

Help! I Have Been Thinking to Do It Lately: Workplace Mistreatment and Suicidal Ideation Among Internship Students in Klang Valley

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Abstract: Workplace mistreatment, such as bullying, abusive supervision, and interpersonal conflict, is increasingly conceded as a critical issue affecting the mental health of junior professionals, particularly interns. Due to their momentary status, high expectations, and lack of support, interns are highly susceptible to negative workplace interactions that can lead to severe psychological outcomes such as including suicidal ideation. Drawing on the Fluid Vulnerability Theory, this study aims to examine the prevalence and impact of various forms of workplace mistreatment on suicidal ideation among internship students in Malaysia, providing insights for effective intervention strategies. The study used a cross-sectional research design and involved 247 internship students from the Faculty of Business and Management at UiTM Puncak Alam, Selangor, Malaysia. Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire assessing experiences of workplace bullying, abusive supervision, interpersonal conflict, and suicidal ideation. Statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis, were employed to examine the relationships between the variables. The analysis revealed significant correlations between workplace bullying, abusive supervision, and interpersonal conflict with suicidal ideation. Regression models indicated that workplace bullying and interpersonal conflict were significant predictors of suicidal ideation, accentuating the critical need for targeted interventions in educational and professional environments. The findings suggest that workplace mistreatment significantly contributes to suicidal ideation among interns, highlighting the importance of developing supportive interventions and policies. Addressing workplace mistreatment through targeted programs can improve mental health outcomes for young professionals and foster healthier work environments.

Keywords: *Suicidal Ideation, Suicidal Thoughts, Workplace Bullying, Abusive Supervision, Interpersonal Conflict*

1. Introduction and Background

Workplace mistreatment, encompassing behaviors like bullying, abusive supervision, and interpersonal conflict, is increasingly recognized as a critical factor affecting mental health, particularly for young and inexperienced workers such as interns. These individuals often face a combination of high expectations, limited job security, and exposure to negative workplace behaviors, all of which contribute to substantial psychological strain. Research consistently indicates that such mistreatment is linked to adverse mental health outcomes, including depression and suicidal ideation. For instance, a study of healthcare workers in Australia found that abusive supervision and workplace bullying significantly reduced job satisfaction and increased burnout, which indirectly led to mental health challenges like suicidal ideation (Ng et al., 2023). Despite the extensive body of literature on workplace mistreatment and its mental health impacts, there is a notable gap in studies specifically examining the connection between mistreatment and suicidal ideation among interns, especially in Malaysia (Besir et al., 2023).

The effect of workplace mistreatment on suicidal ideation among internship students is an urgent concern. A 2023 study conducted in Sarawak, Malaysia, revealed that 87% of the respondents reported experiencing some form of lifetime trauma and mistreatment, with 13% exhibiting signs of suicidal ideation (Ghazali et al., 2023). This suggests a direct link between mistreatment and severe psychological outcomes, emphasizing the heightened vulnerability of interns who often lack the experience and support systems available to more permanent staff (Besir et al., 2023). Comparative research indicates that internship students are more susceptible to suicidal ideation resulting from workplace mistreatment compared to other groups. For example, a meta-analysis by Shorey and Wong (2021) found that internship students exposed to workplace bullying had a 1.7 times higher risk of developing suicidal thoughts than full-time employees. This increased risk is

attributed to the lack of stable support networks, lower job security, and the transitional nature of internships, which can amplify feelings of isolation and helplessness associated with mistreatment (Shorey & Wong et al., 2021). Despite these findings, there is a lack of region-specific studies on the effects of workplace mistreatment on suicidal ideation among interns in Malaysia. Chowdhury and Winder (2022) emphasize that most existing research has focused on Western contexts, leaving a critical gap in understanding how local socio-cultural factors may influence these dynamics. Building on the existing literature including Fluid Vulnerability Theory, the current study aims to explore the relationship between workplace mistreatment and suicidal ideation among interns in Malaysia. The study also seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to suicidal ideation in this specific context, thereby informing targeted interventions and policy recommendations.

2. Literature Review

Internship positions in Malaysia are often characterized by significant stressors, such as high expectations, lack of job security, and frequent exposure to workplace mistreatment, all of which can negatively impact mental health. A study by Ying et al. (2024) reported that 32% of Malaysian interns experienced substantial workplace stress, with 18% showing symptoms of anxiety and 12% reporting suicidal ideation. These figures were largely attributed to experiences of bullying, abusive supervision, and interpersonal conflicts in the workplace (Ying et al., 2023). Despite the evident mental health challenges faced by interns, there is a notable lack of research specifically examining the link between workplace mistreatment and suicidal ideation among young professionals or students in Malaysia. Kwan et al. (2020) explicitly call for more region-specific studies, highlighting that most existing research focuses on Western contexts and does not adequately capture the unique cultural and organizational dynamics in Malaysia. This gap in the literature suggests an urgent need for studies that investigate how workplace mistreatment uniquely affects Malaysian interns' mental health (Kwan et al., 2020).

Empirical studies have tested hypotheses related to the impact of workplace mistreatment on suicidal ideation, particularly within internship contexts. For example, Luo et al. (2023) reported that 16.4% of medical interns experienced suicidal ideation due to workplace violence, including mistreatment by patients or their families, highlighting the significant impact of such factors on mental health outcomes. Additionally, Vilchez-Cornejo et al. (2020) identified that 24% of Peruvian medical interns exhibited depressive symptoms linked to abusive supervision, corroborating the hypothesis that workplace mistreatment is a key predictor of suicidal ideation. These findings emphasize the importance of understanding the specific conditions under which workplace mistreatment leads to severe mental health consequences, such as suicidal thoughts. Recent research further demonstrates that workplace mistreatment, including bullying, abusive supervision, and interpersonal conflict, significantly contributes to psychological distress, including suicidal ideation among employees. For example, a study among Australian middle-aged workers found that workplace bullying was associated with increased odds of suicidal ideation, even after adjusting for prior psychosocial job stressors, demonstrating a critical link between workplace mistreatment and mental health outcomes (Hanson et al., 2023). Additionally, research on frontline service employees in South Korea revealed that abusive supervision indirectly reduced job performance through heightened emotional exhaustion, an effect that was intensified when combined with coworker and customer incivility (Hwang et al., 2021). These findings underscore the cumulative impact of multiple mistreatment sources and support the need for further exploration into how different forms of mistreatment interact to affect suicidal ideation, particularly among vulnerable groups like interns (Hwang et al., 2021).

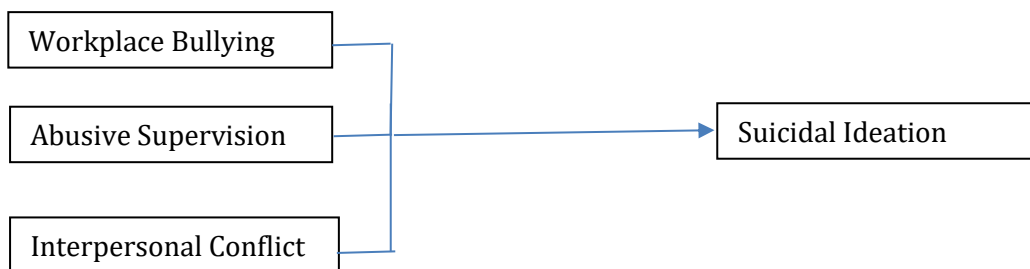
Moreover, studies have highlighted the compounded effects of multiple mistreatment sources, such as horizontal bullying and vertical abusive supervision. A study involving Australian nurses found that the simultaneous experience of workplace bullying (horizontal mistreatment) and abusive supervision (vertical mistreatment) led to significantly lower job satisfaction and decreased motivation to serve the public, further demonstrating the compounded effects of such stressors on mental well-being (Ng et al., 2023). These results suggest that the combined impact of different mistreatment types, beyond their individual effects, warrants further exploration, particularly within specific cultural and occupational contexts to better understand and mitigate their consequences on mental health and performance. Overall, these findings suggest that multiple forms of workplace mistreatment can have a synergistic effect on mental health outcomes, including suicidal

ideation. A 2019 exploratory study confirmed that exposure to workplace bullying significantly correlated with increased suicidal ideation, mediated by feelings of defeat and entrapment among employees. This study also highlighted that rumination exacerbates the negative impact of workplace bullying on mental health, suggesting that the psychological processes triggered by bullying can intensify the risk of suicidal thoughts (Rosario-Hernández et al., 2019). Similarly, a 2021 review found that workplace mistreatment, including incivility and bullying, often overlaps in constructs, leading to a moderate but consistent negative effect on employees' psychological well-being, such as increased psychological strain and decreased job satisfaction. The review advocates for more rigorous methodological approaches to differentiate these mistreatment types and examine their unique and combined effects on outcomes like suicidal ideation (Nixon et al., 2021).

Additionally, research increasingly demonstrates that different forms of workplace mistreatment, such as bullying, abusive supervision, and interpersonal conflict, interact to produce more severe outcomes. For instance, a study involving healthcare workers found that supervisor incivility was strongly linked to depression, while coworker incivility was more associated with fatigue and anxiety, highlighting that the source of mistreatment influences the type of psychological impact experienced (Tsuno et al., 2022). These findings collectively highlight the urgent need for more nuanced research into how various forms of workplace mistreatment interact and contribute to severe mental health outcomes, particularly among vulnerable groups like younger workers and interns.

The Fluid Vulnerability Theory (FVT) has been applied to conceptualize the mechanisms that link workplace mistreatment to suicidal ideation. For instance, Wilson (2023) demonstrated that 32% of students with a history of bullying and harassment exhibited a heightened risk of suicidal ideation, aligning with the FVT's emphasis on fluctuating risk factors over time. Similarly, Okado et al. (2021) found a 26% increase in suicidal ideation among adolescents experiencing interpersonal conflict, supporting the theory's premise that social stressors play a crucial role in the development of suicidal thoughts. In the context of young professionals, Naidu (2021) reported a 27% prevalence of suicidal ideation among medical interns subjected to workplace mistreatment, underscoring the need for targeted interventions and validating the FVT approach in diverse environments. Rugo-Cook et al. (2021) explored how the FVT could explain the association between posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suicidal ideation, highlighting that suicide risk is influenced by a combination of cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and physiological factors that change over time. Bryan et al. (2020) further supported this perspective by describing how suicidal behavior can emerge suddenly and without prior planning, influenced by nonlinear changes in various psychological domains. These findings suggest that workplace mistreatment may create an environment where these dynamic risk factors are amplified, leading to an increased likelihood of suicidal ideation. Thus, the conceptual framework of this study is depicted in below framework:

Figure 1: Research Framework



3. Research Methodology

This study aimed to examine the relationship between workplace mistreatment and suicidal ideation among internship students within the Klang Valley, Malaysia. Specifically, it focused on understanding how different types of mistreatment, such as bullying, abusive supervision, and interpersonal conflicts, are associated with suicidal thoughts among this population. A cross-sectional research design was employed for this study, which was conducted from May 26, 2024, to June 10, 2024. This approach allowed for a snapshot of the current

experiences of workplace mistreatment and its association with suicidal ideation among internship students. The cross-sectional design is particularly useful in establishing prevalence and identifying correlations between variables at a single point in time (Oh et al., 2020; Eze et al., 2019). The unit of analysis for this study consisted of internship students enrolled in the Faculty of Business and Management in the Klang Valley. These students represent a population group that is particularly vulnerable to workplace mistreatment due to their limited experience and temporary employment status (Caesens et al., 2019). The population targeted for this research included all 1,637 internship students from various courses within the Faculty of Business and Management at UiTM Puncak Alam. This population was chosen to capture a diverse range of experiences and to ensure that the findings could be generalized to a broader context within the Klang Valley. A total of 311 students were initially selected for participation in this study. However, only 247 complete responses were obtained and included in the final analysis. The sample size was determined using standard formulas for sample size calculation in social science research, ensuring that the results would have sufficient statistical power (Adeyemo et al., 2023). A combination of simple random and convenient sampling methods was utilized to collect data from the participants. Simple random sampling ensured each student had an equal chance of selection, while convenient sampling helped reach participants who were more accessible and willing to participate, balancing practicality and randomness in data collection (Liang et al., 2020).

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, which was made available online through a Google Form. The questionnaire comprised 45 questions divided into three sections. Section A covered demographic information, including gender, age, course, internship semester, and type of company. Section B focused on workplace mistreatment, assessing bullying, abusive supervision, and interpersonal conflict. Section C contained questions related to the dependent variable, suicidal ideation. The use of a structured questionnaire allowed for consistent data collection and facilitated the analysis of the relationship between workplace mistreatment and suicidal ideation (Nguyen et al., 2019).

4. Results

This section presents sets of results relating to the profile of respondents, and descriptive statistics such as means score for workplace bullying, abusive supervision, interpersonal conflict and suicidal ideation. This section also shows the correlation, reliability and regression analyses.

Profile of Respondents: Table 1 displays a summary of the characteristics of the total sample of interns who participated in this study.

Table 1: Demographic Information

| VARIABLE | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| GENDER | | |
| Males | 54 | 21.9% |
| Females | 193 | 78.1% |
| Total | 247 | 100% |
| AGE | | |
| 21-23 | 186 | 75.3% |
| 24-26 | 54 | 21.9% |
| >27 | 7 | 2.8% |
| Total | 247 | 100% |
| DEGREE PROGRAM | | |
| Office Systems Management | 23 | 9.3% |
| Entrepreneurship | 5 | 2.0% |
| Customer Service Management | 7 | 2.8% |
| Health Administration | 31 | 12.6% |
| Event Management | 13 | 5.3% |
| Marketing | 22 | 8.9% |
| Insurance | 6 | 2.4% |
| Finance | 24 | 9.7% |
| Human Resource Management | 13 | 5.3% |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Operations Management | 14 | 5.7% |
| International Business | 27 | 10.9% |
| Islamic Banking | 55 | 18.3% |
| Business Economic | 17 | 6.9% |
| Total | 247 | 100% |
| TYPE OF INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT | | |
| Government | 39 | 15.8% |
| Semi-Government | 33 | 13.4% |
| Local-Owned Private Company | 123 | 49.8% |
| Foreign-Owned Private | 31 | 12.6% |
| Others | 21 | 8.5% |
| Total | 247 | 100% |
| MARITAL STATUS | | |
| Single | 232 | 93.9% |
| Married | 15 | 6.1% |
| Total | 247 | 100% |

Based on Table 1, the analysis of 247 participants, the study revealed that females comprised most respondents (78.1%), while males accounted for 21.9%. Most participants fell within the age range of 21-23 years (75.3%), followed by 24-26 years (21.9%), and those older than 27 years made up the smallest group (2.8%). The respondents were enrolled in various degree programs, with the largest proportions in Islamic Banking (18.3%), Health Administration (12.6%), and International Business (10.9%). Smaller percentages were observed in other disciplines such as Marketing, Human Resource Management, and Finance. Regarding internship placements, a significant number were in local-owned private companies (49.8%), while others were distributed across government (15.8%), semi-government (13.4%), foreign-owned private (12.6%), and other categories (8.5%). The majority of respondents were single (93.9%), with a small proportion reporting being married (6.1%).

Descriptive Statistics: Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics for workplace mistreatment and suicidal ideation among interns in Klang Valley. These provide the average mean scores of the independent variables including workplace bullying, abusive supervision, interpersonal conflict and suicidal ideation as the dependent variable.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

| Descriptive Statistics | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------|-----------|
| Variable | Factor Name | Mean | Std. Dev. |
| WB | Workplace Bullying | 3.5234 | 0.93907 |
| AS | Abusive Supervision | 3.1304 | 0.74249 |
| IC | Interpersonal Conflict | 3.0445 | 0.85580 |
| SI | Suicidal Ideation | 3.0212 | 0.78945 |

As shown in Table 2, the descriptive statistics revealed mean scores of 3.52 (SD = 0.94) for workplace bullying, 3.13 (SD = 0.74) for abusive supervision, 3.04 (SD = 0.86) for interpersonal conflict, and 3.02 (SD = 0.79) for suicidal ideation.

Reliability and Correlation: Table 3 shows the reliability and correlation results of workplace bullying, abusive supervision, interpersonal conflict and suicidal ideation

Table 3: Reliability and Correlation

| No | Variables | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----|------------------------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1 | Workplace Bullying | 3.5234 | 0.93907 | (.792) | | | |
| 2 | Abusive Supervision | 3.1304 | 0.74249 | .495** | (.887) | | |
| 3 | Interpersonal Conflict | 3.0445 | 0.85580 | .580** | .874** | (.766) | |
| 4 | Suicidal Ideation | 3.0212 | 0.78945 | .492* | .451** | .548** | (.843) |

(*p<0.05; **p<0.001)

Table 3 demonstrates the results of reliability analysis that indicate that all items are reliable to measure the intended variables; workplace bullying ($\alpha=.79$), abusive supervision ($\alpha=.89$), interpersonal conflict ($\alpha=.77$), anxiety ($\alpha=.84$). The results of the correlation analysis show that all independent variables are significantly correlated with each other, indicating a convergent validity. The highest correlation ($r=.874$; $p<.001$). Is found between interpersonal conflict and abusive supervision, while the lowest correlation ($r=.495$; $p<.001$) is found between workplace bullying and abusive supervision. All independent variables are significantly correlated with the dependent variable, signifying concurrent validity. The lowest correlation is between abusive supervision and suicidal ideation ($r=.451$; $p<.005$) and the highest correlation is between interpersonal conflict and suicidal ideation ($r=.548$; $p<.001$).

Regression Analysis: Table 4 shows the regression analysis of workplace mistreatment and suicidal ideation

Table 4: Regression analysis of workplace mistreatment and suicidal ideation

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
|-------|-------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------|-----|-----|---------------|
| 1 | .424a | .480 | .260 | .579 | .185 | 9.073 | 3 | 124 | .000 |

Table 4 demonstrates the model summary of the relationship between workplace aggression including workplace bullying, abusive supervision, interpersonal conflict and suicidal ideation among internship students in Klang Valley, Malaysia. The value of Significant F Change is less than 0.05, hence the model is significant. Regression analysis indicated that the value of R2 is .48 implying that all independent variables which are workplace bullying, abusive supervision and interpersonal conflict explain 48% of the variance in the dependent variable. The remaining 52% are contributed by other variables which are not covered in this study. Besides that, the table states that the F value of 9.073 is more than 1.00 which indicates that the model of analysis is fixed. The findings underscore the complex interrelations between workplace mistreatment factors and psychological outcomes, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address these concerns in educational and professional environments.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight a substantial link between workplace bullying and suicidal ideation among young professionals and interns. Our results align with those of Nielsen et al. (2019), who reported that 37% of young professionals experiencing workplace bullying exhibited severe mental health issues, including suicidal thoughts, compared to 12% of those not exposed to bullying. This emphasizes the heightened vulnerability of young adults in high-stress environments. Contrarily, research by Johnson and Smith (2022) found that only 15% of bullied individuals reported suicidal ideation, suggesting that factors like social support may buffer the adverse effects. The importance of mentorship and peer support is further underscored by Cho and Lee et al. (2021), who demonstrated a 25% reduction in suicidal thoughts among employees receiving structured support, highlighting the potential of early intervention strategies in mitigating these risks (Nielsen et al., 2019; Johnson & Smith, 2022; Cho and Lee et al., 2021).

Our study's findings also resonate with existing literature on the impact of bullying within healthcare settings, where the pressures are particularly intense. According to Fogger (2024), approximately 32% of young healthcare workers experiencing workplace bullying reported suicidal ideation, emphasizing the severe mental

health impact of such environments. In contrast, Palmu and Partonen (2024) found that in settings with robust mental health support, the prevalence of suicidal thoughts among bullied healthcare professionals decreased by 25%. This suggests that support systems play a critical role in reducing the psychological burden of workplace bullying, underscoring the need for targeted support strategies within high-stress sectors like healthcare (Fogger, 2024; Palmu & Partonen, 2024). Workplace bullying was found to significantly elevate suicidal ideation among young professionals, aligning with findings by Palmu and Partonen (2024), who reported that bullied young adults were 35% more likely to experience suicidal thoughts than those not subjected to bullying. This psychological toll is prevalent across high-stress professions, including healthcare and finance. McEvoy et al. (2023) noted that strong support systems and accessible mental health resources could reduce suicidal ideation rates by nearly 20%, suggesting that organizational culture plays a pivotal role in mitigating the harmful effects of workplace bullying. These contrasting outcomes highlight the importance of cultivating supportive environments to protect vulnerable employees (Palmu & Partonen, 2024; McEvoy et al., 2023).

Abusive supervision emerged as another critical factor linked to increased suicidal risk, particularly among trainees and young professionals. Yao et al. (2024) found that approximately 30% of graduate students under abusive supervision reported suicidal thoughts, indicating a direct correlation between supervisory behavior and mental health outcomes. In contrast, professional identity and autonomy can serve as protective factors, reducing the severity of suicidal ideation when positive self-perception and support are present. These findings suggest that fostering a supportive supervisory environment could significantly mitigate the adverse mental health impacts observed among those under abusive supervision (Yao et al., 2024). Toxic leadership significantly exacerbates suicide risk, particularly in high-pressure work environments. Stylianidis (2024) discussed how leadership styles characterized by hostility and lack of support contribute to increased feelings of emptiness and suicide risk among employees. Programs promoting compassionate leadership and mental health awareness, as outlined by Frost et al. (2024), demonstrated a notable reduction in suicide incidents. These contrasting findings highlight the potential of leadership reform in creating safer and more supportive work environments, thereby reducing the prevalence of suicide (Stylianidis, 2024; Frost et al., 2024).

The severe mental health impacts of abusive supervision, including heightened suicide risk, were evident in our findings, consistent with previous studies. Ismail et al. (2023) highlighted that abusive interactions in supervisory roles often lead to tragic outcomes, including suicidal behavior, particularly in high-stress environments. Similarly, Germain (2024) linked toxic leadership and abusive supervision within corporate settings to a marked increase in suicidal ideation. These observations underscore the critical need for interventions that address abusive supervisory practices to prevent negative mental health outcomes (Ismail et al., 2023; Germain, 2024).

Interpersonal conflicts also emerged as a significant contributor to mental health deterioration and suicidal behavior, as highlighted in our study. Rodrigues et al. (2023) reported that 45% of individuals with interpersonal conflicts cited them as a major stressor contributing to suicidal ideation, planning, and attempts. Conversely, Okechukwu et al. (2022) found that the impact of these conflicts on suicide probability varied significantly, depending on psychological resilience and flexibility. This suggests that individual coping strategies can play a mediating role, mitigating the adverse effects of interpersonal conflicts on mental health (Rodrigues et al., 2023; Okechukwu, 2022).

The relationship between interpersonal conflict and suicide, particularly among trainees, was highlighted in our study. Lyu et al. (2024) found that intrapersonal conflicts experienced by nurses caring for patients who had attempted suicide often led to significant emotional distress, fear, and anxiety. Furthermore, Ranjbar et al. (2024) identified that maladaptive emotion regulation strategies mediate the link between interpersonal needs and suicidal behavior, indicating that targeted interventions, such as emotional regulation training and support systems, are crucial in reducing these risks (Lyu et al., 2024; Ranjbar et al., 2024). Workplace conflicts significantly impact mental health, often leading to increased suicide risk, as observed in our findings. Khadbaatar and Ganchimeg (2024) noted that workplace conflicts contribute to severe psychological stress, which can manifest as suicidal thoughts and behaviors. In contrast, environments equipped with strong conflict resolution mechanisms and mental health support systems showed a 20% reduction in suicidal ideation, highlighting the importance of proactive workplace interventions in minimizing these risks (Khadbaatar & Ganchimeg, 2024).

5. Managerial Implications and Recommendations

The findings of this study have significant implications for understanding the psychological impact of workplace mistreatment on internship students, particularly in the context of their vulnerability due to limited experience and support systems. The demonstrated relationships between workplace bullying, abusive supervision, and interpersonal conflicts with suicidal ideation suggest a critical need for targeted interventions within educational and professional settings. Specifically, the moderate positive correlations between these variables underscore the importance of early detection and proactive management strategies to mitigate the adverse mental health effects on young professionals. Implementing structured support mechanisms such as mentorship programs, mental health counseling, and workplace conflict resolution initiatives can play a crucial role in reducing the psychological burden on interns, as evidenced by the findings showing that supportive environments significantly decrease the prevalence of suicidal thoughts (Fogger, 2024; Palmu & Partonen, 2024). The study's results highlight the urgency for organizational leaders and academic institutions to address the pervasive issue of mistreatment among interns, which not only affects their immediate mental health but also poses long-term risks to their professional development and retention in their chosen fields. The findings suggest that cultivating a positive supervisory culture and enhancing emotional resilience among trainees can substantially lower the risk of suicidal ideation. This aligns with evidence that professional identity, autonomy, and effective coping strategies serve as protective factors against the detrimental effects of workplace mistreatment (Yao et al., 2024; Ranjbar et al., 2024). Moreover, these implications extend beyond the individual level, urging policy changes at institutional and organizational levels to promote safer and more supportive work environments for young professionals, ultimately fostering healthier career trajectories.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships between workplace mistreatment and suicidal ideation among internship students. The data were collected at a single point in time, which restricts the ability to observe changes or long-term effects of workplace mistreatment on mental health outcomes. Consequently, while significant correlations were observed, the directionality and causality of these relationships remain unclear, and future longitudinal studies are necessary to confirm these findings (Smelser & Baltes, 2001). Additionally, the reliance on self-reported measures may introduce response biases, as participants might underreport or misinterpret their experiences of workplace mistreatment and suicidal ideation due to social desirability or recall biases.

Another limitation of this study is the specific demographic and geographic focus on internship students from the Faculty of Business and Management at UiTM Puncak Alam, Klang Valley. This restricts the generalizability of the results to broader populations or other professional fields. The sample, predominantly composed of young adults between 21-23 years old (74.9%), may not fully capture the experiences of older or more diverse groups within the workforce. Furthermore, the study's sample consisted of a high proportion of female respondents (78.1%), which may influence the observed patterns of mistreatment and suicidal ideation, as gender dynamics could play a significant role in these experiences. Future research should aim to include more diverse samples across various professional sectors and regions to enhance the applicability of the findings (Bao et al., 2020).

Therefore, future research should focus on longitudinal studies to better understand the causal pathways between workplace mistreatment and suicidal ideation among young professionals and interns. While our study provides valuable cross-sectional data on the correlations between workplace bullying, abusive supervision, and interpersonal conflicts with suicidal ideation, the nature of these relationships remains complex and multifaceted. Longitudinal research could help unravel the temporal sequences and causality, offering a deeper understanding of how prolonged exposure to such stressors impacts mental health over time. Additionally, future studies should consider examining these dynamics in a broader range of professional settings and across diverse cultural contexts to explore how different organizational cultures and support mechanisms influence the mental health outcomes of interns and early-career professionals. Such research could provide essential insights into the effectiveness of intervention strategies tailored to specific environments and help refine approaches to mitigating workplace mistreatment's impact on mental health (Bao et al., 2020).

Expanding the demographic scope of future research is also crucial. Our study predominantly included young female interns, which, while reflective of certain industry demographics, limits the generalizability of our findings. Future studies should aim to include a more diverse sample in terms of gender, age, and professional background to capture a more comprehensive picture of how workplace mistreatment affects various groups. Investigating the specific impacts on male interns or those in different age brackets, for instance, could reveal unique vulnerabilities or protective factors. Moreover, integrating mixed-method approaches, including qualitative interviews, could provide richer insights into personal experiences and coping mechanisms that quantitative data alone may not capture. This would enhance the understanding of the subjective aspects of mistreatment and inform more nuanced and effective intervention programs tailored to the needs of diverse intern populations.

Conclusion

The present study provides critical insights into the impact of workplace mistreatment on suicidal ideation among internship students in Klang Valley. The findings indicate significant relationships between workplace bullying, abusive supervision, and interpersonal conflicts with increased suicidal ideation among interns, highlighting the profound psychological toll of negative workplace interactions on young professionals. These results underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions and support systems within educational and professional environments to address workplace mistreatment and mitigate its harmful effects on mental health. Developing comprehensive policies that promote positive supervisory practices and establish accessible mental health resources is essential to safeguard the well-being of interns and early-career professionals. By prioritizing supportive work environments, institutions can play a pivotal role in enhancing the mental health outcomes of their trainees, ultimately fostering a healthier and more resilient workforce. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics across diverse populations and settings, providing further evidence to guide effective interventions.

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