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Different forms of workplace bullying involvement and its link to personality, power, social status and well-being

25th Workshop on Aggression 2021

Session: How power and status relate to aggression, victimization, and defending

Trier, 2021, November 05th

A photograph of a city street at night, showing buildings and streetlights.

Prevention of aggression and
violence among and against
youth

25th Workshop on Aggression 2021

University of Turku, Finland

Nov 4th-6th, 2021

State of the art

Groups involved in workplace bullying (I)

- Workplace bullying researchers typically assume four groups of employees (e.g., Zapf & Einarsen, 2020)
 - Uninvolved
 - Victims
 - Perpetrators
 - Victim-perpetrators
- Empirical evidence supporting these four groups is lacking so far
- Strong focus on victim perspective (Einarsen et al., 2020; Gupta et al., 2020)

State of the art

Groups involved in workplace bullying (II)

- Some studies include both perspectives (e.g., Baillien et al., 2016; Fernández-del-Río et al., 2021; Linton & Power, 2013; Sischka et al., 2021)
 - Variable-centered approach (victimization and perpetration as separate variables)
 - Tell us little about the interplay of victimization and perpetration
- Some studies employed a person-centered approach (e.g., LCA) but included only victim-related indicators (e.g., Hewett et al., 2018)
- Some older studies used the self-labelling method to identify the four groups (e.g., Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007)
 - Establish groups that match this configuration
 - Subjective, low reliability, low information content (e.g., Nielsen et al., 2020)

State of the art

Importance of identifying workplace bullying groups

- Bully-victim group in school bullying research showed unique relations to other variables (Chung & Lee, 2020; Cook et al., 2010)
- Variable-centered approaches have led to some debated results ("personality traits of workplace bullies are often shared by their victims"; Linton & Power, 2013)

Aims of the study

- Identification and investigation of different workplace bullying groups with mixture modeling (latent class analysis, latent class structure analysis)
- Explore relationship to other variables (personality, power, social status, well-being)

Survey design and participants

- Survey design
 - Amazon MTurk sample ($n = 1,632$)
 - Removed from analysis
 - non-employed ($n = 42$)
 - insufficient effort responding ($n = 92$)
 - missing on workplace bullying items ($n = 6$)
- Effective sample ($n = 1,492$)
 - 53.8% females, ($n = 802$)
 - Age: 19 to 77 years ($M = 40.2$, $SD = 10.7$)
 - Wide range of occupations

Method

Measures (I)

Scale	# Items	Reference	Rel. (ω)	Example item	Answer categories	
Workplace bullying exposure (WBE)	9	Notelaers et al., 2019	-	Being ignored or excluded.	1 (= <i>never</i>)	5 (= <i>daily</i>)*
Workplace bullying perpetration (WBP)	9	Notelaers et al., 2019 (adapted)	-	Ignoring or excluding others.	1 (= <i>never</i>)	5 (= <i>daily</i>)*
Power	6	Yu et al., 2019	.92	I can provide rewards to others at my own discretion.	1 (= <i>strongly disagree</i>)	7 (= <i>strongly agree</i>)
Status	6	Yu et al., 2019	.94	People look up to me because I am good at my work.	1 (= <i>strongly disagree</i>)	7 (= <i>strongly agree</i>)
Dominance	4	Alden et al., 1990	.78	I argue with other people too much.	1 (= <i>not at all</i>)	5 (= <i>very much</i>)
Relatedness	6	Longo et al., 2016	.67	I feel I'm perfectly integrated into a group.	1 (= <i>strongly disagree</i>)	7 (= <i>strongly agree</i>)
Trait aggression	12	Webster et al., 2014	.76	I have trouble controlling my temper.	1 (= <i>extremely uncharacteristic of me</i>)	5 (= <i>extremely characteristic of me</i>)

Notes. Mean scores were employed for scale scoring. * Answer categories 4 (= *weekly*) and 5 (= *daily*) were aggregated due to their low frequency and to reduce convergence problems.

Method

Measures (II)

Scale	# Items	Reference	Rel. (ω)	Example item	Answer categories	
BFI Agreeableness	4	Donnellan et al., 2006	.82	I am not really interested in others. (r)	1 (= very inaccurate)	5 (= very accurate)
BFI Conscientiousn.	4	Donnellan et al., 2006	.77	I like order.	1 (= very inaccurate)	5 (= very accurate)
BFI Extraversion	4	Donnellan et al., 2006	.86	I am the life of the party.	1 (= very inaccurate)	5 (= very accurate)
BFI Neuroticism	4	Donnellan et al., 2006	.80	I have frequent mood swings.	1 (= very inaccurate)	5 (= very accurate)
BFI Openness	4	Donnellan et al., 2006	.78	I have a vivid imagination.	1 (= very inaccurate)	5 (= very accurate)
Work-related burnout	7	Kristensen et al., 2005	.90	Is your work emotionally exhausting?	1 (= never)	5 (= always)
Vigor	3	Schaufeli et al., 2006	.91	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	1 (= never)	7 (= always)

Notes. Mean scores were employed for scale scoring.

Statistical analyses

- 1. Step: Latent class analysis
 - Workplace bullying exposure and perpetration items as indicators
 - MLR estimator / 5,000 random start values / 1,000 iterations
 - AIC, CAIC, BIC, SABIC
 - Lo-Mendell-Rubin likelihood ratio test (LMR-LRT)
 - Bayes factor (BF) and approximate correct model probability (cmP)
 - Additional conditions: Class interpretability, relative class size >5%
- 2. Step: Latent class structure analysis
 - Three-step procedure (e.g., Nylund-Gibson et al., 2014)
 - → shifting of class size
 - → latent classes no longer comparable
 - Mean comparisons based on most likely class membership

Results

Latent class solution (I)

Fit indices suggested different class solutions.
Thus, 2-7 classes were inspected in greater detail.

Table 1. Latent class analysis models fit statistics.

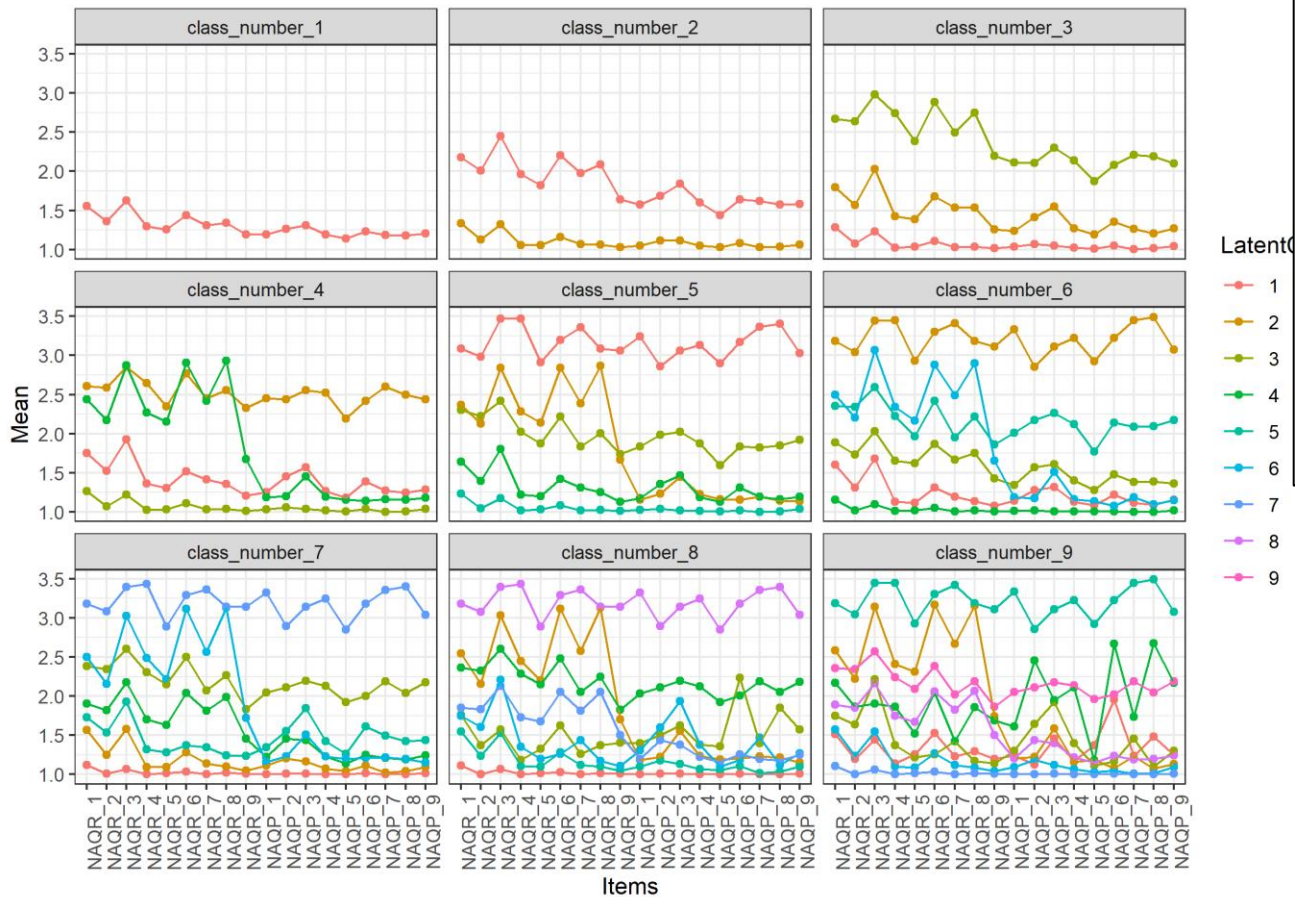
K	LL	#FP	Scaling	AIC	CAIC	BIC	SABIC	AWE	LMR-LRT (p)	BF	cmP	Entropy
1	-17499	54	1.000	35106	35110	35393	35221	35474	NA	0.000	0.000	NA
2	-14678	109	1.094	29575	29592	30154	29807	30317	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.926
3	-13974	164	1.118	28276	28317	29147	28626	29393	0.802	0.000	0.000	0.908
4	-13659	219	1.071	27756	27832	28919	28223	29247	0.829	0.000	0.000	0.917
5	-13439	274	1.139	27426	27550	28881	28010	29292	0.762	150.000	1.000	0.897
6	-13289	329	1.064	27235	27422	28981	27936	29475	0.760	150.000	0.000	0.883
7	-13171	384	1.076	27109	27376	29147	27928	29723	0.760	150.000	0.000	0.859
8	-13078	439	1.057	27033	27401	29364	27969	30022	0.762	150.000	0.000	0.863
9	-12998	494	1.058	26984	27474	29606	28037	30347	0.761	NA	0.000	0.861

Notes. K = number of classes; LL = log-likelihood; #FP = Number of free parameters; Scaling = Scaling factor associated with MLR loglikelihood estimates; AIC = Akaike Information Criterion; CAIC = Consistent AIC; BIC = Bayesian Information Criterion; SABIC = Sample-size adjusted BIC; AWE = approximate weight of evidence; BF = Bayes factor; cmP = approximate correct model probability; LMR = Adjusted Lo-Mendel-Rubin likelihood ratio test. Bolded values indicate best fit for each respective statistic.

Results

Latent class solution (II)

Figure 1. Profile plots for different class solutions.



Qualitatively different classes until 4-class solution.

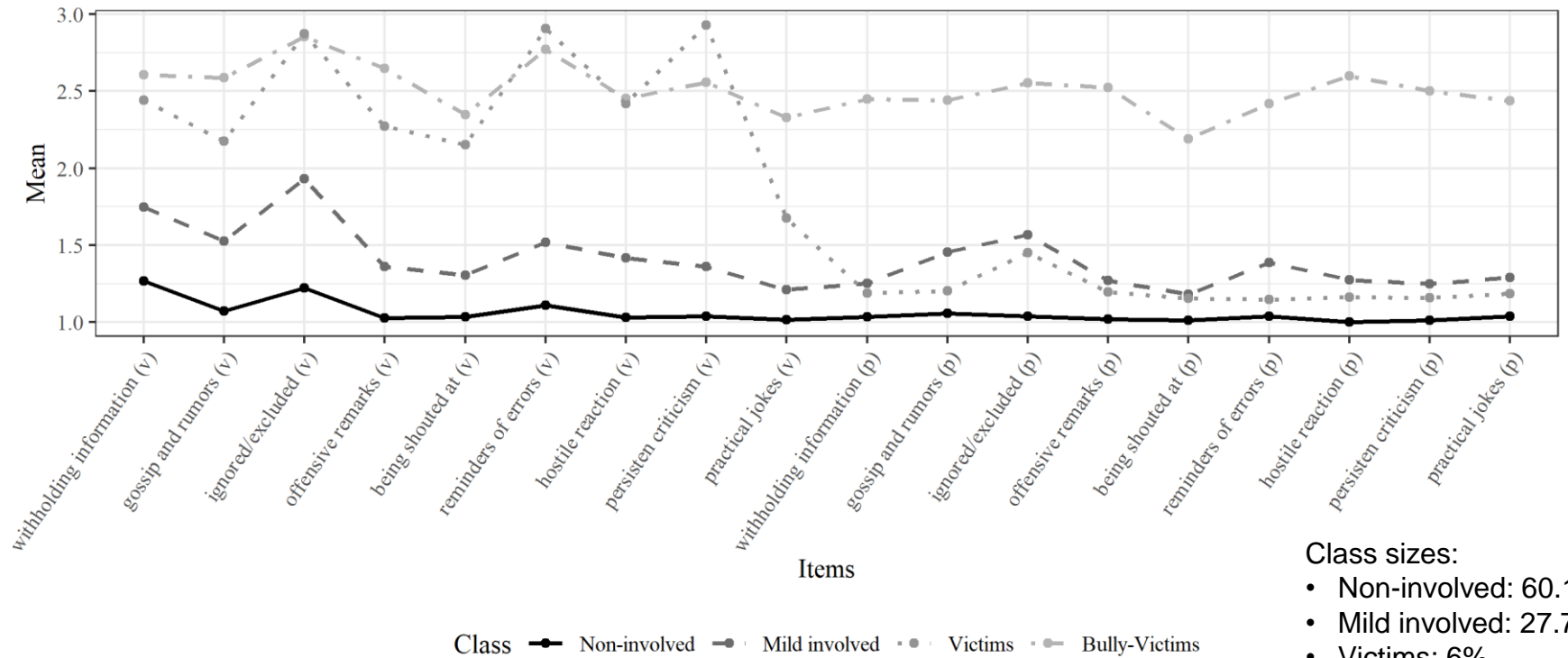
Further added classes:

- only differences in the absolute level of the indicators (quantitative differences)
- not in their shape (qualitative differences)

Results

Latent class solution (III)

Figure 2. Profile plot of the 4-class solution.



Class sizes:
 • Non-involved: 60.1%
 • Mild involved: 27.7%
 • Victims: 6%
 • Bully-victims: 6.2%

Results

Latent class solution (III)

Table 2. Posterior Classification Probabilities for Most Likely Latent Class Membership (Row) by Latent Class (Column).

Class	1	2	3	4
(1) Non-involved	.977	.022	.001	.000
(2) Mild involved	.077	.908	.010	.005
(3) Victims	.002	.062	.929	.007
(4) Bully victims	.000	.019	.006	.974

High entropy and high posterior classification probabilities justify the mean comparisons based on most likely class membership (Clark & Muthén, 2009).

Results

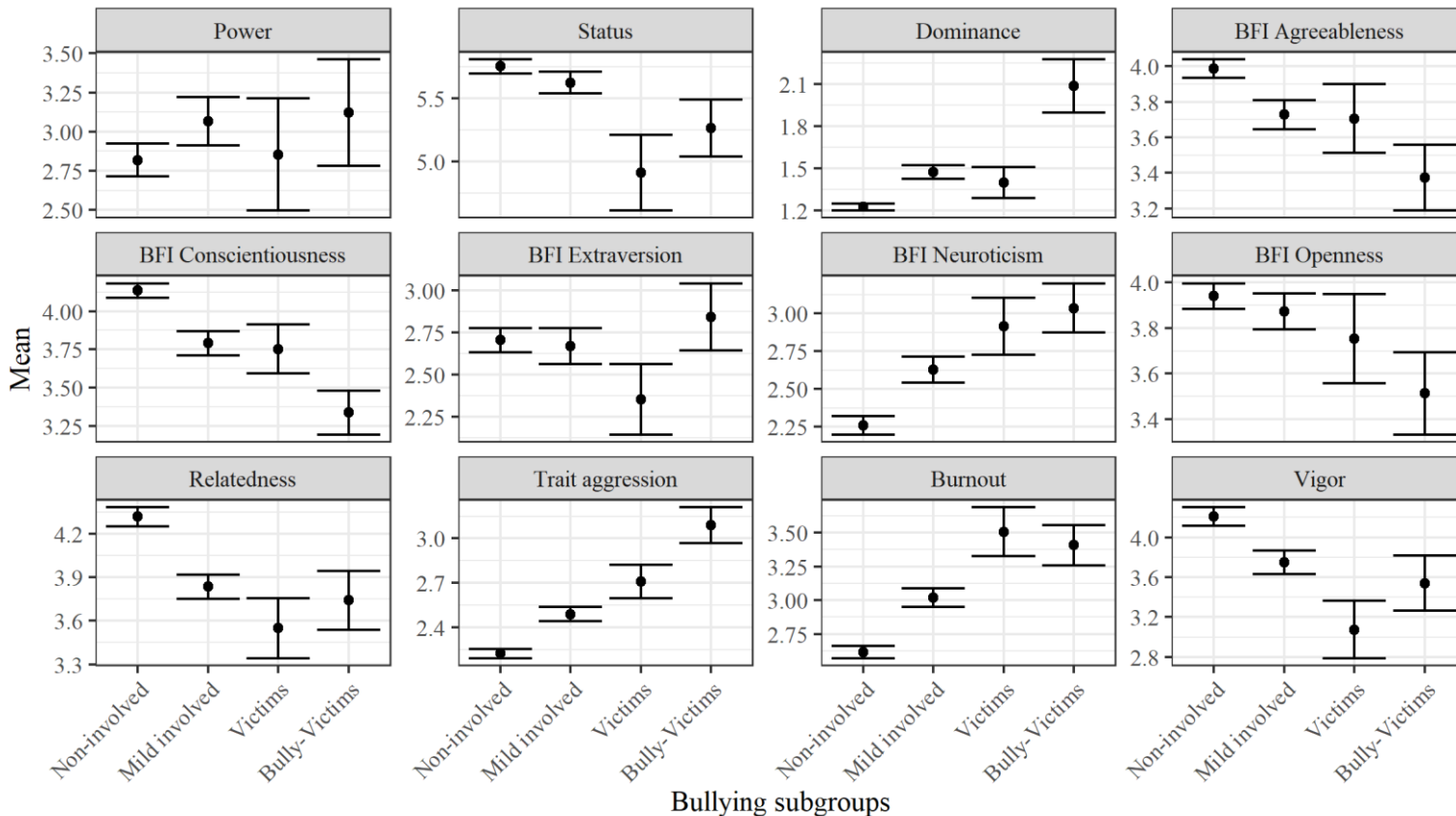
Compared to Victims, Bully-Victims score

- higher on Dominance, Extraversion, and Trait aggression
- lower on Agreeableness and Conscientiousness

Comparing any of the bullying groups with Non-involved, we see differences for every outcome variable.

Association between latent classes and different outcomes

Figure 3. Associations between latent class membership and the outcomes.



Notes. Mean comparison with 95% confidence intervals.

Discussion

Summary & implications

- The study revealed some noteworthy findings
 - (a) Workplace bullying groups showed unique links to personality, power, social status and well-being
 - → WB research should include the perpetrator perspective to get a better picture
 - → Victims and bully-victims show unique personality profiles
 - → The dominant victim perspective in WB research mixes two different groups
 - (b) No pure perpetrator group was identified
 - Aggression always leads to a certain level of counter-aggression
→ pure perpetrators are (very) rare (Olivier et al., 2021)
 - Social desirability effect
 - Perpetrators have wrong perceptions regarding their behavior
 - → Supports the theory that workplace bullying occurs due to an escalating conflict (Einarsen et al., 2020)

Discussion

Study strengths, limitations, and outlook

- Strength: Large sample size
- Limitations:
 - Only self-reports
 - Cross-sectional data
- Outlook:
 - Testing generalizability and prevalence of these classes across different (sub)populations
 - Longitudinal studies (test predictive validity of WB groups)



Thank you for your attention!

Any questions?

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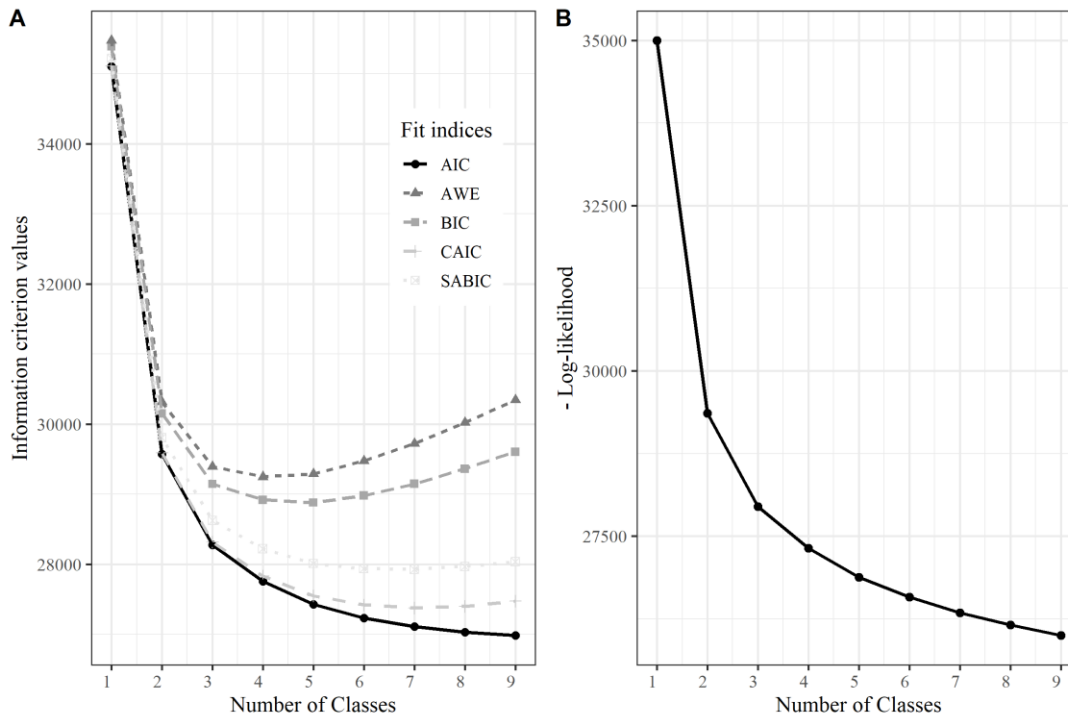


Appendix

Results

Latent class solution (II)

Figure 1. Plot of information criteria and log-likelihood values.



Results

Latent class solution (III)

Figure 2. Conditional bar plots.

