Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal (2019) 31:47–59
https://doi.org/10.1007/s10672-018-9327-7

Academic Violence/Bullying: Application of Bandura's Eight Moral Disengagement Strategies to Higher Education

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Published online: 19 December 2018
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Abstract
Academic violence/bullying of faculty is prevalent in higher education settings resulting in damaged lives, careers, and institutions. The prevalence of and supporting research with regard to academic violence/bullying shows the importance of understanding its dynamics in order to aid in its identification. This article applies Bandura's (2016) eight moral disengagement strategies to the findings of a qualitative research study with nine tenure track academics. Phenomenological research methods were used to analyze research interview texts for evidence of the presence of the moral disengagement strategies. The findings expanded the application of Bandura's (2016) eight moral disengagement strategies within the context of higher education.

Keywords Academic violence · Academic bullying · Higher education · Moral disengagement · Euphemistic language

Work is a core ingredient to psychological health and working meets the human needs for survival, relatedness, and self-determination (Blustein 2008). Therefore, when people experience struggles at work their psychological health can be negatively affected (American Psychological Association Practice Organization 2016; Meyers 2016). One such struggle that researchers began to seriously study in the 1990s is the concept of bullying at work (Keashly and Neuman 2010). The reader needs to note that workplace bullying (also called "mobbing") literature is anchored in the early and current Scandinavian research on the topic (Einarsen et al. 2011; Leymann 1990; Leymann and Gustafsson 1996). Workplace bullying refers to a pattern of frequent and intense maltreatment within workplace relationship(s), typically across a power differential (Lester 2013). Organizations, including higher education institutions, are finding increased instances of workplace bullying (Lester 2013). This study was designed to understand the experiences of professors who have experienced any form of violence (psychological, emotional, cognitive, or physical) in an academic setting during their tenure process. This qualitative analysis of the bullying experience aims to assist faculty in naming their bullying experiences and responding effectively to

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them. Due to the lack of a consistent definition of academic bullying, the name and definition of academic bullying is being expanded in this article to: academic bullying/violence. In addition to serving as an umbrella term to cover the various related terms, the term academic violence/bullying may better convey the continuum of violence (ranging from mild to severe) associated with this phenomenon.

Though workplace bullying is being increasingly discussed and researched, few researchers have examined how and why it occurs in higher education (Cassidy et al. 2014; Taylor 2013). Additionally, Keashly and Neuman (2010) note that university-based researchers of workplace bullying have not examined bullying in academia as extensively as they have researched it in the general workplace, despite relatively higher incidences of bullying in academic settings when compared with the general population. While there is little research on bullying in academia, these authors point out that other venues (online outlets, trade publications, etc.) have published pieces suggesting that the elevated rates of bullying in academia reflect an area for further research.

Bullying in the academic setting damages lives, careers, and institutions (Jones 2013). Sadly, there is growing evidence that workplace violence/bullying is alarmingly prevalent in institutions of higher education and it is on the increase (Misawa 2015). Hollis' (2012) survey findings suggested that 62% of administrators "had been bullied or witnessed bullying in their education positions in the last 18 months" (p. 36). Men in higher education reported higher rates of workplace bullying compared to the national average (Jones et al. 2015); studies have suggested workplace violence/bullying also impacts African-American females and females (Dentith et al. 2015).

In their extensive review of the research on academic bullying, Keashly and Neuman (2010) described the academic setting as one that may be particularly vulnerable to bullying. Academia may be "a somewhat unique context in which bullying may thrive" (Keashly and Neuman 2010, p. 54) due to factors such as tenure, which keeps individuals in community with one another for extended periods of time. Additionally, academia presents unique opportunities for violence/bullying through avenues such as student evaluations, subjective or ambiguous criteria, and peer review personnel decisions within the higher education setting. Other researchers have noted that the unique work environment of higher education consists of contributing factors such as: 1) academic freedom, shared governance, tenure (Keashly and Wajngurt 2016), 2) increased technological use and its impact on incivility (Bartlett and Bartlett 2016), and 3) the behavior of workplace colleagues (Lewis 2002). Workplace bullying/violence is commonly found among colleagues (Keashly and Wajngurt 2016; Lampman 2012; Lampman et al. 2016). It is crucial for faculty and administrators to understand the dynamics of academic violence/bullying in order to effectively identify and address this issue.

Academic violence/bullying prevalence and research in this area confirm the importance of understanding its dynamics in order to aid in its identification. The use of a theoretical model as an underpinning to this process of identification is critical. This article applies Bandura's (2016) eight moral disengagement strategies to the findings of a qualitative research study, which used phenomenological research methods to analyze research interview texts with nine tenure-track academics. Prior to a discussion of the application of this model to academia, a brief overview of the culture promoting bullying/violence is necessary.

Higher Education Culture that Promotes Bullying/Violence

The context of academia provides a unique workplace that influences how bullying/violence occurs. The academic setting has been described in numerous ways by various authors. Cleary

et al. (2013), as cited in Keashly and Neuman (2010), described the academe as "…complex environments with multiple and competing demands, a situation that is impacting on workplace satisfaction, staff morale, and motivation" (p. 264). Keashly and Neuman (2013) summarized the academic setting as a unique interaction of the components of egos, individualism, and tolerance for deviance – all of which contribute to the bullying of faculty. Lester (2013) noted that bullying combinations and power dynamics vary in higher education. Sodowsky (2008) described a department's academic culture this way:

> A department's culture is an unwritten, unspoken, but strongly felt worldview, a system of values and cognitions that determines how things get interpreted, what decisions are made, and what the quality of actions taken will be. This culture is distinct, separate, and bigger than individuals in the department because those who have been around for some time have been conditioned by the culture. (p. 173)

This quote embodies the concept of systemic theoretical components, meaning that behavior which occurs is the direct result of varied components of the system interacting with one another. No one person causes the behavior, but behavior itself has intercausality – it exists because other behavior interacts with it and encourages its expression. Jones (2013) stated that in this context, it is especially difficult to sort out whether problems are due to individuals, personality conflicts, or destructive behavior patterns. Individuals and professors within this context may find it difficult to protect themselves (Proudhon 2009). To enhance self-protection and empowerment within this culture, an understanding of the dynamics is required. Therefore, a theoretical model is needed to describe the dynamics unique to the setting of higher education. A brief review of theoretical models follows.

Theoretical Frameworks for Academic Violence/Bullying

As stated previously, a number of definitions for academic bullying have been proposed in the literature. According to Twale and DeLuca (2008), the organizational structure of the academic world has resulted in incivility that facilitates a bullying culture. These authors' definition of bullying emerged from a conceptual framework that blended organization, governance, and cultural analyses. From a general workplace framework, three groups of authors expanded the description of these workplace dynamics. First, Sguera et al. (2011) described this incivility as interpersonal mistreatment that happens at work, adding that it is more frequent and common than antisocial behaviors and can inhibit workplace effectiveness.

Second, Namie and Namie (2011) provide a theoretical framework of bullying as negative interpersonal behavior that places bullying behavior on a continuum ranging from inappropriateness to homicide and King and Piotrowski (2015) describe the behaviors as abusive and controlling. Third, Duffy and Sperry (2007) describe workplace bullying ("mobbing") as a psychological terrorism because the victim is aware that terror will occur again, but will not know when or from where the attack will come. They use the term "mobbing" because they believe it more accurately depicts the impact of a group attacking an individual and the process of phased occurrences. Specific to academic settings, Keashly and Neuman's (2013) review of the literature on workplace bullying reflects the theoretical differences of opinion regarding the definition, nature, and characteristics of bullying. This in-depth review of the literature on the various aspect of bullying in academia examined 15 research studies conducted in international

academic settings since 1994. Their summary highlighted the numerous definitions and constructs used to study academic bullying. Lester (2013) suggested the numerous theoretical definitions and constructs of academic bullying make it difficult to accurately assess this phenomenon. Therefore, although theories of academic bullying exist, constructs that describe the specific dynamics in terms of academic violence/bullying are needed. Because of its precision in naming factors that facilitate violence in various contexts, Bandura's (2016) moral disengagement theoretical framework with its eight strategies has been chosen to describe the unique combination of factors the individual professor faces when anticipating or experiencing academic violence/bullying.

Bandura's Moral Disengagement Theoretical Framework

Bandura (2016) explored how human beings use four loci of moral disengagement to maintain their positive views of self while engaging in terrible behaviors toward others. These four loci are as follows: *behavioral*, how people justify their behavior morally, socially, and economically; *agency*, who is blamed for the behavior; *effects*, explanation of the effects to disregard/ distort/deny them; and *victim,* attempts to blame the victim. Each of these categories involves at least one of the eight specific moral disengagement mechanisms: the *behavioral* focus has three main mechanisms (moral justification, euphemistic language, advantageous comparison), the *agency* focus has two mechanisms (displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility), the *effects* has one mechanism (disregarding or distorting consequences), and the *victim* focus involves two mechanisms (dehumanization and attribution of blame). The explanation of these mechanisms as they apply to academic violence/bullying is provided following a description of the study. The purpose of the phenomenological research study was to analyze nine tenure track academic research interview texts for evidence of the presence of Bandura's (2016) eight moral disengagement strategies.

Method

Hermeneutic phenomenology grounds the methods of this study (Polkinghorne 1989; Pollio et al. 1997; Rennie 1999). The intent of this methodology is to understand the meaning participants ascribe to experiences. In-depth interviews of participants provided text for analysis of the experience of study (Kvale 1996). Text from interviews was deeply examined by a research team of three individuals to identify patterns and interpret meanings. Multiple texts were then analyzed and compared to identify common central meanings of the experiences.

Participants

Phenomenological interviews were conducted with nine academics representing three disciplines (psychology, social work, and counseling). All participants were involved in the tenure process and agreed to be interviewed for the purpose of this study. The research team collected limited identifying information of the participants to protect their anonymity, which is further outlined below.

Procedure

All participants were contacted through a snowballing sampling method: initial contact was made with academics (in the disciplines of psychology, social work, and counseling) known to the first author. These professors were asked if they could recommend individuals whom they knew had experienced academic violence (psychological, emotional, cognitive, or physical) and who would be willing to be interviewed about their experiences. If they were open to being interviewed at a national conference for their discipline, the referring professor told them to contact the first author directly. Once these referred professors contacted the first author for inclusion in the study, they were asked if they could recommend other individuals who might also be open to being interviewed. If they knew of someone, the first author asked them to pass on the first author's contact information. None of the participants were told who shared their name, nor were the referring individuals told if their contacts agreed to be a part of the study. A total of nine individuals were interviewed during the 2013 academic year.

Because of the "small world" of academia and to prevent identification of participants through deductive reasoning, no demographic information (i.e., names, residences, university affiliations) were collected. To further enhance participant protection, interviews were conducted at national conferences, rather than regional, state, or local conferences, so participants could be assured of their anonymity with regard to residence. Interview locations were chosen by participants (convention center, hotel rooms, etc.) with the understanding that the conversations could be recorded, but not overheard by others, and the participants would not be seen by others who might be able to connect them with the research study.

Interviews were recorded with the written permission of participants. All participants were assigned a number by the first author in the order they were interviewed with no associated record kept of these numbers. All personally identifiable information was removed from transcripts by the first author, transcriber, and the participant if he or she elected to review the typed transcript and make any corrections deemed necessary. Following this transcript feedback, the transcriber then retyped the manuscript masking each participant's name, institutional affiliation, discipline, and any other information that might lead to the disclosure of each identity. Transcripts and audiotapes were kept in a locked file cabinet in the office of the first author.

All interviews used the same protocol. The first author (interviewer) used prompts and short follow-up questions as necessary to clarify participant responses. All participants were asked the same four questions:

1. In your professional career as an academic professor (at an institution where you received tenure), tell me about the most negative event (or series of events) that involved struggles with other professors or administrators.
2. How has this event (or series of events) impacted your professional life? Your personal life?
3. What were specific supports that you relied on during this event (or series of events)?
4. Were there any specific spiritual supports that you relied on during this event (or series of events)? What kept your spirit "alive"?

The in-depth interviews were conducted individually with the first author and ranged in time from 1 to 3.5 h. The participants determined the duration of each interview, in terms of when they felt

"done" with telling their story. The methodology used in the study was consistent with phenomenological approaches using in-depth interviews to gather information about the experiences of participants with as much detail as possible.

Analytic Method

The research team that consisted of the first author, a qualitative research expert, and an additional individual who had professional experience as a consultant to professors in higher education settings analyzed the revised transcripts. This two-tiered interpretive process identified primary themes across interviews. The contexts in which themes occurred in the texts were studied to identify links between important features of the experiences. The process of linking themes to contextual patterns was repeated until the most frequently reported themes were organized into a theoretical schema that accounted for patterns and relationships described in the texts. The schema resulting from this type of qualitative analysis is a comprehensive and detailed picture of the phenomena of the phenomena.

Results

Interview analysis suggested three predominant impact patterns on participants' personal lives. These *thematic patterns* are:

1. Perceptions of Personal vs. Institutional struggles
2. Peaceful vs. Violent outcomes
3. Passive vs. Active participant concern for others

Analysis of reported event contexts and participant demographic characteristics yielded several significant features of the events. The significant event features interacted in unique ways for each participant contributing to their perceptions of event impact on their lives. These event characteristics are:

1. Personal or professional vulnerability of the participant (e.g. member of a minority group, age, tenure status)
2. The presence or absence of a supportive partner/buffer
   The demographics, themes, and contexts in Table 1 shows a strong moral component in the row labeled "Strategies." For participants, the event is grounded in trauma, or upset. What is figural is a strong sense of injustice. All three themes include the sense of trauma, and a range of feelings of injustice. The two case studies below, illustrate the way themes played out against the ground of an upsetting event, in which justice and morality guide actions. Table 1 illustrates relevant demographic and context features of each case, and provides information on decisions to go or stay for each participant.

For example Participant 9 faced the trauma of public humiliation (i.e., a public panel in which the Participant is confronted) after becoming a whistle blower. The participant was guided in her actions because of a belief in the fairness of the university system. During the analysis morality and justice continued to be figural, strongly through each of the participants' interviews, even when counseled to "let it go," by administration, Participant 9 refused, saying,

Table 1 Scale of "it's over" to "engaged"

It's over ——————————————→ Engaged

	5	6	7	4?	1	2	3	9?	8
Characteristics	No ties at all	Emeritus Speaks in classes		Mentoring Lied to when hired-very young				Admin job other institution	Admin other
First job	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
Event attack	Public humiliation	Active attack—manip—also public humil	Active attack	Public humiliation	Public humiliation		Active attacks-students witnessed	Discrim Public humilia	discrim
Personal or institutional	Personal Chair-most direct focus on 1	Personal chair	Personal Chair	Inst (chair)	Personal chair	Personal dean	Personal chair	Personal chair	Inst
Stay or go	go	go	Stay-same	Flux	Stay-same	Stay-same	Stay-switch	Go-acad	Go--admin
Vulnerability		Age-old	Hi—ignore signals Age	age				Sexual preference	race
Profess status									hi
Peace rating Peaceful vs disruptive/violent outcome feelings?	low	low	Hi	Hi	mid	mid	low	low	low
Time since event	9 year gap-17 yrs since hire-lasted 9 yrs	2 years	2 yrs recent, but over al long time before	In throes	Still ongoing	Still ongoing	2 year	3.5 years	long
Strategies—passive vs active/concern for effects on others	Don't hurt anybody-leave	Don't hurt anybody--leave	Do nothing—wait—take care of self--	Doesn't want to hurt others	Working to change from within fair way	Working to change from within fair way	Still trying to stir up with old inst—not fair	Want to fix things from without-use power if needed	Want to fix things from without—use power
Buffers	single	single	Partner	partner	partner	partner	partner	partner	partner

"I won't sit here and take this shit. It is wrong." Like other Participants, Participant 9 also felt personal injustice because of betrayal by her Dean, whom she had perceived as a friend. When participants experienced violent outcomes, they continued to feel a strong sense of injustice. If participants chose to take action or to acquiesce, they reported their actions were guided by concern for others including colleagues who remained in the work environment. In other words, all themes had a strong moral component. Participant 9 continued to have traumatic (Peaceful/Violent) reactions to the event, and strongly illustrates the Active continuum of the Passive/Active theme.

Participant 5 illustrates another way the three themes are grounded in a sense of upset or trauma, while morality remains figural. She perceived her struggle as personal rather than institutional because she believed the department to have a family atmosphere. At the same time, she observed rewards given to those who did not rock the boat. When Participant 5 acted in a way she thought was morally right by taking a stand when raising departmental issues, she found herself alone and isolated, with limited options and support. She was upset at treatment

by her chairperson following her actions. Her feelings of mistreatment were particularly upsetting because her actions were guided by a sense of doing what was right. Participant 5 was at peace (Peaceful vs Violent theme), having moved away from the job and the place the incident occurred. She was strongly guided by an active concern for others in her work, (Passive vs Active), but she made peace with the actual event by the time of the interview.

Rather than further focus on each of the three themes, researchers realized participant perceptions would be illustrated most broadly and comprehensively by a theoretical explanation that would assist in understanding this figural moral component. Bandura's work on moral disengagement provides this lens. The researchers then drew on Bandura's theoretical orientation as a guide to better understand participant moral perspectives.

An analysis of the role morality played in Participant experiences is detailed in the following Discussion section.

Discussion

Table 1 provides information on themes, demographics, and the ultimate decisions of the participant to stay or leave their position. Participant data is presented on a continuum of the degree to which they decided to leave after the experience or to stay. For example,

Some participants perceived the event as past, and viewed it as "over." Some continued to experience emotional involvement and/or practical struggles related to the reported event. Participant 5, for example, perceived the greatest sense of putting the incident behind, and Participants 8 and 9 experienced the most engagement with the events described.

Below each participant's ranking on the continuum is participant information showing impact themes, contextual information, and relevant demographic characteristics for each. Note that the demographic characteristics were not specifically collected for each respondent which explains the spotty recording of the demographic categories of characteristics, first job, and professional status.

Bandura's (2016) Theory of Moral Disengagement provides an in-depth understanding of the moral perspectives in each interview. The findings of the study expand the research on academic violence/bullying through the application of Bandura's moral disengagement strategies within the context of higher education as described in Table 2 (Miller and Marchel 2016). Table 2 lists the moral disengagement mechanism in the first column, the description of the mechanism in the second column, and an example of a respondent quote in the third column. Note that in the third column, the quotes are from the faculty member's perspective/description of the perpetrator's moral disengagement strategy behavior. Additionally, the respondents' quotes are numbered 1–9 according to the number assigned to the respondent interview, and only the strongest quote(s) describing the mechanism was included (the mechanism of euphemistic language has more than one example because of the frequency of this mechanism appearing in the transcripts).

The table contains the name of the mechanism (strategy) (column 1) and an explanation of that moral disengagement mechanism (strategy) (column 2). These two columns explain the use of the moral disengagement strategies by the perpetrator. The third column demonstrates the research study results by using a respondent quote that describes the experience of the moral disengagement strategy as it was used against them by the perpetrator in the higher education setting.

Table 2 Eight moral disengagement mechanisms

Moral Disengagement Mechanism	Description	Respondent # (1–9)/Quotes
Moral Justification	Makes behavior personally and socially acceptable through the portrayal of it as a service to a valued social or moral purpose; it justifies the behavior by stating that it is being done to protect honor and reputation.	8: "But, yeah, when it comes time, if they want to get rid of you, then they'll say, 'Well, your teaching is subpar.' And then [when] your teaching is fine… 'it's your community service'….and [then] they start to say, 'Well, your publication was not in the right journal.'"
Euphemistic Language [very common is the transcripts—also a consistent theme in the context of all cases]	Uses sanitized and convoluted verbiage that allows the users of it to be relieved of a sense of personal agency.	1: "…the writing I do, the research I do, the presenting I do -everything I do is seen as harming students." 2: "She (the dean) [will] say, '…please share your ideas'…but if you do share an idea, if it's different from hers, she talks and talks and talks and talks until everyone just gets so worn down…" 6: "…he (the chairperson) [said] the dean told him I can't be on that committee anymore, but I thought he meant I couldn't be on any committees…outside the department."
Advantageous Comparison	Makes the behavior benign or of little consequence by contrasting it to a more flagrant activity.	3: "I said…that was communicated to me by the chair and this provost said, 'There is no policy at this university about that.'"
Displacement of Responsibility	Views own actions as emerging from social pressure or others' dictations rather than stemming from their own choices about their behavior that would make them responsible for their actions.	7: "I was told [by the chairperson], 'We're going to have tenure-track positions open.'…He took off during the time…of accreditation… 'You gals can handle it.' And we did. And then…it was over [and he said] … 'we're not going to have any tenure-track positions.'"
Diffusion of Responsibility	Diffuses responsibility in different ways: division of labor; group decision making; group action--all of which make everyone responsible without anyone feeling responsible.	7: "And that's one of the things about the hierarchy in the academic setting that's…so devastating…. Everyone knows where the pecking order is: who's in charge of who, who has the power over who - it's completely understood."
Disregarding or Distorting Consequences	Uses selective inattention and cognitive distortion of the effects of one's actions as well as discrediting evidence of harm caused (i.e. don't look at the harm caused or minimize it); the detrimental results of one's behavior are ignored, minimized, distorted, or disbelieved resulting in a reduction of self-censure.	5: "…she (the chairperson) said… 'you'll be teaching three classes…at night'…and that's when Florence said [to me], 'She doesn't understand that you need to have a life too.'"
Dehumanization	Uses dehumanizing behavior that results in people not being viewed as having feelings, hopes, and	4: "…he [an administrator] can be very condescending…in a conference call meeting…he introduced me and

Table 2 (continued)

Moral Disengagement Mechanism	Description	Respondent # (1–9)/Quotes
	concerns, but as subhumans with possible bestial qualities.	he said, 'And she looks like she's twelve years old.'"
Attribution of Blame	Views self as a faultless victim driven to the injurious behavior by forcible provocation--others or circumstances are blamed for the behavior resulting in an excuse of the behavior and possibly a sense of self--righteousness.	9: "…[the] diversity woman says [to me], 'Ah, the student has a right to say what he thinks [about you being lesbian in a public grade contestation hearing]…my advice to you is just to let it go.'

Descriptions stem from Gauthier and Pettifor (2015, August) and Bandura's (2016) eight moral disengagement mechanisms

Each quote in the third column captures the application of the mechanism to the respondent's story. For example, Respondent 8 describes the changing nature (teaching, community service, publication record) of the *moral justification strategy*. The convoluted verbiage of *euphemistic language* is described by Respondent 6 who did not understand the chairperson's directions on committee work. Respondent 3 described the chairperson's use of the *advantageous comparison strategy* as follows: When the chairperson compared the respondent to other faculty in a demeaning and bullying manner, the chairperson explained their bullying behavior toward the respondent as normal and typical because it followed university policy; however, the respondent was later told by the provost in a private meeting that such a university policy did not exist, thereby making the perpetrator's bullying comparison actions flagrantly out of line. Respondent 7 stated the chairperson used *displacement of responsibility* when breaking a promise to faculty (faculty were promised tenure track positions would result from their accreditation work) and explaining this change was due to pressures on the chairperson from the university. This same Respondent (7) described *diffusion of responsibility* in higher education where no one is truly responsible for their behavior because of its hierarchy and pecking order; one's behavior can be excused because they are acting within the limits of their roles and the accompanying power of those roles. *Disregarding or distorting consequences* was described by Respondent 5 whose chairperson told them they were required to teach three night classes, neglecting to consider the impact of this directive on the personal life of the faculty member. Respondent 4 described the experience of *dehumanization* when the administrator introduced her during a faculty meeting in a demeaning fashion. Finally, *attribution of blame* was described by Respondent 9 when told by a diversity representative that the student who "outed" her as a lesbian during a public contestation hearing was only exercising his right of expression thereby explaining why other members of the university community had not set limits on the student's behavior during the hearing.

Limitations

This study has a small sample of nine tenure track academics who represent three mental health disciplines. Because of the sample size, tenure track focus, and disciplinary specificity, the results of this study should not be generalized to all faculty in higher education. The findings presented here are unique to the study participants, and the ways these

professionals articulate their experience of bullying may be informed by their professional location and knowledge as professionals in the fields of psychology, counseling, and social work. Nevertheless, we suggest that the experiences articulated by these faculty members provide contextualized insight and open a particularly powerful window onto the larger phenomenon of academic bullying/violence in higher education. It is not yet known how a broader or more diverse range of faculty members in other academic disciplines might experience academic bullying. To the extent that other academics share the experiences and insights of the study participants, the findings of this study may be transferrable to other settings and can inform further research and dialogue regarding academic bullying and violence, especially with regard to subjective factors (such as age, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation) that may significantly impact the degree, frequency, and type of academic violence/bullying experienced by faculty.

Future Research and Implications

The results of this research study are encouraging for future research related to academic violence/bullying. Specifically, replications of these findings need to be made in order to determine if the pattern found for the moral disengagement mechanisms are applicable across faculty (adjunct, tenure process, post-tenure) and settings (community college, four year universities, etc.). Future studies could further focus on quantitative methodologies, to elucidate predictors of bullying/violence experiences for example. In addition, future research may identify protective factors of academic settings (e.g., academic departments, programs, colleges) in which bullying/violent behavior amongst colleagues is absent. The hopes of future research is to make the academic setting one in which individuals are able to prosper and thrive, without experiencing the devastating effects of bullying/violence on one's professional satisfaction and future, as well as personal health.

Faculty and administrators are encouraged to use these descriptors of the eight moral disengagement strategies to name the dynamics of the violence/bullying in order to facilitate effective interventions. By understanding this framework, professors and administrators can predict and/or name academic violence/bullying. Additionally, exposure to the strategies used by participants may guide professors and administrators in developing effective responses and interventions to the bullying/violence.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest There is no conflict of interest with the authors. All the research was approved through IRB and all participants signed an informed consent.

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