

The Impact of Workplace Bullying on the Psychological and Work Performance of Teachers

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Abstract— Workplace bullying is a persistent problem in schools, yet its effects on teachers in the Philippines are not well documented. This explanatory sequential mixed methods study examined the impact of workplace bullying on the psychological state and work performance of 147 private school teachers in Baliwag City, Bulacan. Data were gathered using the Negative Acts Questionnaire Revised, the Cyberbullying Questionnaire Short Version, the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales 21, and the Stanford Presenteeism Scale 6. Focus group discussions with eleven key informants who had high bullying and symptom scores and low work performance followed the survey. Teachers experienced personal and work-related bullying at a moderate level, while physically intimidating and cyber bullying were slight. Bullying did not significantly predict psychological state overall, but it significantly predicted work performance, with cyberbullying as the only significant individual predictor. Psychological state was negatively related to work performance. The focus groups showed that the most affected teachers experienced social exclusion, excessive workload, and verbal abuse, which led to distress, low self-esteem, and reduced motivation and productivity. Guided by Affective Events Theory, the findings were used to design a four-day psychoeducational program to help schools prevent and address workplace bullying.

Keywords— Affective Events Theory; cyberbullying; mixed methods; psychoeducational program; psychological state; teachers; work performance; workplace bullying.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching is regarded as one of the most important and honorable professions in society. Teachers form the minds of present and future generations and are charged not only with imparting knowledge but also with creating a safe and supportive learning environment. Like many other professions, however, education is affected by workplace bullying, an issue that bears on teachers' psychological well-being and general work performance and, through them, on the quality of education that students receive.

Workplace bullying involves harmful and intentional actions that undermine, intimidate, or degrade individuals through negative interactions with coworkers, supervisors, or administrators. Einarsen et al. (2020) describe it as systematic exposure to unfavorable workplace behaviors over an extended period in circumstances where the targets have little or no opportunity to defend themselves, while Nielsen et al. (2020) stress negative behaviors carried out frequently and over a prolonged period, usually against an individual employee by colleagues or superiors. The American Psychiatric Association (2023) likewise describes multiple, repeated, intentional acts of aggression, hostility, social

isolation, disrespect, or mistreatment that may occur in person or through email, text messaging, and social media. Common examples include excessive criticism of one's work, withholding information that affects performance, assigning impossible tasks, spreading rumors, and social isolation. At its core, bullying is an irrational use of power (National Centre against Bullying, 2021) that rests on a power imbalance between the bully and the target (Taylor, 2021). Bullies seek to feel superior by making targets feel inferior and alone, leaving them unable to defend themselves and eroding their confidence and morale (Mulvahill, 2020). Workplace bullying may take verbal, physical, sexual, or cyber forms (Bulut & Hihi, 2021).

The number of workers affected appears to be substantial and rising worldwide. A survey of 2,000 employees in the United Kingdom found that 23% had been bullied, and about 57% of bullying cases involved supervisors (Bullying in the Workplace Statistics for the UK, 2020). In the United States, Rosling (2020) reported that 90% of workers had experienced bullying, that three-quarters of the bullies were male, and that 60% of them targeted women. The ILO–Lloyd's Register Foundation–Gallup (2021) survey, the first global assessment of workers' experiences of violence and harassment, covered more than 74,000 workers in 121 countries and territories. It found that 22% of women and 18% of men in the Philippines had experienced violence and harassment at work, and that 60% of affected Filipinos said it had happened three or more times. Most victims who reported the incident told a friend, relative, or coworker rather than the police or social services; women most often stayed silent for fear for their reputation (73%), whereas men more often felt that reporting would be a waste of time (57%).

Most research on workplace bullying has been conducted in Western economies, with little attention to Asian workplaces (Michetti, 2020). Within education, school administrators and school boards have devoted considerable effort to student bullying in K–12 schools, but far less attention has gone to bullying among school personnel (Kleinheksel & Geisel, 2019). School staff are not immune: educators bullied by other educators or administrators suffer personal and professional repercussions. In a qualitative study, Gregg and Burleigh (2022) found that targets experienced reduced self-esteem, depression, helplessness, and anxiety, as well as fear, emotional drain, and exhaustion in anticipation of encounters with the bully. Depression and suicidal thoughts were the most serious psychological effects.

The Philippine legal context adds to the concern. According to Conventus Law (2022), no specific law covers workplace bullying, unlike bullying in schools, which is covered by Republic Act 10627. Bills seeking to close this gap have been filed, including House Bill 815 (2016); Senate Bill 1217, or the "Anti-Office Bullying Act of 2019," filed by Senator Ramon Revilla Jr.; and House Bill 8446, the proposed Anti-Bullying in the Workplace Act. These bills would require government and non-government offices to adopt policies against acts such as physical, emotional, and mental harm, name-calling, cyberbullying, spreading of rumors and false news, threats and intimidation, taking undue credit for others' work, and blocking access to workplace and career opportunities. Their proponents argue that bullying is often ignored by employers and coworkers even though it harms victims' health, productivity, morale, and long-term careers. Bullying also erodes organizational functioning and stakeholder support, which is why administrators are urged to integrate bullying-prevention policies into their workplace policies (Crisostomo, 2023).

Despite extensive evidence on the prevalence, predictors, and outcomes of bullying, important gaps and contradictory results remain. Tuckey et al. (2023) note that research on whether workplace bullying affects work performance has produced mixed results: some studies find a significant negative effect and others do not, and although the harm to targets' health is clear, findings on job performance remain inconclusive. Published research on workplace bullying in educational institutions is limited, and evidence on the magnitude of the problem in Philippine schools is scarcer still. This study therefore investigated workplace bullying among teachers in select private schools, focusing on its psychological effects (stress, anxiety, and depression) and its implications for work performance. By combining quantitative data with qualitative insights, it aimed to provide an empirical foundation for a psychoeducational program that raises awareness of workplace bullying, builds coping strategies, and promotes a positive work environment for teachers and other school stakeholders.

Workplace Bullying and Psychological Health

Workplace bullying is considered one of the most stressful phenomena at work and an example of a dysfunctional, toxic relationship that harms individuals' physical and psychological health. It is far from uncommon: in the 2021 WBI U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey, 30% of workers reported directly experiencing bullying at work, rising to 43.2% among those who work remotely. Pooled findings from 12 studies put the prevalence of bullying at some point in a career at around 11%. Its emotional, psychological, medical, and socioeconomic consequences are well documented, and it is a major source of work-related distress and reduced psychological well-being. Asrar et al. (2021) found that workplace bullying significantly affected the psychological well-being of doctors, with gender moderating the relationship, and Lo Presti et al. (2019) showed that anxiety mediated the association between bullying and negative physical symptoms, while anxiety and depression both

mediated its association with negative psychological symptoms.

Bullying behaviors include verbal criticism, personal attacks, humiliation, belittling, and exclusion, and persistent mistreatment of this kind is strongly correlated with later mental health problems in general and occupation-specific populations and across national and cultural boundaries (Wu et al., 2020). Exposure raises the risk of anxiety, depression, and stress-related disorders (Singh et al., 2021), and victims, their coworkers, and their relatives may experience stress, depression, feelings of injustice, and anger. Cerdeira et al. (2023) found that bullying was related to mental restlessness, sadness, impulsivity, and anxiety, and in every case lowered psychological well-being. Bullying was correlated with depression among Bangladeshi nurses (Chowdhury et al., 2022) and with psychological stress in the study of Steele et al. (2020). Mehwish et al. (2021) reported that both face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying adversely affect emotional and physical health, with an estimated 10% to 50% of employees bullied at work. Anasori et al. (2023) showed that bullying predicted psychological distress and reduced work engagement, and Nauman et al. (2019) found a spillover effect in which bullying increases job-related anxiety, which leads to insomnia and, in turn, lower life satisfaction.

Longitudinal and meta-analytic evidence points the same way. Boudrias et al. (2021) identified more than 50 longitudinal studies of consequences, over 20 of which examined psychological outcomes such as depression and anxiety. Malik and Björkqvist (2019) found a significant effect of bullying on stress symptoms, and a meta-analysis reported a mean correlation of .44 (95% CI [.36, .48]) between bullying and post-traumatic stress symptoms (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2020). Another meta-analysis found that bullying exposure increased the likelihood of future mental health problems (OR = 1.68), and a representative study with a five-year time lag showed that bullying predicted mental health problems even after adjusting for baseline mental health, gender, age, job change, job demands, and job control (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2020). At the extreme, a pooled analysis of cohorts from Finland, Sweden, and Denmark found a 1.3 times higher risk of suicide death or attempt among employees exposed to workplace violence, with a possibly increased risk among those exposed to bullying (Hanson et al., 2023). In Japan, 15% of surveyed workers had experienced bullying, 9% had severe psychological distress, and 12% had suicidal ideation (Tsuno & Tabuchi, 2022), and Hollis (2019) reported that faculty who were bullied indicated that bullying may be a precursor to suicidal ideation.

In educational settings, bullying among peers appears to be extensive in schools (Grant Coke, 2021) and is a frequent problem for teachers (Ogbuabor & Ebeh, 2022). Such cases are often concealed or ignored, contributing to depression among victims, and teachers have long endured workplace bullying (Jacobs & De Wet, 2021). Azmat et al. (2023) concluded that bullying damages teachers' psychological health, lowers their self-esteem and confidence, causes depression, and sometimes leads them to quit. Yet organizational responses are frequently unsatisfactory and

may even create conditions that let bullying continue (Bentley et al., 2009; Hodgins et al., 2020), despite symptoms that include stress, headaches, nausea, insomnia, difficulty concentrating, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Bullying is also linked to stress-related health problems and to socioeconomic consequences such as sick-leave absenteeism and unemployment (Chan et al., 2019).

Most of this evidence, around 95% by one estimate, comes from Western countries and Caucasian samples, and studies from Eastern countries, particularly the Philippines, remain scarce. Culture can alter how bullying is experienced, perceived, and given meaning. In Malaysia, employees tend to regard work-related bullying as common and expected, an institutionalized mistreatment rooted in the power hierarchy of Malay culture, and physical intimidation is not a factor (Kwan et al., 2020). Another Malaysian study found that more than one in three employees had experienced bullying, which was associated with being female, higher income, and greater psychological distress (Chan et al., 2019). Bullying is increasingly recognized as a significant public health concern and a major risk factor for employee health, yet less is known about its prevalence in the Philippines, particularly in the education sector. This study therefore examines the relationship between workplace bullying and psychological distress, specifically depression, stress, and anxiety.

Workplace Bullying and Work Performance

Work performance refers to the primary technical process by which an organization produces goods and services, and it includes both the quantity and the quality of employees' output. Bullying behaviors exist in all workplaces and can affect any worker, and most research on bullying and performance points to negative consequences for employee behavior and output. Employees who are bullied are likely to experience stress and other mental health problems that impair their performance. Job stress consists of harmful emotional and physical responses that arise when job requirements do not match the employee's needs, resources, and capabilities (World Health Organization, 2020), and bullied employees often find it difficult to act on or even talk about their experiences (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2022).

Studies from several settings link bullying to poorer performance. Malik and Sattar (2020) found in Pakistan that bullying harmed employees' work performance through emotional exhaustion, and Singh et al. (2021) reported organizational costs such as lower productivity, higher absenteeism, and turnover. Huang et al. (2022) found that bullying weakens cooperation and jeopardizes patient safety and quality of treatment, and Tuckey et al. (2023) argued that bullying can directly undermine cognitive performance capability. Rosander et al. (2021) suggested that exposure can reduce a person's ability to perform tasks and duties, sometimes to the point of contract discontinuation, and PM Jose et al. (2023) reported that bullying reduced employees' perceived employability and engagement. Among teachers, Azmat et al. (2023) found that bullying negatively affected job performance and that female and less experienced teachers were bullied more, and Naz and Akhter (2022) found that

teachers' performance decreased as workplace bullying increased. Robert (2018) linked bullying to increased stress and decreased task performance, and Meriläinen et al. (2019) examined its effects on performance and engagement among academics.

The evidence is not entirely uniform. Omrani (2022) observed that bullying occurs to some extent in almost every organization and may be overt or covert; although the link between bullying and task performance was tenuous, the data showed a strong relationship between bullying and job stress. Serban et al. (2022) noted that negative social stressors such as bullying undermine organizational productivity, increase employee disengagement, and decrease worker performance, and de Wet and Jacobs (2021) added that the health consequences of bullying can make it hard to perform work. These findings are especially relevant to teaching, which demands high levels of commitment, concentration, and emotional investment. Teachers who are bullied may struggle to give their work their full attention, may perform worse, lose interest, and disengage, and bullying can undermine the cooperation and teamwork on which the profession depends, ultimately affecting students' learning experiences.

Little research has examined how common this problem is in educational institutions, and the Philippines has done little to study how workplace bullying affects employee performance. Understanding the scope of bullying in schools can motivate educators and the education sector to develop measures to reduce it and can open the way to in-depth future studies.

Synthesis and Research Gap

The literature converges on several points. First, workplace bullying is conceptualized as repeated, long-lasting negative treatment in which the target has difficulty defending themselves and in which a power imbalance is central (Einarsen et al., 2020; National Centre against Bullying, 2021; Taylor, 2021); in some countries it is also called mobbing (Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996). Second, bullying is strongly associated with psychological harm, especially stress, anxiety, and depression, and, in severe and prolonged cases, with suicidal ideation (Cerdeira et al., 2023; Hanson et al., 2023; Tsuno & Tabuchi, 2022; Wu et al., 2020); it also predicts future mental health problems (Nielsen & Einarsen, 2020). Third, studies in schools and universities report similar harm to teachers' psychological health, self-esteem, and confidence (Azmat et al., 2023; Gregg & Burleigh, 2022; Ogbuabor & Ebeh, 2022).

The evidence on work performance is less settled. Several studies associate bullying with reduced engagement, productivity, and performance (Huang et al., 2022; Malik & Sattar, 2020; Meriläinen et al., 2019; Naz & Akhter, 2022; Singh et al., 2021), but Tuckey et al. (2023) point out that findings are mixed, and Omrani (2022) found a tenuous link between bullying and task performance even as the link with job stress was strong. Moreover, although many studies address bullying and mental health, few isolate its effects on stress, anxiety, and depression, and only a handful of published studies concern educational institutions (Grant Coke, 2021; Hodgins et al., 2020; Jacobs & De Wet, 2021; Kleinhessel & Geisel, 2019; Michetti, 2020). Evidence from

Philippine schools is especially lacking. The present study addresses this gap by examining, in Philippine private schools, how workplace bullying relates to teachers' stress, anxiety, depression, and work performance, on the premise that schools can best serve their students when the mental health and well-being of teachers are safeguarded.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Seligman (1973) called stress, anxiety, and depression the "common colds" of psychiatry because of how frequently they are diagnosed. These mood disorders can prevent people from leading a normal life at work, in social settings, or within the family. Depending on how data are gathered and diagnoses made, as many as 25% of some population groups may experience these symptoms, and adults aged 18 to 25 show the highest prevalence at 29.4% (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2019). A World Health Organization survey identified 14.5% of Filipinos as having a diagnosis of these conditions, although this figure may not represent the entire population because of the small sample included. Because stress, anxiety, and depression are the psychological impacts of workplace bullying examined here, a theoretical lens is needed to explain how they relate to work performance.

The study is anchored on Affective Events Theory (AET), developed by organizational psychologists Howard M. Weiss and Russell Cropanzano to explain how emotions and moods influence job performance. AET links employees' internal states (cognitions, emotions, and moods) to their reactions to events in the work environment, which in turn affect performance, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. It proposes that affect-driven behaviors are explained by employees' moods and emotions, whereas cognition-based behaviors are the best predictors of job satisfaction, and that both positive events (uplifts) and negative events (hassles) have significant psychological effects on job performance and satisfaction. Emotions and behavior thus go hand in hand: an unpleasant event can trigger moods and emotions that influence how well people perform.

Applied to this study, workplace bullying is the negative work event, or "daily hassle," that teachers may experience on top of an already demanding job. Stress, anxiety, and depression are the emotional reactions the event may provoke, and these reactions may in turn influence the quality of teachers' work performance and satisfaction. If bullying is found to have a negative psychological effect on teachers, that effect may then be reflected in how they perform, because the quality of work and job performance can be influenced by mood and emotion. AET also helps employers understand employees' moods and emotions at work, which is why the emotional side of bullying should not be ignored.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of the study. The independent variable is workplace bullying, examined in four forms: personal, work-related, physically intimidating, and cyber. The dependent variables are teachers' psychological state (depression, anxiety, and stress, each examined individually) and work performance. The teachers' demographic profile (age, sex, years of teaching, and educational attainment) is also shown. The double-headed arrow denotes the relationship between psychological state

and work performance amid workplace bullying, and the findings were used to create a psychoeducational program.

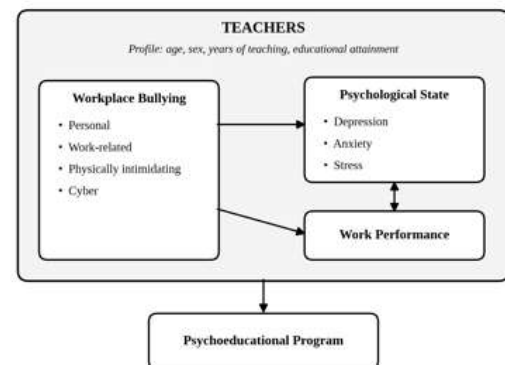


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Statement of the Problem

The main objective of the study was to ascertain the psychological and work performance impacts of workplace bullying on teachers. For the quantitative phase, the guiding research questions were:

1. What is the level of workplace bullying among the teachers in terms of:
 - 1.1 personal bullying;
 - 1.2 work-related bullying;
 - 1.3 physically intimidating bullying; and
 - 1.4 cyberbullying?
2. How may the psychological state of the teachers be described in terms of:
 - 2.1 stress;
 - 2.2 anxiety; and
 - 2.3 depression?
3. What is the level of work performance of the teachers who experienced bullying?
4. Does the level of workplace bullying exert a significant impact on the psychological state of the teachers?
5. Does the level of workplace bullying exert a significant impact on the work performance of the teachers?
6. Is there a significant correlation between the psychological state and work performance of the teachers who experienced bullying?
7. Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings, what psychoeducational program may be developed?

For the qualitative phase, the overarching research questions were:

1. What are the experiences of the key informants on workplace bullying?
2. How do the key informants describe their psychological state and work performance in the midst of workplace bullying?

Hypotheses of the Study

The quantitative phase tested the following null hypotheses at the .05 level of significance:

H₀₁: Workplace bullying has no significant impact on the psychological state of the teachers.

H₀₂: Workplace bullying has no significant impact on the work performance of the teachers.

H₀₃: There is no significant correlation between the bullied teachers' psychological state and work performance.

Significance of the Study

The results are expected to give evidence for a psychoeducational program and, possibly, administrative policies that protect teachers' psychological and physiological well-being. Specifically, the following may benefit:

Philippine Guidance and Counseling Association. The results may strengthen the association's promotion of awareness of the harmful effects of workplace bullying in the education sector and support seminars and trainings on mitigating and handling it, as well as guidance on supporting affected teachers' mental health and psychosocial needs.

Schools. The results may be used in an information campaign for all school stakeholders on the effects of workplace bullying on teachers' psychological state and work performance, with consequences for the quality of instruction that students receive.

Guidance counselors. The results can help counselors understand the prevalence of workplace bullying among teachers and its latent impact, and inform a school-based psychoeducational program to monitor and promote teachers' psychological health.

Educational psychologists. Understanding how bullying affects teachers' mental health and productivity may contribute to a positive school environment, add to the body of knowledge in educational psychology, and guide interventions that improve teachers' well-being.

School administrators. The findings can raise awareness among school heads and support policies aimed at preventing workplace bullying.

Future researchers. The study adds to the workplace bullying literature and can be replicated in other geographical contexts. Its mixed-methods design combines statistical results with participants' own perceptions to give a fuller picture of the psychological and performance consequences of bullying.

Teachers. The findings provide information about the mental health consequences of encountering workplace bullying and how these may affect performance, helping teachers understand themselves and seek appropriate ways to handle and mitigate these effects.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The purpose of a study determines its methodology and design, and choosing an appropriate methodology helps answer the research questions properly (Fraenkel et al., 2015; Polit & Beck, 2004). In line with the study's objectives, a mixed-methods approach was used, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect and analyze data (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). Mixed methods can provide detailed and comprehensive data for achieving research objectives and answering research questions (Bryman, 2006). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) identify four mixed-methods designs: triangulation, embedded, explanatory, and exploratory. The

explanatory sequential design was judged most appropriate for this study.

The explanatory design begins with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Its two-stage structure is straightforward to execute because each method is applied in a separate stage and only one type of data is gathered at a time, and the final report can be presented in two stages that give the reader a clear picture of the findings. After identifying quantitative findings that needed further explanation, the researcher collected qualitative data from participants who could help explain them. The qualitative strand used a phenomenological design, which describes the meaning of a concept or phenomenon for several individuals who share an experience of it (Creswell, 2007) and for which 5 to 25 participants are recommended. This design is suited to an in-depth understanding of the key informants' lived experiences of workplace bullying.

In the first step, research instruments were administered to respondents to collect quantitative data, which were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were then held with selected key informants to verify and explain the quantitative results. The interview data were coded and thematically analyzed, and the quantitative and qualitative results were integrated to support and validate the findings.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in four private schools offering complete basic education in Baliwag City, Bulacan, in the second district of the province. Baliwag officially became a city after a plebiscite held on December 17, 2022 (14°57'14"N, 120°54'04"E). The locale was selected because of its geographic proximity and because it was convenient for the researcher, who is employed in the city, to access.

Participants and Sampling

Purposive sampling was used in both phases. Also called judgment sampling, it requires a set of criteria that individuals must meet to be included as participants and is a way of identifying and selecting cases that uses limited research resources effectively (Palinkas et al., 2015).

The quantitative phase involved 147 full-time basic education teachers from four private schools in Baliwag City. The Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R) was administered to identify teachers exposed to workplace bullying; a score of 34 or higher was taken to indicate that a participant was already experiencing the preliminary stage of workplace bullying. The Cyberbullying Behaviour Questionnaire-Short Version (CBQ-S) was administered to assess exposure to cyberbullying. Teachers identified as experiencing bullying then completed the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21) and the Stanford Presenteeism Scale (SPS-6). Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents across the four schools, which are identified by codes for confidentiality.

Eleven key informants took part in the qualitative phase, divided into two FGDs to reduce bias. Informants were selected on three criteria: (a) the highest bullying scores, (b) the highest symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress on the

DASS-21, and (c) the lowest work performance scores; willingness to participate was also required. For neutrality, one to three participants were selected from each school. Their profiles are presented in Table.

TABLE 1. Respondents of the Study

Participating school	Number of respondents	Percentage
School A	63	42.86
School B	43	29.25
School C	22	14.97
School D	19	12.92
Total	147	100.00

Note. Schools are coded to protect confidentiality.

Instrument

Two sets of tools were used. Phase 1 used four standardized instruments: the NAQ-R and CBQ-S to assess exposure to bullying, the DASS-21 to assess psychological state, and the SPS-6 to assess work performance. Phase 2 used a semi-structured interview guide.

Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R)

The NAQ-R (Einarsen et al., 2009) measures exposure to bullying by coworkers with 22 items covering three factors. Personal bullying (12 items) refers to disparaging behavior such as humiliation and insult through gossip and rumors, reminders of faults and mistakes, being ignored or excluded, and persistent criticism. Work-related bullying (7 items) consists of assigning irrelevant or unpleasant tasks, excessive monitoring of work, tasks beyond one's capacity, and unreasonable deadlines aimed at making a person fail. Physically intimidating bullying (3 items) is the use of one's body or an object to hurt or scare another person and, in the workplace, commonly takes the form of being shouted at, being the target of spontaneous anger, invasion of personal space, threats, or actual violence. The NAQ-R builds on the earlier Negative Acts Questionnaire (Einarsen & Raknes, 1991, 1997; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001). Its criterion validity was supported by high correlations with a single-item measure of perceived victimization, and it correlated as expected with measures of mental health, psychosocial work environment, and leadership, indicating good construct validity. Cronbach's alpha was .90.

Cyberbullying Behaviour Questionnaire-Short Version (CBQ-S)

The CBQ-S is influenced by the NAQ-R (Einarsen et al., 2009), a preliminary Cyber Negative Acts Questionnaire (Sprigg et al., 2012), and a study of cyberbullying by Forssell (2014). Cyberbullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time, against a victim who cannot easily defend themselves; it extends face-to-face bullying to new, digital channels. The scale has seven items on work-related negative acts over the last six months through email, text messages, social media, and the Internet in general, such as unanswered email, aggressively worded messages, exclusion from online communities, and false statements spread online. Frequency is rated on a 5-point scale from "never" to "now and then," "monthly," "weekly," or "daily." Confirmatory factor analyses supported a one-factor model, and internal

consistency was .76 in a Swedish sample and .95 in an American sample.

Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21)

The DASS-21 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) comprises three self-report scales for depression, anxiety, and stress, with seven items per scale. Respondents rate each item from 0 (did not apply to me at all) to 3 (applied to me very much or most of the time), and subscale scores are computed by summing the relevant items. Cut-off points for each subscale were used to identify the severity of symptoms according to Lovibond and Lovibond (1995). The DASS-21 has been validated in various populations and is considered a reliable and suitable tool for quick screening, with good internal consistency and adequate concurrent validity (Coker, 2018). Cronbach's alphas were .81, .89, and .78 for the depression, anxiety, and stress subscales, respectively.

Stanford Presenteeism Scale (SPS-6)

The SPS-6 (Koopman et al., 2002) is a 6-item self-report questionnaire that measures presenteeism, that is, reduced performance at work because of health reasons. It captures workers' perceived ability to concentrate on work tasks despite the distractions of health impairments. Items are rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), giving total scores from 6 to 30, with higher scores interpreted as higher work performance. The SPS-6 has shown acceptable validity and reliability: its construct validity was supported by mild to moderate correlations with other work productivity questionnaires (Spearman's $\rho = .41-.69$), and internal consistency was $\alpha = .71$.

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews using a self-made guide based on an extensive review of relevant literature and pertinent theories. Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to obtain descriptions of the interviewee's lived world with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), and they let the interviewer guide the discussion, comment, and ask follow-up questions for clarification. The guide's open-ended questions focused on the results of the quantitative phase to maximize the explanatory power of the qualitative strand. The first section covered incidents in which teachers experienced bullying at work, and the second explored how these incidents affected their mental health and work performance. A set of follow-up questions was prepared for ambiguous or indirect responses. Before the interviews, the guide underwent content validation and member checking by experts in psychology and research, who rated how well each question reflected the construct it was intended to evaluate (Appendix A).

TABLE 2. DASS-21 Severity Levels

Severity level	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
Normal	0-9	0-7	0-14
Mild	10-13	8-9	15-18
Moderate	14-20	10-14	19-25
Severe	21-27	15-19	26-33
Extremely severe	28+	20+	34+

Note. Scores are DASS-21 subscale scores interpreted with the cut-offs of Lovibond and Lovibond (1995).

Scoring and Interpretation

Tables 2 to 4 present the scoring bands used to interpret the DASS-21, the bullying scales, and the SPS-6.

TABLE 3. Rating Scale for Levels of Workplace Bullying (NAQ-R and CBQ-S)

Rating	Range	Frequency	Severity level
5	4.50-5.00	Daily	Extremely severe
4	3.50-4.49	Weekly	Severe
3	2.50-3.49	Monthly	Mild
2	1.50-2.49	Occasionally	Moderate
1	1.00-1.49	Never	Slight

Note. VERIFY: the labels "Mild" (2.50–3.49) and "Moderate" (1.50–2.49) appear to be in reverse order

TABLE 4. Score Ranges for Work Performance (SPS-6)

Total score	Interpretation
26–30	Very high
21–25	High
16–20	Moderate
11–15	Low
6–10	Very low

Note. Higher scores indicate higher work performance.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data were gathered through survey questionnaires and focus group discussions. Before data gathering began, the researcher obtained approval and clearance from the university's Research Ethics Committee (REC).

For the quantitative phase, the researcher first sought written permission from school heads or administrators. Upon approval, respondents' consent was secured after the details of their participation were explained, and the questionnaires were administered. After retrieval, the data were collected, statistically treated, and tabulated for analysis and interpretation.

For the qualitative phase, written permission was again secured from school heads, and letters were sent to target participants inviting them to the FGDs. Those who agreed signed a consent form that included permission to record the session, and schedules were set according to their availability. The researcher began each session with an informal chat to establish the tone and build rapport, which helped participants relax and speak openly, and took notes of important observations during the discussion. The two FGDs were held via Google Meet and lasted about 60 minutes each. A psychologist or guidance counselor was available in case a participant was triggered by the discussion and needed further support. Throughout both phases, participants' personal information and rights were protected in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data. Data were tabulated and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency, percentage, and sum described the distribution of respondents; weighted means described the level of each form of bullying (personal, work-related, physically intimidating, and cyber); and frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation described the severity of stress, anxiety, and depression symptoms and the level of work performance.

Interpretation followed the scales in Tables 2 to 4. Multiple linear regression, with its accompanying F test (analysis of variance), was used to determine whether the four forms of bullying significantly predicted psychological state (Research Question 4) and work performance (Research Question 5). Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to test the relationship between psychological state and work performance (Research Question 6). All tests used a .05 level of significance.

Qualitative data. In the explanatory design, the researcher identifies particular quantitative findings that require further explanation and then gathers qualitative data from participants who can help explain them (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The FGDs were transcribed verbatim, and these transcripts were supplemented by the researcher's notes and summaries of specific sections. Because of the richness of text data, the researcher "winnowed" the data by focusing on specific points (Guest et al., 2012). The analysis proceeded in five steps: (a) verbatim transcription of the recordings; (b) review of the informants' reflections and reactions as noted by the researcher; (c) identification and tentative naming of conceptual categories from participants' responses; (d) comparison of categories, with similar ones combined until a configuration of themes emerged; and (e) examination of the overall configuration of themes in relation to bullying experiences, psychological state, and work performance. Meaning units were condensed into themes, and the quantitative and qualitative results were then merged through a joint display.

Ethical Considerations

To protect respondents' privacy, written correspondence was used to request permission from school heads and administrators, and participants were informed about the study and signed a written consent form before taking part. All data gathered were anonymous: participants were not personally identified, identifying details were removed during recording and interpretation, and only the researcher had access to the collected data. Respondents could withdraw at any time, even after starting the survey, without repercussions, and any details they wished to omit were deleted immediately. Participants could also decline to answer any question, and their decision was respected. All information was handled in strict confidence and in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Scope and Delimitations

The study examined the psychological and work performance impacts of workplace bullying on teachers. The forms of bullying assessed were personal, work-related, physically intimidating, and cyber bullying, and the perpetrators considered were limited to coworkers, that is, co-teachers, superiors such as principals and supervisors, and other school personnel. The psychological effects were limited to symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression, and the study also examined whether teachers' work performance was related to these symptoms. It focused only on teachers in select private schools in Baliwag City, Bulacan, where the researcher is employed, since it aims to serve as the basis for a school-based psychoeducational program tailored to teachers.

III. RESULTS

The results are presented in the order of the research questions. The quantitative phase is reported first, followed by the qualitative phase, the integration of the two, and the psychoeducational program developed from the findings.

Quantitative Phase

Levels of Workplace Bullying

Tables 5 to 8 show the mean score for each item under the four forms of bullying, interpreted using the scale in Table 3.

As Table 5 shows, personal bullying occurred at a moderate level overall ($M = 1.63$). The most frequently reported experiences were being ignored or excluded ($M = 1.99$), repeated reminders of errors or mistakes ($M = 1.93$), and persistent criticism of errors or mistakes ($M = 1.88$). Eight of the 12 items were rated moderate; the remaining four, namely insulting or offensive remarks, being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when approaching others, practical jokes, and excessive teasing and sarcasm, were rated slight.

TABLE 5. Levels of Workplace Bullying: Personal Bullying

Item	Mean	Interpretation
1. Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your work	1.50	Moderate
2. Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks	1.87	Moderate
3. Spreading of gossip and rumors about you	1.86	Moderate
4. Being ignored or excluded	1.99	Moderate
5. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person, your attitudes, or your private life	1.41	Slight
6. Hints or signals from others that you should quit your job	1.51	Moderate
7. Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes	1.93	Moderate
8. Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach	1.35	Slight
9. Persistent criticism of your errors or mistakes	1.88	Moderate
10. Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get along with	1.23	Slight
11. Having allegations made against you	1.73	Moderate
12. Being the subject of excessive teasing and sarcasm	1.33	Slight
Average	1.63	Moderate

Note. Interpretation follows the scale in Table 3.

Work-related bullying was likewise moderate overall ($M = 1.62$; Table 6). The highest-rated item was exposure to an unmanageable workload ($M = 2.12$), followed by being given tasks with unreasonable deadlines ($M = 2.00$) and excessive monitoring of work ($M = 1.73$). Having one's opinions ignored had a mean of 1.60. The lowest-rated item was pressure not to claim something to which one is entitled by right, such as sick leave or holiday ($M = 1.15$).

TABLE 6. Levels of Workplace Bullying: Work-Related Bullying

Item	Mean	Interpretation
13. Someone withholding information which affects your performance	1.35	Slight
14. Being ordered to do work below your level of competence	1.41	Slight
15. Being exposed to an unmanageable workload	2.12	Moderate
16. Having your opinions ignored	1.60	Moderate
17. Being given tasks with unreasonable deadlines	2.00	Moderate
18. Excessive monitoring of your work	1.73	Moderate
19. Pressure not to claim something to which by right you are entitled (e.g., sick leave, holiday)	1.15	Slight
Average	1.62	Moderate

Note. Interpretation follows the scale in Table 3.

Physically intimidating bullying was slight overall ($M = 1.15$; Table 7). Only being shouted at or being the target of

spontaneous anger was rated moderate ($M = 1.54$). Intimidating behaviors such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, and blocking one's way had a mean of 1.14, and threats of violence, physical abuse, or actual abuse was lowest at 1.01.

TABLE 7. Levels of Workplace Bullying: Physically Intimidating Bullying

Item	Mean	Interpretation
20. Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger	1.54	Moderate
21. Intimidating behaviors such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking your way	1.14	Slight
22. Threats of violence or physical abuse or actual abuse	1.01	Slight
Average	1.15	Slight

Note. Interpretation follows the scale in Table 3.

Cyberbullying was also slight overall ($M = 1.23$; Table 8). False statements spread on the Internet was the only item rated moderate ($M = 1.68$), followed by negative comments on one's work performance on the Internet ($M = 1.34$) and supervisors or colleagues not responding to emails or text messages ($M = 1.22$). Aggressively worded messages and threatening messages about friends or family had the lowest means (both 1.02).

TABLE 8. Levels of Workplace Bullying: Cyberbullying

Item	Mean	Interpretation
23. Your supervisor/colleagues are not responding to your emails or text messages	1.22	Slight
24. Your work performance has been commented upon in negative terms on the Internet	1.34	Slight
25. Rude messages have been sent to you via digital media	1.16	Slight
26. Necessary information has been withheld, making your work more difficult (e.g., being excluded from email lists)	1.14	Slight
27. Aggressively worded messages (e.g., capital letters, bold style, or multiple exclamation marks) have been sent to you via email, text messages, or the like	1.02	Slight
28. Threatening messages about your friends/your family have been sent to you via digital media	1.02	Slight
29. False statements about you have been spread on the Internet	1.68	Moderate
Average	1.23	Slight

Note. Interpretation follows the scale in Table 3.

Table 9 shows the levels of bullying by department. Junior high school (JHS) teachers reported the highest personal bullying ($M = 1.75$), followed by kindergarten (1.65), elementary (1.58), and senior high school (SHS) teachers (1.52). JHS teachers also reported the highest work-related bullying (1.77), followed by kindergarten (1.63), elementary (1.62), and SHS teachers (1.50). Physically intimidating bullying was highest among SHS teachers (1.18) and lowest among kindergarten teachers (1.10), and SHS teachers reported the highest cyberbullying (1.30), followed by JHS teachers (1.28). Across the four forms, the overall mean was 1.41, a slight level.

TABLE 9. Levels of Workplace Bullying by Department

Form of bullying	Kinder	Elementary	JHS	SHS	Overall	Interpretation
Personal	1.65	1.58	1.75	1.52	1.63	Moderate
Work-related	1.63	1.62	1.77	1.50	1.62	Moderate
Physically intimidating	1.10	1.16	1.17	1.18	1.15	Slight
Cyber	1.13	1.22	1.28	1.30	1.23	Slight
Total					1.41	Slight

Note. JHS = junior high school; SHS = senior high school. Values are mean scores; interpretation follows Table 3.

Psychological State of the Teachers

Tables 10 to 12 present the distribution of stress, anxiety, and depression symptoms among the 147 teachers. For stress (Table 10), the mean score was 10.97 (SD = 5.70). None of the teachers fell in the extremely severe category, 2 (1.36%) were in the severe category, 54 (36.73%) were moderate, 30 (20.41%) were mild, and 61 (41.50%) were normal.

TABLE 10. Psychological State of the Teachers: Stress

Score range (severity level)	Frequency	Percentage
28 and above (extremely severe)	0	0.00
21-27 (severe)	2	1.36
14-20 (moderate)	54	36.73
10-13 (mild)	30	20.41
0-9 (normal)	61	41.50
Total	147	100.00

Note. $M = 10.97$, $SD = 5.70$. VERIFY: these are the DASS-21 depression bands; the stress bands in Table 2 are 0–14, 15–18, 19–25, 26–33, and 34+.

For anxiety (Table 11), the mean score was 5.31 (SD = 3.19). No teacher had severe or extremely severe anxiety; 13 (8.84%) were in the moderate category, 35 (23.81%) were mild, and 99 (67.35%) were normal.

TABLE 11. Psychological State of the Teachers: Anxiety

Score range (severity level)	Frequency	Percentage
20 and above (extremely severe)	0	0.00
15–19 (severe)	0	0.00
10–14 (moderate)	13	8.84
8–9 (mild)	35	23.81
0–7 (normal)	99	67.35
Total	147	100.00

Note. $M = 5.31$, $SD = 3.19$.

For depression (Table 12), the mean score was 7.48 (SD = 3.85). No teacher had severe or extremely severe depression; 1 (0.68%) was in the moderate category, 4 (2.72%) were mild, and 142 (96.60%) were normal.

TABLE 12. Psychological State of the Teachers: Depression

Score range (severity level)	Frequency	Percentage
34 and above (extremely severe)	0	0.00
26–33 (severe)	0	0.00
19–25 (moderate)	1	0.68
15–18 (mild)	4	2.72
0–14 (normal)	142	96.60
Total	147	100.00

Note. $M = 7.48$, $SD = 3.85$.

Level of Work Performance

As shown in Table 13, the mean work performance score was 18.94 (SD = 3.79) out of a possible 30, which falls in the moderate range. Most teachers were in the moderate category (63 teachers, 42.86%), 35 (23.81%) were high, and 12 (8.16%) were very high, while 27 (18.37%) were low and 10 (6.80%) were very low.

Impact of Workplace Bullying on Psychological State

A multiple regression tested whether the four forms of bullying predicted the teachers' psychological state (Table 14). None of the predictors was significant: personal bullying ($\beta = .012$, $p = .902$), work-related bullying ($\beta = .053$, $p = .636$),

physically intimidating bullying ($\beta = .056$, $p = .581$), and cyberbullying ($\beta = .093$, $p = .372$). The overall model was not significant, $F(4, 142) = 0.243$, $p = .914$, and explained less than 1% of the variance in psychological state ($R^2 = .007$). The null hypothesis that workplace bullying has no significant impact on the psychological state of the teachers (H_01) was therefore not rejected.

TABLE 13. Work Performance Level of the Teachers

Score range (interpretation)	Frequency	Percentage
26–30 (very high)	12	8.16
21–25 (high)	35	23.81
16–20 (moderate)	63	42.86
11–15 (low)	27	18.37
6–10 (very low)	10	6.80
Total	147	100.00

Note. $M = 18.94$, $SD = 3.79$.

TABLE 14. Regression of Psychological State on the Forms of Workplace Bullying

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
(Constant)	7.246	2.332		3.107	.002
Personal	0.014	0.115	.012	0.124	.902
Work-related	0.077	0.162	.053	0.474	.636
Physically intimidating	0.219	0.395	.056	0.553	.581
Cyber	0.235	0.263	.093	0.895	.372

Note. Dependent variable: psychological state (DASS-21). $R = .083$, $R^2 = .007$, $F(4, 142) = 0.243$, $p = .914$; $\alpha = .05$.

Impact of Workplace Bullying on Work Performance

The regression of work performance on the four forms of bullying is presented in Table 15. The overall model was significant, $F(4, 142) = 4.831$, $p = .001$. Cyberbullying was the only significant predictor ($B = -0.789$, $\beta = -.227$, $p = .021$): each one-point increase in cyberbullying score was associated with a 0.79-point decrease in work performance. Personal bullying ($p = .844$), work-related bullying ($p = .408$), and physically intimidating bullying ($p = .333$) were not significant predictors. The null hypothesis that workplace bullying has no significant impact on the work performance of the teachers (H_02) was therefore rejected.

TABLE 15. Regression of Work Performance on the Forms of Workplace Bullying

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p
(Constant)	29.690	3.002		9.889	< .001
Personal	-0.029	0.148	-.019	-0.197	.844
Work-related	-0.173	0.209	-.086	-0.829	.408
Physically intimidating	-0.495	0.509	-.093	-0.972	.333
Cyber	-0.789	0.338	-.227	-2.334	.021

Note. Dependent variable: work performance (SPS-6). $F(4, 142) = 4.831$, $p = .001$; $\alpha = .05$.

Relationship Between Psychological State and Work Performance

Pearson's product-moment correlation was used to test the relationship between the teachers' psychological state and their work performance (Table 16). The correlation was negative and statistically significant, $r = -.711$, $p = .039$: teachers with poorer psychological state tended to report lower work performance. The null hypothesis that there is no significant

correlation between the bullied teachers' psychological state and work performance (H_03) was therefore rejected.

TABLE 16. Relationship Between Psychological State and Work Performance

Variables	r	p (2-tailed)	N
Psychological state and work performance	.711	.039	147

Note. VERIFY: with $N = 147$, $r = -.711$ corresponds to $p < .001$, not .039

Qualitative Phase

Two FGDs were conducted with the selected key informants via Google Meet, each lasting about 60 minutes. The sessions were recorded and transcribed, and an interview guide directed the flow of the discussions. The findings below summarize what informants said in response to the guide questions, based on the transcripts of the recordings and the researcher's notes.

Eleven teachers qualified as key informants using the criteria described in the Methods (Table 17). They were divided into two FGDs.

TABLE 17. Profile of the Key Informants (KI) in the Focus Group Discussions

Participant	Position	Profile
T1	SHS teacher	Female, 26 years old; bachelor's degree; 2 years of teaching
T2	SHS teacher	Female, 32 years old; bachelor's degree; 8 years of teaching
T3	SHS teacher	Female, 29 years old; bachelor's degree; 6 years of teaching
T4	SHS teacher	Male, 29 years old; bachelor's degree; 5 years of teaching
T5	Elementary teacher	Female, 26 years old; master's units in Educational Management; 3 years of teaching
T6	JHS teacher	Female, 24 years old; bachelor's degree; 1 year of teaching
T7	Elementary teacher	Female, 29 years old; master's units in Educational Management; 5 years of teaching
T8	Elementary teacher	Female, 25 years old; bachelor's degree; 2 years of teaching
T9	Elementary teacher	Female, 27 years old; master's units in Educational Management; 4 years of teaching
T10	Kinder teacher	Female, fifty-two (51) years old; bachelor's degree; 24 years of teaching
T11	Elementary teacher	Female, 43 years old; bachelor's degree; twenty-four (18) years of teaching

Note. VERIFY: T10's age and T11's years of teaching are written with conflicting numerals in the original

The transcripts were analyzed using the joint display method: meaning units were identified and condensed into themes. Three sets of themes emerged, addressing the informants' experiences of workplace bullying, their psychological state, and their work performance. Participant codes and sample statements illustrate each theme.

Experiences of Workplace Bullying

Three sub-themes described how the informants experienced workplace bullying (Table 18). Social bullying, including cyberbullying, involved exclusion, lies, and false rumors that tarnished professional and personal reputation, and was described by four informants. Excessive workload and deadlines was described by five informants who were burdened with additional duties and rushed deadlines without proper support, leading to exhaustion. Verbal abuse was described by three informants who experienced direct or indirect derogatory remarks, including sarcasm and belittling comments about personal or work matters.

TABLE 18. Themes and Sample Statements on the Teachers' Experiences of Workplace Bullying

Sub-theme	Description	Participants	Sample statement
Social bullying	Social bullying (including cyberbullying) involves exclusion, lies, false rumors, or false information told to tarnish professional and personal reputation; it was the most common experience of the respondents.	T1, T3, T4, T8	"I feel uncomfortable and alone. I can feel the group gossip they make behind my back, I'm sure they are referring to me."
Excessive workload and deadlines	Bullied teachers are burdened with additional duties and rushed deadlines without proper support, leading to exhaustion from excessive workload.	T5, T7, T9, T10, T11	"I think my experience in bullying <i>sa school namin</i> is giving me some work that was not mine or not assigned for me to do then <i>sasabihin pa</i> rush that needed to submit <i>agad</i> ."
Verbal abuse	Teachers experienced direct or indirect derogatory remarks, including sarcasm or belittling comments about personal or work matters.	T1, T6, T8	"Verbal bullying, <i>uwag</i> body shaming, <i>masasabihan ako ng maliit/pandak</i> , for them <i>joke lang</i> , but I am really offended."

Note. Core theme: workplace bullying. Filipino words in the statements are italicized.

The core theme for psychological state was psychological distress, with three sub-themes (Table 19). The first, feelings of anxiety, stress, depression, and helplessness, was described by four informants, who attributed heightened distress to persistent criticism and derogatory remarks, whether direct or indirect. The second, low self-esteem and self-confidence, was described by three informants, who internalized negative feedback and came to doubt their abilities. The third, psychological trauma, was described by two informants, for whom ongoing bullying had a lasting impact on emotional well-being.

TABLE 19. Themes and Sample Statements on the Psychological State of the Teachers Amid Workplace Bullying

Sub-theme	Description	Participants	Sample statement
Feelings of anxiety, stress, depression, and helplessness	Persistent exposure to criticism and derogatory remarks, communicated directly or indirectly by colleagues, heightened anxiety, stress, and depression.	T1, T3, T7, T8	"I feel uncomfortable and feel some anxiety. I always think about it and make me feel miserable inside."
Low self-esteem and self-confidence	Respondents internalize negative feedback, doubt their abilities, and feel inadequate in their professional capacities.	T1, T2, T3	"I lost my self-esteem and begin to feel highly self-conscious, I'm afraid <i>na everything na gagawin ko is mali</i> ."
Psychological trauma	Ongoing, relentless bullying has a profound and lasting impact on emotional well-being, resulting in long-term distress and trauma.	T1, T6	"I will never forget that experience. I still feel angry and hurt <i>sa mga ginawa nila sa 'kin</i> . <i>Dahil dun</i> , I became an overthinker I feel like others are talking about me behind my back."

Note. Core theme: psychological distress.

For work performance, the core theme was decreased work performance and engagement, with three sub-themes (Table 20). Low productivity and efficiency, described by three informants, involved criticism and negativity that created distractions and reduced focus and concentration, lowering work output. Lack of motivation, described by three informants, involved demoralization and loss of enthusiasm that drained their energy and led to poor output. Increased absenteeism and turnover, described by three informants, involved wanting to take time off to avoid bullying colleagues and, eventually, seeking new employment to escape the hostile workplace.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Consistent with the sequential explanatory design, the qualitative findings were used to help explain the quantitative results. Table 21 presents the joint display that merges the two strands for the psychological state and work performance questions.

TABLE 20. Themes and Sample Statements on the Work Performance of the Teachers Amid Workplace Bullying

Sub-theme	Description	Participants	Sample statement
Low productivity and efficiency	Constant criticism and negativity create distractions and diminish focus and concentration, decreasing overall work output.	T1, T2, T6	"I can't really focus, <i>naapokuhan ako talaga</i> . I struggle to do my daily task and finish them in time, <i>may mga responsibilities pa na nakakalimutan ko</i> ."
Lack of motivation	Demoralization and lack of enthusiasm from negative interactions drain energy and lead to poor work output and efficiency.	T1, T7, T8	"I don't have energy to work, I feel very lazy in doing or finishing things, just want to go home even though it's too early. There are days I don't even want to show up to the school."
Increased absenteeism and turnover	Respondents often want to take time off to avoid bullying colleagues and eventually seek new employment to escape the hostile workplace.	T1, T4, T6	"I want to resign so badly just to end the suffering that I'm dealing with <i>halos araw-araw</i> ."

Note. Core theme: decreased work performance and engagement.

For psychological state, the survey found that the level of bullying did not significantly predict stress, anxiety, and depression scores, and most teachers scored in the normal range on anxiety and depression. The informants, who were selected for having the highest bullying and symptom scores and the lowest work performance, nonetheless described psychological distress, low self-esteem, and trauma. For work performance, the two strands pointed in the same direction: the regression model was significant, with cyberbullying as the significant predictor, and psychological state was negatively correlated with work performance, while informants described low productivity, lack of motivation, and increased absenteeism and turnover.

TABLE 21. Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings (Joint Display)

Research question	Quantitative findings	Qualitative findings	Integration
What is the impact of workplace bullying on teachers' psychological state?	Bullying did not significantly predict psychological state ($F = 0.243, p = .914$). Most teachers were in the normal range for anxiety and depression.	Informants described psychological distress (anxiety, stress, depression, and helplessness), low self-esteem and self-confidence, and psychological trauma.	The narratives describe the distress of the most affected teachers, which the sample-wide regression did not detect; the strands differ in level of exposure and in the group described, and together they suggest that effects are concentrated in a subset of teachers.
What is the impact of workplace bullying on teachers' work performance?	The model was significant ($F = 4.831, p = .001$); cyberbullying was the only significant predictor ($\beta = -.227, p = .021$). Psychological state and work performance were negatively correlated.	Informants described low productivity and efficiency, lack of motivation, and increased absenteeism and turnover.	The narratives are consistent with the quantitative results and describe how bullying may reduce performance through distraction, demoralization, and withdrawal from work.

Psychoeducational Program (Research Question 7)

A psychoeducational program, Empowering Teachers: Addressing Workplace Bullying, was developed from the quantitative and qualitative findings. It responds to the finding that bullying, especially in its cyber form, is associated with lower work performance, and to the informants' accounts of distress, low self-esteem, lost motivation, and absenteeism. Through information awareness campaigns and interactive sessions, it aims to give teachers knowledge, skills, and strategies to recognize, address, and prevent workplace bullying, and it emphasizes empathy, support, and empowerment. Its goals are (a) to increase awareness and understanding of workplace bullying among teachers, (b) to equip teachers with strategies for effectively addressing and preventing bullying behaviors, and (c) to foster a supportive and inclusive environment in which teachers feel empowered to advocate for themselves and their colleagues.

TABLE 22. Overview of the Psychoeducational Program

Day and time	Topic	Main activities
Day 1, 8:30–11:30 a.m.	Understanding workplace bullying	Seminars with guest speakers on the aspects, legal implications, and impacts of workplace bullying
Day 1, 1:30–4:30 p.m.	Recognizing bullying behaviors	Role-playing; analysis and discussion of video scenarios
Day 2, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.	Training in anti-bullying interventions	Guest speakers; skills-building workshop on assertiveness, conflict resolution, active listening, and de-escalation
Day 3, 8:30–11:30 a.m.	Creating a safe work environment	FGD sessions on anti-bullying policies and procedures
Day 3, 1:30–4:30 p.m.	Anti-bullying policies and procedures	Development and rollout of an anti-bullying policy with open reporting channels
Day 4, 8:30–11:30 a.m.	Supporting teachers	Self-care workshops (relaxation, mindfulness) and a spiritual reflection session
Day 4, 1:30–4:30 p.m.	Evaluation and follow-up	Participant feedback survey; key performance indicators for monitoring; certificates of appreciation

IV. DISCUSSION

Summary of Principal Findings

This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study examined workplace bullying among 147 private school teachers in Baliwag City, Bulacan. Teachers experienced personal and work-related bullying at a moderate level and physically intimidating and cyber bullying at a slight level. The four forms of bullying together did not significantly predict psychological state, but they did significantly predict work performance, with cyberbullying the only significant individual predictor, and psychological state was significantly and negatively related to work performance. Focus group informants, selected for their high bullying and symptom scores and low work performance, described social bullying, excessive workload and deadlines, and verbal abuse, and reported psychological distress, low self-esteem, trauma, and reduced productivity, motivation, and attendance.

Levels and Forms of Workplace Bullying

Personal and work-related bullying were the most common forms. The most frequently reported personal experiences (being ignored or excluded, and being repeatedly reminded of or criticized for errors) and work-related experiences (an unmanageable workload and unreasonable deadlines) may often originate with immediate superiors or school heads. The pattern is similar to that reported by Kleinhessel and Geisel (2019), who found that being the target of gossip or rumors and exposure to an unmanageable workload were among the most common negative acts in K–12 schools, and by Al-Ghabeesh and Qattom (2019), who found that unmanageable workload had the highest item mean among emergency department nurses in Jordan. Both studies reported that bullying came from immediate supervisors. In the qualitative phase, informants described social bullying, workload and deadline pressure, and verbal abuse, in line with the finding of Krishna et al. (2020) that verbal aggression, such as shouting, limited opportunity for self-expression, and accusations, was the most prevalent form of bullying.

In contrast, physically intimidating bullying was rare, which suggests that physical violence seldom occurs among teachers in schools. The low rating for pressure not to claim entitlements such as sick leave or holidays may reflect labor laws, which private educational institutions are also required to follow. Cyberbullying was slight overall, but the moderate rating for false statements spread on the Internet deserves

attention. Tabasum et al. (2021) observed that as workplace communication has moved to email, text messages, and social media, cyberbullying has become a prominent concern, and even slight levels warrant attention to online safety and harassment before they become more prevalent. By department, junior high school teachers reported the highest personal and work-related bullying and senior high school teachers the highest physically intimidating and cyber bullying. The present data do not explain these differences, and they were not tested statistically, so they warrant further study.

Workplace Bullying and Psychological State

Most teachers scored in the normal range for anxiety (67.35%) and depression (96.60%), no teacher fell in the extremely severe category on any of the three subscales, and only two teachers had severe stress symptoms. VERIFY: these percentages depend on the stress and depression score bands in Tables 10 and 12. Consistent with these low symptom levels, none of the four forms of bullying significantly predicted psychological state, and together they explained less than 1% of its variance. This differs from the substantial body of evidence that bullying harms mental health (Nielsen et al., 2020), including evidence from Asia such as the study of Korean employees by Jung et al. (2023), which linked bullying with a higher incidence of depression.

Several explanations are possible, although the present data cannot test them. First, exposure was low to moderate overall, which limits the range of bullying scores available for detecting an effect. Second, the study was cross-sectional, whereas much of the strongest evidence for psychological harm comes from longitudinal designs (Boudrias et al., 2021; Nielsen & Einarsen, 2020). Third, culture may shape how bullying is perceived and how distress is expressed; for example, Malaysian employees have been found to regard work-related bullying as common and expected (Kwan et al., 2020). Finally, teachers may have coping resources or support that buffered the psychological effects of bullying, although this was not measured. The result should not be read as showing that bullying is harmless to teachers, because the informants who were most affected described marked distress.

The qualitative results show what this distress looks like for the teachers most affected. Informants described anxiety, stress, depression, helplessness, low self-esteem, and lingering trauma. These accounts are in line with reports that bullying is associated with anxiety, depression, and stress among nurses, where 64.4% of participants showed symptoms of depression, 58.8% of anxiety, and 46.6% of stress on the DASS-42 (Rosander et al., 2010); that teachers who are victims or witnesses of bullying have lower self-esteem (Cakirpaloglu et al., 2018); and that bullying is associated with post-traumatic stress symptoms (Chenevert et al., 2022; Vignoli, 2022). Cerdeira et al. (2023) further found that personal bullying, the most frequent form in the present study, had the strongest effect on mental restlessness, sadness, impulsivity, and anxiety, and the weakest effect on depression. Workplace bullying has no specific diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.); mental health specialists instead commonly use terms such as stress, anxiety,

and burnout (Glozier, 2022) and often turn to the DASS to gauge symptom severity, which is why the DASS-21 was used here.

Workplace Bullying, Psychological State, and Work Performance

Teachers' work performance was moderate on average, but about a quarter of teachers (25.17%) scored in the low or very low ranges. Bullying significantly predicted work performance, and cyberbullying was the only form with a significant individual effect: higher cyberbullying scores were associated with lower performance. This supports studies linking bullying with reduced performance, including Bashir and Gul (2023), who found that workplace bullying significantly affected performance among school teachers, and Azmat et al. (2023) and Naz and Akhter (2022), who reported lower teacher performance as bullying increased. It also aligns with the view that bullying undermines productivity and increases disengagement (Serban et al., 2022). Because Tuckey et al. (2023) and Omrani (2022) caution that evidence on task performance is mixed, the finding that only one of the four forms was a significant predictor is consistent with that inconsistency. One possible reason why cyberbullying mattered most, which these data cannot test, is that digital communication can reach teachers beyond the school day and leave negative messages visible to others.

Psychological state and work performance were negatively related: teachers with higher stress, anxiety, and depression scores tended to report lower work performance. This agrees with Michetti (2020), whose respondents believed that bullying can lead to low self-esteem, stress, and other health problems that raise turnover and lower work performance, and with Okeke et al. (2022), who found that employee performance depends heavily on a work environment that bullying can damage, and that bullying is positively linked to occupational stress. It is also consistent with the World Health Organization's (2005) view that the nature and circumstances of one's job can affect mental health, and that mental health in turn affects how effectively people work. Two cautions apply. A correlation does not establish the direction of influence, and because bullying did not significantly predict psychological state in this sample, the data do not show that psychological distress carries the effect of bullying onto performance.

The qualitative themes elaborate on how performance suffers. Informants described difficulty concentrating, forgotten responsibilities, low energy and motivation, wanting to avoid school, and thoughts of resigning. These accounts fit studies reporting that bullying decreases productivity and teamwork (Quintos & Gomez, 2023), reduces employee performance (Odunjo-Saka et al., 2021), and is detrimentally related to productivity (Anulika, 2021), as well as studies that link bullying with absenteeism and turnover (Singh et al., 2021).

Integration and Theoretical Implications

Integrating the two strands shows both convergence and a nuance. On work performance, the qualitative narratives and the quantitative results point in the same direction. On psychological state, the survey found no significant effect of bullying level across the sample, while informants selected for

the highest bullying and symptom scores described considerable distress. The two strands thus describe different parts of the same population, the sample as a whole and its most affected members, and together they suggest that the psychological consequences of bullying may be concentrated in a subset of teachers rather than spread evenly.

The findings partly support Affective Events Theory. The emotional reactions that informants described (anxiety, stress, low self-esteem, and demotivation) fit the theory's account of how affective states shape work behavior, and psychological state was linked to performance. However, the quantitative link between bullying (the affective event) and psychological state (the emotional reaction) was not significant, so the full event–emotion–behavior chain was not confirmed statistically. The direct association between cyberbullying and performance suggests that events may also influence performance through paths other than the emotions measured here.

Practical Implications

The findings have implications for schools, guidance counselors, and policymakers. Because personal and work-related bullying, such as exclusion, repeated criticism, unmanageable workload, and unreasonable deadlines, were the most common, prevention efforts should address these everyday behaviors and not only overt aggression, and because cyberbullying was the only significant predictor of performance, school policies should cover online conduct. Since no specific Philippine law covers workplace bullying (Conventus Law, 2022), school-level policies and reporting mechanisms take on added importance. The program Empowering Teachers: Addressing Workplace Bullying (Appendix A) translates these findings into a four-day intervention on understanding and recognizing bullying, anti-bullying intervention skills, safe work environments, policy formulation, and support for teachers' well-being, with evaluation and follow-up. Its effectiveness should be evaluated once it is implemented.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Several limitations should be considered. Participants were purposively sampled from four private schools in a single city, where the researcher is employed, so the findings may not generalize to other schools, regions, or public schools. The survey relied on self-report and a cross-sectional design, which precludes causal inference and may be affected by reluctance to disclose bullying. The DASS-21 is a screening instrument and does not yield clinical diagnoses. The focus group informants were selected for extreme scores, so their accounts illustrate rather than represent the experiences of all teachers. Only bullying by coworkers was examined, and bullying of teachers by students was outside the scope. Finally, differences among departments were not tested statistically.

Future studies could use larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and tests of mediation and moderation, for example, whether coping resources or organizational support buffer the effect of bullying on psychological state, and could evaluate the psychoeducational program after implementation. Research on the impact of student bullying on teachers' psychological well-being and work performance is

also needed.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Workplace bullying was present among the private school teachers, with personal and work-related bullying, such as exclusion, repeated criticism, unmanageable workload, and unreasonable deadlines, the leading forms; physically intimidating and cyber bullying were slight.
2. The level of workplace bullying did not significantly predict teachers' psychological state, and most teachers had normal-range anxiety and depression scores. However, teachers with the highest bullying and symptom scores described psychological distress, low self-esteem, and trauma, which shows that the effects of bullying can be serious for those most affected.
3. Workplace bullying significantly predicted work performance, with cyberbullying the significant individual predictor, and poorer psychological state was associated with lower work performance. The informants' accounts of low productivity, lack of motivation, and increased absenteeism and turnover support these results.
4. The findings underscore the importance of a supportive and respectful work environment for teachers' well-being and work performance, and the need for a psychoeducational program and support mechanisms that address the psychological well-being of bullied teachers and mitigate the effects on their performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are submitted:

1. Comprehensive anti-workplace bullying policies and protocols should be mandatory for all educational institutions to address the prevention, intervention, and postvention of workplace bullying and its effects on teachers' psychological state and work performance.
2. The full cooperation of the school community should be encouraged, and close coordination established on the reporting and recording of bullying incidents for close monitoring and immediate intervention.
3. The psychoeducational program on workplace bullying should be consistently and thoroughly implemented, periodically evaluated to assess its effectiveness, and continuously improved by modifying its strategies and interventions.
4. Given the complexity of workplace bullying, future research should examine areas not covered in this study, particularly the impact of student bullying on teachers' psychological well-being, work performance, and other aspects of the educational environment.

APPENDIX

Psychoeducational Program

Empowering Teachers: Addressing Workplace Bullying

Rationale. Workplace bullying is a pervasive issue in the education setting, and teachers are not immune to it. It has been linked to adverse psychological outcomes such as stress, anxiety, depression, and reduced self-esteem, and to lower

work performance, which can undermine the quality of education and the school's overall performance. A psychoeducational program can give teachers the knowledge, skills, and strategies to recognize, address, and mitigate these effects, help them confront bullying assertively, seek support, and build resilience, and signal an institutional commitment to a respectful and supportive work environment.

Goals. (a) To increase awareness and understanding of workplace bullying among teachers; (b) to equip teachers with strategies for effectively addressing and preventing bullying behaviors in the workplace; and (c) to foster a supportive and inclusive environment where teachers feel empowered to advocate for themselves and their colleagues.

Program Structure

Day / time / topic	Persons involved	Key priority areas	Objectives	Activities
Day 1 (AM) 8:30-11:30 a.m. Understanding Workplace Bullying	Guidance counselors Resource speakers School administrators Teachers	Definition and types of bullying Overview of relevant laws, policies, and regulations related to workplace bullying Impact of bullying on mental health, productivity, and overall well-being	To identify the prevalence and forms of workplace bullying To assess the effectiveness of existing laws, policies, and regulations in preventing and addressing workplace bullying To explore the impact of workplace bullying on individuals' psychological well-being and overall performance	Workplace bullying seminar speakers specialized in workplace bullying cover its aspects, legal implications, and impacts on health, work culture, and work performance
Day 1 (PM) 1:30-4:30 p.m. Recognizing Bullying Behaviors	Guidance counselors School administrators Teachers	Examples of workplace bullying behaviors, such as personal and work-related forms (NAQ-R) Common bullying behaviors and tactics used in educational settings	To help identify bullying behaviors, recognize warning signs, and intervene effectively To promote accountability, respect, and support for bullying victims	Role-playing: simulate bullying scenarios and practice effective communication and intervention techniques Scenario analysis and discuss analyze video scenarios of workplace bullying situations, identify behaviors involved, and discuss appropriate responses
Day 2 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Training in Anti-Bullying Interventions	Guidance counselors Resource speakers School administrators Teachers	Training on effective strategies for recognizing, addressing, and preventing bullying incidents Communication and conflict resolution skills needed to intervene in bullying situations Empathy and bystander intervention techniques that encourage proactive involvement in stopping bullying	To help identify bullying behaviors, recognize warning signs, and intervene effectively To promote accountability, respect, and support for bullying victims	(AM) Guest speakers, such as professionals, psychologists, workplace bullying experts, and insights and experiences on a bullying interventions (PM) Skills-building workshop assertiveness, conflict resolution, active listening, and de-escalation through interactive exercises role-playing
Day 3 (AM) 8:30-11:30 a.m. Creating a Safe Work Environment	Guidance counselors School administrators Teachers	Strategies for fostering a positive and respectful workplace culture Importance of open communication, empathy, and active listening	To identify workplace hazards, educate employees on safety protocols, and establish reporting mechanisms for incidents to ensure timely resolution	Focus group discussion (FGD) sessions on anti-bullying policies
Day 3 (PM) 1:30-4:30 p.m. Anti-Bullying Policies and Procedures	Guidance counselors School administrators Teachers	Review of existing workplace policies, establish reporting procedures, and consequences for perpetrators	To develop clear anti-bullying procedures, and ensure fairness in investigations To regularly review and update policies based on feedback, research, and organizational needs	Develop an anti-bullying policy, with communication channels for employees to report incidents launch it with a formal rollout
Day 4 (AM) 8:30-11:30 a.m. Supporting Teachers	Guidance counselors School administrators Teachers	Resources for emotional support, such as counseling services Self-care practices to enhance resilience and well-being in the face of bullying Coping strategies for managing stress, anxiety, and emotional challenges	To offer resources and interventions that support employees who have experienced or witnessed bullying, including counseling and conflict resolution services To promote a culture of respect, empathy, and inclusivity through ongoing communication, training, and reinforcement of institutional values	Self-care workshops: simple relaxation techniques and mindfulness exercises for managing physical and emotional health stressful situations Spiritual reflection session: quiet contemplation in which participants explore how their spiritual beliefs and practices coping and resilience

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