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Lived experiences of workplace bullying among public school teachers: Impacts and coping mechanisms

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Abstract

Aim: This study aimed to explore the manifestations of workplace bullying experienced by public school teachers, examine its psychological, social, physical, emotional, and work-related impacts, and identify the coping mechanisms used by affected teachers to manage and respond to their experiences.

Methodology: This study employed Husserlian Transcendental Descriptive Phenomenology to examine the lived experiences of teachers who encountered workplace bullying in public schools. Using purposive sampling, five permanent public school teachers from the Schools Division of Aklan, Philippines, participated in in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological data analysis framework.

Results: workplace bullying experienced by public school teachers: lived meanings of public verbal disparagement and professional humiliation; lived meanings of intimidation, threat, and psychological control; cyberbullying through official communication platforms; and lived meanings of perceived career obstruction and work-related bullying involving restricted professional opportunities, removal of responsibilities, and retaliatory task assignments. Participants described workplace bullying as negatively affecting their psychological, social, physical, emotional, and work-related well-being. Participants coped through self-improvement, pursuit of further education, family and peer support, cognitive reframing, and religious coping. However, these individual coping strategies provided only partial relief, while sustained recovery and professional well-being remained associated with supportive organizational conditions and access to safer work environments.

Conclusion: The participants in this study described experiences of workplace bullying that they perceived as extending beyond interpersonal conflict and involving the exercise of positional or administrative authority within their specific professional contexts. Although the participants described using various coping strategies, including self-improvement, social support, cognitive reframing, and religious coping, to manage their experiences, individual responses alone may not adequately address the long-term effects of workplace bullying. Educational institutions may strengthen teacher protection through responsive policies, accessible and independent grievance mechanisms, transparent performance evaluation processes, and supportive organizational interventions. These measures may contribute to safer work environments and promote teacher well-being and professional effectiveness.

Keywords: workplace bullying, descriptive phenomenology, teacher well-being, coping mechanisms

INTRODUCTION

Workplace bullying has emerged as a pervasive occupational hazard within the global education sector, frequently surpassing general corporate rates of harassment due to the unique hierarchical structures of academic institutions (Calitz, 2022; Workplace Bullying Institute, 2024). Research highlights that teachers are exceptionally vulnerable to persistent mistreatment which manifests as administrative overreach, work-related perceived obstruction of opportunities, social exclusion, and verbal perceived workplace tension (Khairallah et al., 2023; Al Qubelat et al., 2025). Issues involving school leadership practices and teachers' opportunities for career advancement further underscore the importance of examining how administrative practices may shape teachers' professional experiences

(Bravo, 2026). Wang (2026) suggests that educational bullying is rarely isolated interpersonal friction; rather, it is a structurally embedded process fueled by power imbalances, opaque governance practices, and toxic institutional cultures. Cross-national studies have reported associations between workplace bullying and adverse outcomes related to teacher retention, professional commitment, instructional delivery, and overall school climate. While international literature extensively maps administrative or vertical bullying—where supervisors may use performance evaluations and workload assignments in ways that teachers perceive as disadvantageous interventions and policy responses remain unevenly implemented, leaving teachers globally exposed to psychological distress and professional attrition.

Within the Philippine educational landscape, these global dynamics intersect with unique bureaucratic structures, hierarchical public school systems, and distinct administrative relationships. Public school teachers operating under the Department of Education (DepEd) navigate complex organizational environments where professional relationships with school heads and supervisors heavily influence daily job security and well-being. Teacher involvement in school-wide decision-making is likewise an important dimension of the relationship between teachers and school leadership, as participation in organizational processes may shape teachers' professional experiences within public schools (Lugasan et al., 2026). Although DepEd maintains civil service guidelines and administrative grievance mechanisms, teacher welfare and professional protections are frequently tested by heavy administrative burdens, centralized management, and opaque evaluation practices. Previous studies have reported associations between workplace bullying and reduced teacher morale. Despite growing professional discourse on educator stress, empirical documentation of institutional bullying within the Philippine public school system remains sparse, highlighting an urgent need to examine how international phenomena manifest locally.

Focusing on public school teachers across the Districts of Kalibo under the Schools Division of Aklan, Philippines, this study addresses a vital empirical void. While systemic pressures affect educators nationwide, the specific lived experiences of public school teachers in Kalibo remain empirically underexplored within academic literature. Investigating this specific municipal setting is essential because its organizational structures reflect the broader realities of Philippine public education—characterized by close-knit professional communities, institutional accountability frameworks, and distinct administrative hierarchies. Rather than assuming widespread provocation prior to investigation, this study recognizes that the localized voices, coping strategies, and multidimensional challenges faced by teachers in Kalibo have not been persistently documented. Grounding the research in this specific locale allows for a granular examination of how local school climate, leadership practices, and professional relationships shape teacher well-being.

Addressing workplace bullying carries profound implications across four major pillars of educational systems. Mitigating psychological distress, emotional exhaustion, and burnout directly protects lesson preparation, classroom delivery, teacher-student interactions, and overall instructional quality. Furthermore, the findings provide critical insights into ethical leadership, organizational justice, supervisory accountability, and transparent evaluation practices within public schools. The manner in which school administrators provide feedback may also be relevant to teachers' work motivation and professional experiences (Alejandre, 2026). Uncovering adaptive coping paths and support resources informs peer mentoring, professional help-seeking, and resilience-building programs, while empirical evidence strengthens institutional anti-harassment policies, refines local grievance procedures, and guides directed efforts toward teacher welfare programs.

Existing scholarship remains largely diagnostic, heavily prioritizing prevalence measurement, general definitions, and corporate or higher education frameworks over actionable, survivor-led solutions for public school educators (Bukhari & Akhter, 2022). While prior studies establish that bullying occurs, they offer a critical shortage of granular, multidimensional data tracking how hostile environments have been associated with declines in physical well-being, cognitive focus, and classroom instruction. Furthermore, current literature provides little insight into the specific navigation paths utilized by teacher-participants. The present study breaks new ground by shifting the focus from mere prevalence to a holistic, survivor-centric investigation. Rather than treating teachers as passive subjects of organizational stress, this research repeatedly categorizes the types of bullying experienced, maps its multidimensional impacts, and uncovers actionable coping strategies from the perspectives of affected educators. By contextualizing these dynamics within the Philippine public school setting of Aklan, this study bridges the divide between theoretical harassment research and prescriptive, real-world educational reform.



Review of Related Literature and Studies

Conceptualizations and Definitions of Workplace Bullying

Workplace bullying is commonly characterized as persistent, unwelcome conduct that demeans, intimidates, humiliates, or challenges an employee and has been associated with adverse outcomes related to health, dignity, and performance (Calitz, 2022). Nielsen et al. (2024) and Galanis et al. (2024) expand this by defining it as repeated exposure to negative acts—such as social exclusion, verbal mistreatment, and psychological mistreatment—where participants in the study face an inherent inability to defend themselves. While general organizational literature frames these behaviors as interpersonal friction, recent educational scholarship suggests that bullying in schools operates as a structurally embedded organizational process (Wang, 2026). Rather than isolated incidents, teacher experiences of bullying manifest through systemic administrative overreach, excessive workload assignments, and the reported misuse of supervisory authority (Al Qubelat et al., 2025; Bukhari & Akhter, 2022).

Power Imbalances and Supervisory Mistreatment in Educational Settings

A defining mechanism of workplace bullying is its close alignment with institutional hierarchies and power imbalances. Broader workplace surveys indicate that supervisors and managers act as primary perpetrators in the majority of cases (Workplace Bullying Institute, 2024). Within educational institutions, this vertical bullying takes a distinct form, as school heads, principals, and district administrators wield considerable control over teacher evaluations, teaching assignments, and professional mobility. Recent studies confirm actions of supervisors that participants regarded as unfair in schools frequently involves work-related obstruction of professional opportunities—such as withholding crucial information, imposing excessive monitoring, and creating hostile environments that target specific educators (Al Qubelat et al., 2025; Wang, 2026). While healthcare and corporate studies highlight similar hierarchical pressures (Galanis et al., 2024), educational research emphasizes that supervisory mistreatment has been reported as a factor associated with poorer school climate and concerns regarding administrative accountability.

Multidimensional Consequences on Teacher Well-Being and Institutional Functioning

The fallout of workplace bullying extends deep into employee performance and institutional health. General organizational studies report associations between workplace bullying, reduced individual output, and lower organizational loyalty (Oduño-Saka et al., 2023; Mousa, 2021). In educational contexts, these impacts intensify, directly affecting teacher well-being, emotional regulation, and professional commitment (Bukhari & Akhter, 2022). Keashly (2021) reported that institutional bullying in academic settings has been associated with lower employee wellness, diminished teaching quality, disruption of departmental operations, and challenges in student learning conditions. Furthermore, the emotional distress of bullying extends beyond direct participants in the study; recent literature highlights that witnesses to workplace bullying suffer parallel psychological distress, contributing to a toxic institutional atmosphere and heightened teacher attrition across school systems (Nielsen et al., 2024).

Methodological Limitations and Coping Strategies in Existing Scholarship

Despite robust documentation of the prevalence and adverse consequences of workplace bullying across corporate, healthcare, and higher education settings, existing literature exhibits critical methodological and thematic limitations. Previous studies remain predominantly diagnostic, relying heavily on quantitative prevalence measurements and cross-sectional designs that treat teachers as passive subjects of organizational stress. There is a marked shortage of granular, qualitative investigations examining how school participants described navigating these hostile environments firsthand, while current research extensively catalogs negative impacts, it offers limited insight into the survivor-led coping mechanisms and adaptive navigation paths utilized by teacher-participants. Research examining teachers' experiences and adaptation further supports the importance of understanding how educators adjust to and navigate challenging professional contexts (Ochoa, 2026). Methodologically, prior research rarely employs a phenomenological lens to capture the lived realities of educators within localized public school frameworks, particularly in developing national contexts.

Synthesis and Research Gap

Although previous studies have documented the prevalence and adverse consequences of workplace bullying across corporate and higher education settings, limited research has examined the lived experiences of public school teachers in the Philippine context, particularly the ways in which workplace bullying affects multiple dimensions of teacher well-being and professional functioning and how affected teachers develop coping strategies. While corporate

and healthcare literature establishes the structural roots of supervisory perceived maltreatment (Calitz, 2022; Workplace Bullying Institute, 2024; Galanis et al., 2024), and emerging educational studies outline teacher experiences of bullying (Bukhari & Akhter, 2022; Al Qubelat et al., 2025; Wang, 2026), a significant knowledge gap persists regarding how these dynamics operate within the bureaucratic and close-knit structures of Philippine public schools. Existing scholarship lacks context-specific inquiries into how localized school climates and administrative relationships shape teacher endurance. This phenomenological study addresses this gap by examining teachers' lived experiences and identifying implications for educational leadership, teacher welfare, and supportive school environments.

Theoretical Framework

This study is theoretically grounded in the Transcendental Descriptive Phenomenology established by Edmund Husserl. Husserl's philosophy posits that human consciousness is inherently intentional—always directed toward an object, event, or experience—and that true knowledge of any phenomenon is rooted in the "lived experience" (Erlebnis) of the conscious individual within their immediate, pre-reflective reality. Unlike traditional empirical approaches that rely on external variables or pre-defined hypotheses to measure behavior, Husserlian phenomenology asserts that a phenomenon must be examined directly as it presents itself to human consciousness. Rather than seeking merely to explain why workplace bullying occurs through external organizational models, this theoretical lens guides the research to purely capture, articulate, and describe the universal structure or "essence" (eidōs) of workplace bullying as it is directly perceived, lived, and navigated by public school teachers.

Husserlian phenomenology is uniquely appropriate for this study because workplace bullying is a deeply personal, subjective, and psychologically complex violation whose true impact cannot be fully captured through quantitative metrics alone. To understand how participants described, endure, and navigate institutional negative interaction, the research must access the inner landscape of the educator's lived reality.

Conceptual Framework

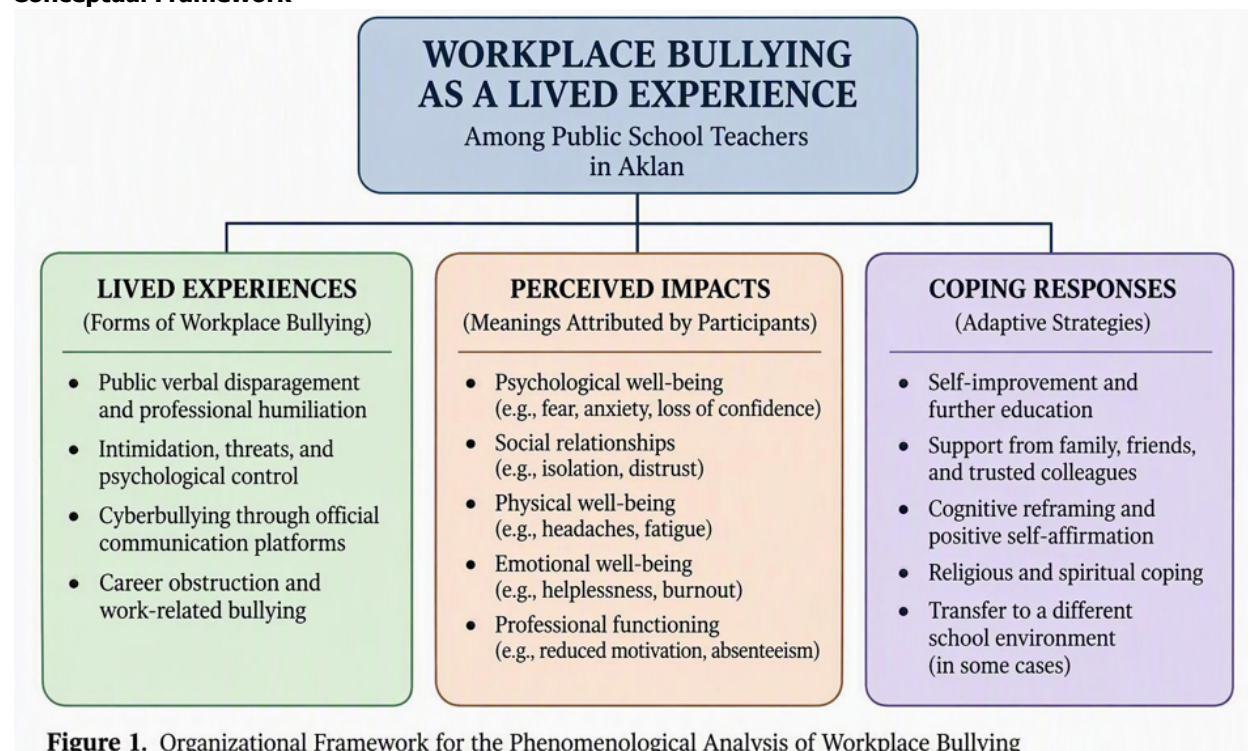


Figure 1. Organizational Framework for the Phenomenological Analysis of Workplace Bullying

The conceptual framework was developed as an organizational guide for examining the lived experiences of public school teachers who reported workplace bullying. Consistent with the Husserlian descriptive phenomenological orientation of the study, the framework is not intended to represent a causal, predictive, developmental, or process-



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oriented model. Rather, it serves as a heuristic structure for organizing the major dimensions of the phenomenon identified through participants' narratives.

The first phenomenological structure, Lived Experiences of Workplace Bullying, refers to the forms of workplace bullying described by participants, including lived meanings of public verbal disparagement and professional humiliation, intimidation and psychological control, cyberbullying through official communication platforms, and career obstruction or work-related bullying.

The second phenomenological structure, Perceived Multidimensional Impacts of Workplace Bullying, represents the meanings participants attributed to these experiences, including perceived effects on their psychological well-being, social relationships, physical health, emotional well-being, and professional functioning. These dimensions reflect participants' descriptions and interpretations of their experiences rather than objectively measured outcomes.

The third phenomenological structure, Lived Meanings of Coping and Adaptive Responses, refers to the strategies participants described using to manage and navigate workplace bullying. This included self-improvement, support from family and trusted peers, cognitive reframing, religious or spiritual coping, and, in some cases, transfer to a different work environment.

These phenomenological structures are presented separately for descriptive purposes but should not be interpreted as sequential stages or causal relationships. Instead, they represent interconnected aspects of the phenomenon as experienced and described by the participants. The framework therefore functions solely as an organizational representation of the lived experience of workplace bullying and supports the phenomenological analysis of participants' narratives.

The framework is intended solely as an organizational representation of the phenomenon and should not be interpreted as depicting causal relationships, temporal sequences, developmental stages, predictive processes, or directional pathways among the phenomenological structures presented.

Statement of the Problem

The Department of Education (DepEd) is expected to promote safe, respectful, and supportive school environments that enable teachers to perform their professional responsibilities effectively. The quality of the educational environment is closely associated with the well-being, professional functioning, and workplace experiences of teachers. Workplace bullying, which may involve repeated verbal aggression, lived meanings of intimidation, threat, and psychological control, social exclusion, professional undermining, or other forms of harmful workplace behavior, may adversely affect teachers and contribute to an unhealthy organizational climate.

For teachers, workplace bullying may extend beyond individual interpersonal difficulties. Experiences of repeated mistreatment may affect psychological and emotional well-being, social relationships, physical health, and professional functioning. The importance of addressing teachers' psycho-emotional well-being is further underscored by research examining psychological first aid-based interventions for teachers (Iguban, 2026). Such experiences may also influence how teachers engage with their work, interact with colleagues, and carry out their instructional and other professional responsibilities. Understanding these experiences is therefore relevant to teacher well-being, educational leadership, school climate, and the development of supportive workplace practice.

Despite the growing recognition of workplace bullying as an organizational and educational concern, limited localized research has explored how public school teachers experience and interpret workplace bullying, how they describe its multidimensional effects, and how they cope with these experiences within their professional environments. In the context of the Districts of Kalibo, Schools Division of Aklan, an in-depth understanding of teachers' lived experiences may provide important insights into the nature of workplace bullying and its implications for teacher welfare and school management.

Therefore, this study seeks to explore the lived experiences of public school teachers who have experienced workplace bullying. Specifically, it examines the forms of workplace bullying they encounter, the ways in which these experiences affect their psychological, social, physical health, emotional, and professional dimensions, and the coping mechanisms they use to manage these experiences. The findings may contribute to a deeper understanding of workplace bullying in public school settings and may provide evidence that can inform teacher support, educational leadership practices, workplace policies, and interventions aimed at promoting safer and more supportive school environments.



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General Objective

To explore the lived meanings of public school teachers who have experienced workplace bullying, particularly the forms of bullying encountered, their multidimensional impacts, and the coping mechanisms used by affected teachers.

Specific Objectives

To achieve the general objective, the study specifically aims to:

1. To describe the lived meanings of workplace bullying as experienced by participants.
2. To explore how public school teachers describe the impacts of workplace bullying on their:
 - a. psychological or mental well-being;
 - b. social relationships and professional interactions;
 - c. physical health and well-being;
 - d. emotional well-being; and
 - e. professional functioning and work performance.
3. To describe the lived meanings of the coping responses used by participants in navigating workplace bullying to manage and respond to experiences of workplace bullying.

Research Questions

1. What are the lived meanings of workplace bullying as experienced by public school teachers?
2. How do public school teachers describe the impacts of workplace bullying on their:
 - a. psychological or mental well-being;
 - b. social relationships and professional interactions;
 - c. physical health and well-being;
 - d. emotional well-being; and
 - e. professional functioning and work performance?
3. How do participants describe and make meaning of the coping responses they used in navigating workplace bullying?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a Husserlian Transcendental Descriptive Phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of public school teachers who reported workplace bullying. Consistent with Husserlian phenomenology, the researchers practiced epoché (bracketing) by maintaining a reflexive journal to identify and suspend personal assumptions, prior experiences, and preconceived views regarding workplace bullying and school administration throughout data collection and analysis.

Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological method. First, interview transcripts were read repeatedly to obtain a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences. Second, significant statements directly related to workplace bullying were identified and extracted. Third, meanings were formulated from these statements while remaining faithful to participants' descriptions. Fourth, related meanings were organized into phenomenological meaning clusters representing common dimensions of the experience. Fifth, the phenomenological meaning clusters were integrated into an exhaustive description of workplace bullying as experienced by the participants. Sixth, the researchers synthesized these descriptions to identify the fundamental structure or essence of the phenomenon, capturing the shared meaning of workplace bullying across participants. Finally, member checking was conducted by sharing phenomenological descriptions, formulated meanings, and interpretations with participants to verify the accuracy and credibility of the findings and to ensure that the descriptions faithfully reflected their lived experiences.

Through this process, the analysis moved beyond individual meaning units and phenomenological meaning clusters to develop an understanding of the fundamental structure (essence) of workplace bullying.

Population and Sampling

The source population of the study consisted of permanent public school teachers in the Schools Division of Aklan, who had experienced workplace bullying. Five public school teachers who met the established inclusion criteria participated in the study.



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Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who could provide detailed, relevant, and experience-based accounts of the phenomenon under investigation. This sampling approach was appropriate because participation required direct lived experience of workplace bullying within a public school setting.

The participants were selected based on the following inclusion criteria:

1. They were currently employed as permanent public school teachers within the Schools Division of Aklan.
2. They had personally experienced workplace bullying or repeated workplace mistreatment involving a school administrator or colleague.
3. They were willing to participate voluntarily and provide detailed accounts of their experiences.
4. They provided informed consent to participate in the study and to have their interviews audio recorded.

The final sample consisted of five participants. In keeping with the phenomenological nature of the study, participant selection emphasized the richness and relevance of participants' lived experiences rather than statistical representativeness. The accounts provided sufficient depth, richness, and variation to address the research questions and support the development of an exhaustive phenomenological description and articulation of the essential structure of the phenomenon.

Recruitment Procedure

After permission to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate authorities within the Schools Division of Aklan, the researchers personally facilitated the recruitment of participants. The researchers approached potential participants directly and privately rather than through school administrators. School heads, supervisors, and other administrative personnel were not involved in identifying specific participants, inviting them to participate, determining who accepted participation, or accessing information regarding participation. This approach was adopted to minimize the possibility of perceived pressure, coercion, or retaliation.

Teachers who expressed interest were provided with an explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, risks and benefits, confidentiality measures, and their rights as participants. They were informed that participation was entirely voluntary, that they could decline participation without explanation.

Potential participants were given adequate time to consider participation before providing informed consent. Interviews were scheduled only after voluntary agreement was obtained. To further protect participants, all communications regarding recruitment and participation were treated confidentially, pseudonyms were assigned, and identifying information was removed from transcripts and reports. No information regarding participation was disclosed to school administrators or other personnel. These safeguards were implemented because the study examined sensitive experiences involving workplace bullying and possible power differentials within the school environment.

Data Sufficiency

The determination of data sufficiency in this study was guided by the descriptive phenomenological objective of obtaining rich and detailed accounts of the lived experience of workplace bullying rather than by a predetermined sample size. Participant recruitment focused on individuals who had direct experience of the phenomenon and who could provide detailed descriptions of how workplace bullying was experienced, interpreted, and managed within their professional contexts.

Throughout the data collection and analysis process, the researchers engaged in repeated reading of interview transcripts and ongoing phenomenological reflection to assess the depth, richness, and relevance of the participants' descriptions. The interviews yielded detailed narratives regarding the forms of workplace bullying experienced, the meanings participants attributed to these experiences, their perceived impacts on various dimensions of well-being, and the coping responses they employed.

As analysis progressed, participants' descriptions revealed recurring experiential structures and shared meanings associated with workplace bullying while also providing nuanced variations in how the phenomenon was lived and interpreted. Subsequent interviews deepened and enriched these phenomenological descriptions, contributing additional insight into the constituent meanings and fundamental structure (essence) of the experience. The accounts obtained provided sufficient depth, richness, and variation to support the development of an exhaustive phenomenological description and articulation of the fundamental structure (essence) of the phenomenon.

Based on the richness of the narratives obtained and the adequacy of the descriptions for addressing the research questions, the researchers determined that sufficient data had been gathered to develop a comprehensive phenomenological description of the phenomenon under investigation. This judgment was based on the depth and relevance of the participants' accounts rather than on the attainment of a specific numerical threshold or a claim that the findings represent all possible experiences of workplace bullying among public school teachers.

The determination of data sufficiency was therefore based on the richness and adequacy of participants' lived descriptions for revealing the essential structure of the phenomenon rather than on the attainment of saturation or a predetermined sample size.

Table 1
Profile of the Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Teaching Experience	Position
John	31-40	1-5 years	Teacher I-III
Jen	41-50	6-10 years	Teacher I-III
Lina	41-50	11-15 years	Teacher I-III
Rita	41-50	11-15 years	Teacher I-III
Andrea	51-60	21-30 years	Teacher I-III

Research Instruments

A researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data from the participants. The guide was developed based on the Statement of the Problem, research objectives, and research questions. It consisted primarily of open-ended questions designed to encourage participants to describe their experiences of workplace bullying in detail.

The interview guide focused on three experiential areas of inquiry: the lived experiences of workplace bullying described by participants, the meanings participants attributed to the perceived impacts of these experiences on their psychological, social, physical, emotional, and professional well-being, and the coping responses they described using to manage and respond to workplace bullying. The interview guide underwent content validation by three experts: a professor with expertise in psychology and counseling, a licensed guidance counselor, and the adviser. The experts reviewed the instrument in terms of clarity, relevance, appropriateness of wording, and alignment with the objectives and research questions. Their comments and recommendations were incorporated into the revision of the interview guide prior to data collection.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, permission to conduct the study was secured from the appropriate authorities within the Schools Division of Aklan. After obtaining the necessary approvals, eligible participants who met the inclusion criteria were informed about the purpose, procedures, and ethical safeguards of the study and were invited to participate voluntarily.

Data collection was conducted during the first quarter of 2022. Before each interview, participants were provided with an informed consent form explaining the purpose of the research, the nature of their participation, the voluntary nature of involvement, their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, the confidentiality measures to be implemented, and the use of audio recording during the interview process. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the conduct of the interviews.

Individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted privately within the participants' respective schools at a mutually agreed date and time. The interview setting was selected to provide privacy, minimize interruptions, and protect the confidentiality of participants' identities and responses. Each interview lasted approximately one to two hours.

The interviews were conducted using a combination of English and Tagalog, depending on the participants' preference and level of comfort in expressing their experiences. This approach allowed participants to provide richer and more authentic descriptions of their lived experiences of workplace bullying.

With the participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded using a cellular phone to ensure the complete and accurate capture of the participants' narratives. Following data collection, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim by the researchers. Responses originally expressed in Tagalog were subsequently translated into English during the transcription process while preserving their contextual meaning and intent.

To enhance the accuracy and credibility of the data, the completed transcripts were carefully checked against the original audio recordings to verify the correctness of the transcription and translation processes. Any discrepancies identified during the review were corrected to ensure that the transcripts accurately reflected the participants' statements.

The researchers also maintained a reflexive journal throughout the data collection process to document methodological decisions, personal reflections, and potential biases that could influence data interpretation. This process supported reflexivity and helped the researchers remain conscious of personal assumptions throughout the study.

To further establish the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, member checking was conducted. The summarized phenomenological descriptions, formulated meanings, constituent meanings, and phenomenological structures were shared with the participants to determine whether they accurately reflected their lived experiences and the meanings they attributed to the phenomenon. Participants were given the opportunity to clarify, validate, or provide additional comments regarding the interpretations. Feedback obtained through this process was considered during the refinement of the phenomenological descriptions, constituent meanings, and essential structure of the phenomenon prior to the presentation of the findings.

Treatment of Data

The interview data were analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological method cited by Donel et al. (2026). First, the researchers read and re-read the verbatim interview transcripts to develop a comprehensive understanding of the participants' descriptions of workplace bullying. Significant statements directly related to the phenomenon were then identified and extracted from the transcripts.

The researchers formulated meanings from these significant statements while remaining attentive to the participants' original descriptions. Formulated meanings were clustered into phenomenological meaning clusters representing shared structures of the lived experience. The resulting phenomenological meaning clusters and formulated meanings were continually compared with the original descriptions to ensure fidelity to the participants' lived experiences. The phenomenological meaning structures were subsequently integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon. From this description, the researchers developed a statement of the fundamental structure of workplace bullying as experienced by the participants. To support the credibility of the findings, the resulting phenomenological descriptions, constituent meanings, and fundamental structure of the phenomenon were presented to the participants for feedback and confirmation of whether they reasonably reflected the participants' lived experiences.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to the conduct of the study, permission to undertake the research was obtained from the appropriate authorities within the Schools Division of Aklan. The study was conducted in accordance with accepted ethical principles governing research involving human participants. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality protections, and their right to decline participation or withdraw at any stage without penalty.

During the informed-consent process, participants were informed that the interviews would explore potentially sensitive experiences involving workplace bullying and emotional distress. Participants were advised that they could decline to answer any question, pause the interview, request the termination of the interview, or withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Participants were also informed of the limits of confidentiality applicable under ethical and legal obligations in situations involving serious concerns regarding participant safety or the safety of others.

Because the study involved discussion of potentially distressing workplace experiences, a participant-support protocol was established before data collection. If a participant exhibited visible signs of distress during an interview, the interview would be temporarily suspended and the participant would be asked whether they wished to continue, pause, reschedule, or terminate participation. Participants were reminded that they were under no obligation to discuss matters that caused discomfort.

The researchers were prepared to provide information regarding available counseling, mental health, healthcare, or other appropriate support services if requested by a participant. Information regarding these services was available throughout the data-collection process.

During several interviews, participants disclosed highly sensitive experiences, including thoughts of suicide, severe emotional distress, and thoughts of retaliation toward individuals they believed had contributed to their workplace difficulties. These disclosures were treated as descriptions of participants lived experiences and were not interpreted as evidence of current intent to engage in self-harm or harm toward others.

When sensitive disclosures emerged, the researchers responded using a supportive and non-judgmental approach, provided participants with opportunities to pause or discontinue the interview, and assessed whether participants wished to receive information regarding available support services. No participant reported an immediate



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intention to harm themselves or others, no emergency intervention was required, and no participant requested termination of the interview because of emotional distress.

Given the sensitive nature of the study and the relatively small professional community from which participants were recruited, particular attention was devoted to minimizing risks of indirect identification. Pseudonyms were used throughout transcripts, analyses, and reports. Names of schools, supervisors, administrators, colleagues, and other potentially identifiable individuals were removed or anonymized during transcription and reporting. Quotations selected for publication were reviewed carefully to ensure that they conveyed participants' experiences without unnecessarily revealing identifying information regarding participants or third parties.

Ethical Review and Research Authorization

This study did not undergo formal review by an institutional research ethics committee because no institutional ethics review board was available or required under the research procedures governing the study at the time of data collection. However, prior authorization to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate authorities within the Schools Division of Aklan. The research was conducted in accordance with accepted ethical principles for research involving human participants, including voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, protection from harm, and the right to withdraw without penalty.

Limitations of the Study

This study provides an in-depth description of the lived experiences of workplace bullying among selected public school teachers; however, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings.

First, the study involved only five participants. Although this sample size is consistent with phenomenological research, which prioritizes depth and richness of description over breadth, it limits the diversity of experiences represented in the study. The findings therefore reflect the perspectives of a small group of participants rather than the experiences of all public school teachers.

Second, the study was conducted within a localized setting in the Schools Division of Aklan. Organizational structures, leadership practices, workplace cultures, and interpersonal relationships may differ across schools, divisions, and regions. Consequently, the findings should be understood within the specific context in which the study was conducted.

Third, purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants who had experienced workplace bullying. While this approach was appropriate for obtaining information-rich accounts of the phenomenon, it was not intended to produce a statistically representative sample. As a result, the findings should not be interpreted as reflecting the prevalence or distribution of workplace bullying among the broader population of public school teachers.

Fourth, the study relied on self-reported and retrospective accounts obtained through interviews. Participants described events based on their recollections and personal interpretations of their experiences. As with all retrospective accounts, the findings may be influenced by recall bias, selective memory, or changes in perception over time.

Fifth, workplace bullying is a sensitive and emotionally charged topic. Participants may have experienced difficulty recalling certain events, may have chosen not to disclose some experiences, or may have emphasized particular aspects that were especially meaningful or distressing to them. These factors are inherent challenges when examining sensitive lived experiences through qualitative inquiry.

Sixth, consistent with the descriptive phenomenological design, the purpose of the study was to describe and understand participants' lived experiences rather than to test hypotheses, establish causation, or produce statistically generalizable findings. The results therefore should not be interpreted as causal explanations of workplace bullying or as findings that can be generalized to all public school teachers.

Seventh, the study focused on participants' descriptions and interpretations of workplace experiences. The researchers did not independently investigate, verify, or adjudicate allegations involving colleagues, supervisors, or administrators. Accordingly, the findings should be understood as descriptions of participants' perceived experiences rather than objective determinations of misconduct or intent on the part of any individual.

Eighth, although participants reported various physical, psychological, emotional, and health-related concerns that they associated with workplace bullying, the study was not designed to establish medical, psychological, or clinical diagnoses, nor could it determine causal relationships between workplace experiences and specific health outcomes. Reported health effects represent the participants' accounts and perceptions of their experiences.

Finally, several participants described perceived effects on their teaching performance, motivation, concentration, and classroom engagement. However, the study did not directly measure instructional effectiveness,



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student achievement, or student learning outcomes. Therefore, conclusions regarding the impact of workplace bullying on student outcomes cannot be drawn from the present findings.

Despite these limitations, the study contributes meaningful phenomenological insights by providing rich, contextually grounded descriptions of how participants experienced, interpreted, and responded to workplace bullying within their professional environments. The findings offer a foundation for future research and may inform supportive educational policies, leadership practices, and teacher welfare initiatives.

Phenomenological Findings and Interpretations

This section presents the phenomenological findings of the study and provides an interpretation of the phenomenological structures and constituent meanings in relation to the research questions.

Consistent with the descriptive phenomenological design of the study, the findings presented in this section reflect the participants' descriptions, perceptions, and interpretations of their lived experiences. The phenomenological meaning structures should not be interpreted as objectively verified events, clinical findings, or causal relationships. Rather, they represent how participants understood and attributed meaning to their experiences of workplace bullying within their specific professional contexts.

Table 2

Alignment of Research Questions, Phenomenological Structures, and Constituent Meanings of the Lived Experience of Workplace Bullying Among Public School Teachers

Research Question	Phenomenological Structures	Constituent Meanings
RQ1. What lived meanings do public school teachers attribute to their experiences of workplace bullying?	Lived Meanings of Workplace Bullying	• Lived Meanings of Public Verbal Disparagement and Professional Humiliation • Lived Meanings of Intimidation, Threat, and Psychological Control • Lived Meanings of Digital Professional Undermining and Cyberbullying • Lived Meanings of Perceived Career Obstruction and Work-Related Bullying
RQ2. How do public school teachers describe the impacts of workplace bullying on their psychological, social, physical, emotional, and professional well-being?	Perceived Multidimensional Impacts of Workplace Bullying	Lived Meanings of Psychological Impacts of Workplace Bullying • Constituent Meanings Related to Psychological Distress and Cognitive Burden • Constituent Meanings Related to Severe Psychological Strain and Withdrawal Intentions Lived Physical Meanings of Workplace Bullying • Constituent Meanings Related to Sleep Disturbance, Fatigue, and Physical Discomfort Lived Social Meanings of Workplace Bullying • Constituent Meanings Related to Restricted Interaction and Self-Isolation • Constituent Meanings Related to Decline of Interpersonal Trust and Fractured Collegial Relationships Lived Emotional Meanings of Workplace Bullying • Constituent Meanings Related to Feelings of Loneliness, Sadness, and Emotional Distress Lived Professional Meanings of Workplace Bullying • Constituent Meanings Related to Reduced Work Engagement and Absenteeism • Perceived Unfairness in Performance Evaluation and Reduced Professional Confidence



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Research Question	Phenomenological Structures	Constituent Meanings
RQ3. What coping mechanisms do public school teachers use to manage and respond to experiences of workplace bullying?	Lived Meanings of Coping and Adaptive Responses	• Constituent Meanings Related to Changes in Classroom Mood and Perceived Effects on Teaching • Constituent Meanings Related to Reported Self-Improvement and Vocational Redirection • Constituent Meanings Related to Cultivation of Optimistic Social Networks and Familial Support Systems • Constituent Meanings Related to Cognitive Filtering and Affirmation of Intrinsic Worth • Constituent Meanings Related to Religious Coping and Adaptation to the Work Environment

Phenomenological Structures of the Lived Experience of Workplace Bullying

The following interpretation reflects the meanings participants attributed to their experiences and should not be interpreted as verification of events or intentions.

Lived Meanings of Public Verbal Disparagement and Professional Humiliation

Participants described recurring experiences of public disparagement within educational institutions that they perceived as contributing to professional and personal humiliation. John and Jen both highlighted the psychological and emotional distress of being belittled in the presence of their peers, an experience also described by Rita, who perceived these actions as damaging her reputation among her colleagues and fellow faculty members. Participants reported public criticism as damaging their professional dignity and social standing.

John: "...in my presence that I am publicly criticized and was put into shame."

Jen: "I was bullied in front of my co-teachers. I felt so insulted with her choice of words being uttered by my offender."

Rita: "...she always calls the attention of my co-teachers just to say something bad about me."

The accounts of John, Jen, and Rita describe experiences of public criticism and negative comments delivered in the presence of colleagues. Participants indicated that these experiences diminished their sense of professional dignity. The participants' narratives suggest that such experiences were not viewed merely as isolated interpersonal disagreements but were interpreted as actions occurring within existing workplace power relationships. Participants described these experiences as negatively affecting their professional dignity and psychological well-being. These narratives suggest that participants perceived public verbal disparagement as affecting their professional credibility within workplace relationships shaped by existing power differences. This interpretation aligns with the Workplace Bullying Institute's (2024) findings that abusive workplace conduct frequently involves humiliation and is often associated with workplace power imbalances. Similar to those findings, participants in the present study described public criticism as occurring within hierarchical relationships. Participants emphasized the public nature of these incidents and described them as affecting their professional reputation within close professional communities.

Collectively, these narratives indicate that public verbal disparagement was experienced as an assault on professional dignity, with participants describing its effects on their workplace relationships, sense of belonging, and emotional well-being.

Lived Meanings of Intimidation, Threat, and Psychological Control

Some participants described repeated verbal aggression and emotional mistreatment that they perceived as negatively affecting their psychological well-being. Jen reported being subjected to persistent verbal aggression, particularly intense shouting, which she associated with feelings of fear and emotional distress. This environment contributed to avoidant behaviors, including apprehension toward interacting with the offender and reluctance to attend work.

Jen: "There were many nights that I cannot sleep because of thinking how she treats me and being so unfair. She would smack in my face that I don't have 'utang na loob' [debt of gratitude] and that she could do what she likes to me even it is not fair. There were also times that I don't like going to school because I am so afraid of what bad things she could do it again."



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Lina: *"Everytime she called me to go to her office before; I was trying to comfort myself while walking toward her office. I'm always telling myself that I am brave (crying), I am strong, I'm not scared with anyone, I can manage everything! I cannot count the sleepless nights. It came to the point that I cannot control my emotions; until one day I have decided to consult a doctor about what is happening to me. I also seek spiritual advice from our pastors."*

Across participants' accounts, intimidation and psychological control were experienced as recurring workplace conditions rather than isolated incidents. Participants described repeated verbal aggression from individuals they perceived as occupying positions of authority, resulting in persistent apprehension, anticipation of negative encounters, and a diminished sense of psychological safety. Rather than being experienced as isolated conflicts, these experiences were described as ongoing conditions that shaped participants' day-to-day functioning within the workplace.

These accounts align with findings reported by Galanis et al. (2024), who identified repeated verbal, psychological, and interpersonal mistreatment as common features of workplace bullying. Similar to those findings, participants in the present study described recurring exposure to behaviors that they perceived as threatening and controlling. However, participants emphasized the continuing anticipation of future encounters with authority figures and described these experiences as influencing how they navigated their daily work environment.

Collectively, the narratives suggest that intimidation, threats, and psychological control contributed to an enduring sense of apprehension and reduced psychological safety, shaping how participants navigated their daily work environment.

Lived Meanings of Digital Professional Undermining and Cyberbullying

Participants described a form of workplace bullying that involved the use of digital communication platforms and social media to convey messages they perceived as harmful, exclusionary, or professionally undermining. Participants recounted instances in which individuals in positions of authority used official online communication platforms to convey messages that they perceived as damaging to their professional standing.

John described receiving messages through the school's Facebook Messenger group chat that he perceived as questioning his competence and professional qualifications:

"Sometimes, in our group chat through FB Messenger, she keeps on sending messages which affects and hurts me. She would believe that I am poor in performance in school and even questioned how I was appointed and hired in the public school."

Similarly, Lina described a situation involving social media postings that she perceived as favoring other teachers while excluding her from recognition:

"I can consider cyber bullying when she posted the appointment of my co-teachers in the page of our Facebook and Messenger account and gave praises to them. I felt insulted."

Participants interpreted these online communications as challenges to their professional competence, credibility, and workplace standing. Because the interactions occurred through official communication platforms that were routinely used for work-related activities, participants viewed them not as isolated online incidents but as extensions of existing workplace relationships and authority structures. The visibility of these communications to colleagues amplified participants' concerns regarding reputation, exclusion, and professional recognition. Consistent with literature on workplace cyberbullying (Nielsen et al., 2024), the essential structure revealed that digital communication platforms may serve as additional contexts through which workplace power relations are experienced and interpreted. Within the present study, these online interactions emerged as visible reminders of participants' perceived vulnerability within workplace relationships, contributing to ongoing workplace distress.

Lived Meanings of Perceived Career Obstruction and Work-Related Bullying

Participants reported workplace experiences that they interpreted as restricting professional growth, limiting recognition, and marginalizing them within the organizational setting. These experiences included the removal of professional responsibilities, exclusion from opportunities that participants believed could contribute to career advancement, and financial consequences that some participants associated with workplace bullying, including healthcare expenses and salary deductions arising from workplace-related distress.

John: *"Yes, for how many times I cannot go to school especially after she put me into shame in school in front of my fellow teachers..."*

Similarly, Jen recounted the removal of professional responsibilities that had previously been entrusted to her:
Jen: *"Maybe it's economic bullying too when she belittled your capacity. She took all my coordinatorship and gave it to others and told me that they are more capable and eligible."*



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Andrea also perceived that workplace mistreatment affected her professional and personal circumstances:

Andrea: *"Yes. Economically bullied. Hypertension and back pain triggered by the stress she gave me and caused me to be brought to the hospital [incurring medical expenses]."*

Andrea associated workplace-related stress with health concerns that she believed were accompanied by additional financial burdens. Together with participants' descriptions of restricted responsibilities and opportunities, these accounts illustrate how workplace bullying was perceived as affecting both professional participation and broader aspects of occupational well-being.

Participants described workplace bullying as occurring not only through direct interpersonal mistreatment but also through forms of organizational exclusion. In the participants' narratives, the withdrawal of responsibilities and perceived restriction of opportunities carried symbolic significance because they affected how participants understood their professional identity, competence, and future prospects within the institution.

Previous research has reported restriction of professional opportunities, exclusion from organizational networks, and withdrawal of responsibilities as experiences commonly associated with workplace bullying. Similar to Busby et al. (2022) and Nielsen et al. (2024), participants interpreted the removal of responsibilities and restricted access to opportunities as forms of workplace marginalization. However, an important contextual difference emerged. Whereas previous studies frequently discuss promotion, career advancement, and organizational mobility, the public school teachers in the present study emphasized coordinatorship assignments, recognition, and professional visibility. Participants described coordinatorship assignments and other professional responsibilities as important indicators of recognition and trust within their schools. Some participants perceived the withdrawal of these responsibilities as signaling reduced confidence in their abilities or diminished professional standing.

From an interpretive perspective, these accounts suggest that the meaning attached to such responsibilities extended beyond the tasks themselves and became linked to participants' understanding of their professional role and value within the organization. Consistent with previous literature (Busby et al., 2022; Nielsen et al., 2024), career obstruction emerged not merely as the loss of specific opportunities but as a form of organizational marginalization that participants associated with diminished professional visibility, reduced recognition, and uncertainty regarding future professional development.

Lived Meanings of Psychological Impacts of Workplace Bullying

The following interpretation reflects the meanings participants attributed to their experiences and should not be interpreted as verification of events or intentions.

Constituent Meanings Related to Psychological Distress and Cognitive Burden

Participants described experiences of workplace bullying that they associated with intrusive thoughts, anticipatory anxiety, persistent vigilance, and diminished self-confidence. These experiences were described as extending beyond workplace encounters and affecting participants' overall well-being in their daily lives.

John reported that experiences of bullying remained difficult to forget and continued to occupy his thoughts long after the incidents occurred:

"I think this totally affects me especially my mental well-being. I am praying a lot that, if possible, to erase those situations in my mind, however it really keeps on going back and it is not very easy to forget. This bothers me a lot and I am always anticipating situations to happen every time and anywhere I meet the school principal."

Participants also described persistent fear and heightened anxiety in anticipation of future interactions with their offenders. John explained that his experiences affected how he interacted with authority figures and contributed to feelings of nervousness even in routine situations:

"...and even sometimes I am scared to anyone especially higher authorities that they might do the same thing to me. That also cause me nervous every time someone is entering my classroom or even, I am anywhere and someone will call me."

Participants also perceived workplace bullying as affecting their confidence and professional self-worth. Lina described how repeated criticism and lack of recognition diminished her confidence and affected both her health and work performance:

"I got very low self-confidence, health, performance was affected because it seems my hardship was not enough and even not recognized."

Across participants' accounts, workplace bullying was primarily experienced as a cognitive burden characterized by persistent rumination, anticipatory anxiety, and diminished self-confidence. Participants described repeatedly revisiting distressing workplace encounters and remaining mentally preoccupied with the possibility of future

negative interactions. John reported that memories of previous incidents remained difficult to dismiss and influenced how he responded to subsequent encounters with authority figures, while Lina associated repeated criticism and lack of recognition with reduced confidence in her professional abilities.

Workplace interactions, particularly those involving individuals associated with prior negative experiences, were often approached with heightened apprehension. Several participants reported becoming increasingly vigilant and expecting criticism or adverse treatment even during routine professional encounters. In this sense, the psychological impact involved an enduring alteration in how participants perceived workplace safety and professional relationships.

Previous studies among various occupational groups have reported associations between workplace bullying and intrusive thoughts, anxiety, reduced self-esteem, and heightened vigilance (Nielsen et al., 2024). However, the present study revealed that these experiences were closely connected to participants' perceptions of workplace power relations. Rather than merely feeling stressed, participants described becoming psychologically preoccupied with anticipating future encounters with individuals they perceived as having the capacity to affect their professional standing.

Across the narratives, workplace bullying emerged as an enduring cognitive and psychological burden marked by persistent rumination, anticipatory anxiety, and diminished confidence in both professional and interpersonal situations.

Constituent Meanings Related to Severe Psychological Strain and Withdrawal Intentions

Some participants described more severe psychological consequences associated with prolonged exposure to workplace bullying. Their narratives reflected substantial psychological strain characterized by diminished coping capacity, thoughts of retaliation, and consideration of leaving the teaching profession.

Rita described the enduring psychological burden of her experience and the extent to which it affected her daily life:

"I think it was like a roller coaster ride. It won't come out from my mind, and this will be a part of my life... There was a time that I could not sleep or eat because of what I was experiencing... It was really a trouble; it's more than a signal number four typhoon. A typhoon only lasts for a day, but my experience with her takes for about six years, try to imagine that."

Similarly, Andrea described emotional exhaustion and thoughts of leaving her profession due to the cumulative impact of workplace bullying:

"I never had good night sleeps during those times. I slept and woke up with the issues. I thought of doing bad things to her, of quitting job and felt so pity for myself and that until now, it won't get out from my mind."

The participant's description of "quitting job" was analyzed as a manifestation of withdrawal intentions and therefore forms part of the constituent meaning Severe Psychological Strain and Withdrawal Intentions.

The accounts of Rita and Andrea illustrate how prolonged exposure to perceived workplace bullying affected their capacity to sustain engagement with their work over time. Participants described experiences that they regarded as chronic, unresolved, and difficult to escape. Rather than focusing primarily on emotional reactions, their narratives reflected growing doubts about their ability to continue functioning effectively within the workplace.

Both participants described reaching a point at which they questioned their capacity to cope with continuing workplace difficulties. In their accounts, thoughts of leaving the profession and disengaging from work emerged after prolonged exposure to circumstances they perceived as persistent and resistant to resolution. These reactions were not presented as desired outcomes but as indicators of the extent to which workplace difficulties had begun to challenge their professional commitment and coping resources.

Previous studies have reported associations between workplace bullying, withdrawal intentions, occupational disengagement, and reduced commitment to one's profession (Nielsen et al., 2024). The present findings converge with this literature in that participants described contemplating disengagement from teaching after extended periods of perceived workplace mistreatment. However, participants emphasized not only dissatisfaction with the workplace but also a sense of exhaustion arising from repeated efforts to endure unresolved situations. This suggests that withdrawal intentions may develop when individuals perceive that available coping strategies are no longer sufficient to manage ongoing workplace difficulties.

These accounts illustrate how prolonged exposure to perceived workplace bullying may culminate in substantial psychological strain, with participants describing diminished coping capacity, occupational disengagement, and thoughts of leaving the profession. Participants described reaching a point at which continued professional engagement became increasingly difficult to sustain within environments they perceived as persistently hostile or unsupportive.

Lived Physical Meanings of Workplace Bullying

The following interpretation reflects the meanings participants attributed to their experiences and should not be interpreted as verification of events or intentions.

Constituent Meanings Related to Sleep Disturbance, Fatigue, and Physical Discomfort

Participants reported experiencing various physical symptoms that they associated with their experiences of workplace bullying. These symptoms included headaches, sleep disturbances, fatigue, hypertension, and physical exhaustion.

John: *"I can't sleep and that will cause me headache which will affect me of not going to school."*

Lina: *"I cannot count the sleepless nights... until one day I decided to consult a doctor about what was happening to me."*

Andrea: *"Hypertension and back pain triggered by the stress she gave me and caused me to be brought to the hospital."*

Participants described sleep disruption, headaches, fatigue, hypertension, and physical discomfort as experiences that occurred alongside ongoing workplace difficulties. Although the present study cannot establish medical causation, participants consistently interpreted these physical symptoms as developing within the context of prolonged workplace stress and recurring anticipation of negative encounters. Their accounts suggest that bodily discomfort was experienced not as an isolated health concern but as part of a broader disruption affecting daily functioning, rest, and occupational engagement.

A notable feature of the participants' narratives was the extent to which future interactions with perceived aggressors remained psychologically present even when participants were outside the workplace. Several participants described difficulty sleeping because they continued to think about previous incidents or worried about future confrontations. In this sense, the physical symptoms reported by participants appeared to be closely intertwined with ongoing psychological vigilance and emotional strain. The workplace experience remained present beyond working hours, affecting rest, recovery, and overall well-being.

From a phenomenological perspective, these accounts suggest that workplace bullying was experienced as an embodied phenomenon. Participants did not describe emotional distress and physical symptoms as separate outcomes. Rather, fear, worry, exhaustion, sleep disturbance, and bodily discomfort were experienced simultaneously as interconnected aspects of a single lived reality. Within participants' accounts, workplace bullying was understood as extending beyond isolated incidents and affecting both their physical and psychological experiences of daily life.

This finding is consistent with research conducted among teachers and other occupational groups in which participants similarly reported sleep disruption, fatigue, and physical discomfort associated with workplace bullying (Nielsen et al., 2024). Similar patterns were evident in the present study. Participants described these physical symptoms as occurring alongside persistent worry, anticipation of negative encounters, and ongoing emotional strain. Rather than viewing sleep disturbance, headaches, fatigue, and bodily discomfort as isolated health concerns, participants interpreted them as part of the broader burden they associated with their workplace experiences. Accordingly, the essential structure revealed that participants perceived physical discomfort and psychological distress as closely interconnected aspects of the same lived experience.

Lived Social Meanings of Workplace Bullying

The following interpretation reflects the meanings participants attributed to their experiences and should not be interpreted as verification of events or intentions.

Constituent Meanings Related to Restricted Interaction and Self-Isolation

Participants described intentionally limiting workplace interactions to reduce the possibility of further conflict, criticism, or negative attention. They viewed social withdrawal as a protective response to an environment they perceived as unsafe.

John: *"I only talked and be with people that are close to me. I do not show to anyone especially to those who are close to the school principal if I am socializing to anyone in school for, I am scared to be doubted most often. I would prefer to be alone working in school. My movements are limited because I do not want to be given any issues if possible."*

Participants described limiting workplace interactions as a way of reducing exposure to situations they believed could result in criticism, conflict, or further workplace difficulties.

These accounts suggest that participants experienced a diminished sense of belonging within the workplace. Social withdrawal appeared to function both as a protective response to perceived risk and as an expression of reduced comfort in workplace relationships.

Previous research suggests that employees exposed to workplace bullying often withdraw from workplace interactions to avoid further distress and may experience a diminished sense of belonging (Nielsen et al., 2024). The present findings align with this literature in that participants also described limiting workplace interactions. However, participants portrayed withdrawal not only as a consequence of bullying but also as an intentional strategy to avoid scrutiny, criticism, and further workplace conflict. This suggests that self-isolation may function simultaneously as a perceived consequence of bullying and as a protective adaptation to a psychologically unsafe environment.

Participants associated their experiences of workplace bullying with increased self-isolation, particularly when they perceived workplace interactions as potentially threatening, critical, or unsafe.

Beyond limiting social interaction, withdrawal appeared to represent an effort to preserve psychological safety within an environment participants no longer regarded as predictable or trustworthy. Being alone was not described as a preferred social condition but as a means of avoiding further scrutiny, misunderstanding, or interpersonal harm. Thus, self-isolation emerged not merely as reduced social participation but as an adaptive response to a workplace experienced as emotionally unsafe.

Constituent Meanings Related to Decline of Interpersonal Trust and Fractured Collegial Relationships

A recurring feature of the narratives was increasing caution in trusting colleagues and sharing personal information. Jen explained that she no longer knew whom she could trust and preferred to work alone. Lina similarly described becoming selective about whom she confided in due to concerns about betrayal and damaged relationships.

Jen: "I don't go always to my co-teachers. I do not know whom can be trusted. I choose to work alone, and I am not interested with them anymore. I have experienced that whatever I say, they are using it against me."

Lina: "It gives me doubts who are the people behind destroying me or even our good relationship during the past. So, before I gave my words, I choose only the person whom I can rely or trust on."

John: "...I maybe don't know too if there are people around (my co-teachers) who are also their eyes is with me so they could report it to the school principal."

A recurring feature across the accounts was growing caution in workplace relationships. Participants reported becoming increasingly selective regarding whom they trusted, confided in, or collaborated with professionally. Concerns about gossip, misrepresentation, or information being relayed to individuals they believed contributed to their difficulties led some participants to limit social and professional interactions. As a result, workplace bullying was experienced not only as conflict with specific individuals but also as a broader disruption of trust within the professional community.

This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that workplace bullying may contribute to reduced interpersonal trust, weakened collegial relationships, and social withdrawal (Nielsen et al., 2024). In the present study, however, participants also portrayed caution and selective engagement as protective responses intended to preserve psychological safety within their work environment.

Lived Emotional Meanings of Workplace Bullying

The following interpretation reflects the meanings participants attributed to their experiences and should not be interpreted as verification of events or intentions.

Constituent Meanings Related to Feelings of Loneliness, Sadness, and Emotional Distress

Participants described experiences of loneliness, sadness, and emotional suffering that they associated with workplace bullying. Several participants reported crying episodes, feelings of isolation, and emotional overwhelm during and after workplace incidents. These experiences were described as extending beyond the workplace and affecting their overall emotional well-being.

Andrea: "I felt so alone that time because only few from the staff knew what's happening in the office or in my classroom with her. I just cried in the corner. Sometimes, my tears fell in the middle of my discussion in front of pupils. That I would tell them that I just remembered or received a sad news... Once, I cried alone in the bedroom of the H.E. building that I couldn't breathe anymore. So, I picked up my phone and call the daycare worker few meters away from the H.E. to help me."

Workplace bullying was experienced by participants as a source of loneliness, sadness, helplessness, and emotional exhaustion that extended beyond specific workplace incidents.

Their accounts suggest that these feelings were associated not only with specific bullying incidents but also with perceptions of limited support, validation, and organizational protection.

Participants frequently described feeling isolated from colleagues and unsupported during periods of conflict. For some, emotional distress was intensified by uncertainty regarding whether their circumstances would improve. The emotional burden therefore stemmed not only from the bullying incidents themselves but also from the perceived absence of protection, validation, and organizational support.

However, participants in the present study frequently linked their emotional distress to perceived failures of organizational support rather than solely to direct bullying behaviors. This observation suggests that emotional outcomes may be shaped not only by the bullying experience itself but also by how individuals perceive institutional responses to that experience.

Taken together, participants portrayed workplace bullying as an emotionally exhausting experience in which loneliness, sadness, and perceived lack of support became intertwined components of participants' everyday professional lives.

Lived Professional Meanings of Workplace Bullying

The following interpretation reflects the meanings participants attributed to their experiences and should not be interpreted as verification of events or intentions.

Constituent Meanings Related to Reduced Work Engagement and Absenteeism

Participants reported that workplace bullying influenced their motivation to attend work and engage fully in their professional responsibilities. Several participants described avoiding workplace interactions, taking leave from work, or feeling reluctant to report to school because of anticipated negative encounters with their offenders.

John: "Yes, for how many times I cannot go to school especially after she put me into shame in school in front of my fellow teachers... More often I would file absences which will cause salary deduction."

Jen: "There were also times that I don't like going to school because I am so afraid of what bad things she could do again."

Participants associated workplace avoidance and absenteeism with their anticipation of potentially distressing encounters, suggesting that these behaviors may have reflected efforts to manage perceived workplace risk. Their accounts suggest that reluctance to attend work was associated not simply with reduced motivation but with efforts to protect themselves from anticipated negative encounters. The participants' narratives suggest that workplace withdrawal may have functioned as a coping response to environments they perceived as psychologically unsafe.

Across accounts, workplace withdrawal emerged within environments participants perceived as psychologically unsafe and was associated with reduced participation in professional activities.

Consistent with previous studies, participants in the present study described workplace bullying as being experienced through diminished workplace engagement, avoidance of professional interactions, and withdrawal from workplace activities (Nielsen et al., 2024). The present findings converge with this literature in that participants also described avoiding work and workplace interactions. However, participants framed absenteeism primarily as a protective strategy intended to reduce exposure to anticipated humiliation, criticism, or emotional distress rather than as a reflection of reduced commitment to teaching. This distinction suggests that withdrawal behaviors may function as self-protective responses when employees perceive the workplace as psychologically unsafe.

Based on the participants' accounts, workplace bullying was experienced as influencing motivation to attend work and engage fully in workplace activities.

Constituent Meanings Related to Reduced Professional Confidence and Perceived Evaluation Injustice

Participants described performance evaluation processes that they perceived as disadvantaging them professionally, including what they regarded as unfairly low ratings despite previous records of strong performance.

Lina: "It affects my performance as a teacher because my concentration in teaching was disturbed. I lost my confidence because I am not motivated... she also gave me a very low rating on my IPCRF..."

Andrea: "Poor performance. I was even rated SATISFACTORY that school year..."

Participants interpreted performance ratings, feedback processes, and the allocation of responsibilities as organizational signals of professional value. Evaluation experiences perceived as unfair were associated with diminished confidence, uncertainty regarding future professional development, and concerns about professional recognition. This finding is broadly consistent with research among Malaysian public-sector employees, which reported associations between workplace bullying and professional functioning (Singh et al., 2025). However, differences in occupational

roles, institutional structures, cultural contexts, and study methodologies should be considered when interpreting the comparison. In the present study, participants suggested that professional confidence was influenced not only by experiences of direct workplace mistreatment but also by the ways organizational practices were interpreted within broader workplace relationships. Thus, while career obstruction emerged as a reported form of workplace bullying, diminished confidence and uncertainty regarding professional growth emerged as perceived consequences of those experiences.

Constituent Meanings Related to Changes in Classroom Mood and Perceived Effects on Teaching

Participants reported that their experiences of workplace bullying influenced their emotional state while carrying out their teaching responsibilities. Several described entering the classroom feeling discouraged, distracted, or emotionally burdened by workplace difficulties. Although they continued to fulfill their professional obligations, some participants indicated that workplace stress occasionally affected their classroom demeanor and interactions with students.

Rita reflected on how her workplace experiences influenced her disposition while teaching:

"It is of course affected because I got a very low self-esteem. My confidence got much affected always... but, however as time goes by, I realized that there's nothing wrong with me and there's something wrong in herself instead... during the time that I am affected, I am emotionally working on to change my belief on to what I am experiencing. In the school, I face my learners with a negative mood because of the present situation. But it came to realized one day that I must put aside the feeling of my bullying experience."

Participants described difficulty completely separating workplace experiences from their teaching responsibilities. Although they remained committed to their learners, workplace stress was reported as influencing their emotional availability, concentration, and classroom disposition. The accounts suggest that substantial emotional energy was directed toward managing workplace concerns, leaving participants with fewer psychological resources to devote to classroom engagement. While the study does not evaluate teaching effectiveness, the narratives indicate that workplace bullying was experienced as having implications for how participants approached their professional role and interacted with students.

Participants' descriptions in the present study were broadly consistent with findings reported among other occupational groups; however, differences in occupational context, organizational structures, cultural settings, and study design limit direct comparison with Philippine public school teachers (Singh et al., 2025). Research among public-sector workers and other occupational groups has suggested that employees experiencing workplace bullying may find it challenging to sustain motivation, concentration, and positive workplace engagement over prolonged periods. While these findings provide useful context, differences in occupational roles, institutional structures, and cultural settings mean that such findings cannot be assumed to operate in the same way among Philippine public school teachers.

Participants perceived workplace bullying as influencing their teaching responsibilities, classroom engagement, and emotional interactions with students; however, these interpretations reflect participants' experiences and do not establish objective effects on teaching performance or student outcomes.

Lived Meanings of Coping Mechanisms of Teachers

The following interpretation reflects the meanings participants attributed to their experiences and should not be interpreted as verification of events or intentions.

Constituent Meanings Related to Reported Self-Improvement and Vocational Redirection

In response to experiences they perceived as workplace bullying, several participants described engaging in self-improvement and professional development as a way of responding to their experiences of workplace bullying. Rather than viewing themselves as powerless, participants described directing their cognitive and emotional energy toward professional development and further education as a way of responding constructively to workplace difficulties.

John: "I make myself better in other aspects of my life and I show to other people the real me which is very opposite to the issues my school head is throwing with me... I look at the other side of myself, that I am opposite to what she is telling me and to other people. I keep on improving myself than listening to the negatives she is telling me... I enrolled myself to school to further mentor and guide me more to my career."

John described pursuing further education and professional development in response to experiences that he considered discouraging and professionally undermining. Rather than focusing exclusively on the negative experiences, he directed attention toward personal growth and career advancement. He appeared to view continued learning as a way of strengthening his competence and reaffirming his professional identity.



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This account reflects an effort to regain a sense of agency and professional confidence following experiences that were perceived as professionally discouraging. Continued education and self-development appeared to provide a constructive means of reaffirming competence and maintaining professional engagement.

Previous research among healthcare, public-sector, and other occupational populations suggests that some employees engage in professional development and skill enhancement when responding to workplace adversity (Rojanasiri, 2025). The present findings indicate that similar responses were described by some participants in this study; however, the specific meanings attached to these coping strategies may differ across occupational and institutional contexts.

Further education and personal development appeared to function both as professional goals and as mechanisms for restoring confidence and reaffirming professional identity.

From a phenomenological perspective, self-improvement represented more than professional advancement. It functioned as an effort to reclaim agency and reconstruct a positive sense of self following experiences that participants perceived as diminishing their professional value. Through continued learning and personal development, participants sought to reaffirm competence and restore a sense of control over their professional future.

Constituent Meanings Related to Cultivation of Optimistic Social Networks and Familial Support Systems

Participants described relying on strong external support structures to cope with the emotional strain associated with workplace bullying. Participants described strengthening relationships with supportive peers and family members to obtain emotional relief, encouragement, and validation.

John: "...I make myself closer to my friends and even help them and encouraged them to be more positive in life... I also invited them to be my classmates in school [graduate studies]. I make myself closer to my family and used time for pleasure to twist my mind from the situation."

Lina: "...I also spend time with my family telling them what I was encountering in the school, so they are my comfort."

Participants described family members, friends, and trusted colleagues as important sources of emotional support during difficult workplace experiences. These relationships provided opportunities to share concerns, receive encouragement, and obtain reassurance regarding their personal and professional worth.

In the participants' narratives, social support appeared to reduce feelings of isolation associated with workplace bullying. These accounts suggest that supportive relationships may help individuals manage workplace adversity by reducing feelings of isolation and reinforcing a sense of belonging, personal worth, and emotional stability.

Studies have consistently identified social support as an important resource for individuals coping with workplace bullying and occupational stress (Rojanasiri, 2025; Sani et al., 2025). Similar patterns emerged in the present study, where participants described family members, friends, and trusted colleagues as important sources of comfort and reassurance. However, participants emphasized emotional validation and protection from isolation more strongly than the practical assistance frequently discussed in broader workplace support literature. This distinction may reflect the deeply personal nature of the experiences described by participants.

Taken together, the accounts suggest that supportive personal and professional relationships played a meaningful role in participants' efforts to manage workplace adversity.

The significance of family support extended beyond emotional comfort. These relationships provided alternative spaces in which participants felt recognized, valued, and understood, thereby counterbalancing experiences of invalidation encountered within the workplace.

Constituent Meanings Related to Cognitive Filtering and Affirmation of Intrinsic Worth

Faced with experiences they perceived as challenging their professional standing, some participants described using a strategy of cognitive filtering. This strategy involved intentionally minimizing the influence of criticism they perceived as unfair while relying on supportive feedback from trusted colleagues, family members, and friends to strengthen their confidence and self-esteem.

Rita: "From the start was so hard, however I need to help myself overcome the struggles I am facing every day. I thanked God that there are people especially my co-teachers who are always present during I am bullied and they knew me well and tells me that I am doing good at my work and I am so kind, I am irrelevant to the perceptions of my offender... so, I started to gain confidence and self-esteem to handle every situation in a Godly way. To face every battle and throw back good deeds to anyone. I make myself available to anyone who needs my help and see that I am a better person... I also tried my best to be a good parent to my kids



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and make myself still a better daughter of my parents. I make myself so important to my family, friends and even to my neighbors."

Rita described relying on positive feedback from trusted colleagues and drawing strength from her roles within her family and community. She appeared to evaluate her worth using sources of validation that extended beyond the workplace. This finding is broadly consistent with findings reported among Portuguese healthcare professionals by Sani et al. (2025), although differences in occupational context, culture, and study setting should be considered when interpreting the comparison.

This account reflects a form of cognitive reframing in which negative workplace messages were counterbalanced by alternative sources of validation derived from family, colleagues, and community relationships.

Based on participants' accounts, constituent meanings related to cognitive filtering and affirmation of intrinsic worth appeared to help participants resist negative self-perceptions associated with workplace bullying. These strategies enabled participants to preserve a sense of competence, personal value, and self-respect despite adverse workplace experiences.

Constituent Meanings Related to Religious Coping and Adaptation to the Work Environment

For several participants, spiritual conviction and radical acceptance formed an important coping approach described by participants. By framing their experiences within a broader spiritual context, participants described maintaining their sense of integrity while continuing to work in environments they perceived as hostile or unsupportive.

Andrea: "Acceptance, that there are schooled but not mannered. I did my obligation to the best I can and trusted God. He knew what's best for me. With my humility, He rewarded me. I was transferred to another station, particularly in the place of my husband. Here, I have a school head who appreciates my dedication and commitment to my work and even trusts and believes in my ability."

Jen: "And most of all I talked to God, asking His guidance and love, to give me more strength that I can surpass all these challenges in my career and workplace."

Andrea and Jen described prayer, faith, and trust in God as important sources of comfort and strength. They viewed these practices as helping them endure difficult workplace situations while maintaining hope and emotional stability.

These narratives suggest that religious belief provided a framework through which participants made sense of their experiences and maintained resilience during periods of workplace adversity.

This finding is broadly consistent with studies among healthcare professionals and other occupational groups that identified religious faith as a coping resource (Sani et al., 2025). Nevertheless, differences in occupational settings, cultural environments, and participant characteristics should be considered when interpreting these similarities. Participants described faith not only as a source of comfort but also as a means of maintaining professional commitment, hope, and perseverance despite perceived workplace mistreatment. Religious coping therefore appeared to function both as an emotional resource and as a framework for sustaining meaning during difficult professional experiences.

For these participants, religious belief and spiritual practice served as important sources of meaning, hope, and emotional stability during periods of workplace adversity.

Faith appeared to serve not only as a source of comfort but also as a framework through which participants assigned meaning to suffering, maintained hope, and preserved their sense of purpose despite ongoing workplace adversity.

The comparative literature cited in this discussion includes studies conducted among nurses, healthcare professionals, manufacturing employees, hotel employees, public-sector workers, and university faculty. These studies were used to contextualize and compare the findings rather than to establish identical experiences among Philippine public school teachers. Differences in occupational roles, organizational structures, cultural settings, institutional environments, and research designs should be considered when interpreting these comparisons. Accordingly, the present findings should be understood within the specific context of public school teachers in the Schools Division of Aklan.

Because the study involved five participants and used a phenomenological approach, the findings are intended to describe the meanings participants attributed to their experiences rather than establish prevalence, causation, or generalizable effects. References to psychological, emotional, physical, social, and professional impacts reflect

participants' perceptions and self-reported experiences and should not be interpreted as clinical diagnoses or empirically verified outcomes.

The phenomenological structures presented in the conceptual framework are used for descriptive organization only. Their presentation should not be interpreted as indicating causal, sequential, or hierarchical relationships among participants' lived experiences, perceived impacts, and coping responses.

Fundamental Structure (Essence) of the Lived Experience of Workplace Bullying

Participants experienced workplace bullying as vulnerability within workplace relationships that they perceived to be shaped by unequal power dynamics. Participants described their experiences as extending beyond isolated incidents of interpersonal conflict and involving recurring experiences of public humiliation, intimidation, professional undermining, and perceived obstruction of career opportunities. Within their accounts, Participants described workplace bullying as an experience they perceived as disrupting their psychological safety, professional identity, and personal well-being.

Participants described experiencing persistent anticipation of negative encounters, particularly when interacting with individuals who held administrative or supervisory authority. This anticipation was accompanied by persistent fear, intrusive thoughts, self-doubt, emotional distress, and difficulties trusting workplace relationships. Participants associated experiences they perceived as bullying with perceived changes in social interactions, emotional functioning, physical well-being, family relationships, and professional engagement. Participants frequently described feeling isolated, unsupported, and uncertain about their professional value and security within the organization as they interpreted and responded to these experiences.

The participants' narratives suggest that workplace bullying was understood as a multidimensional phenomenon that simultaneously affected personal, relational, physical, emotional, and professional aspects of life. Bullying was not described merely as exposure to negative workplace behaviors but as an experience that altered how participants viewed themselves, others, and their work environment. Participants described struggling to preserve their dignity, self-worth, and professional commitment while navigating circumstances they perceived as hostile, unfair, or psychologically unsafe.

Despite these difficulties, participants also described engaging in various adaptive responses in an effort to maintain resilience and continue functioning professionally. They reported drawing strength from self-improvement, further education, support from family and trusted peers, cognitive reframing, religious faith, and, in some cases, transfer to a different work environment. However, their accounts suggest that individual coping mechanisms alone were often insufficient to fully alleviate the effects of workplace bullying. Participants frequently associated supportive leadership, fair organizational practices, and psychologically safe work environments with feelings of recovery, renewed confidence, and perceived improvements in well-being.

Taken together, the essential structure of the experience may be understood as living and working within relationships perceived as unequal and potentially threatening while continually striving to preserve dignity, professional identity, emotional well-being, and commitment to teaching. Across participants, workplace bullying was experienced not merely as a series of negative acts but as an ongoing challenge to one's sense of belonging, professional worth, and psychological safety within the school environment. Participants' accounts suggest that the meaning of workplace bullying extended beyond discrete negative acts and was experienced as an ongoing struggle to maintain professional purpose and personal resilience in the face of perceived workplace tension, exclusion, and diminished psychological safety.

The phenomenological structures and constituent meanings identified across participants converged to reveal an essential structure characterized by the ongoing effort to preserve dignity, professional identity, and psychological safety within workplace relationships perceived as unequal and potentially threatening.

Conclusions

The findings of this study lead to the following conclusions:

1. The participants described the lived experience of workplace bullying as characterized by lived meanings of public verbal disparagement and professional humiliation, lived meanings of intimidation, threat, and psychological control, cyberbullying through official communication platforms, and lived meanings of perceived career obstruction and work-related bullying. Although some participants reported financial burdens, including salary deductions and healthcare-related expenses, these were interpreted as consequences associated with workplace bullying rather than as a separate category of bullying behavior.



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2. The participants reported experiences that they associated with workplace bullying and described these experiences as influencing multiple areas of their well-being. Their accounts included persistent fear, intrusive thoughts, sleep difficulties, social withdrawal, reduced trust in colleagues, physical discomfort, emotional distress, and reduced professional confidence. These findings describe the participants' perceived experiences and do not constitute clinical diagnoses or establish medical causation.
3. Participants described workplace bullying as being associated with perceived changes in their professional functioning and work performance. Some described reduced motivation, difficulty concentrating, absences from work, lower confidence, and changes in their mood while teaching. These accounts suggest that teacher well-being and workplace climate may have important implications for professional functioning and instructional practice. However, the study did not directly measure instructional effectiveness or student learning outcomes.
4. The participants described lived meanings associated with various coping responses to manage their experiences, including professional self-improvement, graduate education, support from family and trusted peers, cognitive reframing, and religious or spiritual coping. One participant also described a transfer to another school environment as an important change associated with a more supportive professional experience. The fundamental structure (essence) revealed that participants perceived both individual coping resources and supportive organizational environments as important in managing their experiences.
5. The essential structure of the lived experience revealed the importance of psychologically safe and supportive school environments. The essential structure revealed that school leaders and educational authorities may consider how leadership practices, grievance procedures, professional evaluation processes, and support systems can help address workplace concerns while protecting teacher dignity and professional functioning.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to address, mitigate, and prevent workplace bullying within educational settings:

1. The Department of Education and relevant educational authorities may review existing mechanisms for addressing workplace bullying and other forms of professional mistreatment. Consideration may be given to accessible and confidential reporting procedures, clear processes for handling complaints, and safeguards intended to reduce fear of retaliation.
2. School leaders and administrators may strengthen professional development initiatives related to ethical leadership, respectful communication, conflict management, psychological safety, and the responsible exercise of authority. Leadership development activities may also include reflection on how public criticism, digital communication, and performance evaluation practices can affect teacher well-being and professional relationships.
3. Educational institutions may review procedures related to performance evaluation, assignment of professional responsibilities, and access to professional development opportunities. Transparent and consistently applied procedures may help strengthen teachers' confidence in institutional processes and reduce perceptions of unfair treatment.
4. Schools and teacher organizations may consider strengthening appropriate peer-support and employee-support mechanisms. These may provide teachers with opportunities to seek assistance, discuss workplace concerns, and access available professional, psychological, legal, medical, or other relevant support services when needed.
5. Teachers experiencing workplace difficulties may consider documenting relevant professional communications and incidents through appropriate and lawful means and may seek assistance through established institutional procedures and available support systems.
6. Future researchers may conduct studies involving larger and more diverse groups of teachers and educational personnel to further examine workplace bullying across different school contexts. Mixed-methods, longitudinal, or comparative studies may also explore the relationship between workplace climate, teacher well-being, leadership practices, professional performance, and, where appropriate, student learning outcomes.
7. Future studies may further examine the concept of career-related or economic consequences of workplace bullying, particularly the perceived effects of restricted professional opportunities, assignment practices, promotion, and access to professional development.



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