SUPERVISOR WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AGAINST YOUNG WORKERS BY VICTIM'S RACE/ETHNICITY

by

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ABSTRACT

Working is often seen as an integral aspect of growing up in the United States. Due to the increased desire for independence and financial gain, many adolescents decide to pursue the expansion of their job skills by entering the labor force. Adolescents crave financial independence and freedom. However, many are unaware of the risks that accompany working. The perpetrators of adolescent workplace violence are generally thought to be customers or coworkers. But what if it was the supervisor?

The main objective of the study is to determine whether abusive supervision of young workers differs depending on the worker's race/ethnicity. Using secondary data analysis from a cross-sectional study, we were able to provide the difference in abusive supervision by the adolescent race/ethnicity.

The result show adolescents experienced hostility, bullying, and workplace violence and that there was a relationship between these experiences and the workers' race/ethnicity. The negative perception of supervisors in terms of hostility, workplace violence, and bullying are, by and large, perceived to be experienced differently among adolescents by their race/ethnicity.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

OSHA Occupational Safety and Health Administration

NIOSH National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

INTRODUCTION

Background

Working is often seen as an integral aspect of growing up in the United States. Due to the increased desire for independence and financial gain, many adolescents decide to pursue the expansion of their job skills by entering the labor force. The decision to seek employment is met with high praise from parental figures/guardians in the young worker's immediate support system (Mortimer, 2010). Remarks from those parental figures are conveyed as a strong desire for their children to learn general life skills such as responsibility, financial literacy, and time management, and they saw youth employment as a means to achieving these goals (Usher et al., 2014). However, many risks accompany adolescent workers, and often the guardians of the adolescents are not very knowledgeable about these risks (Runyan et al., 2010). Among these is the risk of experiencing violence at work (Smith and Gillespie, 2016); (Rauscher, 2008).

According to the United States Department of Labor, workplace violence is any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior at the worksite (Occupational Safety and Health Administration, n.d.). This definition will be used throughout the study.

However, workplace violence is not something that young people and their parents discuss before young workers decide to job hunt (Runyan et al., 2010). Many in the public may think of workplace violence as taking the form of mass shooting events. In reality, such extreme cases of workplace violence are rare, and more commonly,

violence at work results in psychological issues and non-fatal injuries (Occupational Violence | NIOSH | CDC, 2021). The lack of focus on workplace violence among young workers is problematic given that workplace violence victimization has significant implications on the lives and mental health of these workers, including the disruption of cognitive, psychological, emotional, and physical well-being; decrements in job-related attitudes and behaviors; and strain in interpersonal relationships, such as family and friends (Keashly, 2012).

Young workers' risk of workplace violence is high due to the fact that their primary places of employment are retail and food service (Runyan et al., 2007) which requires contact with the public, handling money, and working alone or in small numbers, all of which are risk factors for workplace violence (Nigro & Waugh,1996). One study showed teen employment was most common in the accommodation and food service industry, with 35.1%, approximately 5.4 million, of adolescents holding a job in those sectors. The second most desired sector is retail trade, with 24.5% (DeSilver, 2021).

Even though workplace violence risks exist, many employers do not have policies to prevent workplace violence. Researchers found that most workplaces reported no formal programs or policies to address workplace violence (70%) and provided no workplace violence training for employees (78%) (Smith et al., 2015). Moreover, among the 5% of workplaces that reported a violent incident within the past 12 months, more than 80% did not develop new or modify existing workplace violence programs or policies in response to the incident (Smith et al., 2015).

Thus, the question becomes, who is committed to ensuring the safety of the young worker? It is the expectation that employers are devoted to protecting workers as well as

being legally bound to assure the safety and healthful working conditions for working men and women (United States Department of Labor, 2017). Therefore, preventing adolescent workplace violence is placed in their hands. In the workplace, it is the supervisor who enforces safe work practices and procedures (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.). Therefore, the supervisor's role is to maintain safety in the workplace and are trusted to "engage with, motivate, care for, and empower the young people they work with" (Jenkinson, 2010). It is easy to see how vital the supervisor's role is to adolescent workplaces. By being heavily involved in all aspects of the adolescent workplace, supervisors are thought to be the single most crucial factor in improving youth work employment practice and policy (Nicholls, 2001). However, not all supervisors understand the importance of their position, and, in some cases, they can be the perpetrator of workplace violence themselves.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Abusive supervision is a common occurrence in workplaces around the nation (Tepper et al., 2006). Abusive supervision "refers to subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact" (Tepper, 2000). One study of workplace violence found supervisors to be the perpetrator of verbal and sexual harassment against the employees they oversaw (Smith et al., 2015). Much of the focus on abusive supervision is on adult workers. The lack of attention paid to this issue as it pertains to young workers is concerning due to their risks, as stated above. There needs to be a better understanding of the supervisor adolescent relationship to help ensure supervisors are acting as protectors and not perpetrators.

While all young workers are at risk of experiencing workplace violence, there may be a reason to explore whether that supervisor's treatment of young workers differs by the race/ethnicity of the young workers themselves. One of the reasons an adolescent may experience abusive supervision would be the supervisor's unconscious or implicit racial bias. The supervisors' underlying assumptions and beliefs may "spill over" into their treatment of adolescent staff and, thus, can contribute to the decreased mental health of adolescents (Okechukwu et al., 2013). The use of racism to fuel unconscious bias may contribute to abusive supervision disproportionately when the adolescents are of a different race than the supervisors. Many reports state that adolescents experiencing high

levels of ethnic/racial discrimination have increased depressive symptoms and lower levels of self-esteem over time (Yip, 2014).

The connection between self-esteem and perception of self has been heavily equated to the words, and praise adults give (Cunnien et al., 2009). Being belittled by adults in positions of authority, such as one's supervisor, can affect adolescents' mental health (Mortimer, 2010). Therefore, supervisor abuse may be more of a problem when experienced by adolescents as this age group is still developing their identities. A study targeted at connecting identity development and developmental outcomes for adolescents found that a critical developmental task in adolescence and young adulthood is the development of a coherent sense of self and identity (Branje et al., 2021). When this process is interrupted, there can potentially be detrimental effects, such as depression, anxiety, conduct/antisocial personality disorder, and suicidal ideation; substance dependence problems including nicotine, alcohol, and illicit drug dependence; and life and relationship satisfaction issues, including lower levels of life satisfaction, poorer perceived relationship quality, and lower levels of peer attachment (Boden et al., 2008).

Understanding the potential severity of this issue can be seen by looking at the number of adolescents currently employed in the workforce and the common place where adolescents work. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in July 2021, 20.3 million 16- to 24-year-olds were employed. This statistic increased to 2.1 million, or 11.8%, between April and July (Employment and Unemployment Among Youth Summary, 2021).

There is not a lot of research surrounding adolescent workplace violence, leaving a lack of information, and understanding. This research topic has not been studied prior to

this study. Thus, literature from existing topics was reviewed to support the significance and purpose of the study. The lack of understanding and questioning indicates a lack of importance and exposure for adolescents to the urgency of this topic. Given the number of adolescents experiencing these issues, it is necessary to understand abusive supervision, especially under the pretense of implicit bias, while taking action to ensure young workers' safety. Therefore, this study examines whether workers' reports of abusive supervision differ by workers' racial/ethnic identity.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to determine whether abusive supervision of young workers differs depending on the worker's race/ethnicity.

Rationale

This research aims to contribute to the literature on the safety and health risks young workers experience and to understand whether young workers' experiences of workplace violence differ by race/ethnicity.

The knowledge obtained through the study will contribute to the adolescent workplace violence field by informing the ways in which adolescent workers of different races perceive the treatment they receive from their supervisors. The information learned through this work can help us better understand the relationships between supervisors and their young workers.

Research Questions

My overall research question is whether abusive supervision differs by young victims' race/ethnicity. Using three indicators of abusive supervision, hostility, bullying, and workplace violence, the differences, if any are found, between the different

races/ethnicity responses will provide insight into this question. Through this study, we will answer the following questions:

1.4.1 Negative Supervisor Behaviors

- Do young worker reports of supervisor hostility differ by their race/ethnicity?
- Do young worker reports of supervisor bullying differ by their race/ethnicity?
- Do young worker reports of supervisor perpetrated workplace violence differ by their race/ethnicity?
- Do supervisor responses to reports of workplace violence victimization differ by their race/ethnicity?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The U.S Child Labor Laws

In order to grasp the pertinence of the issue of adolescent workplace violence, an emphasis should be placed on the impacts of the past. Throughout the documented history of the United States, childhood employment has been consistent. An 1870 census showed that one out of every eight children was employed; this number increased to one out of every five by 1900 (Schuman, 2017a). The employment opportunities granted to these young workers have grown and morphed along with the public's perception of the safety measures implemented to protect these adolescents in the workforce. It is only through seeing the progression of this issue that an adequate understanding can be achieved and, thus, an appropriate response.

The beginning of advocacy for adolescent workers is connected to the first Industrial Revolution (Humphries, 2003). Although the records for young workers during this time are few and far between, using "industrial surveys, household data, and other fragmentary evidence," it can be deduced that child labor was a vital aspect of success in the United States (Humphries, 2003). The young worker's role was extremely vital in that many manufacturers were documented saying they would become bankrupt without the child laborers, (Schuman, 2017b).

The progression of child labor laws continued as would be expected in the changing environment of the Industrial Revolution. During this time, mechanization was becoming an alternative to physical labor. Nevertheless, the machinery continued to

require operators. The need to have the machine operator is where the desire for child labor became sought after compared to that of an adult employee. Children could operate the machinery themselves with their basic skills (Schuman, 2017b). There was also a benefit of employed children's lack of knowledge of these young workers' rights. The employers preferred child laborers because they were cheaper, less likely to strike, and more manageable (Paul, 2021). With the rise of machinery, not only did the desire for child workers increase, but the need for child labor regulations did as well.

The first notable instance of child labor reform occurred in the early 1800s. In 1836, Massachusetts became the first state to implement a law requiring young workers aged fifteen years or younger to attend school a minimum of three months out of the year (Whittelsey & Hadley, 1901). Although this could be seen as a small step in the right direction, this occurrence was the first time a state took the initiative concerning the issue of children at work. More instances of child labor reform followed their predecessor. For example, the 1881 American Federation of Labor conference's resolution to ban child employment for those under the age of fourteen, the Democratic adoption of union recommendation for the banning of childhood employment in factories for those under the age of fifteen, and the federal regulation of child labor in the form of the Fair Labor Standard Act.

By the time the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 was enacted, the stance against child labor was already gaining traction. The Fair Labor Standard Act of 1938 (FLSA) is a federal law enacted to accomplish many tasks for all workers in the United States. Specifically for adolescent workers, the law "prohibits the employment of oppressive child labor in the United States" (Donovan & Shimabukuro, 2016). The term oppressive

child labor is an all-encompassing idea that defines the employment regulations of adolescents under the age of sixteen and the employment regulations of adolescents between the ages of sixteen and eighteen when it pertains to precarious employment (Donovan & Shimabukuro, 2016). The coverage given by the Fair Standard Act of 1938 is categorized into three distinct types. The first, mentioned above, oppressive child labor, is the employment of young workers under the age of sixteen when referring to hazardous occupations. The second element covered is the employment relationship; an employer, not a parent, must employ the young worker. The final component is known as commerce. The FLSA defines this as the trade, commerce, transportation, transmission, or communication among several States or between any State and any place outside thereof (Donovan & Shimabukuro, 2016). If the terms of employment satisfy all three components, then the employer must abide by the regulations of worker age, work hours, and work environment to maintain safety for these young workers.

Limitations of These Protections

It has been nearly 85 years since the establishment of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. Currently, it can be argued that the law does not adequately provide safety for adolescent workers. The FLSA was established to protect young workers at a specific time. Due to the advancements and changes since its conception, it is my belief that the law is outdated and virtually inconsequential when referring to the current status of the adolescent employment market. According to Mary E. Miller, a Child Labor/ Young Worker Specialist, the role of government is to create and enforce protective measures to ensure healthy people and communities" (Miller, 2012). This government obligation is

especially necessary when discussing the population of adolescents. There is a need to enact changes to outdated laws to improve safety in adolescent workplaces.

The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 may have aided the adolescent workers of that period. However, there are gaps in these laws that have not kept up with emerging risks. It often seems that new risks emerge faster than laws can keep up with them, and the process of making laws and regulations is very long and contentious. When the safety of young workers is in question, there should be increased concern about youth because adolescent workplace violence is high in retail jobs, customer-oriented, and public-facing jobs (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014b).

Workplace Violence

Workplace violence is defined in a variety of ways. The National Institute for Occupation Safety and Violence (NIOSH) described the variation among previous definitions as a spectrum, ranging "from offensive language to homicide" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014a). Nevertheless, in an effort to provide an all-encompassing definition, NIOSH supplied a working definition, "violent acts, including physical assaults and threats of assault, directed toward persons at work or on duty" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014a).

While the definition is considerably better at grasping the diversity of events of adolescent workplace violence, the named constructs entailed in workplace violence are seldom defined or understood. For example, the Occupational Health Safety Administration (OSHA) has frequently changed its definition of workplace violence. The first iteration of OSHA's workplace violence definition is "the threat of violence against workers. It can occur at or outside the workplace and can range from threats and verbal

abuse to physical assaults and homicide" (U.S. Department of Labor | Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 2002). The most up-to-date definition provided by OSHA is, "workplace violence is any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site" (Occupational Safety and Health Administration, n.d.). The difference between the two definitions is minute but displays the changes in comprehension of workplace violence. It is also important to note the similarities between the NIOSH and OSHA definitions. These two organizations are essential in the maintenance and creation of safe environments in the workplace. Consequently, the two organizations must relay consistent information while interplaying with one another.

With the everchanging definition and perception of workplace violence, those counted in the total of having experienced workplace violence are plentiful. For 2021, it was estimated that young workers, ages 16-24, accounted for 20.6% of the labor force (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). Despite nearly a quarter of adolescents being accounted for, the number of adolescents may be inaccurate due to the lack of workplace violence captured in occupation surveillance systems. Many surveillance systems do not capture workplace violence unless the effect of the violence requires medical attention. This number may also be inaccurate as the younger ages of the adolescent population are omitted. For instance, youth can begin employment at 14 when employed by a parent/guardian (Fact sheet #43: Child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) for nonagricultural occupations, 2016). Given the goals of this research to ensure better safety and protection of the youth experiencing adolescent workplace violence, underreporting can cause the severity of the issue to be decreased.

However, one thing that can be deduced about adolescents in the workplace; these young workers hold employment in places that may have an increased risk of experiencing workplace violence. The nature of retail and food service sector jobs includes the common risk factors associated with workplace violence, such as contact with the public, exchange of money, working alone or in small numbers, working late at night or during early morning hours, or working in community-based settings (Risk factors - Violence in the Workplace, 2014). Due to the lack of literature on adolescent workplace violence, much is left to be explored. Thus, the existing literature was reviewed to provide context to the issue of adolescent workplace violence, specifically abusive supervision occurrences.

Mental Health Impacts of Workplace Violence

Work can impact the mental health of adolescents who hold employment. However, the discussion of work on the development of adolescents rarely mentions the mental health implications (Mortimer et al., 2002). Regardless of the lack of discussion, the quality of the work and the age at which work problems are dealt with can substantially impact adolescents' mental health in the long term (Mortimer et al., 2002).

The age of adolescents is highly developmental in terms of cognitive, emotional, and psychological capabilities (Johnson & Jones, 2010). Since adolescents have not had the life experience to recover and process violent events at the workplace, working can be an emotionally draining experience. A study by Park and colleagues note that the ability of employees to restore psychological capital away from work situations will allow for the development of resources to alleviate negative cognitive and emotional pains (He et al., 2021). However, a study concluded that many adolescents experiencing violence

while at work can have emotions "spill over into personal life" (Brown et al., 2020). This "spillover" can be a reason to believe that there is an incapability of restoring psychological health away from work. Thus, the effects on the mental health of young workers, given prolonged exposure to adolescent workplace violence, are negatively impacting young workers. The side effects can be presented as high levels of depression and low levels of self-esteem (Frone, 2000). When combining the absence of life experience and the developmental stage of adolescence, young workers may experience workplace violence more negatively than their older and more experienced counterparts.

Combining the exposure to risk factors commonly associated with workplace violence, the potential harm that can be caused by workplace violence, and the lack of Child Labor Laws to adequately protect young workers, it is clear that supervisors may be an important defense in adolescent worker protection.

The Importance of Supervision

Although supervisors have the potential to portray negative actions, these individuals are essential in all workplaces. Per the Occupation Health and Safety Act (OHSA) of 1970, a supervisor is appointed by the employer to control a workplace and have authority over a worker (Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, 2015). As the person in control, supervisors take on large amounts of responsibility in their workplace. For example, the duties given to supervisors by OHSA include determining tasks to be done, directing, and monitoring how work is performed, deciding the crew's makeup, and dealing directly with workers' complaints (Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, 2015). The many responsibilities the supervisor has,

make them essential in the work environment as well as their contribution to the image of the workplace.

As mentioned by Kimberly Rauscher, the people who are charged with protecting adolescent workers on the job are their supervisors (Rauscher, 2008). In an ideal scenario, the relationship between adolescents and supervisors is one of mentorship. As such, this unique relationship between a supervisor and an adolescent worker can increase confidence and promotes a positive idea of adult work, and perhaps adulthood in general (Cunnien et al., 2009). Unfortunately, not all young workers experience this idealized relationship during their employment.

Supervisors as a Source of Harm

Sometimes the supervisor is the perpetrator of workplace violence, by displaying abusive leadership qualities. Abusive leadership is a term used to denote an "employees' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in hostile and non-hostile (e.g., unfriendly, intimidating, displeasing, or upsetting) verbal and non-verbal behaviors – excluding physical contact – over an extended period of time" (Starratt & Grandy, 2010). Since the literature on supervisors as a source of harm is limited when discussing adolescents, adult literature is used to supplement the gaps in the literature.

Abusive supervision is common in the workplace, an estimated 13.6% of U.S. workers"(Tepper, 2007). However, approximately 50% of employees can expect to have an abusive supervisor at some point in their working life (Tepper, 2000). Many adults who experience abusive leadership experience heightened psychological distress, including dysfunctional thoughts and emotions such as anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion (Tepper et al., 2007). However, adults are more likely to

thoroughly explain and rationalize instances of workplace violence better than an adolescent, signifying that adolescents may feel the effects of workplace violence with increasing emotional impact (Starratt & Grandy, 2010).

Impacts of Abusive Supervision

Unfortunately, adolescents who have been put in a situation of abusive leadership may experience a plethora of emotional responses ranging from feelings of hopelessness to humiliation and anxiety (Starratt & Grandy, 2010). In a heightened emotional state, adolescents may experience other forms of emotional distress, such as the justification of retaliation against their supervisor, distancing themselves from the situation, and an expectation of a lack of support when coping with abusive leadership (Starratt & Grandy, 2010). However, the effects of abusive supervision don't end with emotional implication. There are physical aspects associated with abusive supervision, such as the inability to focus and panic attacks (Anjum et al., 2019).

Although physical violence can be present in instances of adolescent workplace violence, this extent of violence is not as common. Adolescent workplace violence events, such as verbal harassment and assault, account for a more significant portion of adolescent workplace violence events. Physical violence is more dramatic than emotional violence, but the effects of each are thought to affect adolescents evenly (Dupré et al., 2006). The effects of physical violence can be just as impactful on the adolescent worker as the effects of emotional and verbal violence. Assessing the data then begs the question; what may be causing the supervisor to be abusive toward adolescent workers?

Abusive Supervisor Motivations

The focus of studies concerning abusive supervision is often more concerned with the effects on the workers. In order to understand and combat the effects of workplace violence, beginning with the perpetrator would be a better starting point. One hypothesis as to the motivations behind abusive supervision is that the workplace is often an emotionally and potentially physically exhausting environment (American Psychological Association, 2018). When emotionally and physically run down, coupled with factors such as low or inadequate team performance and the inability to regulate psychological stress, the impact is dysregulation of behaviors and, thus, mistreatment of subordinates (Fan et al., 2020).

The potential inability of supervisors to regulate emotions due to the intense emotional environment may cause unconscious thoughts concerning race and ethnicity to arise in the form of abusive supervision (Schen & Greenlee, 2018).The basis for which supervisors disproportionately abuse their workers may hide in the unconscious mind of the supervisor, specifically the beliefs surrounding the external appearance of their workers. Regarding the implicit bias of racism, supervisors are not immune to this phenomenon, nor are the decisions supervisors make regarding their employees.

2.8.1 Implicit Bias

Implicit bias is a term used to denote attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner (Dalton & Villagran, 2018). There is a lack of knowledge of the extent these biases exist within the supervisor's mind. Thus, the idea of implicit bias as a factor when referring to the supervisor's treatment of the young workers could be racially/ethnically motivated.

Implicit bias is expressed in multiple ways, including affinity bias, the nature to gravitate toward those who look like you (Dalton & Villagran, 2018). A racial bias may also present itself as subtle discriminatory behaviors. These behaviors appear as avoidance of black people and 'closed' or unfriendly verbal and nonverbal communication (Deitch et al., 2003).

Racism has, unfortunately, been a defining factor in the history of the United States. Race is a social construction created to "describe and categorize people into various social groups based on characteristics like skin color, physical features, and genetic heredity" (Roediger, 2021). Racism can be defined as physical appearance discrimination, explicitly focusing on skin color and ethnic/ racial identification. Racism is an everyday occurrence for those who identify with and represent minority groups. However, the depiction of racism has shifted. Modern racism tends to displace blatant and vulgar racism. The forms of discrimination encountered by Blacks show in the form of 'big,' explicit discriminatory events to the more subtle, everyday forms of discrimination (Deitch et al., 2003).

Racial microaggressions are "brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of color because they belong to a racial minority group" (Sue et al., 2020). Supervisors may have implicit biases that can affect their perception of the people around them. Thus, if supervisors possess an implicit racial bias, it may come out in their day-to-day actions toward the employees under them.

2.8.2 Racism in Adolescence

Racism is considered a systemic issue in the United States (Bailey et al., 2017) . Systemic racism is denoted as being pervasively and deeply embedded in systems, laws,

written or unwritten policies, and entrenched practices while creating beliefs that create, condone, and perpetuate widespread unfair treatment and oppression of people identifying as a minority race (Braveman et al., 2022). Racism is not confined to the experiences of adults, in fact, one study showed that about one third of high school students reported they were treated wrongly due to their race/ethnicity at least once in their lifetime (Mpofu et al., 2022). Racism's effect on the health and mental health of adolescents is overwhelmingly negative. In a longitudinal study, the authors found that racism is deteriorating youth's psychological well-being during adulthood transition (Assari et al., 2017).

THE STUDY

Theory and Hypotheses

Implicit bias theory proposes that if people are educated about their biases, then they will be less likely to act on them, and consequently, there will be less of a discriminatory impact (Kang & Lane, 2019). The implicit bias theory relates to the study due to the connection between implicit bias and discrimination and discriminatory behavior. Implicit bias and racism can exist within any aspects of our society to varying degrees, and the workplace is no exception. These have the ability to create hostile environments for people who are the targets of racism. Supervisors have control over the hours, schedules, tasks, vacations, days off, and other managerial tasks (Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, 2015). Their power to shape the work experience can potentially be very impactful to the work experiences of the adolescent worker. If they hold implicit biases, they might express that through the unequal treatment of workers of different races/ethnicity based on their biased views. In order to explore this theory, the following hypotheses were examined based on a worker's race and/or ethnicity:

- the amount of supervisor hostility experienced will differ by the race/ethnicity of the young workers
- the amount of supervisor bullying experienced will differ by the race/ethnicity of the young workers

- the amount of supervisor violence experienced will differ by the race/ethnicity of the young workers
- the positivity of the supervisor's response to a worker's report of their being a victim of a workplace violence event will differ by the race/ethnicity of the young workers

Study Goals and Objectives

Conducting this study provides supervisors with considerations regarding their potential to mistreat adolescent workers due to preconceived and unconscious prejudice against the race/ethnicity of the adolescent workers. The study's overall goal is to bring attention to the topic of adolescent workplace violence, specifically abusive supervision experiences from adolescents, while simultaneously educating supervisors about the potentially harmful effects of their treatment of adolescent workers.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This secondary data analysis uses cross-sectional survey data from the 2018 Violence Against Young Workers (VAYW) study. Pertinent details of this larger study from which the analyzed data originate are below.

Data Collection Procedures and Participants

Survey data were collected from a national sample of 1,031 young workers working in the US through a telephone survey conducted by the Iowa Social Science Research Center (ISSRC) in 2018. See Table 1 below for the characteristics of the study population.

The ISSRC utilized random digit dial (RDD) and non-probability samples to identify subjects. They also employed regional quotas using the nine US Census regions to ensure they achieved national reach. Two samples of 500 workers were targeted. The first included workers ages 14-17 years, and the second included workers ages 18-24 years. Both age groups were called on household landlines and cell phones. Standard calling protocols were used to capitalize on the sample and optimize response rates. Participants were screened for eligibility as follows: had to be between the ages of 14 and 24 and have held a formal job (i.e., employed by a company that issues them a paycheck) in a civilian setting in the past 12 months. Interviewers used a Windows-based Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (WinCATI) system to conduct the survey.

Table 1 Characteristics of the Study Population (n=1,015)

Characteristic	Percent	Number
Age Group		
14 – 17 Years Old	59.01	599
18 – 25 Years Old	40.99	416
Sex		
Female	46.14	472
Male	53.86	551
Race/Ethnicity		
Hispanic, all races	13.69	140
White, Non-Hispanic	71.46	731
African American/Black, non-Hispanic	8.21	84
Biracial, non-Hispanic	3.03	31
Other, non-Hispanic (Asian Pacific Islander, American Indian)	3.62	37

The mean age was 18.44. The 14 – 18 has slightly more participants, accounting for about 59% of the study population, while the 18 – 25 age group accounts for approximately 41%. The distribution of participants based on sex shows more male participants (53.86%) than female participants (46.14%). The racial/ethnic demographic with the most amount of participants is the: white, non-Hispanic group (71.46%) followed by; Hispanic, all races (13.69%); African American/Black, non-Hispanic (8.21%); Other, non-Hispanic (Asian Pacific Islander, American Indian) (3.62%); and Biracial, non-Hispanic (3.03%).

RESEARCH VARIABLES AND MEASURES

Below are details on the dependent and independent variables used in this analysis and how each was measured. Table 2 compiles all the details relative to each study outcome analyzed, including variable names and values used in the data analysis.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables fall into four distinct outcomes: supervisor hostility, supervisor bullying, supervisor perpetrated workplace violence, and supervisor response to reports of workplace violence victimization.

Supervisor Hostility

Supervisor hostility was asked about in the telephone survey using the following question: How strongly do you agree that you were exposed to hostility or conflict from your immediate supervisor in this job? Response options were: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. For our analysis, we combined these responses into two agreement categories as follows: 1=strongly disagree/disagree and 2=agree/strongly agree.

Supervisor Bullying

This analysis examined six different types of supervisor bullying. The phone survey collected data on these by asking (yes/no) respondents if their supervisors ever did any of the following: pressured respondents to meet unrealistic goals; gave them the worst stuff to do; criticized their work unfairly; assigned them tasks beyond their abilities; them unfairly; cut their hours unfairly; and forced them to work overtime.

Supervisor Perpetrated Workplace Violence

In this analysis, we used the variable supervisor perpetrated workplace violence in the dataset. This variable is a yes/no variable, with yes being the respondent was victimized by their supervisor during the past 12 months, including any of the following forms of workplace violence: physical attack, threat, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual assault.

Response

I looked at how supervisors responded when the respondent reported to them that they had experienced some form of workplace violence. I coded open-ended responses to the question" what action did your supervisor take?" asked as a follow-up by the interviewers to the question "did you report this incident of workplace violence to your supervisor." These open-ended responses were first coded into a dichotomous variable: supervisor took positive action or not. Then among the positive actions, I reviewed these actions to locate similar responses that were commonly reported.

Three common supervisor responses stood out. These were: talking to the perpetrator, firing the perpetrator, and filling out paperwork/incident reports. There was such a mix of responses that grouping was difficult, and these were the only responses that stood out.

Independent Variable

The independent variable is the respondent's race/ethnicity. Self-reported race and ethnicity answers were combined into one race/ethnicity variable with the following categories: 1=Hispanic, all races; 2=white, non-Hispanic; 3=black/African American,

non-Hispanic; 4=Asian, Pacific Islander / American Indian, non-Hispanic; 5=bi-racial, non-Hispanic.

Data Analysis Procedures

The overarching outcome of interest is the supervisor treatment of the respondent by the race of the respondent is looked at through three supervisor behaviors directed at respondents. The alpha level was set at .05 for all analyses to determine statistical significance:

Outcome 1) Supervisor Hostility by Respondent Race/Ethnicity

Analysis 1: Compare the frequencies of *reported supervisor hostility* by race/ethnicity

- Cross-tabulations of reported supervisor hostility by race/ethnicity were calculated
- Chi-square tests were used to test for independence between race/ethnicity and supervisor hostility

Outcome 2) Supervisor Bullying by Respondent Race/Ethnicity

Analysis 1: Compare the frequencies of *each reported measure* of supervisor bullying by race/ethnicity.

- Cross-tabulations of each reported bullying measure by race/ethnicity were calculated
- Chi-square tests were used to test for independence between race/ethnicity and supervisor bullying

Outcome 3) Supervisor Perpetrated Workplace Violence by Respondent Race/ethnicity

Analysis 1: Compare the frequencies of reported supervisor-perpetrated workplace violence by respondent race/ethnicity.

- Cross-tabulations of supervisor-perpetrated violence by race/ethnicity were calculated
- Chi-square test was used to test for independence between race/ethnicity and supervisor-perpetrated workplace violence.

Outcome 4) Supervisor Response to Reported Workplace Violence Victimization by Respondent Race/Ethnicity

Variable preparation - code open-ended responses into a dummy variable coded as 0=not an adequate response or 1=adequate response.

Analysis 1: Compare the frequencies of reported adequate supervisor responses by respondent race.

- Cross-tabulations of supervisor response by race/ethnicity were calculated
- Chi-square test was used to test for independence between race/ethnicity and supervisor hostility.

Study Limitations

One limitation presented within the study is possible. Bias is "any systematic error in the design, conduct, or analysis of a study" (Althubaiti, 2016). The bias that is of the most concern would be social desirability bias. Social desirability bias is a term given to the situation that can occur with respondents; respondents will answer the questions in a manner they believe is the response the research wants. This can lead to incorrectly obtained conclusions. The data is pivotal to understanding and interpreting the response

recorded from secondary data analysis. With the true feelings expressed by the participating adolescents, the data may be consistent and conclusive upon analysis.

There may be analysis bias. Analysis bias occurs when the researcher is analyzing the data and naturally looks for the data that best confirm the hypothesis or personal beliefs (Smith & Noble, 2014). This can neglect the data that isn't consistent with personal beliefs or the hypothesis. This bias can cause significant alteration in research outcomes or may provide a false representation of the data accumulated. There were steps taken in an effort to avoid analysis bias, such as multiple researchers interpreting the data or checking for alternative explanations.

There is also a limitation in the data available. This data was collected for another use, meaning that it didn't ask questions that would have been useful in this study. It may have been useful to know the race/ethnicity and the age of the supervisor. Having this information would allow for there to be a better connection of how race may play into the differences in abusive supervision seen between adolescents by race/ethnicity. Also, this analysis did not use modeling which would have allowed us to account for confounders.

Another limitation would be the inability to know whether people of different races tend to hold employment in different workplaces. This knowledge would allow for the potential determination of whether implicit bias is the reason for differential experiences or if it might be the different supervisors within these environments.

The last limitation is the decreased amount of representation from certain races/ethnicities. When conducting a study, the randomized sample will have an increased number of white non-Hispanic individuals. This creates a difficulty in the

representation of those groups. For example, this study had a small amount of Asian pacific Islanders and American Indian adolescents.

Study Strengths

There are many different strengths that accompany a cross-sectional study. Due to the multiple strengths, the main strength of this study lies within the study design. A few of the strengths that often accompany cross-section study design are the quickness in which the study can be conducted, the inexpensive nature of the study design, the ability to collect data on all of the variables at a single point, and the ability of the findings to be used in the creations of further in-depth research studies (Wang & Cheng, 2020).

Secondary data analysis uses the existing data obtained for a different primary question or hypothesis. However, using existing data allows for the data to be cleaned and assessed by professionals within the field and oftentimes is accompanied by thoroughly documented data collection procedures (Cheng & Phillips, 2014). One of the most significant advantages that accompany secondary data analysis is the cost-effectiveness of the study (Johnston, 2014).

RESULTS

The results of the statistical analysis are described below and presented in Tables 2 through 4.

Hostility

Hispanic, all races, and African American/Black, non-Hispanic respondents had the highest percentages of supervisor hostility at approximately 18% (Table 2). Significant chi shows that race and dependent variables are not independent. Running a chi-square test and getting a p-value of 0.05 or less shows that there is a relationship. That the relationship is not likely to be due to chance.

Bullying

There were three bullying behaviors where reporting differences by race/ethnicity were statistically significant (Table 2.). These were being pressured to meet unrealistic goals, being given the worst tasks to perform, and having their hours cut unfairly. The highest percentage reporting being pressured to meet unrealistic goals was Biracial, non-Hispanic (32%) while the lowest was African American/black (10%). The highest percentage reporting having been assigned the worst tasks to do was the bi-racial, non-Hispanic group (27%). The lowest percentages were among the White, non-Hispanic and the Other, non-Hispanic group, both at approximately 13%.

The highest percentage reporting having their hours cut unfairly was Other, non-Hispanic (32%), which includes Asian Pacific Islander and American Indian. The lowest percentage reporting was the Biracial, non-Hispanic group (10%).

Workplace Violence

There were no statistically significant results with regard to differences in reporting of supervisor-perpetrated workplace violence by race/ethnicity.

Table 2 Percentage of Young Workers Reposting Different Types of Negative Supervisor Treatment, by Race/Ethnicity

Percent (Number)					
Measures	Hispanic, All Races	White, Non-Hispanic	African American / Black, non-Hispanic	Biracial, non-Hispanic	Other, non-Hispanic (Asian Pacific Islander, American Indian)
Hostility (n=1023)					
Supervisor Hostile Toward You (n=1,023)	17.99 (25)	10.33 (75)	18.07 (15)	16.13 (5)	16.22 (6)
	P-value: 0.04*				
Bullying (n=1031)					
Pressured in	18.57 (26)	15.32 (112)	9.52 (8)	32.26 (10)	18.92 (7)
	P-value: 0.04*				
Worst tasks in	21.43 (30)	13.13 (96)	15.48 (13)	27.03 (10)	12.90 (4)
	P-value: 0.03*				
Criticized in	17.86 (25)	13.41 (98)	14.29 (12)	19.35 (6)	21.62 (8)
	P-value: 0.4				
Assigned tasks in	10.71 (15)	11.08 (81)	9.52 (8)	9.35 (6)	16.22 (6)
	P-value: 0.5				
Scheduled unfairly in	21.43 (30)	17.10 (125)	21.43 (18)	12.90 (4)	32.43 (12)
	P-value: 0.1				
Cut hours, unfairly in	17.86 (25)	14.64 (107)	16.67 (14)	9.68 (3)	32.43 (12)
	P-value: 0.04*				
Forced overtime in	15.71 (22)	12.86 (94)	10.71 (9)	12.09 (4)	27.03 (10)
	P-value: 0.1				
Bully ANY of the above	45.71 (64)	38.99 (285)	36.90 (31)	48.39 (15)	56.76 (21)
	P-value: 0.1				
Workplace Violence (n=58)					
Supervisor Perpetrator of Workplace Violence [a] (n=580)	28.41 (25)	18.32 (74)	9.52 (4)	15.79 (3)	25.00 (6)
	P-value: 0.09				

[a] Workplace Violence includes verbal abuse, threats, physical attack, sexual harassment, sexual assault

* Significant chi shows that race and dependent variables are not independent

Results on reporting their victimization to their supervisors and their supervisor's response are in Table 3 below. With the exception of the Other, non-Hispanic group, about two-thirds or more of those in all other racial/ethnic categories reported their victimizations to their supervisors. However, these results were not statistically significant. The differences in respondents' reasons for not reporting were not statistically significant, yet there were some interesting findings. The highest percentage reporting they did not tell their supervisor about their victimization because they did not think they would be taken seriously or they did not want to make things worse, was among the Hispanic, all races group.

Table 3 Reporting Workplace Violence and Reasons for Non-reporting by Race/Ethnicity

Percent (Number)					
Measures	Hispanic, All Races	White, non-Hispanic	African American / Black, non-Hispanic	Biracial, non-Hispanic	Other, non-Hispanic (Asian Pacific Islander, American Indian)
Reported their victimization to supervisor (n=438)	65.38 (51)	70.57 (211)	70.00 (21)	73.33 (11)	46.67 (7)
	P-value: 0.35				
Reasons For Non-reporting					
NOT Reported, not taken seriously (n=276)	43.24 (16)	40.93 (79)	25.00 (5)	14.29 (1)	41.18 (7)
	P-value: 0.40				
NOT Reported, not wanting trouble (n=275)	63.89 (23)	59.59 (115)	42.86 (9)	83.33 (5)	64.71 (11)
	P-value: 0.37				
NOT Reported, not wanting to make worse (n=275)	51.35 (19)	39.79 (76)	19.05 (4)	42.86 (3)	19.05 (4)
	P-value: 0.19				

Table 4 represents the response that victims of workplace violence received from their supervisors after reporting their victimization to their supervisor. The percentage reporting a positive response was much higher among the white, non-Hispanic group (73%) when compared to all other races (26%), although this was not statistically

significant. No statistically significant differences were found with regard to the actions taken by respondents' supervisors.

Table 4 Supervisor Response to Reported Workplace Violence Event Comparing White non- Hispanic to All Other Races/Ethnicity

Percent (Number)		
Measures	White, Non-Hispanic	All Other Races/Ethnicity [a]
Supervisor Responded in a positive way (n=301)	73.53 (125)	26.47 (45)
	P-value: 0.127	
Response (n=301)		
Supervisor fired the perpetrator (n=301)	3.33 (7)	6.67 (6)
	P-value: 0.2	
Supervisor talked to the perpetrator(n=301)	23.81 (50)	20.00 (18)
	P-value: 0.5	
Supervisor Banned/Removed the perpetrator (n=301)	13.27 (28)	8.89 (8)
	P-value: 0.4	
Supervisor filled out Paperwork[b] (n=301)	2.86 (6)	2.22 (2)
	P-value: 0.8	

[a] All Other Races/Ethnicity includes Hispanic (All Races), African American/Black, Biracial, Other (Asian Pacific Islander, American Indian)

[b] Supervisor assisted in helping the victim fill out paperwork to document the event

DISCUSSION

The study results suggest that, in some cases, abusive supervision patterns differ across perceived race and ethnicity due to the trends seen in the adverse supervisor treatment of young workers, the reporting patterns for instances of workplace violence, and the supervisor's response to reported workplace violence events. The discussion reviews the abusive supervision amounts differing between the race/ethnicity of the adolescent worker.

The literature surrounding supervisor workplace violence for adolescents is limited in number. However, some studies connect adolescent workplace violence to poor mental health outcomes. In a study by Brown and associates, adolescents spoke of negative mental health implications and diminished ability to function normally outside of the work environment due to workplace violence experiences. Although mental health was not the focus of this study, it shows that some of the supervisor behaviors that lead to poor mental health are being experienced by young workers. This is consistent with other studies in which adolescents began exhibiting and adapting to poor health, such as depression, anxiety, hostility, and substance use (Dionisi et al., 2012).

This study also shows the need to understand the relationship between adolescents and their supervisors. The results of this study show that high percentages of adolescents from all racial/ethnic backgrounds report their victimization to their supervisors. The supervisors' response varies, with talking to the perpetrator being the most common for all racial/ethnic groups. However, there may be reasons adolescents choose not to report

instances of victimization, such as not wanting to make the event worse, not wanting to create trouble, or the fear of not being taken seriously, as reported in this study. There may be a plethora of other reasons why adolescent workers choose not to talk with their supervisors. For instance, a study proposed that managers are unaware of the procedures in place to handle events of workplace violence (Good & Cooper, 2016). Thus, leaving the adolescent to figure out the situation by themselves or seek the help of a coworker (Good & Cooper, 2016). If the adolescent recognizes the inability of the supervisor to mitigate the issue, the young worker might choose to keep instances of workplace violence to themselves.

The difference in the amount of abusive supervision between racial/ethnic groups was noticed throughout many instances of the study. Given the ability to further the research, there may be a need to look directly at the difference between the majority race/ethnicity and the minority race/ethnicity. The minority race/ethnicity groups often experience an increased amount of discrimination (Feagin, 1991). By looking at the discrimination between the majority and minority race/ethnicity, in conjunction with the difference in abusive supervision by the race/ethnicity of the young worker, there may be a bigger story to tell.

Instead of focusing on the individual adolescent, changing the environment in the adolescent works would be more advantageous. Training provided to the Supervisor targeted at educating the Supervisor about the impacts of abusive supervision toward adolescents and the implicit racial bias he/she may have toward adolescents could help mold the environment and create a safe and healthy workplace.

IMPLICATIONS

Violence has the ability to occur at any moment and in any form. However, the violence experienced at the hands of the Supervisor toward an adolescent worker can be substantially decreased, considering the Supervisor's goal is to ensure safety for all, regardless of racial/ethnic identity. According to the Division of Occupational Health and Safety, the safety responsibilities of supervisors include conducting orientation and training of employees, enforcing safe work practices, correcting unsafe conditions, preventing lingering hazardous or unhealthful workplace conditions or hazards, investigating workplace accidents, and promoting a quick return to work. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.) Therefore, through these predetermined roles, the supervisors at workplaces of young workers promote the well-being of adolescents as opposed to being the cause of hazardous conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study's findings support the need for additional research. Given that this study explored a new topic that had never been questioned before, the extent to which abusive supervision is disproportionately experienced by minority races/ethnicities compared to the majority race of White, non-Hispanic wasn't explored. Research utilizing a qualitative study of adolescents spanning a wide range of races/ethnicities would be the next step. The qualitative study should oversample for minority races. The oversampling will allow for better estimates of the minority population to be presented in the standard sampling procedure (Vaughan, 2017). In routine sampling procedures, there would be a large number of white, non-Hispanic individuals compared to the other racial/ethnic minorities.

Furthermore, research regarding adolescent workplace violence is severely limited. Given the significance associated with violence exposure during the formative years of adolescence and the implications accompanying a decreased sense of personal identity, adolescent workplace violence appears to be a critical topic of discussion surrounding the safety of adolescents. As adolescents begin the long work-life journey, it is important that young workers be aware of the potential safety risks that accompany working.

There is a potential need to invest in interventions surrounding the topic of adolescent workplace violence. There has yet to be an official intervention that aims to diminish the physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive

behavior in the adolescent place of employment. The closest to an intervention that has been made public is through the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Health and Safety, a program titled Teens Lead at Work. This program allows teens to be peer leaders and educate their counterparts about the right to safety and health within the workplace (Massachusetts Coalition For Occupational Safety And Health, 2012).

CONCLUSION

We hypothesized that supervisor abuse might be different depending on the race/ethnicity of the young worker. We found that adolescents experienced hostility, bullying, and workplace violence and that there was a relationship between these experiences and the workers' race/ethnicity. The negative perception of supervisors in terms of hostility, workplace violence, and bullying are, by and large, perceived to be experienced differently among adolescents by their race/ethnicity.

In conjunction with the minimal studies, these findings begin to address the issue of abusive supervision toward adolescent workers on the basis of the race/ethnicity of the adolescent worker. But gathering a complete understanding would require more studies in the future. The recommendation would be to conduct a qualitative study with an oversampling of adolescents identifying as minority race/ethnicity as well as identifying the race and age of the supervisor who perpetrated abusive supervision to them. This provides the basis on which to continue researching this topic; it is only through this continued research that the proper precautions can be implemented to alleviate abusive supervisor incidents and cultivate an environment of happiness and health.

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