Openness about Sexual Orientation and Exposure to Workplace Bullying

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ABSTRACT

Previous studies of workplace bullying have not investigated whether Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) employees experience bullying in similar or different ways to their heterosexual counterparts. This study reports on how and to what extent sexuality or sexual orientation influences the experience of workplace bullying and whether openness about sexual orientation elevates risks and shapes exposure to bullying. Using a large and rigorously compiled sample of the British working population comprising 500 non-heterosexuals and 722 heterosexuals (N = 1,222) and applying latent Class Cluster Analysis, a similar behavioural pattern of bullying for LGB employees emerged as for heterosexuals, although LGB employees were 1.34 times more likely to be bullied, and not being open about their sexual orientation elevated the risk of bullying. LGB employees were also more likely to be exposed to intrusive, sexualized behaviours and behaviours of an exclusionary nature. Altogether, this suggests that prejudices and stereotyping towards LGB people persist. Whilst being open about their sexual orientation did not make LGB people more likely to become a target of bullying as hypothesized, those who only reveal their sexual orientation when asked, were significantly more likely to be exposed to negative acts than those who were totally open. This indicates that non-disclosure does not prevent others at work making assumptions of sexual orientation, indicating that stereotyping of LGBs plays a greater part in disclosure than has previously been acknowledged.

approach applied, as two measurement approaches dominate research approaches: namely the self-labelling and behavioural measurement methods (Hoel et al., 2001; Nielsen, Notelaers & Einarsen, 2020). Whilst self-labelling measures prevalence by providing participants with an accepted definition of bullying, behavioural measurement estimates bullying using an inventory of negative acts associated with bullying. These approaches can be deployed in tandem, with self-labelling validating the behavioural experience method findings and *vice versa*, thus providing an investigation of the behavioural nature of bullying experiences whilst recognising that perceptions of being a target of bullying is essential to the overall experience (Nielsen et al., 2020). Researchers have identified three types of bullying behaviours, such as work-related bullying; personal-related bullying; or social exclusion (Einarsen, Hoel & Notelaers, 2009; Nielsen et al., 2020; Notelaers, Van der Heijden, Hoel & Einarsen, 2018; Zapf et al., 2020). However, latent class analyses defeats such a dimensional approach arguing for a patterned approach (Keasley & Jagatic, 2011) that is more appropriate in understanding the phenomena and its behavioural expressions.

Acknowledging such differences in measurement methods and shortcomings with sampling in a review of published empirical studies, Nielsen et al. (2020) and Zapf et al. (2020) concluded that 3–4% of employees may experience serious bullying with negative encounters of a weekly or more frequent occurrence, while approximately 9–15% of the population would experience less severe or occasional bullying. Also, rates in the UK vary: from 10% (e.g., Cowie et al., 2000; Hoel, Cooper & Faragher, 2001) to 5% (Fevre et al., 2009) dependent upon method and sampling.

For risk of exposure, with some exceptions (e.g. Björkqvist et al., 1994; Rosander et al., 2020) most studies report little or no gender difference (Hoel et al., 2001; Zapf et al., 2020). However, where research has focused on other protected classes, including people from ethnic minorities and people with disabilities, they have often showed elevated risks of bullying (e.g., Fevre, Robinson, Lewis, & Jones., 2013; Grainger & Fitzner, 2007; Lewis & Gunn, 2007). The limited data available on the non-heterosexual working population paints a bleak picture of the realities facing LGB employees. A UK survey by Stonewall (2007) suggested that nearly 20% of lesbians and gay men had experienced some degree of homophobic bullying from colleagues. Similarly, according to a survey for the UK's Equality and Human Rights Commission by Ellison & Gunstone (2009) a total of 39% of gay men, 31% of lesbians, and 11% and 16% of bisexual men and bisexual women respectively had experienced bullying, although these figures included experiences outside work.

Research on LGB people often appears to suffer from methodological shortcomings, particularly with respect to sampling (e.g., Croteau, 1996; Martin & Knox, 2000), typically relying on small, self-selected samples, often involving urban and "out" members of the LGB community (Lewis, Hoel & Einarsdottír, 2013) or according to Price (2011, p.15), over-represented by "younger, male, urban dwelling, white, middle-class participants". When more robust sampling has been deployed using face-to-face interviews (N = 4,010), evidence pointed to LGB employees being 2.71 times more likely to report bullying in their workplaces than heterosexual respondents (Fevre, Nichols, Prior & Rutherford, 2009). However, this focus of the Fevre et al. (2009) study was on ill treatment at work and not sexuality and thus had a relatively small sample of LGB employees.

On this basis we put forward the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): LGB employees will report more workplace bullying than non-LGB employees.

With regard to the behavioural experiences of bullying, previous studies of other protected groups including gender (e.g., Salin & Hoel, 2013; Simpson & Cohen, 2004) and disabled workers (Fevre et al., 2013; Fevre et al., 2009) report some discrepancies between sub- groups. Women, for example, are more exposed to social manipulation than men (Salin & Hoel; 2013; Salin, 2001), whilst disabled and chronically ill workers experience more physical violence than people without such conditions (Jones, Robinson, Fevre & Lewis, 2011). Similarly, ethnic minority groups report more personalised and offensive forms of bullying (Giga, Hoel & Lewis, 2008; Lewis & Gunn, 2007). As for LGB employees, the limited evidence available supports anecdotal evidence (e.g., Stonewall, 2007) where LGB people appear to be exposed to different behaviours than heterosexual colleagues, being particularly vulnerable to exclusionary and disrespectful acts from co-workers and supervisors (Stonewall, 2007; Minton, Dahl, O'Moore & Tuck, 2008). Similarly, data from UK Employment Tribunals (labour courts) into discrimination and unfair dismissal reveals that LGB claimants are particularly vulnerable to sexualised practical jokes and intrusive sexualised behaviour as well as acts of homophobia (Acas, 2007) (homophobia was exemplified by threats, physical abuse and humiliating acts such as being spat at, as well as social exclusion through numerous means). Altogether, and supported by evidence emerging from organisational case studies (Colgan, Wright, Creegan & McKearney, 2009; Ward & Winstanley, 2006), it appears that LGB employees' negative workplace experiences diverge from heterosexuals.

To account theoretically for LGB employees' negative workplace experiences, Social Identity Theory (SIT), which can be seen as "an interface between psychological and societal explanations for prejudice and discrimination" (Brewer & Miller, 1984, p. 282), and its more recent extended variant, self-categorisation theory (Ashforth

& Mael, 1989), may offer valuable guidance. SIT and self-categorisation theory explain how individual self-esteem is achieved through social comparison of groups, generating the idea of in-groups (or put simply – us) and out-groups (them), where members of the ingroup and their characteristics are assessed favourably over members of the outgroup (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel, 1972; Turner et al., 1987). The social categories in question that may be cognitively activated and used to identify with a preferred group depend upon what appears to be important in the given context/situation (category salience) including job type, professional or departmental affiliation, hierarchical status and demographic group membership (Ramsey et al., 2011), including gender and sexual orientation. Furthermore, according to Hogg and Terry (2000), central to social identity dynamics are notions of group prototypicality and "depersonalisation". Here, prototypicality or group prototype refers to features of group membership associated with exemplary group members ("ideal types") who best represent the group in terms of perceptions, behaviours, feelings and values. Through categorising of self and others into ingroup and outgroup, similarity and difference are emphasised between respective prototypes generating a series of outcomes including stereotypes, behavioural norms, attitudes and group cohesion (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Consequently, the uniqueness of individuals within the respective group disappears, with group members becoming either interchangeable (Wenzel, Mumandey & Walduz, 2007) or simply emerging as "embodiment of the relevant prototype" (Hogg & Terry, 2000, p. 123). Group members not conforming with prototype may be considered deviant and rejected from the group, especially in situations when they are perceived to bear the marks of a salient outgroup, because marginality could be seen to undermine "the distinctiveness and prototypical clarity and integrity of the group" (Hogg & Terry, 2000, p. 127). This represents a particular problem for what Brewer and Miller (1984) refer to as "clear minorities", for example, being the only black person or "out" LGB person in the group.

Mostly, ingroup identification is seen to be relatively harmless, providing there are acts of compliance with group norms, while the outgroup is viewed with indifference or suspicion. Differentiation to the outgroup can be satisfied by making clear distinctions between the groups (Brewer, 1999), but where distrust to the outgroup is emphasised, and the outgroup is portrayed as second-rate or inferior to the ingroup, particularly with respect to those aspects of identity being compared (Ullrich, 2009), this may trigger aggression, including bullying of atypical members who are seen as breaching the group's normative attributes (Ramsey et al., 2011). This is particularly the case when aggression can be justified through what Brewer (1999) refers to as "moral authority" when, for example, behaviour breaches religious or moral beliefs. Thus, where

the moral order is seen as absolute rather than relative, for example when any sexual orientation other than heterosexuality is considered deviant, moral superiority becomes incompatible with tolerance for difference. This might result in denigration and contempt as an outcome, particularly when the outgroup fails to observe or subscribe to dominant moral codes. Whilst this may give rise to derogatory behaviour, it is argued that contempt is more likely to be associated with avoidance rather than outright hostility, hence leading to segregation and social exclusion (Brewer, 1999).

This above empirical evidence and theoretical discussion give rise to the following hypothesis:

> Hypothesis 2 (H2): The behavioural nature of the bullying experience of LGB individuals will differ from non-LGB individuals.

LGB employees' experiences of bullying must nevertheless be considered in connection with their relative openness about their sexual orientation at work, and to what extent they believe that work colleagues know of their sexual orientation. It is to these issues that we now turn.

WORKPLACE BULLYING AND DEGREE OF OPENNESS ABOUT SEXUALITY AT WORK

With some notable exceptions (e.g., Einarsdottír, Hoel & Lewis, 2015; Froyum, 2007; Rumens & Broomfield, 2012), research portrays non-heterosexuality as an invisible entity and, therefore, needs to be disclosed to become known by others (Clair et al., 2005; Ragins, 2004; Tilcsik, Antby & Knight, 2015). By contrast, for most heterosexuals, disclosure is a non-issue as their sexuality is seen or perceived as given (Röndahl, Innala & Carlsson, 2007; Ward & Winstanley, 2003) and therefore not questioned, as it is considered the norm (Ng and Rumens, 2017), as accurately articulated in the concept of heteronormativity (Jackson, 2006). Furthermore, for LBG employees, disclosure is increasingly seen as an ongoing and repeated process rather than a single event, and is largely considered as being under the control of the individual (Croteau et al., 2008; Ragins, 2008). Decisions about disclosure are seen as strategic choices, albeit not necessarily planned (Colgan, Creegan, McKearney & Wright, 2008), as one may be left to respond to colleagues' personal queries including questions about partners or family arrangements (Bowring & Brewis, 2009). Furthermore, in some circumstances, the control over the process is entirely taken away from the LGB person, where an individual's non-heterosexuality is made public against their own will (for example, being "outed") (e.g., Ragins, 2004).

Disclosure decisions are seen as products of conscious cost-benefit evaluations (Clair et al., 2005; Ragins, 2004) in which LGB people assess the pros and cons of being

open about their sexual orientation to those around them. According to Tilcsik et al., (2015), the awareness of the need to navigate potentially hazardous social situations effectively, often from adolescence, and concealing sexual orientation if necessary, has contributed to making LGB people more socially perceptive. Fear of bullying, violence and discrimination at work and outside it would, in this respect, be factors influencing LGB employees' strategies and decisions as to whether or not to "come out" and affect their overall level or degree of personal disclosure (Day & Schoenrade, 1997; Ward & Winstanley, 2006). In this respect, disclosure has been described as a double-edged sword (Day & Schoenrade, 1997). Thus, openness may be both risky and emotionally costly (Wax et al., 2018), whilst hiding or "staying in the closet" may restrict opportunities to socially integrate, thereby limiting access to valuable information, which may potentially negatively impact career progression (Griffith & Hebl, 2002). Concealing sexual orientation can, in its own right, place a psychological strain on individuals leading to stress-related illness (Meyer, 2003; Ragins, 2008). Therefore, any potential personal gains emerging from disclosure must be considered against likely adverse reactions.

Returning to our theoretical line of reasoning, openness about non-heterosexuality would make sexual orientation as a social category more salient, thus increasing the opportunity for bringing it into conflict with the in-group's ideal type (in most cases heterosexuality). One would envisage that this would increase the chance of becoming a target of intimidating and exclusionary acts and responses, even where the risk is deemed to be acceptable for disclosure still to occur.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): The more open LGBs are about their sexual orientation the greater the risk of exposure to bullying.

METHOD
SAMPLE AND PROCEDURE
To achieve a statistically viable sample we aimed to recruit 500 LGB employees and an equivalent number of heterosexual employees working in British workplaces or who had been in employment within the last six months.

We adopted a face-to-face structured interview approach using CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing) to interview workers at their home residences, replicating the approach taken by studies into sensitive workplace issues such as harassment (Grainger & Fitzner, 2007; Fevre et al., 2009) and workplace ill treatment (Fevre, Lewis & Jones, 2012). CAPI systems prevent the researcher from seeing or accessing the respondent's answers to the sexual orientation questions provided on the screen thus ensuring privacy for LGB participants. To obtain our sample we used an Omnibus

Survey and a quota sampling strategy. Interviewees were selected from a representative sample of around 4,000 adults per week (two waves of 2,000 respondents). To reach the target of 500 LGB employees and 500 heterosexual respondents, the fieldwork was conducted across 44 waves, thus taking approximately six months to achieve the LGB sample. Key screening criteria for participation were current employment or had been employed within the last six months.

The final sample included 712 heterosexuals (353 men and 369 women) and 500 non-heterosexuals: 147 gay men, 122 lesbians, 151 bisexuals, of whom 40 were men and 111 women. A total of 56 respondents labelled themselves as "Unsure" (31 men and 25 women) and as "Other sexuality/sexual orientation" (9 men and 15 women). The categories "Unsure" and "Other" were excluded from the analysis as we were unable to relate respondents within these categories to some of the questions regarding disclosure and openness about sexuality.

The age distribution was as follows: 16.5% were between 16–24 years of age, 34.5% between 25–39, 33.2% between 40–54, 13.2% between 55–64 and finally 2.5% was 65 years or older. The distribution of social grade/class was as follows: 24.1% belonged to social grade AB (upper class and middle class), 34.1% with C1 (lower-middle class), 22.7% with C2 (skilled working class) and finally 19.2% with DE (semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers). Approximately 90% was white and 4.8% reported some form of disability.

MEASUREMENTS
To measure bullying, we combined behavioural and self-labelling methods (see Leon-Perez et al., 2014): by presenting respondents with a common definition of bullying and measuring behavioural experiences using the shortened version (9 items) of the Negative Acts Questionnaire (S-NAQ) (Notelaers, Van der Heijden, Hoel & Einarsen, 2019) and a further four items emerging from a review of the literature (e.g., ACAS, 2007; Colgan et al., 2008; Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Minton et al., 2008; Ragins & Wiethoff, 2003; Stonewall, 2007; Williams & Tregidga, 2014), a total of 13 items. The additional items were: "Being confronted with unwanted jokes or remarks which have a sexual undertone"; "Receiving unwelcome comments about the way you dress"; "Experiencing unwanted physical contact, e.g., touching, grabbing, groping". The following response scale was applied: "never"; "occasionally"; "monthly"; "weekly"; and "daily".

Disclosure was measured with a single question: "How open are/were you about your sexuality in your current/ most recent job?" Response categories were "I give the impression that I am heterosexual", "I am not open at all", "I only reveal my sexuality/sexual orientation if asked", "I avoid drawing attention to my sexuality/ sexual orientation", "I make no secret about my sexuality/

sexual orientation" and "I am totally open". Note that questions about openness about sexual orientation were only answered by non-heterosexual respondents, that is everyone who did not identify as heterosexual or straight.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

Full ethical approval of the study, including approval of the research instrument (questionnaire) and strategy for participant recruitment was obtained by the University's Ethics Committee.

ANALYTIC STRATEGY

The analytic strategy here is rather complex because we first have to explain why we use latent class modelling as well as explain how this statistical technique works. Next, we have to make clear how we test whether the bullying experience is different for LGBs and finally we need to outline how we test whether the risk of LGB, older employees, disability and "disclosing" is higher or lower.

a) Why latent class modelling

Scholars suggest that the complex and dynamic nature of bullying makes the case for the use of latent class modelling (LC) (Nielsen et al., 2020; Notelaers & van der Heijden, 2021). In this way not only the complex nature of the concept but also the strong violations of the distributional assumption, for example, normality, and the fact that these measure are in reality employing a categorical response set (see: Hershcovis & Reich, 2013), are being addressed (Notelaers & van der Heijden, 2021).

LC is a statistical method that classifies respondents into mutually exclusive groups with respect to a not directly observed (latent) trait (e.g., bullying) (Notelaers et al., 2006). The LC analysis starts with the assumption that there is only one group, and subsequently estimates two (e.g., not bullied/bullied), three, four ... and finally n different classes, until an LC model is found that statistically fits the data best (Magidson & Vermunt, 2004). An important difference from traditional cluster methods (such as K-means clustering) is that LC analysis is based on a statistical model that can be tested (Magidson & Vermunt, 2002). As a consequence, determining the number of latent classes is less arbitrary than when using traditional cluster methods. Hence, this method allows for empirically testing whether different target groups exist, based on the responses to an inventory measuring exposure to different kinds of bullying behaviours (Notelaers et al., 2006). The metric of a single latent variable is typically nominal. The Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) is most often used for model selection (Magidson & Vermunt, 2002; 2004) that is to determine the number of latent class clusters. McCutcheon (1987) and Hagenaars (1990) suggested accepting the model with the lowest BIC because the models are non-nested. Next to this test, we also report descriptive fit measures. We assess how well the clusters are separated by

inspecting the total rate of classification errors due to adjacent erroneous classification. Finally, we also inspect local fit, that is how well the model described the initial association between the 13 indicators by comparing the total amount of bivariate residuals of the 1-profile model with that of the final model. In general, the bivariate residuals (BVRs) should be lower than, or equal to, 3.84 (Vermunt, 2013). For readers who are not familiar with LC modelling, these residuals are comparable to the residuals or associations that remain after having modelled a factor structure which is meant to account for the bivariate correlations between the indicators. The latter, 3.84, may be relaxed because the L^2 that follows a χ^2 distribution is quite sensitive to large sample size (Paas, 2014). Taking into account previous applications to workplace bullying, the reduction in BVR should be at least 85% (Einarsen et al., 2009; Leon-Perez et al., 2014; Notelaers et al., 2011).

b) Testing for equivalence of measurement invariance

Before testing hypothesis 1 (H1) that entails comparing heterosexuals' and LGB employees' exposure to bullying in terms of risk, it is critical to establish whether their experience of bullying is similar. Hence, to discern hypothesis 2 (H2) stating that the behavioural nature of the bullying experience of LGB individuals will differ from non-LGB individuals, the level of equivalence, that is, the extent that the measurement is similar (invariant) for both groups must be discerned. Earlier, Clogg and Goodman (1985, 1986) used a multiple-group analysis to inspect whether the measurement instrument differs across groups. The backward elimination of differences may be considered as a conservative modelling strategy as it starts from a complete heterogeneous model and eliminates the differences or fixes parameters step by step (Eid & Diener, 2001). The forward inclusion of differences strategy starts with the complete homogeneous model (pooled dataset). This model assumes no impact upon the measurement model from the grouping variable (heterosexual/LGB). This means that the measurement of bullying at work is assumed to be the same across groups. In subsequent steps these assumptions are relaxed (parameters are freed). We employ the forward inclusion of differences strategy (Chegeni et al., 2021; Hagenaars, 1990; Kankaras et al., 2010). Before introducing the group variable, a model is estimated irrespective of the grouping variable (complete homogeneity; cf. model 0) (see Kankaras, et al., 2010). Next, the group variable is introduced with the assumption that there are no direct relationships between the group variable and indicators of the measurement model. This means that the latent trait (bullying) fully mediates the relationship between the groups (heterosexual/LGB) and negative behaviours (indicators) that are meant to measure bullying (structural homogeneity; cf. models 1–5). In

the following, the remaining relationships between the grouping variable and the indicators are inspected. When these are higher than 3.84 this may indicate that there is a direct association between the grouping variable and indicator. This means that the relationship between the latent variable and the indicators can differ across groups (partial homogeneity; cf. models 6–9). Next, any interactions between latent variable and grouping variable on the indicators are estimated (no homogeneity or heterogeneity; cf. model 10). Finally, we estimate the full heterogeneous model (model 11) by performing a LCC analysis in both the sample of heterosexuals and the sample of LGBs. When these models are nested, the difference in L² and respective degrees of freedom are employed to tax the extent of homogeneity of heterogeneity; otherwise the BIC is employed. The latter penalises for the number of parameters used. As a consequence, BIC prefers more parsimonious models.

Previous research (Zapf et al., 2011) has shown significant relationships between socio-demographical variables and workplace bullying such as age, gender and occupational status. Therefore, we controlled for gender, age, and social grade/class. In addition, disability was taken into account to prevent possible differences between heterosexuals and LGB employees with regard to the experience of workplace bullying attributed to them.

c) Risk groups, 3-step LCA with covariates

To test the hypothesis 1 (H1), whether LGB employees have a higher risk of being bullied, we conducted a STEP3 latent class analysis. We examined whether co-variates such as disability, age, socio-economic class (income), heterosexual/LGB (sexual orientation), gender, occupational position, educational level and nature of contract (full-time/part-time) were related to the 3 latent classes. Because we have covariates in the STEP3 model we used ML estimation. For the ease of interpretation, we used dummy coding using the first category as the reference category. This means that for the sometimes bullied and target of bullying clusters, the not bullied cluster operates as a reference category. The logits and the relative risk ratios Exp(b) portray relationships between categories of the co-variate and LC clusters. They are similar to a multiple comparison procedure in a traditional analysis of variance.

To test the hypothesis relating to disclosure and bullying (H3), we introduced the disclosure item as a co-variate of the STEP 3 LC model in addition to the socio demographic variables.

RESULTS

The results of the analysis in Latent Gold 4.5 (Vermunt & Magidson, 2009) are summarised in the fit statistics that are portrayed in *Table 1*.

Before testing the level of heterogeneity, we note that BIC of both the full homogeneous (model 0), the structural homogenous model (models 1–5) and the full heterogeneous model (11) was the lowest when extracting 3 latent classes. Hence, the statistical fit is best when extracting 3 classes – to illustrate the iterative

	MODEL	N LATENT CLUSTERS	BIC(LL)	L²	DF	CLASS.ERR.
Complete homogeneity	0	3	11062.1	6225.39	1029	0.0462
Structural homogeneity	1	1	13520.5	9549.139	1073	0
	2	2	11348.41	7215.462	1050	0.0233
	3	3	11062.2	6767.661	1027	0.0466
	4	4	11094.22	6638.093	1004	0.0678
	5	5	11122.05	6504.343	981	0.0716
Partial homogeneity	6	3	11064.72	6763.163	1026	0.0468
	7	3	11064.36	6762.795	1026	0.0467
	8	3	11065.36	6763.796	1026	0.0468
	9	3	11067.9	6766.334	1026	0.0466
Heterogeneity	10	3	11422.0	7366.19	1021	0.0477
Full heterogeneity	11	3		6515	948	–

Table 1 Fit statistics.
Legend: BIC: Bayesian Information Criterion; Model 1–5: Traditional LC models (structural homogeneity); Models 6–9: Testing invariance or heterogeneity across heterosexuals and LGBs; Model 6: h/LGBLGB with dress, Model 7: h/LGBLGB ignored; Model 8: h/LGB rem sex and Model 9: h/LGB unwanted contact. Model 10: Heterogeneous model (interaction term between LC and covariate). Model 11: Full homogeneous model (based on the merged data). Model 12: Full heterogeneous model (based on separate analysis of heterosexuals and LGBs).

procedure we only portray the fit of the different LC models for the structural homogeneous model (model 1–5). Following the forward inclusion of difference, we see that the homogeneous model (0) fits better than the structural homogeneous model (3) as L^2 does not decrease significantly. But the BIC of both is almost the same. Because both models are not nested, we must rely on the BIC and conclude that both are equally well fitting. Given the main focus of the article, we prefer model 3 because it accounts for sexual orientation. Allowing for more heterogeneity by adding direct relationship between sexual orientation and items for which the BVR > 3.84 and BVR were larger than 15% did not lead to improvement of fit because L^2 did not decrease significantly. The negative behaviours: "Receiving unwelcome comments about the way you dress", "Being confronted with unwanted jokes or remarks which have a sexual undertone", "Experiencing unwanted physical contact, e.g., touching, grabbing, groping" and "Being ignored by people at work", of which the three first relate to sexual orientation, seemed, therefore, to not function differently for heterosexuals and LGB people. If the L^2 and BIC of these models had been significantly lower than that of the homogeneous models, this would have suggested that the experience of bullying was strictly speaking not comparable between both groups (partial homogeneity). As said, the models six to nine led to a worse fit. Note also that the BIC statistic yielded that allowing such a co-variation was associated with

a deterioration of fit because BIC increased compared to model 3. Thus, from a statistical point of view, the differences between LGB's and non-LGBs with respect to these items was not meaningful as they did not significantly improve fit. Note also that assuming more heterogeneity did not improve fit. In conclusion, we must reject the second hypothesis stated that the experience of bullying would be qualitatively different for LGB and heterosexual employees.

Next, we can describe the latent class clusters. The three different latent class clusters are portrayed in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1 envisages the profile plot in Latent Gold 4.5. On the Y-axis the conditional average scores – these are the average of each item given the latent class cluster – are given, while on the X-axis the negative behaviours are printed. This plot is commonly used to portray the relationship between indicators and the latent variable (LC clusters). The plot shows three distinct lines that portray the different clusters. At the bottom of the figure, the respondents show on average 1.02 which corresponds with the "never" response category. Some 69.7% of the respondents are classified in the "not bullied" latent cluster. The line just above "not bullied" has an average score that varies between 1.15 and 1.55, thus situated between "never" and "sometimes". Accordingly, we label this latent class cluster as "occasional bullying". Approximately 24.1% of the respondents are, according to the latent class model, occasionally a target of
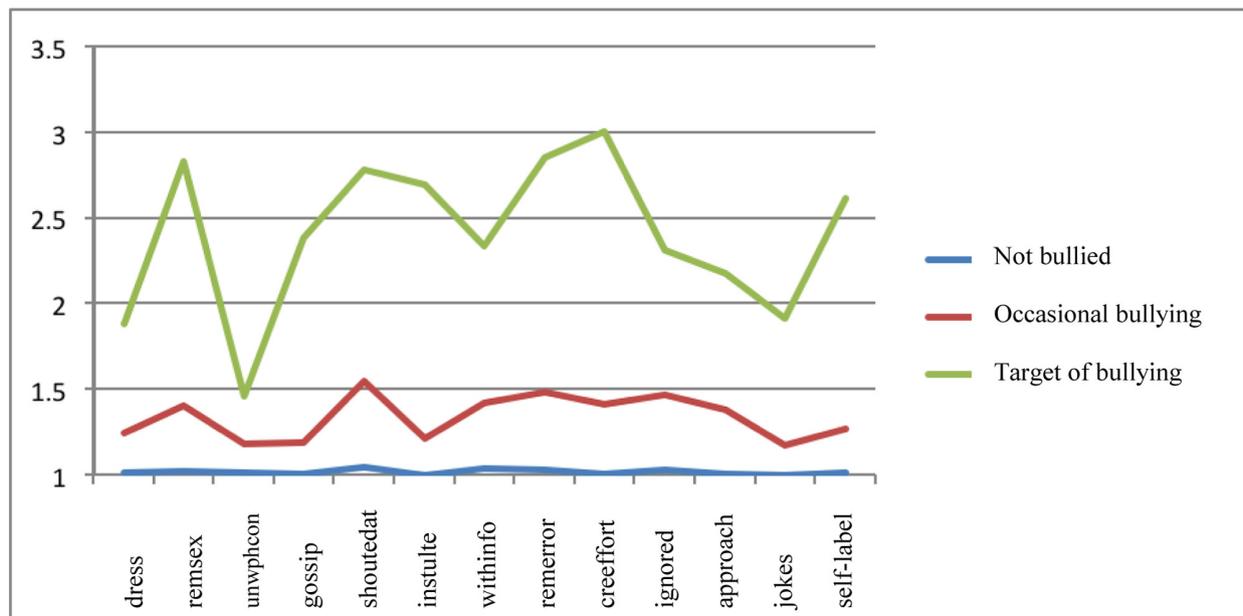

Figure 1 Profile of workplace bullying. Average score on negative behaviours for each latent class. Dress: "Receiving unwelcome comments about the way you dress". Remsex: "Being confronted with unwanted jokes or remarks which have a sexual undertone". Unwphcon: "Experiencing unwanted physical contact, e.g. touching, grabbing, groping". Gossip: "Spreading gossip and rumours about you". Shouted at: Being shouted at". Insulted: "Being insulted or having offensive remarks made about you (i.e. about habits and background, attitude or private life, etc)". Withinfo: "Someone withholding information which affects your performance". Remerror: "Receiving repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes". Creffort: "Persistent criticism of your work or performance".Ignored: "Being ignored by people at work". Approach: "Facing a hostile reaction when you approach others. Jokes: Being the subject of unwanted practical jokes". Self-label: "Using the definition above, have you been bullied at work over the last six months?".

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