Development and Validation of the Perceived Victimization Measure

by

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A Thesis
presented to
The University of Guelph

In partial fulfilment of requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
in
Psychology

Guelph, Ontario, Canada

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE PERCEIVED VICTIMIZATION MEASURE

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The purpose of this study was to develop a measure to understand victimization in the workplace, defined as the degree to which individuals perceive themselves as being hurt by an aggressive act that was deemed to be intentional. The definition is based on a review of the workplace aggression literature. The study followed a multi-phase procedure to develop this measure. Items were developed using a deductive process based on the construct definition. Subject matter experts reviewed the developed 30 items to assess content validity. Two independent samples were used to reduce the measure to the most appropriate and representative items to reflect the construct of perceived victimization. The construct validity of the final eight-item perceived victimization measure was examined against a theoretical nomological network. Findings suggest reliability and preliminary validity evidence for the perceived victimization measure, which may be used in research and applied settings.

Keywords: victimization; aggression; workplace; victim identity; perceptions of harm
DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to all those who have been told to “shake it off,” “deal with it,” “get over it,” or “it wasn’t that bad.” There is no excuse for victimization, nor should the perspective of an individual dealing with aggression ever be diminished.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The process of developing and writing this document was long and arduous, and at many times it would not have been possible if not for the support and efforts of many individuals in my life.

First, I must acknowledge my advisor, Dr. M. Gloria González-Morales for her unending supply of encouragement, knowledge, and reassurance, especially when things looked bleak. Her ability to challenge me to improve while supporting me every day along the process made this a most enriching experience. As well, my advisory committee of Drs. Deborah Powell and David Stanley offered a wealth of knowledge and creative insight that ensured that I never took the easy road. My gratitude also extends to Dr. Jeff Spence, my external examiner, for providing an analytical perspective, and Dr. Leanne Son Hing for her role as chair of my defence.

I owe a great deal of thanks to Ashlyn Patterson, my twin, who was there with me every step of the process, and to my mentor, Nick Salter, who has never been more than a message away. When I needed positive reinforcement these two were always there. To all of the students in the psychology program at the University of Guelph who assisted in countless ways I express my deep-hearted gratitude for your support and assistance.

Finally, I give my thanks to my family (biological and chosen). All of these individuals have done so much more than they can ever realize to help me get to this place, especially my parents, the constant cheerleaders, who since the very beginning have provided listening ears, critical eyes, and unyielding support.
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Figure 2. Phase four parallel analysis raw data and permutation scree plots
Development and Validation of the Perceived Victimization Measure

When employees prepare to go to work to perform their daily roles they should not have to be concerned about risks to their personal security or wellbeing. Unfortunately, workplaces are not guaranteed safe spaces, and employees are not immune to experiences of harmful or negative behaviour. One common negative experience is the occurrence of workplace aggression. In a study of Canadian public workers, 69% experienced forms of psychological aggression (Pizzino, 2002) while 41.4% of an American sample of employees indicated experiencing psychological forms of aggression and 6% indicated experiencing forms of physical violence (Schat, Frone, & Kelloway, 2006). Within the literature, many terms are used to describe acts of aggression in the workplace: incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), interpersonal conflict (Spector & Jex, 1998), social undermining (Duffy, Ganster, & Pagon, 2002), emotional abuse (Keashly, Hunter, & Harvey, 1997), mobbing (Leymann, 1990), bullying (Rayner, 1997), petty tyranny (Ashforth, 1994), abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000), workplace aggression (Neuman & Baron, 1998), and victimization (Aquino, Grover, Bradfield, & Allen, 1999). Although this list covers many of the constructs related to aggression in the workplace, this is not an exhaustive list and other constructs have a similar commonality with workplace aggression. It is apparent by the prevalence rates and sheer number of constructs similar to workplace aggression that this is a topic of importance for academic and applied industrial and organizational psychologists, one that requires further development to better understand how workplace aggression can be dealt with.

This diversity of constructs related to workplace aggression emphasizes the complexity of the phenomenon in relation to the type of aggression, who the aggressor and the target are, and the intensity of the aggressive act (see Table 1). However, given that each of these constructs
refers to similar interpersonal behaviours in the workplace aimed at purposefully inflicting harm, there has been a growing movement to view these behaviours as part of a larger latent construct (Aquino & Lamertz, 2004; Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Hershcovis, 2011; Lapierre, Spector, & Leck, 2005). Specifically, in their *Annual Review of Psychology* article, Aquino and Thau (2009) used workplace victimization as the construct to encompass aggressive behaviours in the workplace from the perspective of the target. However, further development of workplace victimization as an overall construct is currently constrained by the non-existence of a measure that captures “the experience of being a target of workplace aggression” (p. 718). The present study aims to advance research on this issue by developing a new measure that captures the experience of being a victim of aggression: perceived victimization.

**Workplace Victimization: Outcomes and Perceptions**

Aggressive and victimizing behaviours in the workplace are of concern to individuals experiencing the behaviours, and the organizations these behaviours occur in, due to potential physical, psychological, and emotional harm that may result as a consequence of experiencing aggression (Aquino & Thau, 2009; Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001). Being the target of workplace aggression can lead to anxiety and depression (Björkqvist, Österman, & Hjelt-Bäck, 1994; Cortina et al., 2001; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2001; Tepper, 2000; Zapf, 1999), burnout (Goldberg & Grandey, 2007; Grandey, Kern, & Frone, 2007; Tepper, 2000), frustration, negative emotions at work, somatic symptoms (LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002; Frone, 2000; Rogers & Kelloway, 1997; Schat & Kelloway, 2005), lower self-esteem, and reduced life and job satisfaction of the target (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Keashly et al., 1997; Tepper, 2000; Vartia & Hyyti, 2002). In addition to these personal outcomes, the organization is also affected by the occurrence of workplace aggression. For instance, victimized employees
may experience reduced organizational commitment and leave the organization, damaging the human capital of the organization (Bowling & Beehr, 2006; Frone, 2000). The consequences of workplace aggression present significant risks to individual health and wellbeing, as well as potential costs to organizational success. I believe greater emphasis must be placed on assessing aggression in the workplace, specifically the measurement of experiences of victimization, in order for us to develop methods for intervening and preventing victimization from occurring.

Although there are many cases of employees being exposed to aggressive acts of various levels of intensity in the workplace (e.g., incivility, bullying, interpersonal conflict), not all of the employees who experience these behaviours perceive themselves to be victimized. Experiencing a form of aggression does not immediately result in an individual feeling victimized. For example, a supervisor may make the same rude comment to two employees; one employee recently hired by the organization may feel that the supervisor intended to be hurtful with the comment and therefore might feel mistreated. The second employee who has been with the organization for many years and knows this is not the usual way the supervisor behaves may disregard the supervisor’s comment and attribute it to the supervisor being stressed. The second employee may continue working during the rest of the day, unaffected by the comment. In the first case, the employee is more likely to identify as a victim and feel more victimized by the supervisor than in the experience of the second employee.

Current measures of victimization (e.g., Aquino, et al., 1999) tend to focus on how frequently specific behaviours, previously operationalized by the researchers as aggressive, occur towards an individual during a set time period. These measures do not assess the individual’s subjective interpretation of how these behaviours make them feel. This current method, focusing on frequency, is problematic because regardless of how frequently an individual experiences
these behaviours in the workplace, it does not necessarily indicate how likely they are to perceive themselves as a victim of aggressive behaviours, or how strongly they self-identify as a victim. Using the example above of the two employees who experienced their supervisor’s rude comment, the first employee may perceive verbal aggression as highly victimizing after the first incident, whereas the second employee may only feel victimized if the verbal aggression is repeated and can no longer be explained by the supervisor being stressed. Furthermore, in a meta-analysis, Hershcovis (2011) found support that a less frequent form of workplace aggression (i.e., incivility) could have a stronger relationship with a negative organizational outcome than a more frequent form of workplace aggression (i.e., bullying). Therefore, frequency should not necessarily be the sole factor considered to determine the extent to which an individual will be affected by workplace aggression.

Hershcovis (2011) provided a theoretical model to craft a more parsimonious understanding of the relationships between workplace aggression and its outcomes by including moderating and mediating variables. Based on this theoretical contribution, I posit that it is the perceptions of victimization by the targets that are more likely to lead to the individual and organizational outcomes rather than solely the frequency of aggressive acts occurring. Therefore, in order to advance our knowledge in this topic, a measure that focuses on perceptions of and reactions to the behaviour to determine if respondents identify as victims of aggressive behaviour is needed. In the following section I lay out the background of workplace aggression to assist with defining the construct of perceived victimization and proposing its measurement.

**Workplace Aggression and Victimization**

Aggression occurs when an individual directs a behaviour at another person or group with the purpose of causing physical, psychological, or emotional harm (Anderson & Bushman,
An individual who instigates an aggressive act is labelled the *perpetrator* and the individual who the aggressive act is directed towards is labelled the *target*. Only when harm is deemed to have occurred (i.e., the target is unable to achieve essential psychological and physiological needs as a result of the act) is the target then labelled a *victim* (Aquino & Thau, 2009). Therefore, the term *victim* is not necessarily synonymously applied to the label *target* in this relationship. An individual may be targeted by a perpetrator but not experience any physical or psychological harm. In this situation the target would not feel victimized or deem himself or herself as a victim.

In the workplace, employees can feel victimized by different perpetrators according to the perpetrator-target aggression relationships (Braverman, 1999; Greenberg & Barling, 1999). These perpetrator-target relationships can involve aggression from: an outsider unrelated to the organization (e.g., a thief or protester); an outsider related to the organization (e.g., customers or clients); an employee of the organization (e.g., supervisors or coworkers); or a perpetrator that is unconnected to the organization, but is personally connected to the target (e.g., a friend or family member). Therefore, the perceived victimization measure should be applicable among multiple perpetrator-target relationships within workplace settings.

Research conducted from the vantage point of the perpetrator takes into consideration the intentions of the perpetrator’s actions to determine if the behaviour constitutes aggression. Yet the perpetrator’s perception of intent is not always going to mirror the perception the target has of the incident (e.g., the perpetrator may claim the incident was an accident while the target believes it was intentional). The target is the individual who is experiencing the brunt of the behaviour, therefore if the target perceives that the perpetrator may have intended to inflict harm, that is likely to have greater influence on their interpretation of the incident and have greater
influence on their cognitive and emotional responses (Aquino & Thau, 2009). Therefore, from a target’s perception of victimization, the true purpose of the perpetrator is of secondary concern to the target’s subjective evaluation of the intention of the behaviour.

Finally, a measure of workplace aggression should be equally capable of identifying victimization caused by either physical or psychological aggression. Physical aggression includes violent behaviours that may involve some form of material contact between the perpetrator and target, or these behaviours may obstruct a target from being able to complete their task (Lapierre, et al., 2005), such as shoving, punching, use of a weapon, or the destruction of a target’s property. Psychological aggression often involves nonphysical means of executing harm upon another person, including such behaviours as gossiping about, insulting, yelling at, criticizing, alienating, or directing rude gestures or behaviours towards a target (Lapierre et al., 2005). With these examples in mind the construct of perceived victimization should apply to many forms of workplace aggression in order to be effectively parsimonious within the aggression and victimization research.

**Defining and Operationalizing Perceived Victimization**

Developed from a review of victimology literature, Aquino et al. (1999) operationalized victimization as an “individual’s perception of having been exposed, either momentarily or repeatedly, to the aggressive acts of one or more other persons.” The authors further explain that because victimization is based on the target’s perception, it is typically a subjective evaluation as to whether one feels victimized by an aggressive act. Aquino et al.’s (1999) definition focuses on whether victimization is felt to have occurred. This is an important question, but it does not explore the degree to which individuals perceive themselves to have been victimized in the
specific situation. Their operationalization does not address the psychological response to the aggressive act that elicits the self-identification as a victim.

In an attempt to create greater specificity in the operationalization, Aquino and Thau (2009) expressed that “victimization occurs when an employee’s well-being is harmed by an act of aggression.” It is “when fundamental psychological and physiological needs are unmet or thwarted” that the harm to one’s wellbeing occurs. The specific fundamental needs the authors refer to include the five psychological needs for social survival developed by Stevens and Fiske (1995). These pertain to the needs to belong, to understand, to be effective, to find the world benevolent, and to maintain self-esteem, in addition to the physiological need to avoid pain. Aquino and Thau’s (2009) addition to the definition makes progress in the operationalization by incorporating the effect of aggression on thwarting these social survival needs as further explanation of victimization. It incorporates important aspects of the behavioural construct of victimization, however, the definition falls short of addressing the extent to which individuals feel or identify themselves as a victim.

Although the definition supports victim self-identification with dichotomous labels of either victim or non-victim, it does not allow for the measurement of the extent to which one identifies as a victim. The use of this definition indicates that if a need is unmet due to aggression an individual will feel victimized, but the definition does not make reference to the range or extent to which one feels victimized. An individual may have one need unmet or thwarted because of the aggression, and yet there is no way of knowing if they felt more victimized than another individual who had multiple needs unmet or thwarted. Furthermore, neither Stevens and Fiske (1995) nor Aquino and Thau (2009) prioritized the social survival needs to indicate an ordinal level of importance for which needs are most important to an
individual to prevent feelings of victimization. I postulate that every individual is likely to have a unique prioritization of social survival needs, such that thwarting a need for some individuals may have a greater or lesser impact on their perceptions of being victimized than it would on other individuals. For example, individuals high in social anxiety may feel more victimized when their need to belong is compromised, in comparison to individuals low in social anxiety (Williams, 2007). Therefore, it is a worthwhile proposition to look deeper into the specific social survival needs of individuals in the study of perceived victimization, but it is a matter far too specific and personalized to each individual to effectively be incorporated as a necessary component for the quantitative measurement of victimization.

In place of these earlier definitions, I propose a new definition of perceived victimization to facilitate the creation of a measure.

**Perceived victimization** is operationally defined as the degree to which individuals perceive themselves as being hurt by an aggressive act that was deemed to be intentional.

This definition includes three important components that are necessary for the understanding of perceived victimization: subjectivity, perceived harm, and perceived intent.

First, as explained above, perceived victimization is subjective (Aquino et al., 1999), indicating that there will be variance in how individuals interpret a situation. Although one person interprets the situation as victimizing, another person may not find it victimizing. Similarly, the degree to which one considers a situation to be victimizing or whether intent exists may range in severity depending on the individual or the specific point in time the behaviour occurred. Therefore, in terms of perceived victimization, researchers cannot impose an objective
threshold to determine if a situation or behaviour will lead an individual to identify as having been victimized.

Second, this definition focuses on the individual’s experience of perceived harm rather than the cognitive realization of specific social survival needs being thwarted (as was suggested in Aquino and Thau, 2009). In support of the inclusion of harm within the definition, Ochberg (1988) indicates “victims of crime should think of victim status in psychological terms.” He goes on to specify that victims are more likely to suffer from psychological symptoms, including shame, self-blame, morbid hatred, subjugation, defilement, resignation, second injury, and sexual inhibition. In consideration of these psychological symptoms of victimization proposed by Ochberg (1988), it is proposed that when placed in a situation of aggression, an individual is likely to focus on the experience of harm rather than a cognitive process deducing that harm has occurred. Therefore, the operationalization of perceived victimization should focus on the extent to which psychological responses to harm were experienced in order to understand if an individual identifies as having been victimized.

Finally, this definition of perceived victimization includes the individual target’s perception that the perpetrator intended to commit harm with his or her aggressive behaviour (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010). In cases where a target perceives that the perpetrator did not intend to inflict harm, this is labelled as an accident and is not deemed to be a form of victimization. However, the target may perceive the perpetrator to have intended to cause harm whether harm was inflicted or not. Thus, the perpetrator’s intention is less important than the target’s perception of the perpetrator’s purpose; consequently, it is the target’s perception of the situation that leads to feeling mistreated or victimized.
Perceived Victimization Convergent and Discriminant Validity

There are numerous characteristics that describe individuals who identify as victims and the consequences of being victimized (including, but not limited to, the consequences listed above). Although there is no way to precisely predict who will be victimized or who will suffer more greatly as a result of victimization, I propose a nomological network of constructs related to experiences of workplace aggression. To provide evidence of the validity of the developed perceived victimization measure, it should relate to the constructs within the proposed nomological network according to previously established empirical and theoretical relationships.

**Sensitivity to Interpersonal Treatment.** Bunk and Magley (2011) defined sensitivity to interpersonal treatment as “the strength of one’s cognitive and affective responsiveness to interpersonal encounters.” In other words, sensitivity to interpersonal treatment is an individual difference variable that assesses how attentive and reactive individuals are to the actions and words of those around them towards others, or towards themselves. This construct may be related to a person’s self-consciousness with others and also perceptions of equity and injustice (cf. Bunk & Magley, 2011). Within a workplace environment, individuals experience many forms of interpersonal encounters (including workplace aggression) and some individuals will be more attuned or perceptive to the nature of those interactions. I proposed that the construct of sensitivity to interpersonal treatment is similar to perceived victimization by focusing on the individual interpretations of interpersonal interactions. Therefore, I propose individuals who are more sensitive to interpersonal treatment would also be more sensitive to experiencing victimization.

*Hypothesis 1.* Scores on the perceived victimization measure will be positively correlated with sensitivity to interpersonal treatment.
**State Affectivity.** A great deal of research has explored the relationship between affectivity and victimization, typically using the two dimensions of positive activation and negative activation (e.g., Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Based on this conceptualization of affectivity, Bowling et al. (2010) reported that positive affectivity (PA) was negatively related and negative affectivity (NA) was positively related to workplace interpersonal conflict. A common theoretical explanation for the relationship between NA and interpersonal conflict is that individuals who have more heightened negative emotions may be inclined to perceive a situation to be intentional and more harmful compared to those with lower levels of NA (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). In addition, while feeling more negative emotions, one may selectively recall more negative events and thus make more negative attributions for what may objectively be deemed an ambiguous situation or behaviour, and as a result perceive him or herself to be a victim. These affective perspectives may be permanent traits or dispositions, or they may be temporary states of being. When individuals are in more negative states of being (that do not necessarily have to be related to their regular dispositions) they will likely perceive more negativity and harm.

*Hypothesis 2a.* Scores on the perceived victimization measure will be positively correlated with the state negative affectivity at the time the aggression was experienced.

*Hypothesis 2b.* Scores on the perceived victimization measure will be negatively correlated with the state positive affectivity at the time the aggression was experienced.

In addition to the positive-negative perspective of affectivity, it is important to consider the valence-activation perspective of affective states (Green & Salovey, 1999). This perspective of affectivity proposes that affective states exist along two dimensions: the valence of the affective state (i.e., from positive to negative) and the activation level of the affective state (i.e.,
from active to passive). I have not found any previous research on workplace aggression focusing on the valence-activation perspective. However, I posit that this novel perspective may be appropriate when relating to victimization. Individuals who subjectively experience harm are likely to feel worse after a perceived negative incident than after a positive or neutral incident. As Ochberg (1988) highlighted, there are many symptoms of being a victim, including anger, shame, guilt, or some other state that is equally unpleasant. It is unlikely that an individual, after being harmed, would feel pleasant or positive about their experience. Therefore, I propose that when individuals experience more victimization they should also report less positive and more negative affective states.

Hypothesis 2c. Scores on the perceived victimization measure will be negatively correlated with the valence of the state affectivity.

Individuals who experience harm may also experience many types of reactions that span the spectrum of activation. As noted above, individuals may feel depressed or burned-out after an experience of victimization (i.e., low activation), or they may feel anxious, alert, or attentive to their fear of future victimization or personal threat (i.e., high activation). With such a large range of potential responses to victimization on the activation spectrum, I propose that no specific relationship should exist between perceived victimization and the level of activation of the affective states.

Hypothesis 2d. Scores on the perceived victimization measure will not be significantly correlated with the activation of the state affectivity.

Core Self-Evaluations. According to Judge, Locke, and Durham (1997), core self-evaluations encompass the traits of self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, emotional stability, and locus of control. Subsequent research has since provided evidence that these traits form the
higher-order trait of core self-evaluations (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002; Johnson, Rosen, & Levy, 2008). Within their research on target personality and workplace interpersonal conflict, Bowling et al. (2010) found that the more strongly an individual felt about their core self-evaluations, the less likely they were to experience aggression. Therefore, I propose that a similar relationship would exist within this research looking at perceptions of victimization.

_Hypothesis 3_. Scores on the perceived victimization measure will be negatively correlated with core self-evaluations.

**Personality Traits.** Another set of individual difference constructs that can be used to test the convergent and discriminant validity of the perceived victimization measure are the Big Five personality traits. Targets of workplace aggression have been found to be higher in neuroticism and lower in extroversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness (Byrne, 1994; Maynard & Joseph, 1997; Slee & Rigby, 1993; cf. Coyne, Seigne, & Randall, 2000; O’Neil & Hastings, 2011). Research has shown that these four personality traits repeatedly are related to qualities of being a target, such as having reduced social skills and being more anxious (Bowling et al., 2010; Coyne et al., 2000). The previous research has not found any relationship with the personality trait openness to experience.

_Hypothesis 4a_. Scores on the perceived victimization measure will be positively correlated with scores of neuroticism.

_Hypothesis 4b_. Scores on the perceived victimization measure will be negatively correlated with scores of extraversion.

_Hypothesis 4c_. Scores on the perceived victimization measure will be negatively correlated with scores of conscientiousness.
**Hypothesis 4d.** Scores on the perceived victimization measure will be negatively correlated with scores of agreeableness.

**Hypothesis 4e.** Scores on the perceived victimization measure will be uncorrelated with scores of openness to experience.

**Work Tension.** Work tension is a construct that explores whether an individual feels stressed as a result of the experiences of physical and psychological strain in the workplace (e.g., being victimized). Specifically it focuses on how a work stressor translates into psychosomatic influences on ones’ health and personal life. Experiences of workplace aggression are positively related to reported tension and greater psychosomatic ailments (e.g., Frone, 2000; Keashly et al., 1997). As such, individuals who report being victimized to a greater extent should subsequently also report experiencing greater tension in their life as a result of their work life.

**Hypothesis 5.** Scores on the perceived victimization measure will be positively correlated with symptoms of work tension.

**Job Satisfaction.** In previous research job satisfaction consistently is negatively related to experiences of victimization and workplace aggression (e.g., Frone, 2000; Keashly et al., 1997; Tepper, 2000; Vartia & Hyyti, 2002). Individuals who experience aggression from other individuals in their place of employment are less likely to enjoy their work and their work environment. Therefore, I propose that individuals who experience more or greater degrees of victimization in their job are less likely to be satisfied with their job.

**Hypothesis 6.** Scores on the perceived victimization measure will be negatively correlated with overall job satisfaction scores.

**Coworker Satisfaction.** It is important to assess the degree to which employees are satisfied with various components of their job (Dunham & Smith, 1979), not just an overall job
satisfaction. For the purpose of looking at experiences of victimization in the workplace, the focus is placed on reactions related to feelings about coworker and colleague interactions. Previous findings have indicated a negative correlation between levels of satisfaction and employee perceptions of danger and risk (McLain, 1995). When employees experience aggression at the hands of those they work with, it is likely that they will have negative attitudes about their colleagues. I propose that greater identification of being a victim of aggression would result in lower levels of satisfaction with coworkers and work colleagues.

Hypothesis 7. Scores on the perceived victimization measure will be negatively correlated with coworker satisfaction.

Intensity of the aggressive situation. Finally, I will examine the convergence validity of perceived victimization with situations of aggression. The proposed definition of perceived victimization noted above incorporates the components of individuals’ experience of perceived harm and perceived intent. The definition for individuals to perceive victimization requires this subjective assessment of a form of aggressive behaviour. If no aggressive experience has occurred an individual should be unlikely to report victimization; however, if any form of aggression has occurred there is the potential for the individual to report some degree of victimization. Additionally, the greater the intensity of the aggressive behaviour to the individual, the greater victimization the individual should perceive. Therefore, when individuals experience aggressive situations they should report greater perceived victimization than individuals who do not experience aggressive situations, or experience less intense aggressive situations.

Hypothesis 8. Scores on the perceived victimization measure will be positively correlated with the intensity of the aggressive situation.
General Method

Overview

The procedure used for the development and validation of the perceived victimization measure adhered to the recommendations of Hinkin (1998) for measure development by following a five-phase approach. The first phase involved generating a list of items based on the definition set for perceived victimization. Phase two utilized subject matter experts to evaluate the items in relation to the definition. Phase three utilized a sample of hypothetical scenarios that participants read and subsequently answered the perceived victimization items as if they were in the situation. The fourth and fifth phases tested the items in the perceived victimization measure in relation to similar and dissimilar constructs and experiences of workplace aggression to assess the convergent and discriminant validity.

Phase One: Perceived Victimization Item Development

Method

To initiate the item development stage for the perceived victimization measure, the procedure for generating items as outlined by Hinkin (1998) was used. Hinkin (1998) stressed that “the key to successful item generation is the development of a well-articulated theoretical foundation.” Therefore, the developed items were based on the previously presented construct definition: “perceived victimization is the degree to which individuals perceive themselves as being hurt by an aggressive act that was deemed to be intentional.” Focusing on this definition, a structure that met the three basic components was developed for each of the items in the scale: the subjectivity of the target’s experience, the perception of experienced harm, and the perceived intention of the perpetrator.
A deductive method of scale development was used to produce the list of potential items for the perceived victimization scale. Hinkin (1998) notes that a deductive method of item generation is likely to have good content validity and is adequate at sampling the domain being studied. Using the operational definition as the primary source for the items to be generated from and the symptoms of being a victim highlighted by Ochberg (1988), a list of as many items as possible was created in order to capture the full extent of the perceived victimization construct.

Results

A total of 30 items were created (items available in Appendix A). Items were evaluated to ensure that they met basic guidelines for writing quality items (i.e., item consistency, avoiding double-barrelled and leading questions, and keeping items simple and short). For example, an item developed was: “I was intentionally subjected to a hurtful experience.” More items were created during this stage than were actually required with the intention of cutting items during later stages to a preferred shorter measure of less than 10 items.

Phase Two: Substantive Validity Analysis of Items

Method

Anderson and Gerbing (1991) recommended the use of substantive validity analysis to support the content validity of the generated items. In this approach subject matter experts (SMEs) evaluated each item on a Likert scale expressing the degree to which the item fit the intended construct definition. Thirteen psychology graduate students (either PhD or Masters students in industrial-organizational or clinical psychology) acted as SMEs to complete this assessment of items to determine the content validity of the items. Respondents were asked to rate each item on a 7-point Likert scale indicating the extent to which they believed that the items reflected the given definition of perceived victimization, where 0 is “item is not relevant to
the definition,” 4 is “item is slightly relevant to the definition,” and 6 is “item is extremely relevant to the definition.” All items were randomly ordered for each SME to prevent order effects in evaluating items. The SMEs were given an opportunity to write comments in addition to their rating to provide supplementary feedback.

Results

Following the review of items by the SMEs, any item with a mean lower than 4 and with a standard deviation greater than 1.0 was deleted as unrepresentative and was replaced with a new item modeled after a higher scoring item. Furthermore, consistent feedback from the SMEs about any item was considered and reviewed as necessary (e.g., verbosely written items). Items with an average equal to or above a rating of 4 and a standard deviation equal to or less than 1.0 were kept for further analyses (the approved list of items can be found in Appendix B). This phase produced 30 items for the perceived victimization measure that related to the construct definition (represented by the mean score for the item) and for which there was general inter-rater agreement for each rating (as expressed with the standard deviation value of the item).

Phase Three: Principal Components Analysis and Item Reduction

Method

Following the initial item modification based on the ratings of the SMEs, the next phase required participants to complete the remaining items with the purpose of reducing the items to the most parsimonious and highest quality items and identifying the factor structure within the perceived victimization measure.

Participants and procedures. In this phase 264 participants were recruited (50% were recruited through the University of Guelph SONA participant system and 50% were recruited through social media advertising). Participants ranged from 17-61 years old (M = 23.54, SD =
7.334), 68.2% identified as female, 82.6% identified as white/Caucasian, and 65% of the participants were currently employed. Participants recruited from the University of Guelph SONA system were compensated with nominal bonus course credit and the participants recruited through social media were entered into a draw for a chance to win a gift card. Participants completed this phase of the study online.

The nature of the perceived victimization measure requires individuals using the measure to undergo a personal incident and to determine if they found it victimizing. In order to ensure participants had a situation in mind during this phase of the measure validation process (and to control for the types and intensities of experiences by participants), each participant was provided with a hypothetical scenario of workplace aggression and was asked to imagine that this event was happening to them (see Appendix C). Participants were randomly assigned one of seven scenarios. They were asked to focus on the thoughts and feelings they would experience if the assigned situation had happened to them. After reading the scenario, each participant was asked to respond to the 30 items created for the perceived victimization measure. Participants used a seven point Likert-response scale, from 0 (not at all) to 6 (extremely), to indicate the extent they believed the perceived victimization items would apply to them in their given situation.

**Results**

In this phase of the study, a principal components analysis (PCA) conducted with SPSS, was used to investigate the underlying factor structure. The analysis used pairwise deletion to limit the reduced sample size from missing data that would be caused by using listwise deletion. The Keiser-Meyer-Olkin measure demonstrated excellent sample size, KMO = .977, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity $\chi^2 (435) = 9536.662, p < .000$, indicated sufficiently large correlations
for a principal component analysis to be run. The individual item means, standard deviations, and item-total correlations can be found in Table 2.

A parallel analysis was also conducted to determine the number of factors that existed within the 30 items. The parallel analysis compared the raw data with 1000 simulated permutations of the raw data. The eigenvalue of the first factor (22.22) was greater than the eigenvalue at the 95th percentile for the simulation (1.86). The single factor was the only component significantly greater than the set threshold at the 95th percentile (Figure 1). The single factor explained 73.2% of the variance. When visually inspected the scree plot also indicated an inflection point that would warrant a single factor structure. The factor loadings are presented in Table 3. Based on the parallel analysis, the scree plot, and the fact that a majority of the variance was explained by the first component, a single factor was retained in this analysis.

The reliability of the 30 developed perceived victimization items was tested. The internal consistency of the scores for the 30 items was excellent, Cronbach’s α = .988, indicating that there was high reliability in the measure.

To reduce the number of items, the values of the factor loadings were rank ordered from highest (.907) to lowest (.766). Additionally, the item-total correlations were also rank ordered from highest (.900) to lowest (.755). When the two rank-ordered lists were compared, the same items appeared in the lowest ten items of both of these lists. Therefore, these items were selected for elimination. Additionally, two items (“I was purposely harassed” and “I was purposefully bullied”) were removed due to concerns raised about potential construct confusion between the use of these terms and the overarching terminology of victimization. Furthermore, of the remaining items, two items involved the idea of humiliation and two items focused on mistreatment. It was deemed that replication of the same terms was redundant and an
oversampling of the concepts. Therefore, the items with these terms that had higher factor loadings were retained, while the two items with lower factor loadings (“I was hurt by acts that were meant to be humiliating” and “I felt subjected to mistreatment”) were eliminated. As a result, 16 items were retained going into phase four (Appendix D). The internal consistency of the scores for the 16 retained items was excellent, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .981$. This means that with the removal of 14 items the reliability of the measure was still sufficient.

**Phase Four: Construct Validation**

**Method**

The purpose of this phase is threefold; first, to use a new, independent sample to replicate the previously established single factor structure with the 16 perceived victimization items; second, to facilitate further item reduction for the perceived victimization measure from 16 items to the best 8 items; and third, to correlate the perceived victimization measure with constructs in its nomological network to establish convergent and discriminant validity.

**Participants and procedure.** Participants for phase four were individuals recruited through Mechanical Turk, an online survey service (https://www.mturk.com/mturk/). As noted in a similar measure development and validation study, online participant recruitment allows researchers access to a representative sample of the workforce population and a “larger population of employees than other potential data collection methods (e.g., working students)” (Wallace & Chen, 2005). Unlike a student sample or a sample from a single organization, participants recruited through Mechanical Turk would be more likely to be heterogeneous in their personal characteristics and lived experiences. A total of 357 useable participant responses were collected; 52.9% identified as male, the age ranged from 18-68 years old ($M = 31.213$, $SD = 9.874$), and 50.7% and 32.5% identified their ethnicity as South Asian and white/Caucasian,
respectively. In terms of work experience, 66.1% of the sample identified as having full time employment (24.6% identified as part time, contract, or seasonal workers; 2.8% identified as retired, in a volunteer position, or currently unemployed), 49.9% did not consider themselves in a management position, and on average participants had been employed at their current workplace for 4.8 years. Participants completed this phase of the study online and were financially compensated according to the online survey service procedures (a maximum compensation of $0.50).

In this phase participants were required to recall an incident in which they experienced aggression or conflict in their place of employment. Reflecting on that incident, the participants filled out the 16 perceived victimization items. Additionally, participants completed measures that made up the proposed nomological network for workplace victimization.

**Measures.** Unless otherwise specified, all measures were rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from *not at all* (0) to *extremely* (6).

**Perceived victimization.** This scale included eight items following the item reduction in phase 4. Sample items include, “My feelings were hurt by an antagonistic act directed against me” and, “I was purposefully humiliated.” The internal consistency of scores on the scale from phase 4 was .94 (Appendix D).

**Sensitivity to interpersonal treatment.** Participants completed the eight-item Sensitivity to Interpersonal Treatment scale (SIT; Bunk & Magley, 2011) in terms of their general feelings. Example items include, “If my co-workers trust me, it stays on my mind” and, “It is upsetting to me if my supervisor yells at my co-workers.” The internal consistency of scores on the scale was .81 (Appendix E).
**State affectivity.** The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule- Expanded Form (PANAS-X; Watson & Clark, 1999) was used to assess participant affectivity with 66 items (six additional items were added to measure valence and activation; all 66 items can be found in Appendix F). The internal consistency of the scores on the 10-item positive affectivity subscale was .92. Sample items include “alert,” “enthusiastic,” and “proud.” The internal consistency of the scores on the 10-item negative affectivity subscale was .88. Sample items include “afraid,” “hostile,” and “distressed.” The internal consistency of the scores on the 9-item valence subscale was .64. Sample items include, “cheerful,” “happy,” and “downhearted.” The internal consistency of the scores on the 12-item activation subscale was .31. Sample items include, “still,” “active,” and “stimulated.” In filling out this questionnaire participants were given the direction “When answering the following questions select responses that best reflect your feelings during the previously recalled incident.”

**Core self-evaluations.** The Core Self-Evaluation Scale (CSES) was used to measure participants self reported overall core self-evaluations with 12 items (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003). Participants were asked to respond to these items in relation to how they generally feel about themselves. The internal consistency of scores on the scale was .81. Sample items include, “I am confident I get the success I deserve in life” and, “I determine what will happen in my life” (Appendix G).

**Personality.** Personality was measured using the Big Five Inventory (BFI; John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991). This measure has 44-items that ask participants to identify the extent to which each statement typically applies to them (Appendix H). The measure provides a score for each of the Big Five factors (extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness). The internal consistencies of scores on the scales for each trait were: neuroticism
(0.80), extraversion (0.73), conscientiousness (0.79), agreeableness (0.75), and openness to experience (0.67). Sample items include, “is depressed, blue,” “is talkative,” “does a thorough job,” “is helpful and unselfish with others,” and “is original, comes up with new ideas.”

**Work tension.** Work tension was measured using the Work Tension Scale (House & Rizzo, 1972; Appendix I). Participants completed this measure in relation to their recalled experience of workplace aggression. The seven-item scale assesses employee symptoms related to experiencing stressors at work. The internal consistency of scores on the scale was .91. Sample items include, “my job tends to directly affect my health” and, “I have felt nervous before attending meetings in the company.”

**Job satisfaction.** Job satisfaction was measured with the three item Overall Job Satisfaction measure by Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh (1983). Participants answered this question in terms of how they generally feel about their job. The internal consistency of scores on the scale was .78 (Appendix J). Items include, “all in all, I am satisfied with my job,” “in general, I like working here,” and, “in general, I don’t like my job” (reverse-coded).

**Coworker satisfaction.** To measure satisfaction with colleagues at work the coworker satisfaction subscale of the Index of Organizational Reactions scale by Dunham and Smith (1979) was used. The measure contains five items and each item used a different seven-point Likert response format (found in Appendix K). Participants were asked to answer this questionnaire about their general attitudes towards their coworkers. The internal consistency of scores on the scale was .74. Sample items include, “how do you generally feel about the employees you work with?” and, “how much does the way your co-workers handle their jobs add to the success of your organization?”
**Demographics.** Participants completed a demographic questionnaire asking to self-report age, gender, ethnicity, employment status, and organizational tenure.

**Results**

A second principal components analysis (PCA) was conducted with SPSS following the parameters as in phase three, except that this analysis used listwise deletion for missing data, which was possible without the risk of losing a large portion of participants. The Keiser-Meyer-Olkin measure signified excellent sample size, KMO = .975, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity $\chi^2_{(120)} = 4142.035, p < .000$, indicated sufficiently large correlations for a principal component analysis to be run. The internal consistency of the 16 scores on the perceived victimization measure was excellent, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .964$. The individual item means, standard deviations, and corrected item-total correlations can be found in Table 4.

A parallel analysis was also conducted to determine the number of factors that existed within the 16 items. The parallel analysis compared the raw data with 1000 simulated permutations of the raw data. The eigenvalue of the first factor (10.44) was greater than the eigenvalue at the 95th percentile for the simulation (1.51). The single factor was the only component significantly greater than the set threshold at the 95th percentile (Figure 2). The single factor explained 65.19% of the variance. Additionally, when visually inspected, the scree plot indicated an inflection point that would warrant a single factor structure. Based on the parallel analysis, the scree plot, and the variance explained by the component, a single factor was assumed in this analysis as had been determined in phase three.

Similar to phase three, the item reduction was determined based on the factor loadings of the items and the item-total correlations. To ensure that only the most closely connected items were retained, a threshold had been previously set that any item with a factor loading greater
than .80 would be retained and all others eliminated. Factor loadings can be found in Table 5. As a result, eight items were retained as the final measure (see Appendix L). These eight items also had the largest item-total correlations.

The reliability of the 8 perceived victimization items was tested. The internal consistency of scores for the items was excellent, Cronbach’s α = .94, indicating that there was high reliability in the scores for this measure. A confirmatory factor analysis was also performed. The single factor explained 70.4% of the variance and the factor loadings ranged from .815 to .860 (Table 6). This model showed reasonably good fit ($\chi^2$(27) = 53.929, $p < .01$; CFI = .986; RMSEA = .053; TLI = .981).

**Construct Validation.** The means, standard deviations, Cronbach’s alphas, and zero-order correlations for all variables measured in this study are included in Table 6. In examining the relationships between the perceived victimization measure and the other constructs in the proposed nomological network, eleven of the fourteen hypotheses were supported. Particularly, the 8-item perceived victimization measure was significantly negatively related to valence ($r = -.22, p < .001$), core self-evaluations ($r = -.20, p = .001$), conscientiousness ($r = -.19, p = .002$), job satisfaction ($r = -.12, p = .043$), and satisfaction with coworkers ($r = -.15, p = .011$). In addition, the 8-item perceived victimization measure was significantly positively related to sensitivity to interpersonal treatment ($r = .33, p < .001$), negative affectivity ($r = .45, p < .001$), neuroticism ($r = .15, p = .009$), and work tension ($r = .41, p < .001$). As hypothesized, the perceived victimization measure was not significantly related to activation ($r = -0.08, p = 0.168$) or the personality trait openness to experience ($r = .07, p = .257$).

Contrary to the hypotheses, extraversion was not significantly related to perceived victimization ($r = .07, p = .268$), nor was agreeableness ($r = -.01, p = .881$). It was hypothesized
that positive affectivity would be significantly negatively related to perceived victimization, but it was significantly positively related ($r = .22, p < .001$).

**Phase Five: Convergence with Workplace Aggression**

**Method**

In order to further study the construct validation, in particular the convergent validity of the victimization measure in relation to aggression I examined the relationship between phase three participants’ responses to the finalized perceived victimization measure (the final 8 items) and the intensity of the hypothetical aggressive scenarios.

In phase three participants were given hypothetical workplace aggression scenarios. In a previous pilot study participants were asked to read scenarios and rate the intensity of the aggression in the scenario. Based on the results of participants’ intensity ratings in the pilot research, seven scenarios were selected for this study to represent a range of intensities and types of aggressive behaviours. Therefore, two scenarios were more highly aggressive situations, two scenarios were more moderately aggressive situations, two scenarios were slightly aggressive situations, and one scenario was developed with minimal workplace aggression. Each of these scenarios was coded according to its aggressive behaviour and intensity of the situation (i.e., $3 = \textit{higher aggression}, 2 = \textit{moderate aggression}, 1 = \textit{slight aggression}, 0 = \textit{minimal aggression}$). Using the hypothetical scenarios ensured that participants were responding to controlled aggressive situations that would vary in intensity of aggression, rather than risk asking participants to recall a situation of workplace aggression and all participants recalling similarly intensive aggressive scenarios (e.g., if all participants were to recall high intensity workplace aggression scenarios there would be a risk of the perceived victimization items being validated with a restricted range of behaviours). Therefore, a perceived victimization score for each of the
participants from phase three was developed by averaging the participants’ scores across all eight items in the perceived victimization measure, as determined in the item reduction process in phase four.

**Results**

The correlation between the intensity of the aggressive behaviours in the scenarios and the scores on the eight-item perceived victimization measure was significantly positively correlated, \( r = .654, p < .001 \). This indicated that when participants read more aggressive workplace scenarios they reported greater perceptions of victimization. This provides supplementary evidence of convergent validity for the perceived victimization items indicating its utility with experienced aggression.

**Summary and Concluding Discussion**

The present research sought to develop and assess the validity of a measure that allows researchers and organizational practitioners to determine the degree to which employees experience victimization in the event of workplace aggression. As a result of a detailed development and validation process, such a measure was crafted: the perceived victimization measure.

Subject matter experts assessed the content validity of the initial proposed items as satisfactory according to the developed construct definition. Additionally, the items developed for this measure demonstrated excellent reliability when participants answered them with hypothetical scenarios (phase 3) and their memories of a specific incident of workplace aggression (phase 4). Preliminary evidence of construct validity was provided by virtue of testing the measure against the proposed nomological network and experiences of workplace aggression. The results from the construct validation in phase four supported eleven of the fourteen
correlational hypotheses, indicating that the developed measure shows preliminary support of construct validity for perceived victimization. It is also important to note that none of the constructs measured were highly correlated with the perceived victimization measure (ranging from -.22 to .45). This suggests that the perceived victimization items actually measured a unique construct and did not simply measure another construct proposed within the nomological network instead.

Of the supported hypotheses it is important to take specific note of the significant positive correlation between responses on the perceived victimization measure and the sensitivity to interpersonal treatment measure ($r = .33, p < .001$). Of all the constructs included in the nomological network, sensitivity to interpersonal treatment is perhaps most closely theoretically connected to the perceived victimization construct. The sensitivity to interpersonal treatment measure subjectively assesses the general affinity of individuals to recognize interpersonal mistreatment at work directed at them or that they witness directed towards others. Sensitivity to interpersonal treatment is similar in the components proposed in the definition of perceived victimization: there is subjectivity, perception of harm occurring (or lack of harm), and an attribution made about the perpetrator’s intent. The fact that this construct, which so closely resembles a general perceived victimization, is statistically significantly correlated with the developed measure provides substantive evidence about the convergent validity of the perceived victimization measure. Nevertheless, the fact that the correlation between these measures is moderate also suggests that these measures are still measuring different (although related) constructs.

Contrary to three of the proposed hypotheses, the perceived victimization measure was not related to extraversion and agreeableness, and it was positively correlated with state positive
affectivity. Although these findings were unanticipated, this does not necessarily negate the utility or validity of the measure. The previous research that had looked at agreeableness and extraversion was in relation to individuals being targeted for workplace aggression. As was previously mentioned, being a target does not necessarily mean that one will identify as being a victim. In this case, perhaps individuals lower in extraversion and agreeableness are more likely to be targeted, but the personality traits may not be related to the internalization of the aggression into victimization. Actually, I found that internalization of victimization is more closely related to neuroticism and conscientiousness. Future research should explore how often individuals are targeted, in addition to their perception of victimization. Only then can extraversion and agreeableness (as well as other individual difference trait and state variables) be explored in relation to identification as a target versus identification as a victim.

State positive affectivity was positively correlated to perceived victimization, contradictory to the hypothesized relationship. One reason this relationship may have occurred is that participants were asked to recall a memory of workplace aggression rather than report on an incident of workplace aggression that they had immediately experienced. Although participants answered the positive affectivity items following their reflection on the experience of aggression, there is the possibility that because individuals were recalling an experience further back in memory, they may have had time to reappraise the experience and in their response recalled their feelings with a more positive interpretation than what was actually felt during the past experience. Future research should consider having an experimental or applied sample of participants complete this measure immediately following an experience of workplace aggression in order to prevent the influence of elapsed time on memory. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the positive correlation between perceived victimization and positive affectivity
was smaller than the correlation with negative affectivity. I suspect that these counterintuitive findings may be related to the way the positive affectivity and negative affectivity scores are built limiting the influence of the activation dimension. Furthermore, I found support for the proposed relationships with affectivity valence and activation. These findings suggest that the valence-activation framework does distinguish more carefully the affective reactions that victims may experience: emotions with a negative valence that may be passive (i.e., sadness) or active (i.e., anger). However, I cannot discard the low reliability of the activation scale as the reason for the non-significant correlation between activation and perceived victimization. Therefore, more research is needed to investigate victimization in relation to the valence-activation perspective to measure affectivity because this perspective allows for a full range of affectivity to be explored, rather than only the positive and negative activation portions of affect. It should be noted that in the construct validation phase there was limited evidence supporting discriminant validity with the perceived victimization measure because of the reference point participants were using to recall their experienced aggression. Participants were asked to recall an experience of workplace aggression within the last three months, therefore, the constructs chosen for the nomological network needed to be applicable for recall from that point in time, as well. If constructs were not related to the perceived victimization measure it would be problematic to attribute if the lack of relationship was because there actually was no relationship as theoretically hypothesized or because of the temporal difference between the experience and the measurement of the other construct. In order for evidence of discriminant validity to be obtained without risk of temporal contamination, perceived victimization and the other constructs should be measured in closer proximity to the experience of aggression.
Future research should attempt to investigate relationships with other constructs that may need to be distinguished from perceived victimization and ensure there is no construct contamination. Specifically, researchers should explore if individuals higher in impression management or social desirability respond differently on the measure, or if these individual qualities may contaminate participation on the perceived victimization measure. For example, individuals higher in social desirability may report lower levels of victimization in order to appear more socially agreeable with others, or these individuals may use impression management techniques to appear less victimized to present themselves as more capable of dealing with adversity. Therefore, more evidence of discriminant validity is necessary during future construct validation efforts.

Finally, the correlation between the intensity of the hypothetical workplace aggression scenarios and responses on the perceived victimization measure (phase 5) was high and significantly positively correlated, showing further evidence of convergent validity. However, future research conducted to assess the validity of the perceived victimization measure must look specifically at the relationship between the perceived victimization measure and existing measures of workplace aggression, such as bullying, abusive supervision, and incivility. Although there are limitations related to the current measurement of these constructs (as noted above), one component of the construct validation process must consider the relationship with existing measures of aggressive behaviours. The inclusion of phase five began this process, but required participants to consider a hypothetical scenario rather than real experiences of aggression. Future research could have participants respond to existing measures of aggression and then answer the perceived victimization measure regarding their general sentiments of being
victimized in their workplaces. This process will more closely connect the experience of aggression with the perception of being victimized.

In sum, this research provides a valuable initial contribution to the organizational behaviour and aggression literatures, both theoretically and methodologically, and to the applied stream of workplace health and safety. The newly formulated operational definition conceptualizes workplace victimization in a framework that allows for measurement of the extent victimization was experienced, while still being grounded in the theoretical contributions that have established the psychological perspective of workplace victimization over the last two decades. This research continues the trend in the literature to work towards a condensed perspective of workplace aggression by focusing on the similarities of experiences of workplace aggression and measuring the overall experience of victimization. The present measure of perceived victimization fills an important gap in the workplace literature by allowing researchers to measure the latent construct of workplace victimization (Aquino & Thau, 2009). Therefore, the perceived victimization measure will be useful in future research and practical settings following additional replication and construct validation.

**Theoretical Contributions**

A significant contribution of this research is that it has explored the victimization experience in isolation from other constructs or influences. Experiencing victimization is influenced by many factors including the target’s perception of the intensity of the aggressive behaviour, the visibility of the aggressive behaviour to others, and the power distance between the perpetrator and the target (Hershcovis, 2011). Parcelling out and focusing on perceived victimization provides the necessary step to allow for the study of the influence of these factors (intensity, visibility, power distance) on the experiences of victimization. Now that the perceived
victimization measure has been developed it is possible to study the relationship between these characteristics of aggression and reports of perceived victimization. Additionally, researchers can examine the context that surrounds workplace aggression. Specifically, social norms should directly influence the way an individual perceives a situation, and therefore the organizational and social context should be accounted for in the victimization process. For instance, it would be of particular interest to explore how perceptions of victimization may change within workplaces where aggressive behaviours may be seen as a socially accepted practice. In such contexts it may be the case that individuals report more frequent aggressive acts, however their perceived victimization scores may be much lower because the social norms contextualize this behaviour without intention to harm. Parcelling out perceived victimization from the social context facilitates the understanding of these dynamic relationships of factors that influence the experience of workplace victimization. In sum, the existence of a measure of perceived victimization that is independent from existing workplace aggression measures that explore frequency of predetermined behaviours, will enable researchers to further explore the multilevel influences of the intervening factors.

This measure reinforces a victim-centred approach to aggression in the workplace rather than focusing on the perpetrator of the aggression. Researchers are determined and focussed in their desire to avoid the perception of blaming the victim (e.g., Aquino & Lamertz, 2004). A measure centred on the perspectives of the target to determine victimization will greatly advance this goal: to enhance concern and positive assistance for the individual facing the aggression. In addition, this measure will be a viable tool for victimization in other spheres of life outside of the workplace. The nature of the items and the response format allow the scale to be easily transferred to other domains of aggression research, such as intimate partner violence and peer
aggression in schools, to name a few. The consistent use of the perceived victimization measure in other domains will allow greater interdisciplinary discussions on aggression to emerge. As a result, a more detailed, universal understanding of aggression and victimization can be developed in order to better understand why some individuals are more likely to experience victimization than are others.

This measure is not only flexible across domains, but also within the workplace aggression domain. The perceived victimization measure can be used with each of the workplace perpetrator-target relationships, with physical and psychological forms of aggression, and with different types of aggression (e.g., incivility, bullying, interpersonal conflict, etc.). Furthermore, it offers a method to differentiate between targets who feel victimized and those who do not, while providing the possibility that individuals may fall somewhere on a spectrum of victimization between these two labels. This measure provides an opportunity for future workplace aggression research to become more parsimonious in its dealings with victimization issues, by offering a method to measure the latent construct and thereby to connect the many types of workplace aggression that are manifested.

**Practical Implications**

Now that a measure of perceived victimization exists, there is greater potential for exploring previously studied relationships with other constructs. Whereas previously the frequency of experiencing aggression was the sole indicator of victimization, now the extent to which one identifies as feeling victimized can be measured. Measuring perceived victimization enables greater detail to be gleaned in analyzing situations of aggression. This will be of great importance when considering a mediating influence between an act of workplace aggression and personal and/or organizational outcomes. After a participant is given a measure of the frequency
of workplace aggression (such as a bullying or incivility measure) the participants can be asked to complete the perceived victimization measure. In this way they will be able to think about the specific behaviours that have occurred and identify the extent to which these behaviours made them feel like a victim. This method assures that both frequency of aggressive behaviours and the perception of being a victim are equally taken into consideration. Following the administration of the perceived victimization measure (either at the same time or at a later time), participants should be given measures to assess what have previously been labelled as the negative outcomes of workplace aggression (e.g., burnout, job satisfaction, physical and psychological wellbeing). The perceived victimization measure allows more detail to be collected about the experience of aggression on individuals and it will facilitate greater understanding of empirical relationships between constructs within the workplace aggression literature.

A discussion of the perceived victimization measure would not be complete without a recommendation for its use in an applied setting. When employees report incidents to their supervisors, or occupational health or human resource specialists, they should be encouraged to complete the measure in respect to the recent incident (to complement existing practices and procedures). By doing this the organizational representative responsible for dealing with the matter will have the ability to view the harm of the incident from the perspective of the employee rather than making a third-party, subjective interpretation of the employee’s experience. Furthermore, for research and for greater understanding of the victimization experience, there may be a benefit in having the employee complete the measure immediately following the incident and again at a later period of time to determine if time away from the incident has changed the perspective of the employee’s experience of victimization. It is possible that in some
cases of workplace aggression employees do not immediately identify as being victimized, but after re-evaluating the experience and contemplating the incident over time and with further perspective, they may see themselves to have been victimized. The opposite is also possible; in the immediate situation one may identify as a victim, but after a period of time there is a shift in how one re-evaluates what happened and adjust their coping mechanisms and perspective such that they no longer perceived themselves to be a victim.

**Limitations**

As with any research, limitations in the design and execution of the research may exist that hinder the generalizability of the findings. In phase three of this study, half of the sample was collected from a young, university undergraduate population. The extent that these individuals have experience in the workforce may have reduced their ability to empathize with the hypothetical scenarios they were asked to read and report on, and the demographics may not necessarily be representative of a typical workforce population. The collection of participants from social media recruitment mitigated the influence of this effect by providing a slightly more diverse sample in this phase (in respect to age and work experience). Notwithstanding the large number of undergraduate participants, this sample should still provide insight into the present topic. Young individuals do experience aggression in early jobs and general aggression in other spheres of their life (e.g., bullying in schools, familial struggle, peer conflict), which may translate into being able to understand the hypothetical workplace aggression scenarios perhaps as well as a sample of currently employed, older workers. Furthermore, Barling, Dupré, & Kelloway (2009) noted the importance of studying young employees due to their increased presence in the workforce. The experience of workplace aggression on young workers may
influence how they engage in aggression in their later years providing additional merits to using samples of student populations as participants.

An additional limitation of the samples is that they were collected through a convenience sampling methodology and online recruitment through Mechanical Turk. Without a truly random sample of participants it is impossible to know if those that participated in the various phases of the study are characteristically different from the rest of the workforce population. The use of unique recruitment methods in each phase should lessen the impact of this limitation, however, future studies should attempt to access different populations through more randomized recruitment methods.

**Conclusion**

Workplace aggression is common among employees and can have serious negative consequences to both the individual and the organization. For too long the workplace aggression literature has been unhelpful to individuals and their employers; it has labelled those in the workplace who are targeted the same way as it has identified individuals who view themselves as victims. Previous research has not offered a method to measure and determine the differences and consequently has offered less precise responses to those who were wronged. Now such a measure exists: the perceived victimization measure allows individuals the opportunity to gain insight about their subjective experiences of undue harm in the workplace from individuals who they deem to have intentionally violated their wellbeing.
References


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<tr>
<td>Workplace harassment</td>
<td>“Repeated activities with the aim of bringing mental (but sometimes also physical) pain, and directed towards one or more individuals who, for one reason or another, are not able to defend themselves.”</td>
<td>Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Bjorkqvist et al., 1994)</td>
<td></td>
<td>and/or physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying (Einarsen &amp; Skogstad, 1996)</td>
<td>“A situation where one or several individuals persistently over a period of time perceive themselves to be on the receiving end of negative actions from one or several persons, in a situation where the target of bullying has difficulty in defending him or herself against these actions.”</td>
<td>Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and/or physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobbing (Zapf et al., 1996)</td>
<td>“Severe form of harassing people in organizations.”</td>
<td>Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and/or physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty tyranny</td>
<td>“someone who uses their power and authority oppressively, capriciously, and perhaps vindictively.”</td>
<td>Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ashforth, 1997)</td>
<td></td>
<td>and/or physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional abuse</td>
<td>includes verbal and nonverbal modes of expression; repeated, or part of a pattern; unwelcome and unsolicited; violate a standard of appropriate conduct toward others; result in</td>
<td>Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Keashly, 1998)</td>
<td></td>
<td>and/or physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harm or injury; actor intended to harm; actor is in a more powerful position</td>
<td>Incivility (Andersson &amp; Pearson, 1999; Cortina et al., 2001) “Low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect.”</td>
<td>Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“individual’s perception of having been exposed, either momentarily or repeatedly to the aggressive acts of one or more other persons.”</td>
<td>Victimization (Aquino et al., 1999)</td>
<td>Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviors, excluding physical contact.”</td>
<td>Abusive supervision (Tepper, 2000)</td>
<td>Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Behavior intended to hinder, over time, the ability to establish and maintain positive interpersonal relationships, work-related success, and favourable reputation.”</td>
<td>Social undermining (Duffy et al., 2002)</td>
<td>Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Overt action by another party that challenges, calls into question, or diminishes a person’s sense of competence, dignity, or self-worth.”</td>
<td>Identity threat (Aquino &amp; Douglas, 2003)</td>
<td>Psychological</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

*Phase 3 descriptive statistics and item-total correlations for 30 perceived victimization items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally subjected to a hurtful experience</td>
<td>3.37 (1.88)</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmful behaviour was intentionally directed towards me</td>
<td>3.49 (1.97)</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My feelings were hurt by an antagonistic act directed against me</td>
<td>2.41 (1.91)</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally treated poorly</td>
<td>3.61 (1.96)</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was purposefully humiliated</td>
<td>3.31 (2.04)</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was purposefully picked on</td>
<td>3.34 (1.93)</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally disrespected</td>
<td>3.76 (1.98)</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A conscious effort was made to make me feel mistreated</td>
<td>3.44 (1.95)</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I suffered as a result of an intentional act</td>
<td>3.32 (1.95)</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was hurt by acts that were meant to be humiliating</td>
<td>3.25 (1.95)</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was victimized</td>
<td>3.18 (2.02)</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was purposefully bullied</td>
<td>3.28 (1.94)</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt subjected to mistreatment</td>
<td>3.78 (1.85)</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt hurt as the target of nasty behaviour</td>
<td>3.66 (1.99)</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally belittled</td>
<td>3.49 (1.97)</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was offended by intentional malevolent acts</td>
<td>3.44 (2.02)</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally wounded by hostile behaviour</td>
<td>2.93 (1.96)</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was purposely harassed</td>
<td>2.99 (2.08)</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My feelings were hurt by an act deliberately directed towards me</td>
<td>3.51 (1.90)</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Score (SD)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt deliberately accosted</td>
<td>3.35 (1.97)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel pained by the malicious lack of regard for my wellbeing</td>
<td>3.37 (1.98)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt distressed by being purposefully abused</td>
<td>3.25 (2.03)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt indignant because of a calculated effort to hurt me</td>
<td>3.23 (1.93)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt purposefully insulted by this situation</td>
<td>3.85 (1.90)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt troubled by purposeful actions directed towards me</td>
<td>3.57 (1.84)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt hurt to be deliberately singled out for mistreatment</td>
<td>3.57 (1.86)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally made to feel powerless</td>
<td>3.20 (1.96)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt the purposeful act committed against me made my life more difficult</td>
<td>3.08 (1.87)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intimidated by the intentional actions directed towards me</td>
<td>3.08 (1.97)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It hurt to be treated like less than I am</td>
<td>3.98 (1.89)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3

**Phase 3 factor loadings for perceived victimization items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Component 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally subjected to a hurtful experience</td>
<td>.907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My feelings were hurt by an antagonistic act directed against me</td>
<td>.897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmful behaviour was intentionally directed towards me</td>
<td>.896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was purposefully humiliated</td>
<td>.892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt deliberately accosted</td>
<td>.891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally treated poorly</td>
<td>.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was purposefully picked on</td>
<td>.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I suffered as a result of an intentional act</td>
<td>.871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was hurt by acts that were meant to be humiliating</td>
<td>.871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was victimized</td>
<td>.870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A conscious effort was made to make me feel mistreated</td>
<td>.869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally disrespected</td>
<td>.868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was offended by intentional malevolent acts</td>
<td>.861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was purposefully bullied</td>
<td>.859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt subjected to mistreatment</td>
<td>.859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally belittled</td>
<td>.858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt hurt as the target of nasty behaviour</td>
<td>.858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was purposely harassed</td>
<td>.853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally wounded by hostile behaviour</td>
<td>.853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My feelings were hurt by an act deliberately directed towards me</td>
<td>.853</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I felt distressed by being purposefully abused .845
I felt indignant because of a calculated effort to hurt me .840
I felt purposefully insulted by this situation .836
I feel pained by the malicious lack of regard for my wellbeing .836
I felt troubled by purposeful actions directed towards me .833
I felt hurt to be deliberately singled out for mistreatment .828
I was intentionally made to feel powerless .825
I felt the purposeful act committed against me made my life more difficult .813
I was intimidated by the intentional actions directed towards me .781
It hurt to be treated like less than I am .766

Note. Factor loadings smaller than .36 were removed.
Table 4

*Phase 4 descriptive statistics and item-total correlations for 16 perceived victimization items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
<th>Total Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally disrespected</td>
<td>3.67 (1.80)</td>
<td>.747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt hurt as the target of nasty behaviour</td>
<td>3.63 (1.77)</td>
<td>.763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally treated poorly</td>
<td>3.58 (1.85)</td>
<td>.811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My feelings were hurt by an act deliberately directed towards me</td>
<td>3.56 (1.84)</td>
<td>.770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally belittled</td>
<td>3.55 (1.88)</td>
<td>.773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A conscious effort was made to make me feel mistreated</td>
<td>3.53 (1.79)</td>
<td>.813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was offended by intentional malevolent acts</td>
<td>3.46 (1.81)</td>
<td>.751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally subjected to a hurtful experience</td>
<td>3.45 (1.83)</td>
<td>.817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My feelings were hurt by an antagonistic act directed against me</td>
<td>3.44 (1.85)</td>
<td>.786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt deliberately accosted</td>
<td>3.42 (1.81)</td>
<td>.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmful behaviour was intentionally directed towards me</td>
<td>3.41 (1.81)</td>
<td>.767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I suffered as a result of an intentional act</td>
<td>3.35 (1.85)</td>
<td>.748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally wounded by hostile behaviour</td>
<td>3.33 (1.91)</td>
<td>.799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was purposefully picked on</td>
<td>3.33 (1.94)</td>
<td>.770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was purposefully humiliated</td>
<td>3.19 (1.95)</td>
<td>.807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was victimized</td>
<td>3.12 (1.95)</td>
<td>.721</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

*Phase 4 factor loadings for perceived victimization items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally subjected to a hurtful experience*</td>
<td>.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A conscious effort was made to make me feel mistreated*</td>
<td>.839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally treated poorly*</td>
<td>.838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was purposefully humiliated*</td>
<td>.834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt deliberately accosted*</td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally wounded by hostile behaviour*</td>
<td>.827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My feelings were hurt by an antagonistic act directed against me*</td>
<td>.815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally belittled*</td>
<td>.803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was purposefully picked on</td>
<td>.800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My feelings were hurt by an act deliberately directed towards me</td>
<td>.800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmful behaviour was intentionally directed towards me</td>
<td>.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt hurt as the target of nasty behaviour</td>
<td>.795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was offended by intentional malevolent acts</td>
<td>.784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally disrespected</td>
<td>.780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I suffered as a result of an intentional act</td>
<td>.780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was victimized</td>
<td>.754</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Items denoted with an asterisk (*) were identified as the eight final items for the perceived victimization measure.
Table 6

Factor loadings for the eight-item Perceived Victimization Measure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was purposefully humiliated</td>
<td>.860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally subjected to a hurtful experience</td>
<td>.859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A conscious effort was made to make me feel mistreated</td>
<td>.850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally wounded by hostile behaviour</td>
<td>.838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt deliberately accosted</td>
<td>.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally treated poorly</td>
<td>.833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was intentionally belittled</td>
<td>.819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My feelings were hurt by an antagonistic act directed against me</td>
<td>.815</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

*Phase 4 means, standard deviations, alphas, and correlations of measures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PVM</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. SIT</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. NA</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. PA</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Valence</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td>-.41**</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Activation</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.30**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. CSES</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>-.20**</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.37**</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Neur.</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.47**</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
<td>-.70**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Extra.</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.16**</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>-.41**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Con.</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>-.34**</td>
<td>-.30**</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.66**</td>
<td>-.63**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Agree.</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>-.30**</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
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<td>.48**</td>
<td>-.49**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Openness</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Work</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.53**</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.20**</td>
<td>-.53**</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.38**</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td>.13*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Job Sat</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>-.12*</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>-.22**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.15**</td>
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*Note. PVM = Perceived Victimization Measure; SIT = Sensitivity to Interpersonal Treatment; NA = Negative Affectivity; PA = Positive Affectivity; CSES = Core Self-Evaluations Scales; Neur. = Neuroticism; Extra. = Extraversion; Con. = Conscientiousness; Agree. = Agreeableness; Work = Work Tension; Job Sat = Job Satisfaction; Coworker = Coworker Satisfaction*

* p < 0.05, two-tailed ** p < 0.01, two-tailed
Figure 1. Phase three parallel analysis raw data and permutation scree plots
Figure 2. Phase four parallel analysis raw data and permutation scree plots
Appendix A. Initial item list for perceived victimization construct measurement

1. My feelings were hurt by an act deliberately directed towards me
2. I was intentionally subjected to a hurtful experience
3. Harmful behaviour was intentionally directed towards me
4. I was intentionally disrespected
5. A conscious effort was made to make me feel mistreated
6. I felt hurt as the target of nasty behaviour
7. I was purposely harassed
8. I was purposefully humiliated
9. I felt subjected to mistreatment
10. I was purposefully picked on
11. I felt hurt to be deliberately singled out for mistreatment
12. I was purposefully bullied
13. This experience succeeded at pushing my buttons
14. I was intentionally belittled
15. I was intentionally wounded by hostile behaviour
16. I felt distressed by being purposefully abused
17. This experience succeeded in making my life more difficult
18. I felt purposefully insulted by this situation
19. It hurt to be treated like less than I am
20. I feel pained by the malicious lack of regard for my wellbeing
21. I was intimidated by the intentional actions directed towards me
22. I felt deliberately accosted
23. I suffered as a result of an intentional act

24. I was offended by intentional malevolent acts

25. I felt troubled by purposeful actions directed towards me

26. I was hurt by acts that were meant to be humiliating

27. I was intentionally treated poorly

28. I felt indignant because of a calculated effort to hurt me

29. I was intentionally made to feel powerless

30. I was victimized
Appendix B. Revised item list for perceived victimization construct measurement based on subject matter experts’ ratings and feedback

1. My feelings were hurt by an act deliberately directed towards me
2. I was intentionally subjected to a hurtful experience
3. Harmful behaviour was intentionally directed towards me
4. I was purposefully humiliated
5. I felt subjected to mistreatment
6. I was purposefully picked on
7. I was purposefully bullied
8. I was intentionally belittled
9. I was intentionally wounded by hostile behaviour
10. I felt distressed by being purposefully abused
11. I felt purposefully insulted by this situation
12. I feel pained by the malicious lack of regard for my wellbeing
13. I was intimidated by the intentional actions directed towards me
14. I felt deliberately accosted
15. I suffered as a result of an intentional act
16. I was offended by intentional malevolent acts
17. I was hurt by acts that were meant to be humiliating
18. I was intentionally treated poorly
19. I felt indignant because of a calculated effort to hurt me
20. I was intentionally made to feel powerless
21. I was victimized
22. I was intentionally disrespected
23. A conscious effort was made to make me feel mistreated
24. I felt hurt as the target of nasty behaviour
25. I was purposely harassed
26. I felt hurt to be deliberately singled out for mistreatment
27. My feelings were hurt by an antagonistic act directed against me
28. I felt the purposeful act committed against me made my life more difficult
29. It hurt to be treated like less than I am
30. I felt troubled by purposeful actions directs towards me
Appendix C. Developed hypothetical situations for participants in phase three

Report Writing Scenario

You were assigned to complete a report with a coworker. This coworker has never liked you and you cannot think of any reason why this individual might have such a negative attitude towards you. Instead of helping you with the report your coworker works on other tasks unrelated to the assigned project. In order to get the report finished you spend your entire weekend finalizing the report in great detail and submit it on your supervisor’s desk for your supervisor to read Monday morning. On Monday you walk past your supervisor’s office and notice your coworker talking to your supervisor. You overhear your coworker lying to your supervisor saying that they were the one to complete the report over the weekend, that you had put very little work into the project, and that they want to lodge a complaint against you for your lack of help on this project.

Staff Social Scenario

To celebrate the hard work of its employees, your company has provided a Friday social gathering after work. Everyone in your department is in attendance. Ever since you joined this department you have found your supervisor to be cold and unpleasant towards you. In fact, your supervisor has often made unjustified rude comments about your performance, encouraged other employees to exclude you from events, and even spread false rumours around the office about your personal life. During the social this individual walks by and bumps into you, splashing coffee all over your arm. Your supervisor sneers at you and tells you that you deserved it. As you walk away to go dry your arm you hear your supervisor continuing to mock you in the presence of other employees.
Project Debrief Scenario

You have just completed a major project at work that you spent the past two months developing and implementing for a client. As part of wrapping up the project, your supervisor is going through a performance evaluation meeting with you to assess your performance and the overall success of the project. During the evaluation of your performance, your supervisor makes allegations that your performance was insufficient and that you embarrassed the company with a number of errors throughout the project. Your supervisor criticizes you for every error on the project and it appears not to matter that the client was impressed with your work. Your supervisor is giving the performance evaluation at your desk where many of your colleagues can overhear what is being said. Your supervisor’s behaviour is a repeated issue you have had to deal with.

Working at your Desk Scenario

Things have been really busy with your job lately. While at your desk a coworker approaches you and asks why you have not finished a few reports yet. Your coworker was expecting to read them by the end of the day. As you try to explain to your coworker that you are working to have the reports done, but that you are under a lot of stress right now, your coworker increases their tone and begins to scold you. Your coworker questions whether you are competent enough to handle these tasks and hints that you should probably quit your job and find something simpler to do. Other employees in the office begin to watch you from their desks, easily hearing the public reprimand. This type of behaviour from your coworker has happened before on a couple of occasions.
Phone Call Scenario

While sitting alone in your office you make a phone call to discuss a strategy for an upcoming meeting with a client. Throughout the phone conversation your contributions are devalued and teasing comments are directed towards you. You are having this phone conversation with a coworker and they are the one directing these comments towards. This is the first time your coworker has done this to you.

Brainstorming Scenario

In the last month your company has just contracted work with an important client. Upon receiving this client your company suggested that the employee with the strongest performance on this project could receive a significant bonus or even a promotion. You have noticed that one individual has been ignoring your phone calls and emails, and is excluding you from some conversations. This person has taken long periods of time to respond to your questions, which means you are slower in performing your tasks. You also have realized that some of the information that the individual does pass on to you about the client and project is out-dated. In discussion with other colleagues about this individual’s behaviour, it seems as though your colleagues have not noticed any of this behaviour directed towards you. In this instance the individual alienating and withholding information from you is a coworker on your team, however, usually this person includes you in everything and provides you with all necessary information and resources. This is the first project you have felt like this has happened to you.
**Lunch Break Scenario**

Your job has been relatively uneventful for you for the last few weeks. While you were working on a couple of key projects with your coworkers you realized that each of the projects should be completed well before the assigned deadlines. As a team you are functioning quite effectively: team members listen to each other and feel comfortable providing their own input. In addition, the workload in the group is shared equally among all members of the team and the atmosphere has been generally positive while you are working. Today, you had lunch in front of your computer. After the lunch break you joined a team meeting in which they were talking about how fun it was to go out for lunch.
Appendix D. Revised perceived victimization measure items from phase three

Focusing on the thoughts and feelings you experienced in the situation you have recalled, please answer to what extent the following apply:

1. I was intentionally subjected to a hurtful experience
2. My feelings were hurt by an antagonistic act directed against me
3. Harmful behaviour was intentionally directed towards me
4. I was purposefully humiliated
5. I felt deliberately accosted
6. I was intentionally treated poorly
7. I was purposefully picked on
8. I suffered as a result of an intentional act
9. I was victimized
10. A conscious effort was made to make me feel mistreated
11. I was intentionally disrespected
12. I was offended by intentional malevolent acts
13. I felt hurt as the target of nasty behaviour
14. I was intentionally belittled
15. I was intentionally wounded by hostile behaviour
16. My feelings were hurt by an act deliberately directed towards me
Appendix E. Sensitivity to Interpersonal Treatment Measure

Please rate to what extent you believe the following statements apply to you as an employee.

1. I would remember when my supervisor treats me with respect.
2. It makes me angry if my supervisor lies to me.
3. If my co-workers trust me, it stays on my mind.
4. I would remember when my co-workers lie to me.
5. If my supervisor appreciates my co-workers’ hard work, it stays on my mind.
6. It is upsetting to me if my supervisor yells at my co-workers.
7. It is important to me that my co-workers trust each other.
8. If my co-workers do not treat each other with respect, it stays on my mind.
Appendix F. Positive Affect and Negative Affect Schedule- Extended Form

When answering the following questions select the responses that best reflect your feelings during the previously recalled incident. Thinking about yourself and how you felt, to what extent did you feel…?

1. Cheerful
2. Disgusted
3. Attentive
4. Bashful
5. Sluggish
6. Daring
7. Surprised
8. Strong
9. Scornful
10. Relaxed
11. Irritable
12. Delighted
13. Inspired
14. Fearless
15. Disgusted with self
16. Sad
17. Calm
18. Afraid
19. Tired
20. Amazed
21. Shaky
22. Happy
23. Timid
24. Alone
25. Alert
26. Upset
27. Angry
28. Bold
29. Blue
30. Shy
31. Active
32. Guilty
33. Joyful
34. Nervous
35. Lonely
36. Sleepy
37. Excited
38. Hostile
39. Proud
40. Jittery
41. Lively
42. Ashamed
43. At ease
44. Scared
45. Drowsy
46. Angry at self
47. Enthusiastic
48. Downhearted
49. Sheepish
50. Distressed
51. Blameworthy
52. Determined
53. Frightened
54. Astonished
55. Interested
56. Loathing
57. Confident
58. Energetic
59. Concentrating
60. Dissatisfied with self
61. Stimulated
62. Startled
63. Aroused
64. Still
65. Quiet
66. Sleepy

Negative Affect: afraid, scared, nervous, jittery, irritable, hostile, guilty, ashamed, upset, distressed

Positive Affect: active, alert, attentive, determined, enthusiastic, excited, inspired, interested, proud, strong

Activation: active, astonished, energetic, stimulated, startled, aroused, still, quiet, sleepy, sluggish, tired, drowsy

Valence: cheerful, delighted, happy, joyful, sad, alone, blue, lonely, downhearted
Appendix G. Core Self-Evaluations Scale

Below are several statements about you with which you may agree or disagree. Using the response scale, indicate to what extent each item applies to you.

1. I am confident I get the success I deserve in life.
2. Sometimes I feel depressed. (R)
3. When I try, I generally succeed.
4. Sometimes when I fail I feel worthless. (R)
5. I complete tasks successfully.
6. Sometimes, I do not feel in control of my work. (R)
7. Overall, I am satisfied with myself.
8. I am filled with doubts about my competence. (R)
9. I determine what will happen in my life.
10. I do not feel in control of my success in my career. (R)
11. I am capable of coping with most of my problems.
12. There are times when things look pretty bleak and hopeless to me. (R)

(R) = Reverse coded item
Appendix H. The Big Five Inventory (BFI)

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. Next to each statement indicate the extent to which you feel that this statement applies to you.

*I see myself as someone who...*

1. Is talkative
2. Tends to find fault with others
3. Does a thorough job
4. Is depressed, blue
5. Is original, comes up with new ideas
6. Is reserved
7. Is helpful and unselfish with others
8. Can be somewhat careless
9. Is relaxed, handles stress well
10. Is curious about many different things
11. Is full of energy
12. Starts quarrels with others
13. Is a reliable worker
14. Can be tense
15. Is ingenious, a deep thinker
16. Generates a lot of enthusiasm
17. Has a forgiving nature
18. Tends to be disorganized
19. Worries a lot
20. Has an active imagination
21. Tends to be quiet
22. Is generally trusting
23. Tends to be lazy
24. Is emotionally stable, not easily upset
25. Is inventive
26. Has an assertive personality
27. Can be cold and aloof
28. Perseveres until the task is finished
29. Can be moody
30. Values artistic, aesthetic experiences
31. Is sometimes shy, inhibited
32. Is considerate and kind to almost everyone
33. Does things efficiently
34. Remains calm in tense situations
35. Prefers work that is routine
36. Is outgoing, sociable
37. Is sometimes rude to others
38. Makes plans and follows through with them
39. Gets nervous easily
40. Likes to reflect, play with ideas
41. Has few artistic interests
42. Likes to cooperate with others
43. Is easily distracted

44. Is sophisticated in art music, or literature
Appendix I. Work Tension Scale

Please rate to what extent you believe the following statements apply to you.

1. My job tends to directly affect my health
2. I work under a great deal of tensions
3. I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job
4. If I had a different job, my health would probably improve
5. Problems associated with my job have kept me awake at night
6. I have felt nervous before attending meetings in the company
7. I often “take my job home with me” in the sense that I think about it when doing other things.
Appendix J. Overall Job Satisfaction Scale

Please rate to what extent you believe the following statements apply to you.

1. All in all, I am satisfied with my job
2. In general, I don’t like my job (R)
3. In general, I like working here

(R) = Reverse coded item
Appendix K. Index of Organizational Reactions: Coworker Satisfaction

1. How do you generally feel about the employees you work with? [They are the worst group to be around; I really don’t like them at all; I don’t particularly care for them; I have no feelings one way or the other; I like them fairly well; I like them a great deal; They are the best group I could ask for]

2. How is your overall attitude toward your job influenced by the people you work with? [It is very unfavourably influenced; It is unfavourably influenced; It is slightly unfavourably influenced; It is not influenced one way or the other; It is slightly favourably influenced; It is favourably influenced; It is very favourably influenced]

3. The example my fellow employees set: [Greatly discourages me from working hard; Discourages me from working hard; Somewhat discourages me from working hard; Has little effect on me; Somewhat encourages me to work hard; Greatly encourages me to work hard]

4. How much does the way your co-workers handle their jobs add to the success of your organization? [It adds almost nothing to the success; It adds very little to the success; It adds a little to the success; It adds a normal amount to the success; It adds quite a bit to the success; It adds a lot to the success; It adds a very great deal to the success]

5. In this organization there is: [A very great deal of friction; A lot of friction; Quite a bit of friction; Some friction; Little friction; Almost no friction; No friction]
Appendix L. Eight-item Perceived Victimization Measure

1. I was intentionally subjected to a hurtful experience

2. A conscious effort was made to make me feel mistreated

3. I was intentionally treated poorly

4. I was purposefully humiliated

5. I felt deliberately accosted

6. I was intentionally wounded by hostile behaviour

7. My feelings were hurt by an antagonistic act direct against me

8. I was intentionally belittled