

An Examination of Two Different Ways of Dealing with Bullying:

A Comparison between a State and Private School

There has been much public concern lately regarding bullying within schools, the safety of students and their learning development (Rigby, 2003). Solutions for school-based bullying are not easy to identify or to explain (Smith & Brain, 2000). Practical implications for this vein of research include, the psychological welfare of the students, teachers and parents, as well as the wider community. Hence, there is a growing emphasis to rectify the limited research into evaluation of anti-bullying interventions in schools (Smith & Sharp, 1994; Rigby, 2003).

Power relationships are characteristic of human interactions, although they do not have to, and usually do not, include an abuse of that power. No universal definition of bullying exists (Smith & Brain, 2000), yet it is agreed that bullying can be either direct (physical, verbal) or indirect (social exclusion, rumor mongering). A review of the last two decades of research into bullying in schools accounted for data across 16 European countries, as well as Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the USA and Canada. It was concluded that the bullying relationships cross-culturally, had a similarity of structure (Smith & Brain, 2000). The consensus was that bullying is not solely a bully-victim relationship, but rather bullying is seen as a violent group process, where participants reinforce each other's behavior. The collective nature of bullying means that social relationships within the group greatly influence the bullying process. As a social problem, it has been established that school bullying is a systematic abuse of power, involving three dominant factors: a bully, a victim, and by-standers (Smith & Sharp, 1994).

Undesirable consequences of bullying include the victim's fear of reporting that he/she is being bullied, and the increased risk of depression and low self-esteem that negatively impact on a student's ability to learn and problem-solve (Salmon, James & Smith, 1997; Smith & Sharpe 1994). Male students tend to be bullies (3:1), using direct bullying methods. Female students tend to use indirect bullying styles that are more difficult to pin down or affect with intervention. It is noted that gender differences in bullying behavior may aid in the focus of anti-bullying programs and accurate measurement of bullying behavior.

Roberts (2005) contends that current availability of research makes it difficult for policy makers to determine the best choices of intervention. There is a vast amount of information, theories, models and results to sort through. Many programs exist, such as Quality Circles, the No Blame approach, Pikas, befriending and peer support, or peer mentoring and mediation, adult counseling and or mediation, playground changes as such as more sport and games, and gardens, or trained monitors (Smith & Brain, 2000; Roberts, 2005). Hence, it is difficult to evaluate which interventions are best for a school. Roberts suggests systematic reviews of anti-bullying interventions to filter information and to provide consensus on where research stands to date.

Smith and Sharpe's (1994) *School Bullying: Insights and Perspectives*, propose that anti-bullying policies of schools are not as effective as they could be. However, Salmon et al.'s (1997) research found completely the opposite. The two English schools compared found only 4.2% of respondents had experienced bullying. Victims tended to be the younger secondary school students. A review of two decades of bullying research in schools has revealed that bullying remains an international issue (Smith & Brain 2000). Through the evaluation of school-based anti-bullying interventions more of the nature and effects of bullying can be understood.

Using surveys, Whitney & Smith (1994) evaluated an anti-bullying school program that used Olweus's (1992) self-report bullying survey, the first of its kind (cited by Smith & Brain, 1997). An "information pack" was then developed and distributed nationally. In Scotland, the Edinburgh Council introduced two similar information packs during the 1990s. Anti-bullying videos were produced, and an Anti-Bully Center built in 1993 in Wales. Also at this time, the Department of Education in the UK set national guidelines to reduce bullying within schools. In 2000, the Department also distributed the *Don't Suffer in Silence Pack* throughout English and Welsh schools. All of these programs are considered effective. However, few evaluations exist, and so the effects of their policies on the well-being and education of the student remain unknown.

There has been further headway into the evaluation of anti-bullying programs. O'Morre (2000) reviewed the whole school policy that uses an ecological approach, and found it to be quite successful. As well, Ortega Ruiz and Lera (2000) evaluated the ecological approach of Seville schools in Spain that focused policies on interpersonal relationships of the school. It was concluded that analyses of students, teachers, parents and the wider community, as well as incorporating curriculum change, manifests in a successful anti-bullying intervention.

It appears that research evaluating current anti-bullying programs is critical, although limited. This present research study will compare the levels of bullying behaviour and awareness of anti-bullying interventions, of two South-East, private and state schools. The different school policies and intervention methods will be described and evaluated. Students, teachers and parents will be surveyed, and selected in-depth interviews will take place. It is expected that levels of bullying activity and awareness of anti-bullying intervention/s, will differ with respect to student inclusion in the development of anti-bullying programs.

That is to say, I will be investigating whether or not private schools are better and more equipped in dealing with bullying than state schools.

Method

Participants

All primary schools across the 33 regions of Greater London are eligible to take part in this study (<http://www.schoolsnet.com/>). Two schools one state, one private, were chosen using a random numbers table. Parent-and-community committees, as well as school principles, received a letter explaining the aim of the study and asking permission to evaluate their anti-bullying programs. For this exploratory study, only year 6 students were asked to participate.

A parental consent form was issued to all students, and those who returned their forms were able to take part. The consent form will provide contact details of the primary researcher. Also, the form outlined participant rights, such as voluntary participation, withdrawal without penalty, and anonymity through the use of participant numbers. Participants were assured of secure storage of all data relevant to this study, and that after 5 years the data will be shredded. These ethical precautions are necessary because some student demographics need to be collected as control variables, including, socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender and age.

No incentives were provided for participation in this study. All results were shared with the students, their parents and the schools, to contribute to their policy reviews.

Materials

Students will complete The Olweus Revised Bully/Victim Questionnaire (2001) using a computer. The 40 item multiple choice survey contains questions on experiences of direct and indirect bullying, where incidents of bullying have taken place, bullying attitudes of the respondents, and perceptions of the extent to which others such as peers, parents and teachers are

aware of bullying, and their levels of intervention. This instrument has a very high reliability, and content and construct validity.

Olweus' questionnaire has been adapted for this study to include four questions that specifically measure awareness of current anti-bullying programs and perceptions of the programs effectiveness within each school. An additional four questions are used to gauge student perceptions of personal involvement in the development of programs within their school. The questionnaire yields three sub-scores: a bully/victim score, an awareness score, and an involvement score. Summed, these provide an overall total score to represent each student's contribution to these three dimensions.

For the individual interviews 5 students, 5 teachers, and 5 parents (couples are considered as "one"), will be randomly selected from a pool of volunteers. Students eligible for an interview must have completed a survey. The structured interview for students shall inquire into perceptions of bullying behavior towards/perpetrated by themselves, as well as perceptions of bullying activity within their school. Also, as part of the in-depth interview, participants will be asked their feelings about involvement/lack of in the development of anti-bullying programs. The interview for parents and teachers shall ask about perceptions of bullying, awareness of anti-bullying programs, and attitudes towards bullying, and the involvement of students in decision-making processes for programs.

Design

This is a comparative-correlational study which aims to define the current levels of bullying in a public and private schools. It is comparative because it compared the levels of bullying, awareness and engagement of the students in both schools. Descriptive statistics such as the mean and standard deviation were computed. The t-test for two independent variables was

used to do pairwise comparisons on the 3 categories of bullying, awareness and engagement. Finally, the study is also correlational because the relationships among these three categories were also established using the Pearson's r correlation coefficient.

Procedure

An announcement was made to year 6 classes of each school asking them to take part in a study about their school. The participants' were not told that the study is about anti-bullying programs within their school. This is so they do not try to guess the hypothesis, and also to protect participants from bullying for taking part. Each student was given a parental consent form and asked to return it by a set day.

The following week, the researcher went to each school on a separate day to distribute and collect the questionnaires. The day following the survey, interviews of students, teachers and parents began. While students and teachers can be met during lunch hours or after school, meetings with most parents were in the evenings after work. All surveys and interviews were administered personally by the researcher to control for possible inconsistencies in explanation of terms (Mellor, 1990).

On completion of the study students, teachers and parents were thanked, and will be briefly informed of the study's hypothesis, and of their part in the research. Results were made available to all participants, teachers, and head teachers following dissertation submission.

In summary, it is expected that the degree of involvement of year 6 students in the development of anti-bullying programs will influence bullying activity within their schools. An ecological approach was taken for this initially, small-scale exploratory research. An ecological paradigm is much more globally relevant in regards to evaluation of anti-bullying programs, because it considers pedagogy and interpersonal relationships of students, their parents, teachers and the

surrounding community. This research aims to extend understanding of how a school can better cultivate an atmosphere of positive learning for the children of our future.

All in all, there were 30 students which participated from each school (for the questionnaire portion), to give a total of 60 total number of respondents. On the other hand, the qualitative portion entailed interviewing 3 students and 2 administrators from each learning institution.

Problem Statement

The current study aims to answer the following overall problem: Is there a significant difference in the effectiveness of the development and implementation of anti-bullying policies between a public and private school?

To answer this question, the following sub-problems shall be addressed:

- 1) To what extent does bullying behavior occur in the public and private schools as perceived by its students?
- 2) What is the level of awareness of students and teachers on anti-bullying policies as rated by students?
- 3) What is the level of engagement of students and teachers on anti-bullying policies as rated by students?
- 4) Are there significant relationships among bullying, awareness, and engagement scores?

Results

Demographics

The sample consists of 60 students from St Christophers School, Becenham, Kent, UK (a private school). An equal number of students were from, Pickhurst Primary School, West Wickham, Kent (a state or public school). The mean age of the students from each sample was 14.5 and

14.7 years, respectively. To eliminate the possible effect of gender, equal percentages of boys and girls were selected to compose each sample.

Olweus Bullying Scores

Table 1. *T-test for liking breaks.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	2.8333	.74029	-7.35	.000**
Private	4.3000	1.35672		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

Table 1 shows that there is a significant difference between the state and private schools in terms of students liking their breaks. Private school students have expressed liking their breaks more than their public school counterparts ($t=-7.35, p<.05$).

Table 2. *T-test for spending breaktimes alone.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	4.3000	1.35672	.373	.710
Private	4.2167	1.07501		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

Table 2 depicts that there is no significant difference between private and public school students in terms of spending their breaks alone ($t=.373, p>.05$).

Table 3. *T-test for being bullied at school.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	P
Public	4.1667	.97714	12.073	.000**
Private	2.1000	.89632		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

The results for comparing their perceptions of being bullied at school shows that public school students seem to perceive bullied more than students from the private school ($t=12.073, p<.05$).

Table 4. *T-test for teachers stopping bullying.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	4.5667	.64746	3.08	.003**
Private	4.0500	1.12634		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

When asked about whether their teacher prohibit or stop bullying, public school students have

given significantly higher ratings than their private school counterparts ($t=3.08, p<.05$).

Table 5. *T-test for telling teachers that one is bullied.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	4.1667	.97714	10.256	.000**
Private	2.4500	.85222		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

Table 5 suggests that public school students seem to be more open to telling their teachers about their bullying experiences than private school students ($t=10.256, p<.05$).

Table 6. *T-test for telling parents that one is bullied.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	4.4333	.72174	6.618	.000**
Private	3.0833	1.40570		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

A similar trend is seen for being more open to parents and sharing bullying experiences. Public school students gave higher ratings than private school students ($t=6.618, p<.05$).

Table 7. *T-test for participating in bullying behavior.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	3.0500	1.06445	8.579	.000**
Private	1.6833	.62414		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

Participation in bullying behavior also yielded significant results, with public school students experiencing bullying to a greater extent than private school students ($t=8.579$, $p<.05$).

Table 8. *T-test for telling anyone that one is being bullied.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	4.3667	.80183	7.203	.000**
Private	2.8833	1.37892		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

The results for this item follow the same trend as those of openness to telling parents and teachers about bullying experiences, where public school students seem to be more open to sharing to anyone their bullying experience ($t=7.203$, $p<.05$).

Table 9. *T-test for noticing that someone is being bullied.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	P
Public	4.0500	1.15605	10.326	.000**
Private	2.1000	.89632		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

While there seems to be greater openness among public school students, there also seems to have a higher incidence of bullying among them. The results for this item suggest that public school students notice bullying more than their private school counterparts ($t=10.326$, $p<.05$).

Table 10. *T-test for being bullied going to school.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	p
Public	3.9667	1.14931	9.921	.000**
Private	2.1000	.89632		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

The results suggest that public school students experience bullying to a greater extent; in this case, they express more strongly that they are bullied going to school when compared to private school students ($t=9.921$, $p<.05$).

Table 11. *T-test for being bullied going from school.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	3.9500	.96419	10.885	.000**
Private	2.1000	.89632		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

The results are consistent with the previous item, indicating that public school students experience bullying to a greater extent; in this case, they express more strongly that they are bullied going from school when compared to private school students ($t=10.885$, $p<.05$).

Table 12. *T-test for being bullied by teachers.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	2.0000	.95669	1.888	.061
Private	1.6500	1.07080		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

The t-test for comparing bullying by teachers did not yield a significant result. The private and state schools yielded statistically equal means ($t=1.888$, $p>.05$).

Table 13. *T-test for helping those who are bullied.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	P
Public	4.0500	1.15605	-1.114	-.268
Private	4.2500	.77295		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

For the item helping those who are bullied, the results were also not significant. Thus, this suggests that there is no significant difference between the public and private schools in terms of their willingness to help those who are bullied ($t=-1.14$, $p>.05$).

Table 14. *T-test for bullying another student.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	P
Public	3.0167	.98276	8.871	.000**
Private	1.6833	.62414		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

Public school students gave higher ratings on admitting to bullying another student when compared to their private school counterparts ($t=8.871$, $p<.05$).

Awareness of Teachers and Students of Anti-Bullying Policies.

Table 15. *T-test for lack of awareness of teachers on anti-bullying policies.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	p
Public	4.4333	.72174	6.618	.000**
Private	3.0833	1.40570		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

For awareness of teachers on anti-bullying policies, the results are significant, with public school students giving higher ratings ($t=6.618, p<.05$). Since this item is reverse scored, this means private school teachers are more aware of their anti-bullying policies, as perceived by their students.

Table 16. *T-test for lack of awareness of students on anti-bullying policies.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	p
Public	3.5000	1.21432	1.737	.085
Private	3.0833	1.40570		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

There is no significant difference between public and private school students in terms of their students' awareness of their anti-bullying policies. The results suggest that the private school students are equally aware of anti-bullying policies as the public school students ($t=1.737,$

p>.05).

Table 17. *T-test for perceived lack of effectiveness of awareness campaigns.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	3.3833	.76117	2.021	.046*
Private	3.1000	.77460		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

The results for perceived lack of effectiveness suggests that the private school’s awareness campaigns are evaluated as more effective than those from the public school (t=2.021, p<.05).

Table 18. *T-test for perceived lack of involvement of teachers on increasing awareness on anti-bullying policies.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	4.4333	.72174	6.618	.000**
Private	3.0833	1.40570		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

Involvement of Teachers and Students in Development and Advocacy of Anti-Bullying Policies

Table 19. *T-test for teachers' involvement in promoting anti-bullying policies.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	3.7500	1.29700	2.700	.008**
Private	3.0833	1.40570		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

Private school teachers were given higher engagement scores compared to teachers from the public school (t=2.700, p<.05).

Table 20. *T-test for students' involvement in promoting anti-bullying policies.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	4.1667	.49289	3.871	.000**
Private	3.8667	.34280		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

Public school students seem more involved in promoting their school's anti-bullying policies, compared to students from the private school (t=3.871, p<.05).

Table 21. *T-test for teachers helping in the consistent implementation of anti-bullying policies.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	3.8333	1.30406	-1.415	.160
Private	4.1000	.65613		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

Teachers from the private school are as equally helpful in ensuring the consistent implementation of anti-bullying policies as teachers from the public school ($t = -1.415, p > .05$).

Table 22. *T-test for students helping in the consistent implementation of anti-bullying policies.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	3.8167	1.33393	-1.476	.143
Private	4.1000	.65613		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

Similarly, students from the private school are as equally helpful in ensuring the consistent implementation of anti-bullying policies as their counterparts from the public school ($t = -1.476, p > .05$).

Table 23. *T-test for overall bullying score.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	P
Public	52.9167	9.68187	8.704	.000**
Private	38.6500	8.21290		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

The overall bullying score suggests higher scores from the public school when compared to the private school ($t=8.704$, $p<.05$). This suggests that greater incidence of bullying occurs within the public school setting.

Table 24. *T-test for overall awareness score.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	15.7500	2.08810	5.160	.000**
Private	12.3500	4.65714		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

When the awareness levels of the two schools are compared, one can see that the public school yielded higher scores; however, since the items from this category are all reverse scored, this suggests that the private school has higher awareness levels than the public school ($t=5.160$, $p<.05$).

Table 25. *T-test for overall engagement score.*

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p
Public	15.5667	3.98883	.689	.492
Private	15.1500	2.46209		

*significant at the .05 significance level

**significant at the .01 significance level

For overall engagement score, it is shown that there is no significant difference between the engagement score of the public and private school ($t=.689, p>.05$).

Table 26. *Intercorrelation matrix among bullying, awareness and engagement scores.*

	Bullying	Awareness	Engagement
Bullying	1	-.566**	-.482**
Awareness	-.566**	1	.672**
Engagement	-.482**	.672**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The intercorrelation matrix above suggests that bullying behavior is significantly correlated with awareness of anti-bullying policies ($r=-.566, p<.05$). The positive correlation suggests that as awareness of anti-policies increase, the incidence and gravity with which bullying occurs necessarily decreases. Moreover, engagement in the development and implementation of anti-bullying policies is also negatively correlated with bullying scores. This indicates that as engagement of both teachers and students increases, this helps significantly in the reduction of incidence of bullying. Awareness and engagement are positively related. Naturally, once students and teachers are made keenly aware of the noble thrusts of anti-bullying policies, that increases

their engagement or involvement in ensuring that these are implemented properly.

Discussion

In the past two decades, there has been substantial research dedicated to change management amongst schools. For instance, the school improvement route has been proposed by Beare et al (1989) and Stoll & Fink (1996), which has been strongly founded on a holistic view of the school as a system; thus, human resource management interventions may then be used as a channel through which eventual school improvement may be achieved. Everard and Morris (1990) have used the initial framework of Adair (1998), prescribing management to secure objectives. This is carried out through leaders introduction of change who are equipped with the skills and competencies called for to enact change throughout the whole system. Contemporary work in 25 secondary learning institutions in the Midlands region of the United Kingdom, has accorded proof of how the change in one component of school culture has yielded various degrees of effectiveness and success. The potency of change has been assessed by demonstrating an association between change management and the results based on the perceptions of student respondents. Such empirical proof has also resulted into a consideration of qualitative data on the significance of overall school culture and particular policies in implementing change.

The results of the study are consistent with those yielded in the Keele et al study, which depicts that engagement and awareness on anti-bullying policies do increase the likelihood of implementation success.

Student perceptions of anti-bullying policies in 25 secondary schools has been undertaken by the Keele University partnership. The latter is an association of schools which host students

following the post-graduate certificate in education course (Glover et al, 1997). The main task was to establish the success or perceived effectiveness of anti-bullying measures on the occurrence and overall effect of anti-social behavior among schools. The methodology entailed the use of a questionnaire, which has been accomplished by 23% or 4700 of the whole student population which discussed views on peer relationships. Of these, 150 students underwent a structured interview. The research group was keenly aware that the development and implementation of policies will allow modifications towards how effective change may be enacted. Moreover, five staff members from each school were interviewed to garner a more detailed view on the introduction of anti-bullying policies and procedures.

The root or origin of policies is reflective of the distinct management culture of a school (Fullan, 1991). School staff have unique views on the need for change and in exploring their perceptions of the existing degree of anti-social behavior among students (Cosntable, 1994). The more that change lends itself more easily to measurement, it is more probable that members may be convinced of the effectiveness of new policies. For instance, in three out of the 25 schools in the Keele study, there has been a noted decreased in grave incidents of bullying, despite an initial increase in the number of reported incidents of all types of seriousness. The extent of measurement is constrained by such subjectivity as has been demonstrated by Randall (1991) in his investigation of the management of bullying within the community setting.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) purport that at the initial stage of formulating policies, the conventional reason is to provide a benchmark for acceptable behavior within the school context. Other reasons cited for policy formulation is practically reacting to external pressures, and in such a case, initiated and lead by senior management. The required response to direct pressures compelled by legislation is prescribed by Bowe & Ball (1992); in essence, schools do not have a

choice except to introduce policies to comply with legislation. Indirect pressures from legislation have caused schools to reassess their response to anti-social behavior because they aspire to project a good image towards prospective students and their parents. The most commonly cited reason for policy formulation is to establish best practices within the school and to respond to media attention which has focused on bullying issues. Modifications in the management of a particular aspect of school life has been tagged thus – ‘policy’. However, in general, qualitative evidence suggests the policy makers’ acknowledgement of the contribution of behavior in overall school improvement, as what has been documented in the Elton Report (Department of Education and Science, 1989). In the report, it has been explicitly stated that anti-bullying measures have been introduced to ‘establish decent behaviour as the norm in schools’ and ‘to help to develop a rounded person within a pleasant constructive atmosphere.’

In 15 out of the 25 schools in the Keele study, the one who has spearheaded the initiative was a senior management team member. The set up has promoted a bottom-up approach, with students and classroom teachers being strongly engaged in the process. A bottom-up ownership of change approach does increase engagement and participative commitment; however, it also increases expectations, as illustrated by the investigation undertaken by Stone (1995). In the institution where the program has been initiated by students, teacher support and encouragement has been demonstrated as a crucial determinant of success.

Management and Staff Support as Determinants of Success

The results of the present study show that teacher and management support are critical to the eventual reduction of bullying behavior. When teachers are strongly engaged in the formulation and implementation of anti-bullying policies, it is more likely that they will be deemed or evaluated more effective. Management style is a critical factor in the introduction of change

within a school. For instance, Bush (1995) purports that for the authoritarian leader, such change may simply be part of the bureaucratic structure of the school. In contrast, for more open and affable senior managers, the approach may engage all staff in the decision making process. In some other instances, change is brought forth ambivalently, seemingly as an outcome of micropolitical pressures brought to bear with staffroom negotiations. In such an instance, power play or some other form of transaction transpires (Ball, 1987; Handy, 1993). At the authoritarian extreme, one teacher has given the following comment: “I vaguely recall a pile of papers in my pigeonhole.” Meanwhile, at the affable end of this continuum, she expresses:

“The policy evolved as a result of staff discussion which was then considered by the senior management team who made proposals which were refined by the pastoral committee, and thence sent to the governors, at a time when the profile was raised by media pressure which caused the school to evaluate procedures” (Glover et al, 1997)

In another school, pressure groups were evident when a group of staff were keen that “we should do something about having a policy but they were mainly from the pastoral side and we were much concerned about getting much more time for the subjects... it led to a lot of bargaining. (Glover et al, 1997)”

Moreover, evidence suggests that while there is strong and broad ownership of policy with the staff feeling that they were actively engaged in the process, there is a need to sustain the momentum, lest it be overtaken by more pressing and seemingly more urgent issues. Wallace (1991) demonstrates that having numerous objectives may result in a weakening or even loss of drive; the Keele study has proved that the participant schools had indeed been simultaneously involved in several policy development areas. In addition, Fullan (1991) emphasizes the significance of the beginning stage, where ideas for change become adequately integrated into

staff thinking or in organisational practice to allow successful implementation. These are consistent with the results of the interview where 2 out of 5 teachers from both public and private schools did express some level of difficulty in sustaining momentum in policy implementation. The critical role of a leader in policy implementation is also stressed. Grace (1997) presents an array of leadership approaches which might be determined by the context of managerial action. Naturally, if anti-bullying is not among the priorities of the leader and chances are not provided for strong staff engagement and participation, the atmosphere conducive for such a change may not be created. The following comment has been given on the relationship between policy formulation and leadership from a private school teacher.

‘Strong and continuing influence of the deputy head and the school counselor giving a dynamic lead and they will not be deflected but they have given middle management staff their heads as leaders of the programme.’

The distinction might indicate that the absence of a policy results in a stronger degree of anti-social behaviour in those schools without particular policies. However, the evidence likewise suggests that the general culture can be so positive that an anti-bullying stand is sustained ‘whilst there are no well-established practices known to staff’ (Glover et al, 1997). Moreover, staff in this school uphold that this is applicable at the crisis management phase (usually consequent to a serious bullying incident) but that student reaction indicates that much bullying occurs unreprimanded. Policies within the other school are assessed to be more effective because specific plans and procedures are shared by all staff. 73% of all the students who participated gave positive evaluations on the manner in which staff handled problems, while 86% expressed that they felt secure in the existing environment, knowing that the staff will undertake full investigation of bullying incidents if they occurred (Glover et al, 1997).

Changing Practices: Policies and Culture

The significance behind the drafting of a policy, apart from being organisational development initiatives of the school, is a three-prong approach. First, a policy makes it transparent to everyone about what the school is undertaking in a specific area and the rationale behind such an activity. Moreover, it disseminates information on the practice expected within the school and permits progress tracking (Wilms, 1992). When an analysis between basic philosophy and policy and practice is undertaken, one will realize that this is distinct from one school to another, and may be practically related to the goals of the learning institution. These, in effect, somehow serve as indicators of how the school translates its objectives into tangible realities (Fidler, 1996). The more profound goals are intrinsic or inherent into the culture of the organisation, represented by policies utilized to guide how relationships ought to be managed and daily practice (Barth, 1990). If the culture advocates the changed practices, it is probable that policies will be developed from a rationale integrated into the goals of the school and will accord the detail of practice in everyday school life. These may be regularly assessed by institutional self-evaluation (Stoll, 1991). Several authors (Foster et al, 1990; Mellor, 1991; Smith & Sharp, 1994) indicate that policies ought to be associated to the overall goals and strategies of the school; moreover, it should also provide details of curricular practice, referral systems, and the role of participating staff. Several schools have cited indispensable elements such as ‘respect for each other, working together and using lines of communication for all – not just the pupils’ and ‘acknowledge the rights of access of each individual to all opportunities’ (Glover et al, 1997). From these suggestions have sprung:

“the creation of a climate within the school where bullying behaviors are not accepted by any member of the school community and in which we use all students, staff and parents to work

towards the elimination of any form of bullying” (Glover et al, 1997).

As depicted by Fullan (1991), the use of some catch phrases as a way of capturing these policies is crucial: some examples include ‘fair deal’, ‘caring community’, ‘ten key aims’ and ‘looking out for each other’. These heighten students’ awareness and underlines community thinking and action. Moreover Everard and Morris (1996) purport that this embodies the gaining commitment phase, crucial in the success of any anti-bullying policy.

It would be crude to consider that decision makers in these two schools are aware of the distinction between improving culture and drafting policy. The atmosphere in which students experience culture can be scrutinized in terms of social interaction and behaviour within the teaching and learning environments, which is a basic tenet to the management of educational effectiveness purported by Hargreaves (1995). He provides a model that contains several components of social control as an authoritarian feature and social cohesion as an integrative determinant. The senior staff of the two schools who have been interviewed illustrated that those who were inclined towards social control were more likely to draft policies; on the other hand, those who tended towards social cohesion were more comfortable with engaging staff, parents and pupils, before proceeding to formal policy formulation.

The Complexity of School Culture and its Impact to Policy Formulation

In discussing about change in organisations, Martin and Meyerson (1988) assert that culture is a complicated pattern of meanings, values, and behaviours – more profound than the practices which are occasionally referred to. Given this however, culture has a significant impact on policy. It may be viewed as an integrative anchor, as seen in the anti-bullying policy of the private school investigated, where it has been seen and applied onto the whole school system and

is associated to the behaviour ethos in general – both in word and in action. On the other hand, it may also serve as a vehicle for differentiation, whereby the variety of anti-bullying policies exercised by year heads within an overall minimalist framework in another school which strongly advocates the needs of individual pupils and the autonomy of school staff. The latter approach is more clearly observed from the anti-bullying policies of the public school investigated in the current study. Both of these approaches, however, make use of cultural change from a core or centralist school stance; however, in some schools, there is evidence of a vague association between policies drafted in response to individual student and staff needs, but without an encompassing, integrative theme or framework. This ambivalence creates subcultures within the school system, with conflict arising among senior staff, parents, and students regarding policy interpretation (Martin & Meyerson, 1988).

Publication of Anti-Bullying Policies

Where the objectives are explicitly expressed, both schools have exerted effort in the advertisement and publication of the policies. In both of the schools, there is a reference to a benchmark of student-created posters in school corridors and rooms, serving as a reminder to all students that ‘bullying is not necessarily physical’; that ‘students ought to be treated fairly by all’ and that ‘all are encouraged to talk freely to staff regarding their bullying experiences’. ‘Care and consideration for others is basic’. These tenets have also been openly developed in both the public and private schools, where senior governors, school staff, and parents were encouraged to be engaged in the policy development and formulation process. In the Keele study, there were certain schools who did not demonstrate such openness. One form tutor from the private school purports that ‘organisations need a level of intimidation to bring out the best in pupils – but we

also need to set up an atmosphere in which disclosure can happen whilst avoiding over-reaction and becoming suppressive.’ In addition, within this school, ‘policy is not always clear because principles are not defined’ and one year head from the public school further comments, ‘the policy is not owned by enough staff to affect the culture of the school shown for example in the philosophical chasm regarding no-blame policies’.

Strengthening Advocacy during the Implementation Phase

Whether through an attempt to enhance school effectiveness or through more direct managerial action, the pragmatic tenets of policy implementation need to be assessed and implemented by all staff. The public school, in particular, has expressed some lack of advocacy or support, ‘we are having some difficulty in implementation because not all staff are clear about the purpose, implementation details, and ultimate objective of our anti-bullying policy. Our role as stewards is not clearly defined.’ Hargreaves (1995) asserts that such cooperation and engagement is necessary in the success of implementation of any policy. In his study, one school asserts the following:

“Cooperation and recognition that the weaker have problems to be understood and tolerated through the implementation of a charter based on the caring community and including equal rights for all and an entitlement for all pupils to have one member of staff to keep them straight, one to listen and one to defend” (Hargreaves, 1995).

This degree of advocacy underlies guidance on the investigation of bullying incidents, specifically where no blame policies have been put forth, where ‘personal relationships are the focus, and form tutors are the medium, for all codes of behaviour.’ At its most sophisticated level, this leads to some forms of contract, the usage of checklists to ensure guarantee that

policies are complied with, and a monitoring system which intends to ensure sustenance and continued effectiveness. The t-tests of the current study shows that the private school which yielded significantly higher awareness and engagement scores also resulted in lesser incidence of bullying. Such evidence suggests that schools which have anti-bullying policies which have well-defined goals, explained in a language understood by students, advertised as principles of good and peaceful community life by staff, and exercised consistently in action, have a higher probability of attaining their goals (Fullan, 1991).

Difficulties in Sustenance

Staff in both public and private schools acknowledge the difficulties in attaining the goals of any policy because of certain concerns. Some of these include ‘not having adequate time for investigating the bullying incident or to address the needs of the individuals concerned’, ‘usually having to be involved with issues that we cannot really monitor or track down and figure out the interrelationships of what actually happened – the truth is evasive’. The pragmatic hardships also encompass a ‘lack of the optimal atmosphere or environment’, ‘the issues brought about by lack of resources to respond to student needs’, and ‘soliciting proof in such a way that will compel and justify our actions – usually through the feedback that people give us’. The outcome of all of these difficulties is some basic philosophical hardships in policy development that focuses on relationships. The results are strongly dependent on rumors and hearsay, with indefinite or doubtful metrics, and their subjectivity is an obstacle to the interpretation of results. Eraut (1993) demonstrates how professional education necessitates that the staff in both public and private schools to analyze and breed the required knowhow, skills, and attitudes to manage change and address the need to develop effective anti-bullying policies.

Conclusion

The present study shows that significant differences do exist between the public and private schools in terms of the incidence of bullying (as measured by their bullying scores), awareness and engagement. In particular, it has been shown that a greater incidence in bullying seems to transpire within the public school – and that these results are consistent with correlations among bullying, awareness and engagement. Because awareness and engagement are correlated with incidence and gravity of bullying, concrete measures must be carried out to enhance these critical factors. The degree of policy development within each school is reflective of the pressures for change and its motivation to establish tenets which will serve as guideposts for students, parents, and staff.

From the study, it is clear that the level of policy development may be depicted in some sort of continuum. Successful policy implementation, as asserted by Glover and colleagues (1997), seemed to have two elements: 1) clear documentation, and 2) consistent application. The consistency of application also suggested some degree of monitoring and assessment as a characteristic. Policies which were not documented, as in the public school, seemed to be less successful and effective. On the other hand, documented and undocumented policies become equally ineffective when they are not consistently applied, when no policy exists, or when staff enact such policy pragmatically (Glover et al, 1997). The management of both schools ought to ensure that support and advocacy for the policies are ingrained in both school staff and students who may synergistically work towards the success of its implementation.

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OLWEUS BULLYING QUESTIONNAIRE

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Mostly	Always
1) Do you like your break times?	1	2	3	4	5	6
2) In general, do you spend your breaks alone?	1	2	3	4	5	6
3) Usually, do you get bullied at school?	1	2	3	4	5	6
4) Do teachers try to stop your being bullied?	1	2	3	4	5	6
5) Do you tell teachers that you are being bullied?	1	2	3	4	5	6
6) Do you tell your parents that you are bullied?	1	2	3	4	5	6
7) Do you participate in bullying behaviour?	1	2	3	4	5	6
8) Do you tell anyone that you are bullied?	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____ (Please indicate their relationship to you e.g., sister, priest, counsellor)						
9) Do you notice students in your class being bullied?	1	2	3	4	5	6
10) Are you bullied going <u>to</u> school?	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____ (Please indicate where mostly e.g., shops near school, bus)						
11) Are you bullied going <u>from</u> school?	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____ (Please indicate where mostly e.g., shops near school, bus)						
12) Are you ever bullied by a teacher/s	1	2	3	4	5	6
13) Usually, do help another who is being bullied?	1	2	3	4	5	6
_____ (If you <u>don't</u> could you write why you don't e.g., am scared, not sure what to do)						
_____ (If you <u>do</u> could you write what you do e.g., tell them to stop, tell a teacher)						
14) Do you ever bully another student?	1	2	3	4	5	6
State your level of agreement to the following statements using the following scale						
1- Strongly Disagree 2- Moderately Disagree 3- Slightly Disagree						
4- Slightly Agree 5 – Moderately Agree 6 – Strongly Agree						
15) Teachers lack awareness on anti-bullying policies.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16) Students lack awareness on anti-bullying policies.	1	2	3	4	5	6

