



**RESEARCH STUDIES**

*workplacebullying.org*

# **The Economic Crisis and Bullying**

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## The Economic Crisis and Bullying

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*Purpose: To gauge whether or not bullying has been affected by the post-Sept. 2008 economic recession/crisis.*

*Principal Finding: 27.5%* of people surveyed said the bullying got worse (it became more abusive/severe/frequent). 22% said the bullying began after or on Sept. 2008 (the date recognized as the start of the global economic crisis) which could be expected if the onset of bullying is routine. One-fourth of bullying would be expected to start during the last quarter of any year.

Note: This is a non-scientific study. The 454 people who completed the survey (called respondents) visited the website designed to help people with bullying problems. They do not represent a random sample of adult Americans (as was done in the WBI-Zogby survey). Conclusions are limited to people who believe they are or have been bullied.

*The survey questions:*

Workplace Bullying was defined as sabotage that prevents work from getting done, verbal abuse, threatening conduct, intimidation, humiliation, or exploitation of a known vulnerability (psychological or physical)

**64.4%** said it is happening to them now

**32.5%** had it happen to them before, but it is not happening now

**2.4%** have only witnessed it happening to others; it never happened to me

**0.7%** I have not seen or heard it myself, but others told me it happened [Only 2 people out of 456 said that they had neither seen it directly nor heard about it from others and stopped answering the survey.]

Perpetrator's rank

**5.9%** of perpetrators had a lower rank than the target

**18.7%** of perpetrators were peers with the same rank

**75.4%** of perpetrators ranked higher than the target

Perpetrator's gender: **65.9%** F, **34.1%** M

Target's gender: **81.3%** F, **18.7%** M

When did the bullying begin?

**21.8%** said - AFTER/on September 2008

**75.2%** said the bullying began BEFORE September 2008

**3.1%** were not when the bullying began

Has the employer claimed financial trouble due to the economic crisis?

**36.9%** Yes

**47.5%** No

**15.7%** Not sure

Did the bullying CHANGE since the economic downturn?

**27.5%** said it became MORE abusive/severe/frequent

**2%** No change -- mistreatment was rare and still is

**67%** No change -- mistreatment was common and still is

**3.4%** Yes; It became LESS abusive/severe/frequent

Did the perpetrator or anyone else (e.g., perpetrator's friends, HR, managers) suggest that different levels of bullying were **caused** of the economic downturn?

**4.5%** Yes

**78.7%** No

**16.8%** Not sure

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