The influence of organizational culture and leadership on workplace bullying in organizations in Serbia[*]

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of research into the influence and predictive effects of organizational culture and leadership (transformational, transactional and ethical leadership) on workplace bullying and mistreatment in organizations in Serbia. The moderating effect of company success on the observed relationships was also examined. The data were obtained through a survey of 536 respondents (employed by organizations in Serbia). Ethical and transformational leadership, as well as organizational culture with pronounced human orientation and in-group collectivism have all been shown to reduce workplace bullying. The strong power of ethical leadership in these processes is particularly emphasized. In contrast, transactional leadership, high power distance, and unrealistic insistence on achieving superior results increase the chances of workplace bullying. In doing so, high performance expectations have a greater effect on work-related bullying, and power distance on person-related bullying. The dimensions related to high performances and rewards have a complex, sometimes contradictory impact on workplace bullying. Organizational culture and leadership have a much stronger impact on workplace bullying in high success companies than in low success companies.

1 Introduction

Although as early as 1976 the professional and scientific public learned that employees could be exposed to physical and verbal abuse, which is not necessarily sexual in nature (Brodsky 1976), it was only Leymann's first theoretical

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and empirical work (Leymann, 1990; 1993) which led to wider public interest, emphasizing the role of the working group and management in the development of this phenomenon. The prevalence of workplace bullying is noticeable worldwide, and is supported by numerous studies which provide significant insight into this phenomenon (Einarsen/Hoel/Notelaers 2009; Hoel/Cooper 2000). Today, the concept of workplace bulling is also studied by the Bergen Bullying Research Group in Norway (http://www.uib.no/rg/bbrg). Among other things, the researchers in this group are credited with developing one of the most commonly used tools for investigating harassment at work, the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R; Einarsen et al. 2009), which has been translated and adapted into several foreign languages. (Vukelić 2015). The advantage of using this comparable and valid methodology is the possibility of cross-cultural comparisons of harassment in the workplace and the completion of international systematic and continuous research. (Einarsen et al. 2009; Giorgi/Arenas/Leon-Perez 2011; Vukelić/Čizmić/Petrović/Tenjović/Giorgi 2015).

By reviewing different explanations for abuse, we can gain a better understanding of the logic behind this process (Salin 2003). Boddewyn (1985, p.10) states that "conditions by themselves do not usually lead to violence, but act as factors that enable it, if there is an additional motivator or mover". In that sense, poor business cooperation leads to a decrease in productivity and the appearance of negative behaviour (Cornoiu et al. 2013), which in turn results in a lack of respect among employees, thus causing dysfunctional relationships at work and creating a negative working atmosphere. What all these factors which lead to workplace bullying have in common is that they are always destructive. The issue of harassment in the workplace can have potentially serious consequences, both for the potential victim and for the employer. It is important to respect the fact that this is seen as a health and safety issue, because for the potential victim, the negative effects may impact on physical and mental health (Kivimäki et al. 2003; Rugulies et al. 2012; Nielsen et al. 2014;Verkuil et al. 2015; Bonde et al. 2016; Harvey et al. 2017), while for the employer the common influences are related to problems in the workplace, and problems in industrial relations and litigation. In addition, some of the outcomes of abuse include absenteeism and turnover intentions. Another outcome may be the exclusion of bullies from work, which is the final stage of abuse (Glambek et al. 2014). The employer is obliged to assess the risk to employees, to introduce the necessary policies and procedures, to establish quality human resource management, and thus to counteract this phenomenon. (Wall et al. 2018).

Of particular relevance to this work are the relationships between organizational culture and workplace bullying. Cultural differences represent a strong determinant of many organizationally relevant behaviours (Gelfand et al. 2007). Thus, organizational culture undoubtedly has an impact on workplace bullying (Fox 2012; Salin et al. 2019; Zapf et al. 1996; Vartia 1996). In order to gain a better

insight into this impact, it is necessary to separate the influences of individual organizational culture dimensions. Existing research agrees that power distance increases the likelihood of workplace bullying (Kalliath et al. 2012; Aquino Lamertz 2004; Salin et al. 2019; Samnani 2013), and human orientation reduces workplace bullying (Kalliath et al. 2012; Power et al. 2013). In the in-group collectivism and performance orientation dimensions, the results are not so consistent. For example, according to (Vliert et al. 2013), in-group collectivism reduces bullying, whereas (Samnani 2013) found that individualism actually contributes to it. Similarly, according to (Kalliath et al. 2012), performance orientation decreases bullying, while according to (Power et al. 2013; Porter et al. 2018), performance orientation indirectly creates the conditions for bullying to occur.

Also, this paper looks at the influences of leadership (transformational, transactional and ethical leadership styles) on workplace bullying. Previous research has found that leadership, in general, has significant relationships with the bullying process (Leymann 1993; Einarsen et al. 1994; Vartia 1996; Zapf/Osterwalder 1998; Nielsen 2013; Skogstad et al. 2007). The direction of these relationships depends on leadership styles, as pointed out by Hoel, Glasø, Hetland, Cooper, and Einarsen (2010). Thus, those leadership styles which diminish workplace bullying are: transformational leadership (Cemaloğlu 2011; Nielsen 2013), authentic leadership (Nielsen 2013), and ethical leadership (Stouten et al. 2010; Yamada 2008; Ahmad 2018). In contrast, the leadership style which undoubtedly increases workplace bullying is laissez-faire leadership (Nielsen 2013; Tsuno/Kawakami 2015; Hoel et al. 2010). Finally, transactional leadership operates in different ways: it can increase workplace bullying through 'non-contingent punishment' (Hoel et al. 2010), and is sometimes neutral (Cemaloğlu 2011).

However, if workplace bullying is viewed in different cultural contexts, there is little research to offer a comparison of bullying behaviours across cultural dimensions (Jacobson/Hood/Van Buren 2014). Also, the impression gained is that existing research does not sufficiently examine the impact of organizational culture and leadership on the individual dimensions of workplace bullying. In addition, according to previous research, some organizational culture and leadership dimensions show different effects on workplace bullying. Finally, in Serbian organizations, so far no relationship has been established between organizational culture and workplace bullying, or between leadership and workplace bullying. For example, Vukelić (2015) suggests that organizational factors such as organizational culture and climate be included in future workplace bullying research in Serbia. This research intends to fill these gaps.

Accordingly, the aim of this paper is to determine whether, how and to what extent organizational culture and leadership influence workplace bullying and mistreatment in organizations in Serbia. In addition, the company success mod-

erator was also included in the analysis of the observed relationships so as to allow a closer look at the observed relationships from another angle. This variable has not been used as a moderator in similar research to date. The financial performance dimension for a given company is taken (the respondents' perception) as an indicator of company success.

In this paper, organizational culture is seen through four GLOBE dimensions: power distance, humane orientation, performance orientation and in-group collectivism (Collectivism 2). These dimensions were chosen for two reasons. First, these dimensions are most often observed in similar studies and evidently have an impact (sometimes contradictory) on workplace bullying, as previously discussed. Second, the national and organizational culture in Serbia is strongly characterized by increased power distance and increased collectivism (in-group) (Vukonjanski et al. 2012; Rajković et al. 2020; Mali et al. 2020).
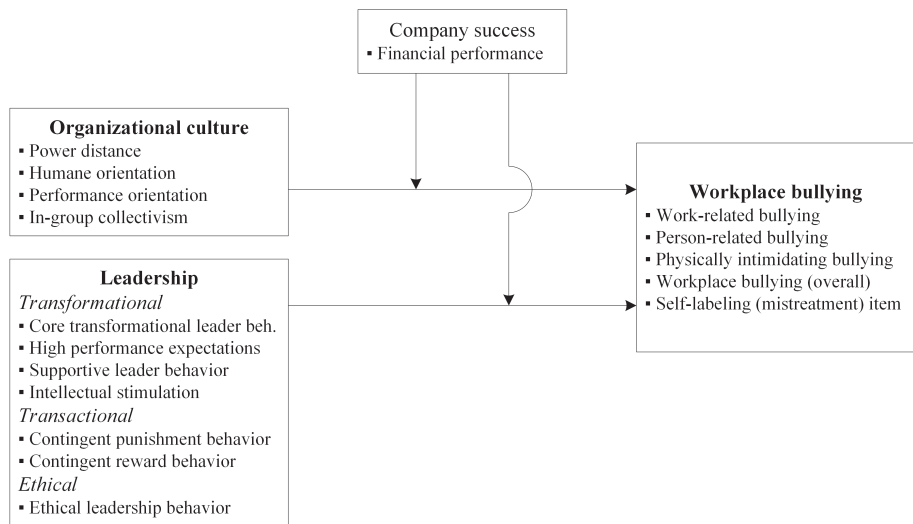

Figure 1 Research model (graphic view)

Leadership is observed through four transformational leadership dimensions (core transformational leader behaviour, high performance expectations, supportive leader behaviour, and intellectual stimulation), two transactional leadership dimensions (contingent reward behaviour and contingent punishment behaviour) and one dimension of ethical leadership. Workplace bullying is observed through four dimensions: work-related bullying, person-related bullying, physically intimidating bullying and workplace bullying (total dimension), and one item: self-labelling (mistreatment). For better visibility, this research setting can be displayed graphically (Figure 1).

This study was conducted in organizations in Serbia, which are the subject of the research in this paper. So far, several studies dealing with the occurrence of workplace bullying have been carried out in Serbia (Petrović et al. 2014; Vukelić et al. 2015). What made these studies particularly valuable and comparable was the use of the valid Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R) methodology (Einarsen et al. 2009).

The significance of the paper stems from the focus on the nature of the effect of individual organizational culture and leadership dimensions on individual workplace bullying dimensions and the mistreatment item, both in the general case and in the case of the company success moderator. At the same time, these relationships will be examined for the first time in the specific, transitional conditions in Serbia. This will create the conditions for comparing the obtained results with existing ones. This is especially important given the different findings of studies to date regarding the functioning of individual organizational culture and leadership dimensions on bullying. The fact that employee exposure to negative practices (NAQ-R) was examined only in interaction with other employees (colleagues, superiors and/or subordinates) also contributes to the significance of this study.

Based on the results obtained and the analyses performed, proposals have been made to improve leadership behaviour with regard to reducing and/or eliminating workplace bullying completely. The proposals are specific and refer to the way in which certain organizational culture and leadership dimensions are realized. Such results and the presented proposals apply primarily to organizations in Serbia, but they can certainly be useful for broadening existing theoretical knowledge and for a better understanding of some practical issues in the field of workplace bullying.

2 Theory and hypothesis

2.1 Workplace bullying in Serbian organizations

In Serbia, the study of workplace bullying began after the democratic changes in 2000, thanks to the engagement of experts from the trade unions (Vukelić 2015). It can be said that the rate of harassment in the workplace in Serbia partially fits into the global framework, where 2.5 % of employees are exposed to serious abuse (Petrović et al. 2014), while almost a quarter of employees are exposed to some mild form of abuse. According to (Vukelić/Čizmić/Petrović 2013), at the time the research was carried out, 52 % of individuals in Serbia had experienced harassment at work, either as victims or former victims. This result can be compared with data from Malesia, where 39.1 % of employed participants reported that they were being bullied (Chan et al. 2019).

Jovanović (2008) notes that the phenomenon of workplace bullying was initially identified as a sociological problem, then as a health problem, then as a socio-economic problem and finally as a legal issue. Harassment at work, as a legal issue, is directly related to the socio-economic rights elaborated by labour legislation (both international and Serbian) which concern the dignity of people at work. Based on this, there are numerous reasons to treat abuse directly as a legal issue (Jovanović 2008). The problem is that workplace bullying is often confused with similar violations of employee rights, such as discrimination, discrimination-related harassment or sexual harassment.

The socio-economic aspect of workplace bullying is related to the interests of employees and superiors in organizations, as well to those of the state, because the consequences of this problem directly or indirectly affect employers' costs, and thus impact on the budget costs of the state (Jovanović 2008). The direct impact of workplace bullying refers to frequent sick leave, downtime due to terminated contracts, etc., while indirect costs arise from poor interpersonal relationships which are in turn reflected in poor motivation to work and declining productivity, all of which affect state budget revenues (taxes and contributions) (Jovanović 2008).

In previous studies in Serbia, no risk groups for workplace bullying were identified based on gender, age, level of education or employee hierarchical levels (Petrović et al. 2014; Petrović/Vukelić/Čizmić 2017; Vukelić/Čizmić/Petrović 2018). There is a slightly greater presence of workplace bullying in the manufacturing industry compared to other sectors (health and social protection, education and research, local government, trade and catering) (Vukelić et al. 2014). In the research (Stankov et al. 2020), which also forms part of the research presented in this paper, the effects of six control variables were examined (the gender of the respondents, the age of the respondents, the education of the respondents, the national origin of the company, the ownership structure of the company and the size of the company) in terms of the intensity of workplace bullying in organizations in Serbia. Company size was identified as the only variable (and is therefore very important) which affects workplace bullying: workplace bullying is more pronounced in large companies than in small companies (Stankov et al. 2020).

According to (Vukelić et al. 2015), workplace bullying in Serbia strongly encourages the desire to leave the organization and significantly reduces personal health assessment. In addition, workplace bullying increases absenteeism and reduces subjective assessment of work productivity. People who have witnessed workplace bullying also have a desire to leave the organization (Petrović/Čizmić/Vukelić 2014). Strong organizational support can alleviate an individual's desire to leave an organization in situations of exposure to harassment at work (Vukelić/Čizmić/Petrović 2013).

2.2 Organizational culture and workplace bullying

Hofstede et al. (Hofstede/Neuijen/Ohavy/Sanders 1990) assumed that organizational cultures were partly predetermined by nationality, while Dickson, BeShears and Gupta (2004, p. 74) observed that "national culture and industry are integral parts of the environment in which organizations function". At the same time, Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper (2003) describe workplace bullying as a "multicausal social phenomenon" which includes "cultural and socioeconomic factors". Thus, there are studies that examine the link between organizational culture and workplace bullying (Hood/Logsdon 2008; Lewis 2006; Logsdon et al. 2007; Salin 2003).

However, according to (Jacobson et al. 2014), few studies attempt to describe in detail the enormous impact national culture can have on violent behaviour in organizations. The same authors suggest that the dimensions of national culture derived from the GLOBE project may be useful for studying workplace bullying in different cultural contexts. According to (Lutgen-Sandvik et al. 2007), some of the dimensions from Hofstede's (1980) cultural framework (e.g. power distance and individualism), may play a role in the increased prevalence of violence compared to the USA and the Scandinavian countries. In any case, there are subtle variations in the perception of workplace bullying between different cultures and national contexts (Ahmed/Kaleem, 2019).

So, although bullying is a universal phenomenon, there are institutional, legal, organizational, and cultural factors that can influence the perception of what behaviours are considered bullying. Due to different value systems, hierarchical relationships, communication norms and the larger institutional context, abuse can be experienced differently across cultures (Fox 2012; Salin et al. 2019). The study, in which the respondents were human resource professionals from 13 different countries (Salin et al. 2019), found that cultural factors, and in particular performance orientation, power distance and in-group orientation, seemed relevant for explaining cross-national differences in bullying perceptions. Some other studies link bullying with poor organizational climate and poor communication (Zapf et al. 1996; Vartia 1996). Studying the effects of organizational culture on bullying must be viewed through the individual organizational culture dimensions.

Theoretical reasoning by Jacobson, Hood, and Van Buren (2014) hypothesized that high assertiveness and high power distance would be associated with higher levels of bullying in society, whereas in-group collectivism would be linked to lower levels of bullying. This power distance influence is undoubtedly confirmed. Thus, according to (Kalliath et al. 2012), power imbalance, as part of organizational culture, is a powerful risk factor for bullying behaviours. Differences in power dynamics and organizational culture norms are the main factors that influence the occurrence of victimization (Aquino and Lamertz 2004). Fi-

nally, in the study (Salin et al. 2019), power distance was designated as the dimension more likely to lead to workplace bullying. When it comes to the impact of in-group collectivism on workplace bullying, there are some differences in the findings of individual researchers. Van de Vliert, Einarsen and Nielsen (2013) reported that employee bullying was lower in cultures with a high degree of in-group orientation, which supports the initial ideas. However, Samnani (2013) argues that employees from countries with high individualism and low power distance are most likely to show resistance to bullying. This result is consistent with other studies pertaining to the influence of power distance. With reference to individualism, the explanation may be that in high individualistic countries bullying resistance is provided by the individual, and in countries with high in-group collectivism bullying resistance is based on collective values and collective action.

Some references address the dimensions of humane orientation and performance orientation on workplace bullying. The research (Kalliath et al. 2012) examined the way in which organizational culture affects the emergence of workplace bullying in Estonia as a transitional country. The results reveal a clear negative relationship between bullying and task-oriented and relationship-oriented organizational culture: strong orientation towards tasks and relationships leads to a reduced risk of bullying. However, a somewhat different result was gained in the study (Power et al. 2013), which addressed the impact of culture on the acceptability of bullying. This research was realized by surveying MBA students on six continents. Future orientation and humane orientation were shown to reduce the acceptability of abuse, while performance orientation enhanced bullying acceptability. According to (Porter et al. 2018), an organizational culture that emphasizes rewards leads to higher levels of bullying. A strong emphasis on rewards is one of the main characteristics of a highly competitive, performance-based culture that encourages aggressive behaviour, which in turn leads to perceived bullying. Practically, rewards such as salary increases and promotions may potentially be areas of contention and employees might bully others in an effort to succeed. There is a noticeable relationship with the performance orientation dimension here, because rewards usually follow high performance. From this we can conclude that humane orientation certainly reduces the risk of workplace bullying, while the effect of performance orientation is complex: although it may reduce bullying, it can also create conditions of pressure and negative competition among employees.

Based on the previous considerations, the first hypothesis in the paper is set:

H1:   There is a statistically significant correlation between the organizational culture and leadership dimensions and the workplace bullying dimensions (and the mistreatment item).

2.3 Leadership and workplace bullying

Leymann (1993) suggests that poor work organization and leadership problems lead to bullying. This opinion is also suggested by the findings of Einarsen et al. (1994), Vartia (1996) and Zapf and Osterwalder (1998). A general, direct link between leadership quality and bullying has been confirmed in several studies (Nielsen 2013; Skogstad et al. 2007). The results of a survey conducted in Denmark (Francioli et al. 2015) also show that leadership quality plays a role in establishing working conditions which may lead to workplace bullying, but with social community at work as a mediator. Employee maltreatment is an indicator of weak leadership and low support from superiors, resulting in stress, absenteeism, and emotional problems among employees, as well as their desire to leave the organization. This was established on a sample of tourism workers and managers in New Zealand (Bentley/Catley/Cooper-Thomas/Gardner/O'Driscoll/Dale/Trenberth 2012).

Leadership styles play an important but complex role in the bullying process (Hoel et al. 2010). Thus, researchers often examine the effects of transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, authentic and ethical leadership styles on workplace bullying. For example, a study carried out in schools in Turkey (Cemaloğlu 2011) showed a negative relationship between transformational leadership among principals and workplace bullying, while no relationship between transactional leadership among principals and workplace bullying was found. Nielsen (2013) examined whether and how leadership styles (laissez-faire, transformational, and authentic leadership) are related to the emergence of bullying in work groups, in two Norwegian shipping companies. Laissez-faire leadership was associated with an increased risk of exposure to bullying behaviour, and self-labelled bullying victimization. In contrast, transformational, and authentic leadership in particular, were associated with a reduced risk of exposure to bullying behaviour. A study of Japanese civil servants (Kanami/Norito 2015) found that a passive laissez faire and low individual consideration leadership style increased workers' exposure to bullying.

Ethical leadership style has emerged as a critical inhibiting factor of workplace bullying (Stouten et al. 2010; Yamada 2008). Ahmad (2018) examined the cross-cultural effectiveness of ethical leadership in two countries: Australia and Pakistan. In different cultural settings, ethical leadership has been shown to significantly reduce employees' exposure to workplace bullying, because ethical leaders promote justice at work. A study conducted in academic work settings, in the context of Pakistan (Ahmad et al. 2020), showed that the occurrence of unethical behaviour, plays a more powerful role than ethical behaviour in shaping employee well-being, as well as workplace bullying. On the other hand, destructive leadership creates a negative environment, which leaves the space

for bullying to occur (Matthiesen/Einarsen 2010; Einarsen et al. 2013; Skogstad et al. 2011; Salin/Hoel 2011; Nielsen 2013; Salin 2003).

Workplace bullying is a common occurrence among junior doctors in Malaysia, and it can adversely affect their training and professional skills (Samsudin et al. 2020). Among other things, these phenomena can be mitigated in conditions where there is a moderate degree of production and achievement-oriented leadership styles, a moderate and high degree of organizational support, a moderate degree of procedural justice, a moderate and high degree of interactional justice, and a high degree of distributive justice. Research in Great Britain (Hoel et al. 2010) found that 'non-contingent punishment' emerged as the strongest predictor of self-perceived exposure to bullying, while autocratic leadership was the strongest predictor of observed bullying. In addition, laissez-faire leadership emerged as a predictor of self-reported as well as observed bullying. It should be noted that different leadership styles have a high degree of consistency in how workplace bullying operates in all parts of the world.

Based on the previous considerations, the second hypothesis in the paper is set:

H2: There is a statistically significant predictive effect of the organizational culture and leadership dimensions on the workplace bullying dimensions (and the mistreatment item).

2.4 Company success and workplace bullying

There is very little evidence that organizations provide effective protection against workplace bullying (Hodgins/MacCurtain/Mannix McNamara 2020), and in fact, organizations appear to be extremely poor at preventing or providing effective protection against bullying (Einarsen/Hoel/Zapf/Cooper 2011; Hurley/Hutchinson/Bradbury/Browne 2016; Vickers 2012). Although there may be isolated exceptions, the general impression is that organizations fail to prevent or manage workplace bullying in order to reduce harm to workers (Catley/Blackwood/Forsyth/Tappin 2016; Kahn/Kahn 2012). Negative experiences exist even in organizations which have anti-bullying policies (Hodgins/Mannix McNamara 2019). All of this points to the complex relationship of the organization (as a system), the protection against workplace bullying, and the degree of the real presence of workplace bullying.

The aforementioned indicate the need to examine the effects of some characteristics of organizations on attitudes towards workplace bullying. For example, the question may be posed as to whether more successful companies cope better with the phenomena of workplace bullying. On the one hand, when a company is more successful, it is possible to have better mechanisms for neutralizing workplace bullying, as well as to more effectively establish a favourable leadership and organizational culture, which will contribute to reducing workplace

bullying. On the other hand, in high success companies the demands and expectations are great, and the competition among employees is strong, so it is the company's success that can open the space for enhanced workplace bullying. This highlights the importance of examining the moderating effect of company success in relation to the influence of organizational culture and leadership on workplace bullying. This moderating influence is assumed to exist, and research should show its intensity and direction.

Hence, the paper also examines the moderating effect of company success on the observed relationships. In this part of the research, the third hypothesis in the paper is set:

H3: *There is a moderating effect of company success on the relation between the organizational culture and leadership dimensions and the workplace bullying dimensions (and the mistreatment item).*

3 Method

3.1 Survey instruments (measures)

Organizational Culture. The GLOBE project was used (House et al. 1999; 2002; 2004) as an instrument for measuring organizational culture. The first part of the questionnaire for the measurement of organizational culture was used (the state of "how it is"). This questionnaire comprises 34 items and nine dimensions. The completed questionnaires were processed according to GLOBE Syntax. As previously explained (in the introduction), for the purpose of this research, the following four dimensions are used: Power Distance, Humane Orientation, Performance Orientation and In-Group Collectivism (Collectivism 2) (House et al. 2004). The respondents evaluated each item on a seven-point Likert scale.

Transformational leadership. The Transformational Leadership Behaviour Inventory (TLI) questionnaire was used to measure transformational leadership (Podsakoff/MacKenzie/Moorman/Fetter 1990; MacKenzie/Podsakoff/Rich 2001). The questionnaire comprises 14 items arranged in four dimensions: 1. Core Transformational Leader Behaviour, 2. High Performance Expectations, 3. Supportive Leader Behaviour and 4. Intellectual Stimulation. The respondents evaluated each item on aseven point Likert scale.

Transactional leadership. For the measurement of transactional leadership, a questionnaire developed in the following references was used (Podsakoff/Todor/ Grover/Huber 1984; MacKenzie et al. 2001). The questionnaire consists of seven items distributed in two dimensions: 1. Contingent Reward Behaviour and 2. Contingent Punishment Behaviour. The respondents evaluated each item on a seven-point Likert scale.

Ethical leadership behaviour. For the measurement of ethical leadership behaviour, the Ethical Leadership Scale was used (Brown/Trevino/Harrison 2005). The questionnaire consists of 10 items (one dimension). The respondents evaluated each item on aseven point Likert scale.

Workplace bullying. Workplace bullying was measured by the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised, NAQ-R (Einarsen et al. 2009) instrument, which was validated in Serbian in the reference (Vukelić et al. 2015). The questionnaire consists of 22 items (3 dimensions: Work-Related Bullying, Person-Related Bullying and Physically Intimidating Bullying). In addition, the Workplace Bullying (NAQ-R total) dimension, which included all of the 22 items, was used in the analyses. The respondents evaluated how often they had been exposed to each item in the last six months, with five response categories being offered: "never", "occasionally", "monthly", "weekly" and "daily". These response categories were assigned quantitative scores, from 1 (for "never") to 5 (for "daily"), respectively. Practically, the respondents evaluated each item on a five-point Likert scale.

Self-labelled victim of bullying (the mistreatment item). Self-labelling (mistreatment) was measured by one item, similar to the reference (Einarsen et al. 2009). The respondents answered the question as to whether and to what extent they had been bullied at work during the last six months (the definition of bullying was given before that). They were offered five categories of answers: "no", "yes, occasionally", "yes, several times a month", "yes, several times a week" and "yes, almost daily". These answer categories were assigned quantitative scores, from 1 (for "no") to 5 (for "yes, almost daily"), respectively. Practically, the respondents evaluated each item on a five-point Likert scale.

Financial performance. The financial performance dimension consists of seven items: productivity, profitability, market share, sales growth, competitive status, asset growth, and salaries. This approach is defined according to the references (Tan/Litschert 1994; Wang/Tsui/Zhang/Ma 2003; Wang/Tsui/Xin 2011). The respondents evaluated each item on a seven point Likert scale.

3.2 Participants and data collection

The research was carried out in Serbian organizations. It was conducted by asking the respondents to complete questionnaires. The survey was conducted using interviews with the respondents. The respondents are employed by organizations in Serbia, at different organizational levels. A total of 536 valid questionnaires, from 129 organizations, were collected (in most organizations several respondents participated, but not more than 10). This includes all available organizations, regardless of ownership, size and sector. In this way, a wide range of organizations was involved, in order for the obtained results to better represent the overall situation in Serbia regarding workplace bullying.

This approach corresponds to the given research. Thus, the sample includes 184 (34.3 %) respondents employed in state companies, and 352 (65.7 %) respondents employed in private companies. Also, there are 229 (42.7 %) respondents employed in small companies (companies with 50 or fewer employees), and 307 (57.3 %) respondents employed in medium and large companies (companies with more than 50 employees).

The company success moderator is observed in relation to the financial performance dimension. The sample of 536 respondents was divided by the mean (4.571). There are 259 companies (48.32 %) in the low success companies' group (FP < 4.571), while there are 277 companies (51.68 %) in the high success companies group (FP ≥ 4.571).

4 Results

4.1 Descriptive statistics

The results of the descriptive statistics for the organizational culture, leadership, workplace bullying and financial performance dimensions and the self-labelling (mistreatment) item are shown in Table 1. This table gives the names, abbreviations, mean and standard deviation for each dimension and item, as well as Cronbach's alpha for each dimension. The Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.725 to 0.970.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for all the observed dimensions and the self-labelling (mistreatment) item

Dimensions	Abbr.	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Cron. alpha
Power distance	PD	536	1.000	7.000	4.66169	1.441837	0.725
Humane orientation	HO	536	1.000	7.000	4.23974	1.605739	0.930
Performance orientation	PO	536	1.000	7.000	4.11147	1.449316	0.780
In-group collectivism (Collectivism 2)	GC	536	1.000	7.000	4.30299	1.523544	0.906
Core transformational leader behaviour	L1	536	1.000	7.000	4.52985	1.752002	0.931
High performance expectations	L2	536	1.000	7.000	5.30473	1.429554	0.827
Supportive leader behaviour	L3	536	1.000	7.000	3.69310	1.879993	0.967
Intellectual stimulation	L4	536	1.000	7.000	3.88060	1.719179	0.899
Contingent reward behaviour	L5	536	1.000	7.000	4.11007	1.876692	0.938
Contingent punishment behaviour	L6	536	1.000	7.000	5.24316	1.553061	0.906
Ethical leadership behaviour	EL	536	1.000	7.000	4.10746	1.773159	0.970
Work-related bullying	WRB	536	1.000	5.000	2.15032	.969466	0.903
Person-related bullying	PRB	536	1.000	5.000	1.86381	.864768	0.948
Physically intimidating bullying	PIB	536	1.000	5.000	1.54913	.713955	0.755
Workplace bullying	WB	536	1.000	5.000	1.91206	.831234	0.964
Self-labelling (mistreatment)	SLM	536	1.000	5.000	1.88000	1.06000	-
Financial performance	FP	536	1.000	7.000	4.51226	1.415940	0.927

Source: (Stankov, in progress)

4.2 Correlation analysis

The correlation coefficients between the organizational culture and leadership dimensions and the workplace bullying dimensions and the self-labelling (mistreatment) item are given in Table 2. Pearson's correlation was used, *p<0.05; **p<0.01.

Table 2 The correlation coefficients between the organizational culture and leadership dimensions and the workplace bullying dimensions and the self-labelling (mistreatment) item

	WRB	PRB	PIB	WB	SLM
PD	.241**	.253**	.153**	.251**	.172**
HO	-.452**	-.438**	-.339**	-.456**	-.295**
PO	-.366**	-.338**	-.229**	-.354**	-.215**
GC	-.472**	-.429**	-.310**	-.455**	-.311**
L1	-.413**	-.367**	-.280**	-.394**	-.250**
L2	.004	-.040	-.051	-.027	.030
L3	-.493**	-.425**	-.303**	-.460**	-.285**
L4	-.384**	-.363**	-.247**	-.377**	-.247**
L5	-.408**	-.375**	-.265**	-.395**	-.231**
L6	.218**	.198**	.102*	.205**	.144**
EL	-.547**	-.498**	-.372**	-.529**	-.383**

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$
Source: (Stankov, in progress)

4.3 Regression analysis

The predictive effect of the organizational culture dimensions (independent variables) on the workplace bullying dimensions and the self-labelling (mistreatment) item (dependent variables) was examined using multiple regression analysis (Table 3). The predictive effect of the leadership dimensions (independent variables) on the workplace bullying dimensions and the self-labelling (mistreatment) item (dependent variables) was examined using multiple regression analysis (Table 4). The predictive effect of the integrated organizational culture and leadership dimensions (independent variables) on the workplace bullying dimensions and the self-labelling (mistreatment) item (dependent variables) was examined using multiple regression analysis (Table 5). The results in Tables 3, 4 and 5, where there is a statistically significant predictive effect, are indicated in bold font and shaded fields.

Table 3 Regression analysis (independent variables: the organizational culture dimensions; dependent variables: the workplace bullying dimensions and the mistreatment item)

Depend.	PD	HO	PO	GC	R^2	F	Sig.
			Indep.				
			β				
WRB	**0.130**	**- 0.253**	0.125	**- 0.358**	**0.269**	48.794	0.000
PRB	**0.152**	**- 0.284**	0.122	**- 0.286**	**0.244**	42.890	0.000
PIB	0.077	**- 0.272**	**0.151**	**- 0.215**	**0.137**	20.993	0.000
WB	**0.143**	**- 0.287**	**0.133**	**- 0.321**	**0.265**	47.930	0.000
SLM	**0.101**	**- 0.179**	**0.162**	**- 0.287**	**0.125**	18.947	0.000

Source: (Stankov, in progress)

Table 4   Regression analysis (independent variables: the leadership dimensions; dependent variables: the workplace bullying dimensions and the mistreatment item)

Depend.	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6	EL	R^2	F	Sig.
WRB	- 0.158	0.166	- 0.120	0.020	0.152	0.103	- 0.503	0.354	41.272	0.000
PRB	- 0.085	0.082	- 0.005	- 0.036	0.109	0.125	- 0.502	0.277	28.876	0.000
PIB	- 0.065	0.056	0.000	0.021	0.109	0.048	- 0.438	0.149	13.239	0.000
WB	- 0.115	0.114	- 0.047	- 0.011	0.131	0.115	- 0.523	0.316	34.904	0.000
SLM	- 0.048	0.140	0.084	- 0.030	0.213	0.061	- 0.603	0.190	17.690	0.000

Source: (Stankov, in progress)

Table 5   Regression analysis (independent variables: the integrated organizational culture and leadership dimensions; dependent variables: the workplace bullying dimensions and the mistreatment item)

Dep.	PD	HO	PO	GC	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5	L6	EL	R^2	F	Sig.
WRB	0.042	- 0.159	0.129	- 0.152	- 0.116	0.145	- 0.077	0.001	0.185	0.101	- 0.432	0.375	28.635	0.000
PRB	0.090	- 0.224	0.133	- 0.121	- 0.036	0.049	0.054	- 0.060	0.145	0.117	- 0.416	0.314	21.761	0.000
PIB	0.041	- 0.225	0.167	- 0.077	- 0.047	0.037	0.054	- 0.009	0.123	0.043	- 0.375	0.177	10.266	0.000
WB	0.071	- 0.213	0.143	- 0.134	- 0.069	0.086	0.009	- 0.035	0.165	0.109	- 0.440	0.349	25.555	0.000
SLM	0.044	- 0.124	0.153	- 0.167	- 0.013	0.119	0.117	- 0.046	0.242	0.056	- 0.543	0.208	12.543	0.000

Source: (Stankov, in progress)

4.4 Company success as a moderator of the observed relationships

The results of the correlation analysis between the organizational culture and leadership dimensions and the workplace bullying dimensions and the self-labelling (mistreatment) item, for companies with low and high success, are given in Table 6. The test of the moderating effect of company success was performed using hierarchical regression analysis. In Table 6, the results confirming the moderating effect of company success are highlighted in the shaded boxes.

Table 6 The correlation coefficients between the organizational culture and leadership dimensions and the workplace bullying dimensions and the self-labelling (mistreatment) item for companies with low and high success

Success of the company		WRB	PRB	PIB	WB	SLM
	PD	.209**	.194**	.048	.195**	.130*
	HO	-.343**	-.351**	-.210**	-.354**	-.197**
	PO	-.317**	-.279**	-.138*	-.294**	-.133*
	GC	-.397**	-.341**	-.160**	-.363**	-.223**
Low	L1	-.388**	-.331**	-.199**	-.358**	-.238**
success	L2	-.025	-.089	-.089	-.071	.036
$N_{LS} = 259$	L3	-.332**	-.249**	-.063	-.274**	-.085
	L4	-.269**	-.220**	-.075	-.235**	-.055
	L5	-.317**	-.259**	-.106	-.279**	-.106
	L6	.106	.097	.007	.096	.049
	EL	-.432**	-.380**	-.224**	-.405**	-.234**
	PD	.268**	.304**	.239**	.298**	.208**
	HO	-.556**	-.523**	-.456**	-.553**	-.395**
	PO	-.481**	-.449**	-.357**	-.472**	-.340**
	GC	-.579**	-.538**	-.457**	-.570**	-.422**
High	L1	-.508**	-.457**	-.404**	-.492**	-.310**
success	L2	.029	.006	-.027	.011	.018
$N_{HS} = 277$	L3	-.623**	-.563**	-.487**	-.604**	-.454**
	L4	-.478**	-.476**	-.383**	-.489**	-.410**
	L5	-.505**	-.487**	-.409**	-.509**	-.355**
	L6	.323**	.297**	.189**	.309**	.239**
	EL	-.671**	-.619**	-.515**	-.656**	-.537**

*p<0.05; **p<0.01.
Source: (Stankov, in progress)

5 Discussion

5.1 Discussion of the results of the descriptive statistics

According to Table 1, the workplace bullying dimensions and mistreatment item have relatively low values. However, it is necessary to compare the values obtained here with the average scores for the same workplace bullying dimensions in other countries. For example, the results from Norway show the value 1.22 for workplace bullying (NAQ-R) (Notelaers/Einarsen 2013), while those for Sweden the value 1.26 for workplace bullying (NAQ-R) (Rosander/Blomberg 2019). According to Einarsen, Hoel and Notelaers (2009), the following values were obtained for the United Kingdom: work related bullying 1.97; person related bullying 1.21; physically intimidating bullying 1.29 and workplace bullying (NAQ-R) 1.45. In Spain, Moreno-Jimenez, Rodriguez-Muñoz, Martínez

Gamarra and Gálvez-Herrer (2007), reported the following results: work related bullying 1.70; person related bullying 1.33; and workplace bullying (NAQ-R) 1.54. This data clearly shows that the average scores for workplace bullying in Serbian organizations have significantly higher (less favourable) values compared to the data presented from other countries. The fact that the comparison was made with highly developed countries from Western Europe might provide a mitigating circumstance. We should not forget that the scores for Serbian organizations are still low and at the bottom of the scale.

5.2 Discussion of the results of the correlation analysis (checking hypothesis H1)

Almost all of the organizational culture and leadership dimensions have a statistically significant effect on the workplace bullying dimensions (Table 2). The only exception is the L2 – High Performance Expectations dimension, which has no statistically significant effect. Hence, hypothesis H1 is confirmed.

A large number of organizational culture and leadership dimensions stand out as having a statistically significant and negative impact on the workplace bullying dimensions. From these dimensions, dimension EL – Ethical Leadership Behaviour, followed by the HO – Humane Orientation, GC – In-group Collectivism and L3 – Supportive Leader Behaviour dimensions, have the strongest negative impact. Obviously, ethical leadership behaviour, leadership support, and an organizational culture that fosters humane orientation and in-group collectivism significantly reduce, prevent, or even completely eliminate workplace bullying phenomena. Thus, diminishing workplace bullying is influenced by those dimensions which involve ethical, humane, personal and supportive components in the behaviour of leaders as well as in the culture of the organization. This kind of connection is quite logical. Accordingly, viewed in the opposite direction, low values for these organizational culture and leadership dimensions may stimulate and increase workplace bullying. Other dimensions that can also significantly reduce workplace bullying are L1 – Core Transformational Leader Behaviour and L4 – Intellectual Stimulation. Thus, both ethical leadership (in particular) and transformational leadership have a favourable (negative) impact on workplace bullying. These results are in agreement with those of the references that found that workplace bullying is diminished under conditions of ethical leadership (Stouten et al. 2010; Yamada 2008; Ahmad 2018), humane orientation (Kalliath et al. 2012; Power et al. 2013), in-group collectivism (Vliert et al. 2013), organizational support (Djurkovic/McCormack/Casimir 2008; Samsudin et al. 2020), as well as transformational leadership (Cemaloğlu 2011; Nielsen 2013).

However, the correlation analysis shows that there are also two dimensions that have a statistically significant and positive impact on the occurrence of

workplace bullying, namely: PD – Power Distance and L6 – Contingent Punishment Behaviour. High power distance, the strong exercise of authority based on position, expectations of absolute obedience from subordinates, as well as pronounced management through punishment and criticism are certainly not popular leader behaviours from the perspective of employees. Such leadership behaviours are likely to provoke feelings of dissatisfaction, insecurity, pressure, and fear among employees. The conditions described provide the impetus and fertile ground for the emergence of workplace bullying. Clearly, reducing the power distance, and expressing dissatisfaction with leadership and punishments by the leader can have a positive effect on workplace bullying. Existing research also yields similar results when it comes to the impact of power distance on workplace bullying (Kalliath et al. 2012; Aquino/Lamertz, 2004; Salin et al. 2019), as well as the impact of contingent punishment on workplace bullying (Hoel et al. 2010).

That being said, the L2 – High Performance Expectations dimension has no statistically significant effect. This dimension can act in two ways: if it is aimed at enhancing work and performance for both the organization and individuals, then it is reasonable to expect a positive and healthy orientation that leaves no space or time for workplace bullying; however, if it is aimed at achieving results at all costs, while neglecting the real capabilities of employees and the organizational system as a whole, then the emergence of workplace bullying is quite possible. This is probably the reason why this dimension does not, in fact, have a statistically significant effect in the overall score, whereas in some individual cases one of the two modes of action of this dimension may be mentioned.

From the workplace bullying dimensions, dimension WRB – Work-Related Bullying is most influenced by the organizational culture and leadership dimensions, followed by the general WB – Workplace Bullying dimension and PRB – Person-Related Bullying. There are significantly smaller effects on the PIB – Physically Intimidating Bullying dimension and the SLM – Self-labelling (mistreatment) item. Thus, organizational culture and leadership are a little more focused on the work of the employees themselves than on their personality. Interestingly, the only exception to this part of the results is the PD – Power Distance dimension, which has a stronger effect on PRB – Person-Related Bullying than on WRB – Work-Related Bullying. Power distance obviously has a slightly more pronounced personal component, that is, it is perceived more personally than business.

5.3 Discussion of the results of the regression analysis (checking hypothesis H2)

According to Table 3, all of the observed dimensions of organizational culture have statistically significant predictive effects. However, there are clearly two dimensions that have a negative effect (HO – Humane Orientation and GC – In-group Collectivism) and two which have a positive effect (PD – Power Distance and PO – Performance Orientation). The difference between the results of the correlation analysis lies in the direction of the PO dimension, which is now positive. In the regression analysis, due to the effect of a number of independent variables, the predictive effect of dimension PO – Performance Orientation turned out to be statistically significant and positive. In the overall impact of organizational culture on workplace bullying, performance orientation may serve as a good front for strong and sometimes unrealistic insistence on high performance, which in turn may be the introduction to the workplace bullying phenomenon. This result for the performance orientation dimension is consistent with the results obtained in the research (Power et al. 2013; Porter et al. 2018), but differs from the reference result (Kalliath et al. 2012).The effect of the other dimensions was discussed in the correlation analysis.

According to Table 4, from the leadership dimensions, the most statistically significant and negative effect is exerted by dimension EL – Ethical Leadership Behaviour, which is consistent with the results of the correlation analysis. To a lesser extent, the L1 – Core Transformational Leader Behaviour dimension has a statistically significant and negative effect, but only on dimension WRB – Work-Related Bullying. Thus, transformational leadership can diminish the business aspect of workplace bullying. It should be said that there is no predictive effect of the dimensions L3 – Supportive Leader Behaviour and L4 – Intellectual Stimulation. In the regression analysis, as part of the operation of multiple independent variables, these dimensions lose their impact.

One group of dimensions has a statistically significant and positive effect on workplace bullying. For dimension L6 – Contingent Punishment Behaviour, this is expected and consistent with the results of the correlation analysis. However, here we encounter a positive predictive effect of dimensions L2 – High Performance Expectations and L5 – Contingent Reward Behaviour on workplace bullying. For the L2 – High Performance Expectations dimension, this could have been deduced from the results of the correlation analysis. The broader range of independent variables is dominated by the notion that high performance insistence is stressful for employees, thus forming the basis for the emergence of workplace bullying, especially in the WRB – Work-Related Bullying dimension. This phenomenon is analogous to the predictive effect of the organizational culture dimension PO – Performance Orientation: practically, both dimensions are focused on achieving high performance, high standards are

set, expectations are high, pressure is more pronounced, and when the intended results fail to be achieved, it is more likely to become a potential source of workplace bullying.This result bears considerable resemblance to the study (Samsudin et al. 2020), which suggests that a moderate degree of production and achievement-oriented leadership style mitigates workplace bullying.

The biggest surprise is the positive (statistically significant) predictive effect of dimension L5 – Contingent Reward Behaviour. From this it can be concluded that the recognition of results by leaders is nevertheless part of transactional leadership and that rewards and punishment are inseparable as they form part of the same leadership style. Rewards, in isolation from other actions, can diminish workplace bullying (as shown in the correlation analysis). However, the nature of rewards goes deeper and rewards may often only be superficial recognition of employees' performance, concealing the true situation and actions of leaders. This result is also confirmed in a previous study, in which rewards are labelled as a mechanism for fostering employee competitiveness, which creates the conditions for increased bullying (Porter et al. 2018).Of course, there are certainly examples of honest, affirmative, and unconditional employee rewards. Thus, according to the results of this study, the effect of transactional leadership on workplace bullying is certainly unfavourable in terms of contingent punishment, which is in line with the research (Hoel et al. 2010), but when it comes to contingent reward, it can be both favourable and unfavourable, which may be considered analogous to the research result (Cemaloğlu 2011), according to which transactional leadership has no effect on workplace bullying.

Table 5 shows the results of the regression analysis to examine the integrated predictive effects of the organizational culture and leadership dimensions on the workplace bullying dimensions. The strongest statistically significant and negative effect is retained by the EL – Ethical Leadership Behaviour dimension, which has proven to be the most powerful predictor and the most effective means of reducing and completely eliminating the occurrence of workplace bullying. In addition, workplace bullying can be mitigated by reinforcing HO – Humane Orientation and GC – In-group Collectivism (to a lesser extent).

Other statistically significant predictive effects are positive. Thus, workplace bullying can be increased in conditions of transactional leadership (L5 – Contingent Reward Behaviour and L6 – Contingent Punishment Behaviour), but also when there is a strong focus on achieving high performance (PO – Performance Orientation and L2 – High Performance Expectations), as discussed previously. In such conditions, the effects of PO – Performance Orientation and L5 – Contingent Reward Behaviour increased in the integrated regression analysis, relative to the two individual regression analyses. It should also be noted that PD – Power Distance has a statistically significant and positive predictive effect only on PRB – Person-Related Bullying. This confirms the previous statement

that power distance reflects more on the personality of employees than on the conditions, manner, volume and type of work, etc.

The corrected determination indexes R^2 have values in the range from 0.177 to 0.375 and are all statistically significant (Table 5). Also, these values are higher than observed in the organizational culture dimensions and leadership dimensions when viewed separately (Tables 3 and 4), which is logical. The strongest predictive effect occurs for dimension WRB – Work-Related Bullying, followed by the overall WB – Workplace Bullying dimension and PRB – Person-Related Bullying. These results are consistent with those of the correlation analysis. Based on the previous findings, hypothesis H2 is confirmed.

5.4 A summary of the results of the correlation and regression analysis

By integrating the results of the correlation and regression analysis, it can be concluded that from all the organizational culture and leadership dimensions, dimension EL – Ethical Leadership Behaviour has the strongest negative effects on workplace bullying (meaning a positive impact). Leader ethical behaviour is the surest way to neutralize and eliminate workplace bullying. Also, workplace bullying can be significantly reduced by nurturing an organizational culture which fosters the dimensions of HO – Humane Orientation and GC – In-group Collectivism. Most of the transformational leadership dimensions (L3 – Supportive Leader Behaviour, L1 – Core Transformational Leader Behaviour and L4 – Intellectual Stimulation) also have a favourable impact, albeit not as strong.

In contrast, the dimensions PD – Power Distance and L6 – Contingent Punishment Behaviour have the strongest positive effects on workplace bullying (hence, adverse effects). In addition, when rewards are combined with punishment, dimension L5 – Contingent Reward Behaviour can also be a source of workplace bullying. Also, the presence of excessive, unreasonable and inhumane performance orientation, both through organizational values (PO – Performance Orientation) and leadership behaviour (L2 – High Performance Expectations), creates the conditions for the emergence of workplace bullying. As discussed, previous studies also show a certain degree of disagreement about the direction of performance orientation/high performance expectations and rewards on workplace bullying. In this paper, the complex, sometimes even contradictory influence of this dimension group is confirmed. It should also be noted that dimension L2 – High Performance Expectations is more focused on the business component of workplace bullying (WRB), while the PD – Power Distance dimension relates to the personal component (PRB – Person-Related Bullying). In other words, high performance expectations relate more to the job, and power distance to personality. The obtained results can generally be considered in the light of existing research, which examines similar relations,

that is, the influences of some of the dimensions observed here on workplace bullying.

Power distance, as a basic feature in the conceptualization of violence, is often considered around the world in terms of understanding workplace bullying in different frameworks of national culture (Ahmed/Kaleem, 2019). For example, Einarsen (2000) argues that there are some indications that the prevalence of harassment or the frequency of harassment is lower in countries with low power distance such as Norway, Sweden and Finland than in countries with high power distance such as France, Spain or the United States. Similarly, Lutgen-Sandvik et al. (2007) suggest that this cultural dimension explains the current differences in violence between the USA and the Scandinavian countries. Loh et al. (2010) report that employees in Singapore, where there are pronounced power differences, are less reactive to bullying in comparison with those from Australia (as an egalitarian society) because the high power distance culture accepts such imbalances. In general, cross-cultural research shows that abusive behaviours are more expected in countries with a high distance of power than in those with a low power distance, with supervisors as the typical perpetrators. (D'Cruz et al. 2016; Loh et al. 2010).

According to Hofstede (2001), people in collectivist cultures share strong social ties. Based on this, it is hypothesized that employees may receive better social support when exposed to workplace bullying in a collectivist society compared to those in an individualistic society (Ahmed/Kaleem, 2019). Ahmed & Kaleem (2019) endorse this in their research, where they confirmed the role of emotional and social support in workplace bullying situations. Thus, national culture mitigates the effects of workplace bullying and turnover intentions among employees in Pakistan to a greater extent than among employees in Australia. Therefore, according to (Power et al. 2013), people from individualistic cultures tend to seek little support from other members of society.

Previous research agrees that ethical leader behaviour significantly reduces workplace bullying. For example, according to (Appelbaum/Semerjian/Mohan 2012), establishing an ethical climate in the workplace is the most effective tool for eliminating workplace bullying. A study conducted in Pakistan, in an academic work environment (Ahmad/Sohal/Wolfram 2020), indicates the very powerful role of unethical leadership behaviour in endangering employee well-being, but also the emergence of workplace bullying. Research (Stouten et al. 2010), conducted in a large consumer electronics factory in Belgium showed that ethical leadership improves the working environment, which in turn leads to the suppression of workplace bullying.

Similarly, transformational leadership certainly has a beneficial effect on reducing workplace bullying. This is shown in the (previously mentioned) research (Appelbaum/Semerjian/Mohan 2012), where along with ethical leadership,

transformational leadership also emerges as an effective tool for managers in reducing workplace bullying. The findings from studies in primary schools in Turkey (Cemaloğlu 2011) show a negative relationship between the transformational leadership actions of principals and workplace bullying. Also, according to (Ertureten/Cemalcilar/Aycan 2013), transformational leadership reduces the likelihood of the appearance of workplace bullying.

On the other hand, the impact of transactional leadership on workplace bullying may vary and can range from a favourable, neutral impact to an adverse one. Thus, according to the previously cited research (Ertureten et al. 2013), not only does transformational leadership reduce the likelihood of workplace bullying, but it is also more effective in dealing with it. This is explained by the fact that transactional leaders reduce insecurity in the work environment by clarifying desired goals and performance criteria and rewarding or punishing employees based on these criteria (Sosik/Godshalk 2000). However, according to (Cemaloğlu 2011), no link was found between transactional leadership actions of principals and workplace bullying. Finally, according to (Porter et al 2018), both rewards and punishment can promote workplace bullying(Hoel et al 2010). As stated in this paper, the impact of transactional leadership on workplace bullying is unfavourable in terms of sanctions, while indefinite when it comes to rewards: it can be favourable and unfavourable, depending on the manner and context of rewards.

5.5 Discussion of the moderating effects of company success (checking hypothesis H3)

Based on the results shown in Table 6, it can be said that the moderating effect of company success exists in a significant number of cases and is strongly expressed. Hence, hypothesis H3 is confirmed. The moderating effect of company success is manifested by the fact that all of the correlations (where there is a moderating effect) are statistically significant and stronger in high success companies. In high success companies, the high value dimensions of PO – Performance Orientation, L1 – Core Transformational Leader Behaviour, L3 – Supportive Leader Behaviour, L4 – Intellectual Stimulation, L5 – Contingent Reward Behaviour and EL – Ethical Leadership Behaviour are especially able to reduce the workplace bullying dimensions. The situation is similar with the dimensions of HO – Humane Orientation and GC – In-group Collectivism, although there is no statistically significant moderating effect here. At the same time, in high success companies, higher values for the PD – Power Distance and L6 – Contingent Punishment Behaviour dimensions, in particular, may serve to increase the workplace bullying dimensions.

Thus, organizational culture and leadership have a much stronger impact on workplace bullying in high success companies than in their low success coun-

terparts. When the situation in high success companies is favourable (which involves applying the principles of transformational and ethical leadership, adequate rewards, minimum and fair punishment, organizational focus on performance, humane orientation, in-group collectivism, and low power distance), then workplace bullying has a pronounced tendency to be low. However, when the situation in high success companies is unfavourable, then workplace bullying can increase significantly. In other words, for high success companies, the following applies: when the situation is good, then it is really good and when it is bad, then it is really, really bad (from the perspective of the influence of organizational culture and leadership on workplace bullying). In low success companies, these influences are weaker and more persistent, so workplace bullying is not so dependent on organizational culture and leadership dimensions.

In high success companies there are higher expectations (both organizational and leadership), there is pressure to achieve top results, and employees suffer more stress. In such conditions, the support of colleagues and superiors, as well as the lack of that support, the ethical or unethical behaviour of leaders, both low power distance and high power distance and the fairness or unfairness of the reward and punishment system all become more palpable. When conditions are favourable, interpersonal relationships are relaxed and employees have the opportunity to work well and enjoy the organization's success. Otherwise, the situation becomes more difficult and employees lose their sense of satisfaction because of the organization's success and become focused on problems in interpersonal relationships. All of this is also true of workplace bullying: in high success companies, there is a wider range of mechanisms to mitigate and eliminate workplace bullying than in low success companies. Practically, any improvement in the organizational culture and leadership dimensions in high success companies can significantly reduce workplace bullying.

6 Conclusion

The theoretical significance of the paper derives from the research results themselves. In general, ethical and transformational leadership, as well as organizational culture with pronounced humane orientation and in-group collectivism, diminish workplace bullying. In particular, the strong power of ethical leadership in these processes should be emphasized. In contrast, transactional leadership, high power distance, and unrealistic insistence on achieving superior results increase the chances of workplace bullying. Such findings are, for the most part, consistent with the results of the existing research.

Organizational culture and leadership have a much stronger impact on workplace bullying in high success companies than in low success companies. Practically, favourable organizational culture and leadership strongly reduce workplace bullying in high success companies, but unfavourable organizational

culture and leadership greatly increase it. In low success companies, these impacts are weaker, so workplace bullying is not so dependent on organizational culture and leadership. Hence, all three hypotheses were confirmed.

In theoretical terms, the contribution of the paper lies in the provision of a more detailed insight into the way organizational culture and leadership dimensions work on the individual dimensions of workplace bullying. It is also significant that a moderator (company success) was introduced, whose effect has not been examined in the observed relations so far. Also, the observed relations were established for the first time for organizations in Serbia. All this completes the study of the phenomena of workplace bullying in a broader context and expands the basis for further research.

The practical significance of the paper comes from the possibility of using the obtained results in order to mitigate and neutralize workplace bullying in Serbian organizations, as well as organizations outside Serbia. Accordingly, in order to reduce and eliminate workplace bullying, leaders in organizations should, first and foremost, apply ethical principles and in leading by example, encourage and motivate their employees. Leaders can influence the enhancement of humane and in-group collectivism orientation at the organizational level, which also has beneficial effects on workplace bullying. At the same time, transformational leadership should be preferred, power distance reduced, punishment avoided, and reward exercised without pressure or conditioning and in combination with punishment. If the organization insists on high performance, even in situations where it is really necessary, then high performance must be applied with caution, with a great deal of sensitivity and with an appropriate approach to employees. Leaders in high success companies, in particular, must take care not to fall into extremely disadvantaged organizational culture and leadership. In such cases, the environment can be particularly disadvantageous for the level of workplace bullying.

In addition, some other practical recommendations can be defined for organizations in Serbia, and above all for the management of these organizations: organizations should behave socially responsibly and consistently; organizational values should be developed in such a way that they imply zero tolerance towards workplace bullying; organizations should create a climate of encouragement to report possible workplace bullying, i.e. to develop the understanding that it is important to protect the victim and the perpetrator, and to condemn and punish the abuser appropriately; it is necessary to adopt appropriate internal rules and procedures for defining cases of workplace bullying, and relations with the abuser, victim and whistleblower (this implies the objective and consistent application of these rules). The application of the above recommendations will undoubtedly contribute to the mitigation and elimination of workplace bullying,

as well as to increasing job satisfaction and employee trust, and all this can have only positive effects on overall business performance.

The limitations of the research is that the results and proposals relate to organizations in Serbia. However, similar relationships can be expected to exist in many other countries, especially in those with similar economic and cultural conditions.

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