From the President

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2020!

Thanks to everyone who submitted an abstract or poster for #IAWBH2020. The scientific review panel is busily reviewing them, with decisions being available very soon. That means that it is time to REGISTER for the conference.

Early bird registration closes on March 21st, and all presenters must register by April 3rd.

Make sure you check the conference website https://www.uowdubai.ac.ae/iawbh2020 for all the details, and also remember to check that your IAWBH membership is up to date so you get the member discount!

I’m really excited about the great keynote speakers from whom we’ll be learning from: Professor Premilla D’Cruz; Associate Professor Jordi Escartin, and Catherine Mattice Zundel. There will of course be the PhD workshops and other workshops in advance of the keynotes and parallel sessions, and plenty of chances to socialise with colleagues.

I also ask you to share details about the conference with your colleagues, students, and clients, as we continue to grow our membership and expand our reach to new places and perspectives.

While you’re sorting out your conference registrations, another thing to think about is the IAWBH elections, which happen every two years, ahead of our conference and General Assembly. Please consider if you would like to stand for a position on the IAWBH Board (and other elected roles). On our website there are descriptions of the available roles https://iawbh.org/elections along with the application form. The deadline to return these is by Feb 29th.

Our current election committee members will be happy to talk with you if you have any questions. We’re looking for people from a range of countries and backgrounds to contribute to IAWBH in this way. Please talk with your colleagues about nominating!

Best regards

Carlo
From the Election committee

Dear IAWBH Member,

As the Electoral Committee, we would like to inform you of preparations for the 2020 IAWBH elections.

This year, we will be electing:

- President (holds position for 2 yrs and can re-stand once) our current President is re-standing.
- Three board members (at least one practitioner)
- Two reserve board members
- One Governance /audit member
- Two Election Committee Members

We kindly invite you to consider if you would be interested in standing for any of these positions. This is an excellent chance to work for our Association and to support and influence the future of bullying research and practice.

Please find more information for candidates and please fill in the application form if you want to stand. People who served in the past have found it useful for their career, but nevertheless there is a time commitment.

If you are interested in standing for any of these positions, please send the information requested to Mieneke Pouwelse (Mieneke.pouwelse@ou.nl) and Charlotte Rayner (charlotte.rayner@port.ac.uk) no later than 29th February (midday, Oslo time).

We are keen to ensure that there is representation from around the globe so that the expanding nature of our membership is reflected in the elected positions.

You are warmly welcome to contact us earlier to express your interest or ask any questions. Elections will be held in March-April 2020 and the results announced well before the IAWBH General Assembly. We hope there will be a high number of candidates!

Yours sincerely,

Mieneke Pouwelse and Charlotte Rayner
Upcoming event: SIG Webinar

Join the co-conveners of the Organizational Influences and Bystanders SIG for a Webinar in February!

During this one hour live event, we'll discuss highlights from the "Dark Side of Organisations" masterclass that took place in September at Kinneret College, Tiberias, Israel and network to connect for possible interest in mutual research projects.

Come join us on February 25, 2020

8am (US, Pacific), 4pm (Ireland), and 6pm (Israel) on Zoom!

Registration is open until February 11, 2020

We hope to see you there on Zoom!

Christina, Yariv and Patricia
Co-conveners of the Organizational Influences and Bystanders SIG
In this column members of IAWBH may present the three works that influenced them the most. Dr Rebecka Cowen Forsell is a postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Work, Life and Evaluation (CTA) at Malmö University in Sweden.

Introduction

I have a PhD in Urban studies and hold a postdoctoral research position at the Centre for Work Life and Evaluation studies (CTA), at Malmö University in Sweden. My research concerns the phenomena of cyberbullying in working life. With cyberbullying the negative behaviour moves from a material space of bodily presence manifested as the workplace, to boundary-blurred digital spaces.

In my understanding of cyberbullying, space provides a defining context for social interaction. However, what socio-spatial circumstances digital spaces provide changes with the function and meaning of the particular platform used, as well as with conventions and norms embodied in that platform.

In the below I have listed three books and book chapters that have been highly influential sources for my understanding of work life cyberbullying.

1) Personal connections in the digital age (Baym, 2015)

This book by media scholar Nancy Baym gives an excellent understanding of everyday life interactions online. The book adopts a critical perspective, urging its readers to differentiate between different digital media platforms in order to build a richer understanding. Baym identifies seven key concepts that can be used to differentiate digital media which I found useful in the understanding of cyberbullying and its consequences on the individual. This book has been an influential source in my dissertation on cyberbullying in working life. It gives valuable insight into the everyday life on the internet and contextual influences on online communication, including the audience influences on user’s behaviour. Moreover, the book is a good example of how other academic disciplines not always associated with the field of workplace bullying can enrich the field.

2) Cyberbullying at work: Understanding the influence of technology (Farley, Coyne, & D’Cruz, 2017)

During the last years, the research area of work life cyberbullying has expanded considerably. For an overview of the research area of cyberbullying at work I would recommend this book chapter. The authors give an extended review on the existing empirical studies in the field, as well as identifying tensions and key areas for future research. This book covers definitions, prevalence rates, consequences and antecedents and is an excellent introduction to the research area of cyberbullying in working life.
3) Life on the screen—identity in the age of the Internet (Turkle, 1995)

What characterizes social life on the Internet in the early 1990s, when a wider public started to gain access to the Internet, differs in many ways from today. Still, this classic book by Sherry Turkle provides insight to attitudes among users that may still impact contemporary behaviours online. One of the main arguments in the book is that online space gives users the opportunity to “escape” their fixed identities from the offline world and in the realm of anonymity, explore new and sometimes contradictory sides of the selves. By describing it as playful and deliberating, this book that is written almost two decades before cyberbullying among adults became a topic in research and practice, has a positive outlook on the self-experiment users can engage in online. Hence, this early book provides contrasting perspectives on anonymous interaction compared to most work on cyberbullying. Although terms and conditions for online interaction are constantly changing, this book is in my mind a progenitor in the understanding of factors that may trigger cyberbullying behaviour among users.

References

Methodology Matters

Using Experimental Vignette Methodology to Explore the Effect of Organisational Power and the Ambiguity of Deviance of Bystander Behaviour and Intervention

Introduction

Dr. Annabelle Neall is a Lecturer of Organisational Psychology at the University of Queensland, Australia. Her research aims to tackle the problem of workplace mistreatment in all forms, by investigating the causal mechanisms that underpin bullying and harassment in organisations, uncovering the underlying organisational risk contexts, and by generating creative and innovative measures and tools that remove the underlying risk contexts that give rise to the problem.

Here, she discusses the use of Experimental Vignette Methodology in a series of studies to uncover why bystanders fail to intervene in the face of workplace wrongdoing, which formed the basis of her PhD thesis.

What was the research question you sought to answer?

The detrimental effects of bullying and harassment are readily evident in academic research, private practice, organisational complaints, and anecdotally. Accordingly, attention has recently turned to how to tackle and prevent such behaviour (Hodgins et al., 2014). Workers who experience workplace bullying and harassment are usually advised to:

- a) report the behaviour via a complaint to their manager or HR (despite the fact that managers and supervisors are the most commonly reported perpetrators of the bullying behaviour)
- b) defend themselves from perpetrator (through assertiveness training or confliction resolution training)
- c) manage the negative effects of ongoing exposure to bullying behaviour (through counselling, yoga, meditation)

While the above strategies can play a role in the overall risk management approach to workplace bullying, it is important for organisations to also implement strategies that (a) address the underlying risk factors that give rise to bullying (i.e., preventative) and (b) deal with behaviour when it occurs (i.e., interceptive). Early, informal intervention that involves employees is key in successfully addressing psychosocial risks such as workplace bullying (Hodgins, 2013).

The role of the bystander in this interceptive or preventative process has been scarcely examined in the context of workplace bullying, although anecdotal evidence suggests that intervention is uncommon, even though workers often have a requirement to keep themselves and others safe at work (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011), and are often aware of the detrimental effects of workplace bullying. This led me to the question of why bystanders fail to intervene when they witness workplace bullying or harassment.
What prompted your use of the research methodology and methods?

An earlier study in my thesis identified the fear of social exclusion as a prevailing barrier to bystander intervention (Neall, 2018). Specifically, workers were fearful to intervene because they felt that may be subject to a range of negative consequences as a result of their interceptive actions. Additionally, participants in the exploratory study identified organisational power and the ambiguity of the deviant act as potential facilitators to bystander intervention. For example, workers who held certain roles in the organisation were able to offset their risk of social exclusion by virtue of the tangible resources they control, or the skills, knowledge, abilities or network that they have developed through long periods of tenure with the organisation – all of which are valuable to the workgroup. In this second part of my thesis, I sought to test when and how these factors shaped bystanders’ decisions to intervene.

Previous research has determined that experimental vignettes provide more accurate estimates of real-life decision-making than interviews or questionnaires (Alexander & Becker 1978). Unlike traditional survey approaches, experimental vignettes provide a rich context around the variables of interest and seek to determine behavioural responses in the setting of a hypothetical but realistic situation (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014).

What were the advantages/disadvantages of using the methodological approach?

Experimental vignette methodology shares elements of traditional forms of research - surveys, questionnaires, laboratory studies - while counterbalancing the weaknesses of each approach (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010), thereby offering several advantages. First, experimental vignettes enhance experimental practicality and allows researchers to manipulate and control independent variables, thereby enhancing internal validity (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010).

Second, experimental vignettes create a standardised experience of the concept of interest, which reduces concept confounding (Alexander & Becker, 1978) and increases discriminant validity. Third and perhaps most salient for the current research context, experimental vignettes offer an innocuous procedure for exploring sensitive subject matter using an experimental format. In the current series of studies, I was able to explore the relationship between bystander behaviour intentions and organisational power/ambiguity of deviance as facilitators of intervention, in a happy medium of experimental realism, where participants could be delegated to varying organisational roles and asked to envisage undesirable acts of workplace behaviour to determine the effect of these factors on subsequent behaviours and decisions, with considerably less risk to their psychological wellbeing.

Notwithstanding these benefits, experimental vignettes have limited external validity. Specifically, the scenarios presented to participants in this series of studies comprised an artificial situation, where the true costs of intervention (i.e., social exclusion) were unlikely to be salient to participants. There is much to be gained from mixed-method approach to bullying and harassment research, including the amalgamation of experimental vignettes, field and observation studies, and qualitative interviews, where the benefits of experimental manipulation that stem from vignette studies, are supplemented with rich, contextual data obtained from qualitative approaches.
How well was the research question answered?

Using a 2 × 2 experimental vignette methodology in two different studies, participants were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions, depicting different combinations of the experimental factors and a control condition. They were then asked to rate their intentions to intervene as a bystander in that scenario, along with their perceptions of who is responsible for intervention, the costs and benefits of intervention, and the usefulness of certain organisational resources in promoting bystander intervention.

Using vignettes allowed me to identify main effects for both of the hypothesised facilitating variables, and explore interactions between the two. Specifically, organisational power appears to gain salience in contexts in which it may need to be exercised. In order words, the power condition had an impact on reported behavioural intentions and cognitions, in light of situations where interpersonal deviance was clearly recognised by the bystander. This finding would not have been evident through traditional survey approaches.

References:


Tell us something about yourself?

I am the founder and CEO of Civility Partners, a full-service human resources consulting firm. My team and I partner with our clients to help them be compliant with the law, and build and maintain a positive and healthy work culture. I am also the author of two books, BACK OFF! Your Kick-Ass Guide to Ending Bullying at Work, and, Seeking Civility: How Leaders, Managers and HR Can Create a Workplace Free of Bullying.

I am one of the four founding members of the National Workplace Bullying Coalition, a group focused on education and legislation of workplace bullying in the United States. The Coalition has had three conferences which included speakers from State Assemblies, Senators and Congress; obtained over 28,000 signatures on a petition urging President Obama to address workplace bullying; and participated in legislation in Tennessee, California and New Jersey.

We also collected stories from people empowered by their bullying experience for our book, Stand Up, Speak Out Against Workplace Bullying: Your Guide to Survival and Victory Through 23 Real Life Testimonies, so that we could change the messaging for targets of bullying to one of hope rather than despair.

Our latest endeavor is the Dignity at Work Act.

Random fact about me: I was once in a full-page ad in the Wall Street Journal as the poster child for my commercial insurance company, Hiscox, who was running a campaign called “I’mpossible,” focused on courageous entrepreneurs.

How did you become interested in workplace bullying?

Like many of us, I worked with someone who engaged in bullying. As the Director of Human Resources, I experienced the problems it creates for an organization and a boss I couldn’t convince to step in. I also personally felt bullied.

During my second semester of graduate school at San Diego State University, my two courses were Ethnography and the Dark Side of Communication. Both classes required a paper, and I decided to write about my work situation so I could save time in researching one topic for two classes. That’s when I came across the work of many of you! It was therapeutic to educate myself, and I continued that line of research throughout graduate school.

My thesis paper, Bullies in Business: A Self-Report Survey of Behavior Rationale, is dedicated to the Post-It Nazi, which is what we called the bully in my workplace (and he knows about this. Ha!).
What can you tell us about development of the workplace bullying field in your country?

Federal law only prohibits harassment based on a protected characteristic (e.g., race, disability, sexual orientation) but bullying, or equal opportunity harassment, is not illegal.

As for state law, the Healthy Workplace Bill has had a hard time getting passed and many people have switched focus from that Bill to the Dignity at Work Act. The HWB has had some success, though, in that several states and even cities have borrowed some of its language. For example, California mandates harassment prevention training and it must include some discussion on abusive conduct. Utah requires its government agencies have training every year, and Tennessee’s law encourages employers to have an anti-bullying policy.

What do you hope to achieve in the field of workplace bullying in the future?

I’ll start with an example of our impact. We were hired to address a culture of gender discrimination and bullying in the IT Dept at University of California, Berkeley. We started with a climate assessment and found, among many problems, that on a scale of 1-5 (5 = bullied daily) that women averaged a score of 4 while men averaged a score of 2. After one year of work together, Civility Partners conducted a second survey and both scores had dropped to an average of 1.2. This is just one example of how my team and I work our magic. They’ve published our work on their website if you want to check it out.

Our services include:
- fractional and outsourced HR services
- training on such topics as harassment prevention, civility, bystander intervention, implicit bias, and supervisory skills
- coaching using Dr. Laura Crawshaw’s methodology for abrasive leaders
- culture change consulting for toxic workplaces
- keynote speeches on creating positive workplace cultures

What do you hope to achieve in the field of workplace bullying in the future?

Civility Partners’ vision is to create a world where every workplace provides a safe, healthy and inclusive work environment. Our mission is to partner with our clients to help them do just that. One by one, we intend to create positive environments in every workplace in every corner of the world.
Upcoming events

IAWBH 2020 12th International Conference on Workplace Bullying and Harassment
8-11 June 2020, Dubai, UAE
https://www.uowdubai.ac.ae/iawbh2020

14th European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology Conference
6-8 April 2020, Nicosia Cyprus
http://www.eaohp.org/conference.html

European Congress of Psychology
19-24 July 2020, Prague, Czechoslovakia
http://www.efpa.eu/events/2020-07-19-international-congress-of-psychology-icp2020-

ANZAM 2020 Conference
1-3 December 2020, Perth, Australia
https://www.anzam.org/events/anzam-2020-conference-perth-australia-1-3-december-2020/

20th European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology Congress
May 2021, Glasgow, UK
https://eawop2021.org/home-page
Minutes of the General Assembly

International Association on Workplace Bullying and Harassment, Thursday 7 June, 2018, 5.30-6.55pm

1. **Present:** Premilla D’Cruz (PD), Carlo Caponocchia (CC), Maryam Omari (MO), Bevan Catley (BC), Shayne Mathieson (SM), Katherine Lippel (KL), + 75 members (see attendance sheets)

   **Apologies:** Nils Magerøy (NM), Adrienne Hubert

2. Katherine Lippel was elected by acclaim to chair the Assembly.

3. **Minutes** of the 2016 General Assembly (21 April 2016 held in Auckland, New Zealand) were accepted, Moved Sabine Hammond, Seconded Susan Johnson

4. **President’s Report:** delivered by Premilla D’Cruz, noted key issues

   I. Future development of the IAWBH
   II. Website, logo and membership fees and drive
   III. Biennial conference
   IV. Travel grants
   V. MasterClass
   VI. Newsletter and LinkedIn
   VII. Special Interest Groups
   VIII. Literature and database
   IX. Webinars
   X. Treasury
   XI. Elections
   XII. E-Archives
   XIII. Use of IAWBH logo, name and brand
   XIV. Update on actions form 2016 GA
   XV. Thanks to all officers, members and others (auditor, book-keeper, etc) who had assisted the Board and facilitated the functioning of the Board and Association.
The President’s report had been emailed to all members prior to the GA. As there were no questions or comments, it was taken as read.

5. **Constitutional amendment**: A constitutional amendment to the Governance section of the Constitution, clause 11 was moved by PD, seconded by SM. The purpose of the amendment is to clarify the replacement of a sitting board member with a reserve member. The current clause reads Two substitute members will be elected by the General Assembly for a two year period as stand-ins should a Board member be unable to complete their term.

To allow for continuity (the original aim of the founders of the Constitution) it was moved to add: Should a substitute member (“reserve”) be called on to take the place of a serving Board member, the substitute member will complete the full term of the Board member who they replaced.

Charlotte Rayner recommended that the clause be further amended to clarify that the reserve who takes up a substitute role has this count as a full term for the purposes of their re-election. This substitution will be considered to be a full term for the substituting member.

6. **Treasurer’s report**: Delivered by CC in the absence of NM (due to family circumstances).

In summary: The total deficit for the year is £3,354, while the total assets are £34,709.

The Summer School (now renamed MasterClass) broke even.

The Board instituted scholarship applicants for the conference, and CC encouraged members to apply for these, and to encourage others to do so.

It was recognised that the face-to-face Board meeting would be more expensive now that there was a greater geographic spread of Board members; but there was general support for this meeting in the non-conference years to take place.

Treasurer’s report was accepted unanimously.

7. **Update on activities**: Future development of IAWBH - was covered in the President’s Report

I. **MasterClass** – the 2017 MasterClass had 35 participants, considering “Time to rethink the bully in bullying” PD invited members to apply for application for the 2019 MasterClass. Applications close 1 August 2018. Ria Deakin and Frances-Louise McGregor, organizers of the 2017 Masterclass, were thanked.

II. **Doctoral Workshop**, this year had 28 participants. It was run by Helge Høel and Nick Djukovic, assisted by PD and Ernesto Noronha. Both Helge and Nick were thanked for their contribution.

III. **Webinars**. MO reported that there were limitations with the functionality of the previous website, but we have now updated our website. However, a webinar as such is a difficult option to follow through on. MO had uploaded a video from a workshop she had hosted, and only 5 members had watched it from the IAWBH website.
V. Special Interest Groups. MO reported that there are 9 current SIGs, but only 5 of those are active. She thanked the convenors of the SIG meetings for this year, CC, KL, Susan Johnson and Evelyn Field. The SIG meetings had all been approximately one day and had been well attended. MO reported that the Board would review the SIGs to consolidate and rationalise then, to strengthen them as they go forward.

8. Governance Report: Delivered by Helge Hoel (HH). HH and Maarit Vartia had considered all the minutes and reports of the Board since April 2016, and reported that all matters appeared to have been dealt with in-depth and appropriately by the Board.

The report was voted to be received.

9 Election Results: Charlotte Rayner (CR) formally announced the results of the Election. The new President is Carlo Caponecchia, new board members are Stephen Teo, Eva Gemzøe Mikkelsen and Neill Thompson.

10 No suggestions from the member or the Board were offered

11 No other business was identified

12 Acknowledgements: PD acknowledged with thanks the work that NM had done as Treasurer for the last 8 years, in registering the Association, creating a bank account, maintaining membership registration, bookkeeping, and ensuring our money situation was regularly reported; and the work of Adrienne Hubert as our communications manager, especially her work with the regular newsletter, the LinkedIn groups, and SIGs. KL thanked PD for her work as the President for the last 2 years and her earlier 8 year membership of the Board. There were general thanks and a small presentation to Loic Lerouge and Marie-France Hirigoyen as the coordinating organisers of the 2018 conference.

13 2020 Conference: PD then provided information on the criteria to consider conference bids, including location, the people involved in the organising, academic excellence, financial viability and the opportunity for the development of IAWBH, its members, and innovation and growth potential. It was announced that the next conference will be held in Dubai, 7 – 11 June 2020, hosted by the University of Woollongong in Dubai. It was noted that as Sunday is considered a weekday in Dubai, that the conference would be starting a day earlier in the week than usual. The conference chair and committee members, Alison Thirlwall, Alastair Watson and Mahshid Baghestani, made a small presentation about the conference and the venue.

The meeting finished at 6.55pm

Note: these minutes cannot be formally confirmed by the General Assembly until 2020, but I certify that they are a true record of the meeting.

Shayne Mathieson, Secretary of the Board
Next newsletter and guidelines

We are delighted that a lot of our members contribute to the IAWBH newsletter. To ensure the quality of contributions, the Board of IAWBH has prepared some guidelines.

If you intend to write a contribution for the newsletter please first check the guidelines at our website: http://www.iawbh.org/Newsletterguidelines.

The next IAWBH newsletter will appear in April 2020. Please inform us about:

- your published work,
- international conferences on workplace bullying,
- special issues on workplace bullying and harassment,
- research breakthroughs,
- new research projects or challenging hypothesis,
- international cooperation and funding, and
- any news that may be relevant to a significant number of our members.

If you would like to contribute or discuss ideas, please get in contact: neill.thompson@northumbria.ac.uk

Disclaimer:
The viewpoints in contributions other than those communicated by Board members in their capacity as office bearers do not reflect the position of the IAWBH or its Board but of the author. Authors must necessarily ensure accurate referencing and citations and the IAWBH and its Board are not responsible for plagiarism within contributions.

Purpose of the IAWBH

The purpose of the IAWBH is to stimulate, generate, integrate and disseminate research and evidence based practice in the field of workplace bullying and harassment, and to promote fairness, justice and dignity at work for all.

A full description of the IAWBH purpose is available: https://iawbh.org/Purpose-IAWBH