Harassing another person for personal gain or to humiliate them"

Discussion

The results of the employee sample offer insights into how full-time employees who take on the role of organizational newcomers interpret and respond to workplace bullying. The following discussion explains how findings and concepts relating to full-time employees are relevant to information seeking, bystander roles, and sensemaking.

Information seeking

The profile that emerged from the data suggests that situational variables do not drive information seeking tactics, while individual difference variables such as knowledge about bullying, motivation, and conflict management style do influence the use of information seeking tactics. No significant effects emerged for main or interaction effects due to social cost and psychological contracts regarding the use of overt, observing, or third-party tactics (H1-H4). However, individuals who had higher levels of bullying knowledge were more likely to use overt and observing information seeking tactics (RQ1) and information seeking motivation was

positively correlated with the use of overt, observing, and third-party tactics (H5). Active conflict management styles such as integrating and dominating were the strongest predictors overt, observing, and third-party information-seeking tactics while avoiding was the second strongest predictor and was positively associated with overt tactics and negatively associated with observing and third-party tactics (H6a & H6b).

Individual-level variables were stronger predictors of information seeking behavior than situational variables as social cost and psychological relationships did not influence information-seeking behavior. One possible explanation for the lack of effects due to social cost and psychological contract may be that all four conditions may be clearly and unambiguously viewed as instances of bullying. Bowes-Sperry and O'Leary-Kelly (2005) argue that workplace bullying is ambiguous often making it difficult for individuals to identify. Similarly, Cowan (2012) shows that bullying can take many forms it is often difficult making it difficult even for HR departments accurately identify it. If the bullying situation is clear and unambiguous, organizational newcomers may not perceive a need to seek out additional information. As suggested by the qualitative analysis of the question regarding potential action, once they have determined that this is a bullying episode they may view the actions they need to take as a binary choice: they can choose to follow organizational procedures or norms by reporting the situation or simply avoid engaging the situation. Full-time employees are likely to know that organizations often have clear rules regarding inappropriate behavior such as bullying and that there are rules in place to address it. As a result, if they are clear that this episode is bullying, their choice is to either engage or avoid the situation.

However, when full-time employees view a situation as ambiguous and are not sure if it counts as an instance of bullying, they may need to seek information in order to determine what

kind of situation they are experiencing and what actions to take. The qualitative analysis indicates that one possible action that organizational newcomers can take is to seek additional information to clarify the type of situation they have witnessed. Hellemans, Dal Cason and Casini (2017) found that bystanders of workplace bullying often intervene once employees "become aware of the situation and define it as one requiring action (because of its emergency); they then decide it is their responsibility to act and determine which action can (or must) be taken to help" (p.141). This suggests that when organizational newcomers are not sure of how to interpret an event, they need to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty regarding the situation so they can determine if what they witnessed is actually bullying behavior or something else. Once they have become aware of the kind of situation they have witnessed and determined it requires action, they can decide what action to take.

If a decision has been made to seek information, full-time employees may rely heavily on their individual experiences and personality to guide how they seek information. As the analysis suggests, full-time employees with higher levels of information seeking motivation use informational strategies more and knowledge and conflict management styles are associated with the use of different information seeking strategies. The positive relationship between information seeking motivation and information seeking strategy use makes intuitive sense and may be explained in light of the situation's ambiguity. As the qualitative data suggests, risk is an important determinant of what actions organizational newcomers take and when coupled with an ambiguous situation, it makes sense that organizational newcomers want to seek additional information in order to manage risk.

Bystanders

The results suggest that both situational and individual difference variables predict the adoption of particular bystander roles. Situational variables did predict bystander role as low social cost was associated with becoming a target ally, high social cost was associated with becoming a silent bystander, and strong psychological contract was associated with becoming a bully ally (RQ2). Individual difference variables also predicted bystander role (RQ3). For bullying knowledge, high knowledge participants were more likely to become target allies. Participants with higher levels of work experience were more likely to become target allies and less likely to become bully allies. Active conflict management styles were the strongest predictors of becoming a target ally (integrating, dominating) and bully ally (dominating, integrating). The passive conflict management of avoiding is the strongest predictor of becoming a silent bystander (avoiding, integrating).

The results for RQ2 showed that situational variables influenced the adoption of a particular bystander role for full-time employees in the organizational newcomer role. Social cost influenced whether participants would become target allies or silent bystanders. As discussed in Chapter 2, if a newcomer feels that there is low risk in offering support and has the motivation to provide support, then there is a stronger likelihood of becoming a target ally. Witnesses of workplace bullying may choose to become a silent bystander in order to avoid negative consequences. Even if a bystander has a strong intention and desire to support the target, if the social cost associated with supporting the target is high, this could diminish the likelihood that a bystander will provide support (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013).

RQ2 also showed that psychological contract strength influenced participants in whether they would become bully allies. Strong psychological contracts were associated with an increased likelihood of employees becoming a bully ally. Though becoming a bully ally can

occur for a variety of reasons, research has shown that strong psychological contracts with the manager often results in a stronger sense of loyalty to an organization or manager (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004; Turnley, Bolino, Lester & Bloodgood, 2003). If the employee perceives there to be a relationship where implicit promises are kept by a manger, then the loyalty to the manager may be strong. The loyalty due to the psychological contract may provide a rationale to support the manager's behaviors – either actively or passively. The employee may not see the behavior as bullying and possibly support the manager's behavior. Employees have a general idea of what implicit promises should be made with managers and organizations (Parzefall & Salin, 2010) and if these promises are kept, they may think that they are supporting the manager rather than supporting the bullying behavior.

Similar to the results in Chapter 4, becoming a target ally was found to be positively related to an individual's level of bully knowledge (RQ3). The results support the proposition that newcomers use their past experiences from their working lives to inform their actions in an organization they joined (Carr et al., 2006). Employees who have training or experience in managing bullying may be more likely to become target allies.

RQ3 also showed that the less work experience a person has the more likely they will become a bully ally and the more work experience someone has the less likely they will be a target ally. Less experience in workplace environments may lead newcomers to either intentionally or unintentionally be bully allies, because they perceive a high social cost in going against the manager and don't have the experience to find ways to mitigate the social cost. The high social cost may prompt those with less experience to be bully allies to stay safe and support the manager.

On the other hand, higher levels of work experience may thwart employees from being a target ally, because they understand the risk of intervening and the ambiguity of bullying situations. Those with higher levels of work experience may not readily feel the need to become a target ally until all the facts and information are made available. For instance, Hellemans et al. (2017) found that employees often assess whether or not a target is "deserving" of support and weigh the severity of the bullying before providing help. Those with higher levels of experience may not readily adopt target ally roles until the ambiguity has lessened and it is clear that the situation calls for their assistance (Hellemans, et al., 2017).

In terms of the mean score, the highest for bystander role was target ally, silent bystander and then bully ally. Without taking situational variables and individual differences into account, it makes sense that the target ally role would be the most likely bystander role chosen. RQ4 details more of the rationale of why bystanders opt for being a target ally – such as personal morals, ethics and wanting to help out those in need. However, as demonstrated in RQ2, characteristics of the workplace like social cost influence the bystander role. Employees may want to be a target ally, but situational and individual factors affect bystander role. The reasons for this can be due to the repercussions of intervening or not intervening that employees perceive. The vignettes presented a situation that can also be construed as the norms of the workplace, and full-time employees who have been through the entry phase of socialization may know the importance of abiding by the norms of the workplace. For example, employees may feel that if social cost is high, they may need to adopt a silent bystander role even though they want to be a target ally (Miller, 1996). The norms of the workplace matter to those who have been through the socialization process (i.e. veteran newcomers), because the employees

understand that in order to maintain their reputation and job, they need to carefully navigate the norms (Carr et al., 2006).

The results for H7 and H8 made intuitive sense when assessing the relationship of conflict management styles to bystander roles. As expected, bystanders that have avoiding conflict management styles (passive) tended to become silent bystanders while integrating styles (active) were associated with target allies. Dominating styles (active) were significant in predicting bully allies. For passive styles like avoiding, Lutgen-Sandvik (2013) found that the avoiding style is often associated with those in the silent bystander role. Silent bystanders tend to be those who enact behaviors of avoidance and withdraw from conflict (Namie & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013).

Active bystander roles like target ally and bully ally were predicted by active conflict styles including integrating and dominating styles. The combination of these two styles for both analyses for the target and bully ally suggest that the employee is trying to actively navigate the tension between pursuing optimal "win-win" goals that honor their own needs and those of others and pursuing "win-lose" goals that emphasize their own concern for self. The silent bystander role can be viewed as taking less energy as the choice is whether to engage the situation or not. The roles of target and bully ally require managing conflicting loyalties to the supervisor, the target, and oneself which would require a more active engagement with the situation.

Sensemaking

The first question of "What would you do?" suggests that the primary choice for full-time employees appears to be whether to take action by reporting the incident to human resources or not. The most frequently cited action was full-time employees taking direct action by reporting

the incident to human resources, a more indirect and potentially anonymous action. This is surprising as some research suggests that employees often see HR departments lacking in efficiency and quality (Fox & Cowan, 2015). However, full-time employees with years of experience may have stronger insight into how organizations work and may feel more comfortable reporting to HR anonymously. Almost equal in frequency to reporting the incident was to “not engage.”

In order to ascertain if intervening is possible, an increase of self-efficacy may need to occur which may come about from gathering information regarding the manager and the situation. The second question, “What information would you seek?” showed there was a generally high degree of wanting to seek information about the situation and the relationship of the parties involved – especially the manager. This matches the information seeking of veteran newcomers where employees are also valuing the need to learn more about the relationships of the new work environment and compare it to their previous experiences (Carr et al., 2006). The manager holds power and knowing more about the situation and how the manager plays a role in it may increase or decrease that self-efficacy to intervene.

For the third question, “What factors influenced your decision?” the two most significant categories involved participants: (1) assessing how intervening in the bullying situation could affect them personally and (2) the participants’ moral interpretation of the bullying. Above all else, participants tended to be worried that getting involved could result in them losing their job or suffering a professional consequence. Lutgen-Sandvik (2007) suggest that the primary motivation for bystanders is economic resources like money or keeping a job. Social cost becomes a factor due to an employee’s need to save face, not be fired, or avoid becoming a target of bullying (Lutgen-Sandvik & Fletcher, 2013). There is a perception of risk that is associated

strongly with the situation. However, some of the motivation derives from the personality and moral ethics of the employee. While some employees claimed to take action based on their personal ethics, it was generally filtered with an assessment of how risky the situation is. For full-time employees, saving face and their job was a priority that at times overshadowed their personal beliefs about the bullying situation.

Participants provided their definition of workplace bullying for the fourth question, and though the definitions directly reflect the definitions found in Chapter 1, describing abuse of power was significantly mentioned most often in the responses. Bullying in the workplace is often cited as being due to the target's position, influence, charisma or the persistence of subtle bullying over time by an employee of higher status (Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik, & Alberts, 2006). The experience of full-time employees show that the participants are assessing how their response correlates to the workplace environment not just themselves.

Summary

Chapter 5 presented the results for the full-time employee sample. Situational factors (social cost and psychological contracts) had no significant effects on information seeking tactics. However, social cost and psychological contracts were influential in participants becoming a target ally, silent bystander or bully ally. Conflict management styles were significant predictors of both information seeking tactic and bystander role. Dominating styles held a strong relationship to overt tactics while integrating styles held a strong relationship to observing and third-party tactics. ANOVA analyses showed that situational variables did impact chosen bystander roles. Individual differences differed in significance, but notable findings suggest that work experience does play a small role as well as self-perceived knowledge of workplace bullying. Furthermore, passive conflict styles related to passive bystander roles like

silent bystanders while active conflict styles related to active bystander roles like target ally and bully ally.

A thematic analysis was conducted to analyze the responses of the four open-ended questions to determine how the full-time employees engage in sensemaking when encountering workplace bullying. Overall, full-time employees have a strong desire to report the bullying but want to be informed about situation, the characteristics of the bully and target, and possible actions moving forward. The factors that influence the decisions being made regarding action center on individual characteristics (personal characteristics and newcomer status) and organizational perceptions (risk, perceptions of bullying within the workplace). Additionally, the definitions provided by full-time employees were in line with literature-based definitions of workplace bullying.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Chapter 6 focuses on interpreting the results presented in Chapters 4 and 5 with an emphasis on reviewing the significant similarities and differences of the college student and full-time employee sample. The chapter also covers the implications, limitations, and future research emerging from the dissertation results.

Similarities and Differences between College and Full-time Samples

The results from the two samples show significant similarities and differences. For both samples, the role of situational variables in predicting the use of information-seeking tactics was minimal, and the role of individual variables in predicting the use of information-seeking tactics and the adoption of bystander roles was much stronger. The similarities and differences between neophyte newcomers and veteran newcomers in how they seek information, adopt bystander roles, and make sense of workplace bullying may be explained by concepts such as self-efficacy, risk, and prosocial values.

Information seeking tactics

Four important similarities between the college-student and full-time employee sample emerged. First, the use of overt, observe and third-party information seeking tactics were not generally influenced by situational variables. Miller's (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Miller, 1996) research regarding organizational newcomers and the use of information seeking tactics suggest that the social cost associated with information should influence an organizational newcomer's use of information seeking tactics. However, no main or interaction effects for social cost or psychological contract were found to influence the use of information-seeking strategies for either sample. College student use of information-seeking tactics may not be influenced by

situational factors, because their self-efficacy is high. The literature suggests that neophyte newcomers exhibit high levels of self-efficacy in communicating what they feel is necessary, regardless of the climate and norms of the organization (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Kuron, Lyons, Schweitzer & Ng, 2015).

As with most veteran newcomers, past experience and knowledge can be a large determinant in the behaviors a newcomer exhibits in an organization (Carr et al., 2006). Their previous experiences may provide a set of expectations where full-time employees perceive all the bullying scenarios as being highly risky, regardless of situational variations. If the act of bullying is viewed as a highly risky situation in general, the overall perception associated with an incident of bullying may diminish the influence of situational factors on information seeking. The results due to situational variables on information seeking for neophyte and veteran newcomers are the same; however, the explanation differs as the situation has little effect for neophytes given their high level of self-efficacy and for veterans it is due to the real-world knowledge that bullying situations are highly risky, regardless of situational factors.

Second, participants from both samples ranked their likely use of information seeking tactics in the same manner as they indicated they would use observing tactics most frequently, followed by third-party tactics and then overt tactics. The same order for the use of information seeking tactics suggests that both neophytes and veterans assess the risk of using particular information seeking tactics the same way. Even if the situation does not influence the use of a particular information seeking tactic, high levels of self-efficacy or perceptions of bullying incidents being highly risky, neophytes and veterans associate certain costs with the use of particular information seeking strategies. In keeping with Miller's (Miller & Jablin, 1991; Miller, 1996) logic, people are more likely to use observing and third-party tactics in situations

where the social costs are high and less likely to use direct strategies. While situational variables do not influence whether neophytes or veterans are more or less likely to use a particular tactic, they do seem to prefer indirect versus direct strategies given their relative social cost.

Third, the higher the knowledge of workplace bullying, the more likely that college students and full-time employees would engage in overt and observing information-seeking tactics. The pattern of increased use of overt and observing information-seeking tactics makes sense intuitively as their use would increase as organizational newcomers become knowledgeable about bullying, which would give them an understanding of how to use these tactics in the situation. One explanation for the lack of differences on the use of third-party tactics due to knowledge differences may be that they are perceived as being riskier to use. Asking questions of other organizational members regarding difficult situations may be risky, because an employee could be asking information from a person who is an ally of the managerial bully or could risk being perceived as incompetent or professionally inexperienced by asking for help in making sense of the situation. Involving others in the information seeking process may bring about more risk than necessary for someone trying to understand a situation of workplace bullying, particularly since bully allies can be in all levels of an organization (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013). This explanation makes particular sense for veteran newcomers as they as more aware of the risks of seeking information from third-parties. For neophyte newcomers, their high level of self-efficacy may lead them to use overt and observing tactics where they are directly in control of getting information from the involved parties as opposed to being dependent on third-party accounts of the situation.

Fourth, conflict management styles predicted the use of information-seeking tactics in similar ways except for third-party information tactics which was most strongly predicted by

obliging for college students and integrating for full-time employees. For both samples, dominating styles were the strongest predictors for overt tactics and integrating styles were the strongest predictors for observing tactics. People who prefer dominating conflict management styles may perceive less risk using a direct approach given their focus on seeking an optimal outcome for themselves and would be less hesitant to use it. People who prefer an integrating conflict management style may recognize the challenge of trying to appease all parties involved makes the situation more complex and riskier. As a result, they may want to use more covert information-seeking tactics to obtain as much information as possible to not only avoid risk to self and others, but to quietly gather information that can be subsequently used to take action.

The biggest difference between the college and full-time sample emerged for what conflict management style predicted third-party information seeking tactic. For college students, obliging was the strongest predictor for third-party information seeking tactic. For full-time employees, integrating was the strongest predictor of third-party information seeking tactics. The combination of being a neophyte newcomer and preference for an obliging conflict management style may lead them to feel they have less power and self-efficacy. As a result, this combination of factors may make college students more sensitive to the power differences between them and the manager, and in order to attain information without risk, feel they need to gather it from an outside source. On the other hand, veteran newcomers who prefer integrating styles of conflict management may be more likely to use observing tactics as they recognize creating a “win-win” situation for both parties is incredibly difficult. As a result, they need to collect as much information as they can quietly in order to determine how they might go about creating an integrative solution to the situation. However, since all parties need to be satisfied, people who view the situation as balancing multiple, potentially conflicting goals due to their preference for

an integrating conflict management style, may use more indirect tactics. When one also recognizes that full-time employees are aware that human resources can be used to address the bullying problem, veteran newcomers have a readily available pathway to use third-party tactics.

Bystander role

Both samples ordered their preference for adopting a bystander role in the same way with becoming a target ally as the most preferred bystander role followed by silent bystander and then bully ally. This outcome is actually contradictory to most research into bystander roles for workplace bullying. Research suggests that employees typically ignore, avoid or observe bullying scenarios as their primary response before intervening (O'Reilly and Aquino, 2011). However, the research also suggests that there is a strong willingness to become target allies as bystanders have moral and ethical willingness to help someone who is being bullied (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013). However, situational factors such as social cost, norms and interpretation of the situation affect the immediacy of becoming a target ally (Ng, Niven & Hoel, 2020). Lutgen-Sandvik (2006; 2013) suggest that the bystander role is a dynamic and ever changing one. For example, since bullying is often a behavior exhibited through a period of weeks, months or even years, target allies may become bully allies and silent bystanders may eventually become target allies. Given that the vignettes reference the manager, "continually crossing the line," participants are likely to have determined this is a persistent situation and move quickly to the target ally position as suggested by Lutgen-Sandvik (2006; 2013).

The results highlight that neophyte and veteran newcomers used situational cues in different ways when determining the adoption of bystander roles. Situational factors did not influence what bystander roles neophytes adopted. This could be due to a number of reasons. For example, as mentioned previously, neophyte newcomer's high level of self-efficacy may

diminish the influence of situational factors on their choice of bystander role. Closely tied to the notion of self-efficacy is the importance of morals, ethics and personality traits when college students assess what bystander role they wish to adopt. The results from RQ4 suggest that personal characteristics such as one's sense of morality and ethics is a strong factor for college students determining what to do in bullying situations. As Powers and Myers (2017) observe, college students who are undergoing vocational anticipatory socialization (VAS) are basing their behaviors on what they believe is the correct thing to do in the workplace. The college students may feel that bullying, regardless of the situation, is such a grave offense in the workplace that considering risk is not essential when it comes to being a target ally. Engaging in a bullying situation to support or defend a target may be an optimal response based on what they have learned in VAS and is based on their personal ethics.

For the full-time employee sample, situational variables did influence what bystander roles were adopted. Full-time employees who perceived: (1) a strong psychological contract with the manager tended to become bully allies, (2) a lower level of social cost tended to become target allies, and (3) a high level of social cost tended to become silent bystanders. Full-time employees, as veterans of the workplace, may be more aware of the consequences of getting involved in a bullying situation, and may also be aware of how situational factors can influence decision making given their experience (Carr et al., 2006).

The differences due to social cost align with the logic of Miller's (1996) model regarding information seeking tactics where workplace environments with high social cost deter employees from seeking information overtly due to potential risks. For bystanders, as described by Lutgen-Sandvik (2013), there is a social cost embedded with different types of bystanders. For example, workplace environments where social cost is high may cause behaviors associated with being a

target ally to result in punishment. On the other hand, workplace environments with a low social cost may provide little risk to engage in target ally behavior, as the consequences are not as apparent or real.

One of the only significant indicators for employees to become bully allies was if they held strong psychological contracts. Since psychological contracts imply that a manager keeps their implicit promises, there is a stronger sense of loyalty to an organization or manager (Dabos & Rousseau, 2004). Though the vignette stimuli did not expand on the relationship the participant had with the manager other than that they keep their promises, conditions with strong psychological contracts may influence the perceived level of trust that the full-time employee can assume exists. In RQ4, some participants reported that the manager may not be at fault for exhibiting bullying behavior since they are someone who regularly keeps promises. The responses showed that some believed the manager was not bullying or that the target deserved it, and this interpretation may result from those who felt loyal to the manager.

While the adoption of bystander roles was different for neophyte and veteran newcomer due to situational variables, the pattern of individual difference variables that predicted bystander roles was similar. For both samples, perceived knowledge of workplace bullying related to becoming a target ally, avoiding styles held the highest variance for predicting silent bystander, integrating styles held the highest variance for target ally, and dominating styles held the highest variance for bully ally.

The perceived knowledge of workplace bullying and integrating conflict management styles held a significant relationship to being a target ally. It would seem rational to assume that those who have integrating conflict management styles would want to seek optimal outcomes for everyone with consideration to ethical solutions. Since individuals using integrating styles seek

optimal outcomes for everyone, it is unlikely that a bystander would become a bully ally. Integrating styles coupled with perceived knowledge of how to manage workplace bullying puts the bystander in a position to be a target ally, but at the same time consider the needs of the other parties in conflict.

Sensemaking

RQ4 examined how college students and full-time employees made sense of the bullying situation and what actions they were willing to take upon witnessing it. Veteran and neophyte newcomers have different backgrounds, work experience, socialization experiences, and knowledge about the workplace. Based on the varying levels of socialization that each newcomer type has encountered, both groups may have different expectations on how to interpret bullying behavior, engage with the bullying, and how to gather information.

First, there was a difference in the kinds of actions that neophyte and veteran newcomers take in response to witnessing the bullying of a team member. College students prefer direct action which includes confronting the manager, supporting the target and overtly seeking information. The full-time employees were more interested in indirect action that involved either reporting the behavior to human resources, not engaging at all and learning more about the situation. Direct action is more active while indirect action is more passive. It makes sense that veteran newcomers were more likely to utilize third-party resources like human resources, because they have more knowledge about the workplace, and the role of human resources in managing workplace issues. On the other hand, neophyte newcomers may not be fully aware of the capabilities of human resources and how to utilize them due to a lack of experience. In addition to a lack of experience, neophytes may be more motivated by their strong sense morals

and personality which would encourage making direct effort to aid the situation in a manner they deem fit.

Second, the results from both samples indicated that it was important for organizational newcomers to seek information on the history and current relationship of the parties involved along with ways to resolve or report the incident. Veteran newcomers wanted more information on the situation as a whole to evaluate the relationship of the parties involved, and the norms of the workgroup. On the other hand, college students wanted more information about the manager and parties directly involved. Though the frequency of the type of information sought varied a little, both samples wanted the same information regarding the bullying. Though bullying is prevalent in organizations, it is often subtle and difficult to identify by employees (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013). As a result, seeking out information regarding the relationship between the bully and the target would be needed given the nature of the situation and is unlikely to be influenced by experience level.

Third, with some minor differences in frequency, the results from both samples demonstrated that the top factors that influenced subsequent action on how to engage the bullying were risk assessment, personal identity and workplace expectations. These factors suggest that newcomers may triangulate what they decide to do based on three relatively simple interrelated questions: (1) How risky is it?, (2) Does it reflect who I am?, and (3) What are the workplace norms? These questions make sense as it suggests perception of risk, one's personal identity, and the workplace culture which influences their decision making. It is important to note that the questions participants were asked centered on what they would do and what factors influenced that decision. The kinds of actions were not limited to information seeking and included a number of different options. This may partially explain why the results for social cost

had no effect on information seeking for newcomers, but issues of risk entered into the decision-making process. The former is a decision about how to seek information and the latter is a decision more generally about what to do such as seeking information, reporting the incident, or ignoring it.

Fourth, the definition of workplace bullying was generally the same and matched the definition of workplace bullying offered in Chapter 1. Though not a significant difference, the prevalence for abuse of power in the full-time employee sample was mentioned more frequently. The conceptual definitions of workplace bullying match well with the definitions by newcomers. College students are at least intuitively aware of what workplace bullying is even with their limited workplace experience. The results suggest there is a strong culturally shared script that clearly identifies what counts as bullying.

Future Research

There are three areas of future research: (1) information management and decision making, (2) behaviors associated with target allies and (3) predicting bully allies. One area for future research would be to investigate how bystanders engage in information management and how they use that information to make a decision as a bystander. This study investigated how situational variables influence the use of information seeking tactic. But managing information is more than simply using a particular tactic, it also involves determining what types of information to gather, the source of information, the channels that are used to collect information, and how to manage conflicting information. Moreover, examining the way that information is managed and its link to decision making is important.

Future research needs to examine the decision-making process newcomers engage in as they gather information. Though the type of information sought will be extremely contextual to

the exact situation of someone witnessing workplace bullying, neophytes and veteran newcomers may have different abilities and skill when it comes information gathering. Kirschenbaum (1992) showed that the experience of navy personnel influenced different levels of decision-making when gathering information. For example, in a series of decision-making experiments, participants who had greater knowledge and experience in the Navy had more effective information-gathering strategies than those who had less knowledge and experience. Another factor that can affect decision-making is the level of control bystanders feel they have in the organization (Ashforth & Saks, 2000). Factors such as the ones described above, can influence how bystanders engage in decision-making when it comes to gathering information. The experience of the employee and the culture can influence how information will be gathered.

A second area of future research should investigate how bystander roles are performed in interaction and how their performance is influenced by the situation. The results of the study identified what type of bystander a newcomer would become but did not examine what behaviors were associated with particular bystander roles and how those behaviors were performed. There are numerous behaviors that could be perceived as being a target ally, silent bystander and bully ally. For instance, Lutgen-Sandvik (2013) describes target allies as those who provide support to the target either by providing emotional support or actively reporting the behavior. Silent bystanders are intentionally avoiding the bullying situation or not vocalizing dissent. Bully allies are either helping the bully engage in bullying behaviors by taking part in the bullying or offering encouragement to continue the bullying.

The scope of all the bystander roles in terms of performed behaviors is quite large, and it needs to be further researched on how specific behaviors are associated with which type of bystander. Though research has already identified tactics used for different types of bystanders

(Paul et al., 2012; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2013), future research also needs to take into consideration more of the contextual factors. Researchers into workplace bullying, especially those investigating the bystander role encourage further research into how situational factors influence the kind of behavior that is performed for a particular bystander role (Hellemans, Dal Cason, & Casini, 2017). Individuals may perform a specific bystander role, but the kind of behaviors that select to perform the role may be influenced by situational factors.

A third area for future research is to identify what leads organizational newcomers to become bully allies or to provide limited support to targets. The study results identified that strong psychological contract and dominating styles of conflict management were related to bully ally roles. If we are to encourage newcomers to become target allies, it is also important to understand the mechanisms that lead newcomers to become bully allies. Lutgen-Sandvik (2013) explains that bully allies are often motivated by maintaining an appearance of "allegiance" with the bully, seeing the target as deserving of being bullied, protecting their own self-interests and maintain power within organization. Though these motivations do contribute to being bully allies, they do not take into consideration other factors such individual differences such as experience, newcomer status or even conflict management styles. If we are to prohibit individuals from becoming bully allies and creating a climate that promotes target ally behavior, we need to know what mechanisms lead individuals to become bully allies.

Practical Implications

There is a strong desire by organizations to create healthy workplaces and minimize dehumanizing and destructive practices such as workplace bullying. The results from the dissertation suggest three practical implications: (1) to develop training and anti-bullying interventions that anticipate the unique needs of both neophyte and veteran newcomers, (2) to

increase awareness and accessibility to organizational resources regarding bullying, and (3) to offer active bystander training. Both neophyte and veteran newcomers express a stronger desire to become target allies. In order to facilitate their development, organizations need to re-evaluate their entry phase training for new employees with an emphasis on communication practices that focus on anti-bullying practices.

Encourage a culture of open feedback

A striking finding from the study was that veteran newcomers who had a trusting relationship with their manager were more likely to become a bully ally. Silent bystanders and bully allies may not condone the behavior but feel obligated to support the manager or feel scared to speak out against the behavior even though they want to. This suggests a need to focus on creating an environment where bystanders feel they can speak out and provide feedback for uncertain situations like those of bullying. When managers and employees have a strong dissociation with providing feedback, criticisms, or suggestions this is what Moss and Sanchez (2004) call a "feedback gap." Feedback gaps occur when employees and managers have information to share about each other's performance, behaviors or conduct etc. but there is a strong unwillingness to share that feedback due to situational or personality factors.

It is necessary to train newcomers and managers on how to foster cultures that promote feedback and civil disagreement. Feedback-avoiding behavior can occur and employees can become hesitant to engage with their manager and vice versa. Moss and Sanchez (2004) provide several suggestions on how to close the feedback gap. One specific suggestion is for managers to create a reputation for being an active listener. This increases the likelihood that employees feel comfortable discussing issues or problems they are experiencing or observing. Even if the employee is feeling loyal to manager, if the employee feels the behavior the manager is

exhibiting is causing harm there will be a willingness to speak up and not fear consequence. Furthermore, part of this active listening needs to be coupled with meetings conducted in private. Guerin (1989) showed that feedback in the presence of others causes evaluation apprehension and can result in feedback that is not completely honest or comprehensive. Organizations and managers need to develop cultures where employees feel comfortable talking to them about a variety of issues and know that their issues will be listened to.

Improve Access to Policies and Procedures

The dissertation results suggest that neophytes and veterans who have knowledge about workplace bullying and on how to manage it were more likely to become target allies. This suggests that organizations need to take active steps to make information, in the form of policies and procedures, easily accessible to organizational newcomers. This is particularly important for neophytes as they are less likely to know about organizational policies and resources such as human resources that can help them manage bullying. One explanation for why neophytes do not report bullying using human resources or alerting a third-party to the incident may be due to not being aware of organizational policies and procedures.

One possible strategy for improving information dissemination and building knowledge regarding bullying can be to educate newcomers about the role of human resources. Improving the reputation and value of human resources in organizations may be a good start for developing open communication with newcomers and training them to identify and manage workplace bullying (Ritzman, 2016). Providing information about human resources and the services they alert newcomers to safe avenues to minimize, resolve, and prevent bullying (Fox & Cowan, 2015). This may be difficult, however, as human resources departments are often viewed negatively by employees which requires that employees trust human resources if they are to take

seriously the resources they provide (Di Pietro & Di Virgilio, 2013). Harrington, Rayner and Warren (2012) showed that the level of trust employees have for human resources influence employee willingness to encourage, follow and be informed of anti-bullying policies.

It is also likely that veterans and neophytes may differ in how well they understand organizational policies and procedures. The results showed that veteran newcomers are more willing to report bullying to human resources as a result of being more aware of organizational procedures. Neophytes on the other hand, tend to opt for more direct means of engagement with bullying such as confronting the manager, which may put them at risk. Given that neophyte newcomers gravitate toward direct individual interventions, they need to become more aware of organizational procedures and policies and how to apply them. This is not to downplay the potential benefits of direct intervention by newcomers, but to broaden the range of action they may consider for intervening.

Research has investigated workplace bullying and the role human resources has on informing and implementing bullying policies (Ritzman, 2016; Salin, 2008; Fox, & Cowan, 2015). Human resource training on policies and procedures can provide protection for employees and allow for “safer” measures of engagement when it comes to physical and emotional harm (Ford & Tetrick, 2008). More informative outlets for policies and procedures can in turn reduce the need for newcomers to question their position in organizations, the social cost of engaging in the bullying, the social cost of seeking information and the general risk of getting involved.

Provide Active Bystander Training

The research results suggest that higher levels of perceived workplace bullying knowledge and a preference for integrating conflict management styles were associated with becoming a target ally. This suggests that anti-bullying training for newcomers during the entry

phase needs to focus on building knowledge about bullying and conflict management. Newcomers can learn to engage bullying in a productive way and use their voice to make a positive difference.

The important role of training to reduce bullying is well recognized in the literature (Keashly, 2010). Leon-Perez, Notelaers and Leon-Rubio (2016) found that introducing a training intervention focused on improving conflict management helped employees of a healthcare organization engage positively with conflict by showing support, engaging with positivity, and utilizing proper channels to report conflict. Active bystander training typically focuses on teaching participants skills that can lead them to positively respond to bullying incidents and intervene safely (Scully & Rowe, 2009). For example, as part of human resources training, Bartlett and Bartlett (2011) suggest that "it is critical for them [employees] to understand how bullying is defined in the context of the workplace and the specific types of bullying that are occurring in the workplace" (p.13). Bystanders need to accurately make sense of the behaviors they are witnessing so that they can have more influence and ability to respond as target allies.

A specific method for training active bystanders is a training program called Green Dot. Normally conducted on college campuses, this active bystander training has shown to be an effective means of improving positive responses to workplace bullying, interpersonal bullying, emotional and physical violence (Coker, Fisher, Bush, Swan, Williams, Clear, & DeGue, 2015). The emphasis of Green Dot is how to be an effective active bystander in situations of conflict. Though the program is not solely focused on bullying, the training directly relates to behaviors often associated with becoming target allies. The training highlights safe strategies for bystanders to intervene such as mediating a conflict situation, reporting behavior to proper

authorities, and determining if intervention is even necessary. This type of training can help improve the self-efficacy of participants and make them feel more confident in their own ability to intervene in bullying situations. Organization should adopt models of bystander training such as Green Dot for newcomer training.

Research Limitations

There are three limitations regarding the dissertation study that need to be acknowledged. The first limitation regards the use of a role-playing method that positioned college students and full-time employees as organizational newcomers as opposed to sampling a group of actual neophyte or veteran newcomers. Participants were asked to play the role of an organizational newcomer and respond to the vignettes as opposed to sampling actual neophyte and veteran newcomers and having them completing items that tapped into their experience. One reason that no effects emerged due to social cost may be the lack of realism or impact of the vignettes. Miller (1996) used an actual sample of organizational newcomers and several elements of his proposed model were confirmed. It is important to point out that Hughes and Huby (2004) suggest that using role-playing scenarios can help avoid confirmation bias since participants are adopting a role they are not directly connected with. However, future research may address this potential limitation by sampling actual neophyte and veteran newcomers.

The second limitation is that the study did not address sequences of information seeking or the processes by which bystander roles were adopted. It is likely that newcomers may sequence their information seeking starting with low-cost strategies (e.g., observing) and then move to higher cost strategies (e.g., overt) if they do get the information they need. Similarly, one could envision individuals starting with a silent bystander role and then moving to target ally

role as they obtain more information. Sequences of information seeking tactics and shifts from one bystander role to another should be investigated.

The third limitation that needs further exploration is assessing how members of underrepresented groups engage in workplace bullying situations. For instance, the participants in both samples were predominantly white accounting for 80% in the full-time sample and 73% in college sample. Furthermore, those in traditionally underrepresented groups may face even more hurdles as they encounter bullying as newcomer bystanders. There may be more factors involved with how to engage with bullying when gender, race, sexual orientation and socioeconomic factors play a role. Statistically, those of diverse groups are more likely to be bullied such as females, persons of color, and those who are financially disadvantaged (AAUW, 2019). In interviews conducted by Tye-Williams, Carbo, D'Cruz, Hollis, Keashly, Mattice and Tracy (2020), people in disenfranchised groups often feel they have no power in the workplace to combat workplace bullying. These groups feel they must endure workplace bullying in all contexts, due to their position in society and in the workplace. In their study, it was described that the way bullies communicate were interpreted differently based on the gender and race of the bully. Participants of the dissertation offered different interpretations of the behaviors witnessed and some even said it seemed that the target deserved it. It is difficult to say if race or gender had a direct role in that interpretation, but as Tye-Williams et al. (2020) found, race and gender do play a major role in how bullying is interpreted.

Summary

The dissertation's goal was to expand the scope of research into workplace bullying by focusing on organizational newcomers who witnessed workplace bullying. Research has not examined the relationship between being an organizational newcomer and witnessing bullying.

Organizational newcomers who witness bullying are in a particularly vulnerable position within the organization as they are new to the organizations and how they respond to witnessing bullying can dramatically affect their livelihood and success at work. Bystanders wishing to intervene in workplace bullying situations put themselves at great risk of getting fired, losing status in the organization, or getting bullied. In addition to these risks, newcomers are still socializing into the organization and are learning the culture and norms and thus, are not well acquainted with the informal aspects of the workplace dynamics. When newcomers are bystanders, the situation becomes even more sensitive, and the responses to workplace bullying are even riskier.

Newcomers have a variety of backgrounds and work experiences. Some newcomers are new to the work environment and have little to no experience in the workplace or what can be called neophyte newcomers. Another newcomer type called veteran newcomers have a longer job history, greater career experience and better understanding of the socialization process and dynamics of organizations. Veteran and neophyte newcomers have different expectations of what constitutes typical behavior in an organization and expectations on how to behave in an organization. As the results of the study suggest, there are similarities and differences between newcomers regarding how they make sense of and respond to bullying.

The results indicated several important similarities and differences between neophytes and veterans. The results showed that college students and full-time employees are generally willing to become target allies, use similar types of information seeking tactics, and want more information about the situation and the parties involved in order to assess the situation and decide how to engage. While situational variables did not influence the type of bystander role neophytes assumed, veteran newcomers felt influenced by social cost and psychological contract

strengths. This makes sense in that veteran newcomers are generally more aware of the consequences their actions can have within organizations. Thus, veteran newcomers may understand how the risk of social cost can influence engagement with bullying but at the same time how a sense of loyalty to a manager can also influence bystander roles. Another key result was that those newcomers with high levels of knowledge on what to do when workplace bullying occurs were more likely to be target allies. This clearly demonstrated that those who either had previous experience or training in workplace bullying were more likely to be target allies. Furthermore, the results suggested that college students are more willing to directly engage with the bully and target while full-time employees take a more indirect route and opt to report the behavior to authorities such as the human resources department.

Organizations need to address issues of workplace bullying via training and an avenue typically forgotten is training employees early on as newcomers about the realities of workplace bullying and how to respond to it. Based on the results, newcomers generally want to help the victim but do not have adequate information on the situation. Seeking information about what to do could lead to various outcomes that can either benefit or disadvantage the newcomer. Newcomers need to be socialized better and taught the cultural and relational norms of the workplace earlier in the socialization process. Organizations need to have better and more available sources of information. Newcomers socialize into the culture of an organization and ultimately help continue the culture in both productive and destructive way. To improve the health and longevity of an organization and its members, newcomers need to be prioritized and participate in anti-bullying training. Future research needs to provide more effort into understanding the behaviors of bystander roles in workplace bullying and focus on how those

roles seek information. Additionally, it is critical to further study the factors that can predict bully allies and ultimately foster a safer work environment.

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APPENDIX A

ROCI-II Survey Instrument

The Likert-style response options for the following items ranged from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

I try to investigate an issue with my supervisor to find a solution acceptable to us.
I generally try to satisfy the needs of my supervisor.
I attempt to avoid being "put on the spot" and try to keep my conflict with my supervisor to myself.
I try to integrate my ideas with those of my supervisor to come up with a decision jointly.
I try to work with my supervisor to find solutions to a problem which satisfy our expectations.
I usually avoid open discussion of my differences with my supervisor.
I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse.
I use my influence to get my ideas accepted.
I use my authority to make a decision in my favor.
I usually accommodate the wishes of my supervisor.
I give in to the wishes of my supervisor.
I exchange accurate information with my supervisor to solve a problem together.
I usually allow concessions to my supervisor. I usually allow concessions to my supervisor.
I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks.
I negotiate with my supervisor so that a compromise can be reached.
I try to stay away from disagreement with my supervisor.
I avoid an encounter with my supervisor.
I use my expertise to make a decision in my favor.
I often go along with the suggestions of my supervisor.
I use "give and take" so that a compromise can be made.
I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue.
I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that the issues can be resolved in the best possible way.
I collaborate with my supervisor to come up with decisions acceptable to us.
I try to satisfy the expectations of my supervisor.
I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation.
I try to keep my disagreement with my supervisor to myself in order to avoid hard feelings.
I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my supervisor.
I try to work with my supervisor for a proper understanding of a problem.