

2022

The Influence of School Faculty Culture on Anti-Bullying Policies

Bethany Huff
Walden University

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Walden University

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Bethany Nicole Huff

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

The Influence of School Faculty Culture on Anti-Bullying Policies

by

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MA, Slippery Rock University, 2013

BS, Slippery Rock University, 2011

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Criminal Justice

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Abstract

Despite the continual research conducted related to bullying, teachers and school faculty continue to face challenges related to addressing bullying within the school setting. Due to the various consequences related to bullying, it is crucial that school faculty find the best methods to adequately address incidents that occur within the school so that students can continue to receive their education in a safe environment. The purpose of this study was to improve the understanding of how school faculty perceive the organizational culture related to anti-bullying programs and how this influences their implementation and utilization of strategies developed by programs implemented due to anti-bullying laws. The theoretical framework that acted as the base for this qualitative study was the organizational culture theory. Participants were asked questions related to their school's definition of bullying, policies on how to address incidents, as well as the culture of support related to implementing these strategies as well as receiving adequate training on how to identify and address bullying inside and outside of their classroom. Data collected were analyzed via identification of themes and coding that provided adequate understanding of the responses from participants and how they related to the research questions of this study. The participants reported that the school had not provided a clear understanding of what behavior was and was not considered bullying. The study leads to various implications related to social change that will assist policy makers, school officials, and school faculty to adequately implement policies and programs in school to provide students with a safe and positive learning environment.

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Dedication

It is with genuine gratitude that I dedicated this research to Josh, Jodi, Don, Anna Jo, Adelynn, Sophia, and Rowan. Also, I dedicate this in memory of my grandmother, MaryAnn.

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Thank you to everyone who has helped me to reach this point. In whole, there have been a lot of sacrifice that has been made to help me to attain this level of academic achievement. I will forever be thankful for the support, encouragement, and guidance throughout this journey.

Special acknowledgement to my parents, Jodi and Don, for always believing that I could finish, when I struggled to even see the light at the end of the tunnel. To my husband, Josh, for celebrating my victories as if they were his own and always making sure I know how proud he is of me. Also, to our four children. They may not be aware of the sacrifices we have had to make to get to this point, but I hope they all see that hard work pays off and that they, too, can achieve anything they put their mind to. Lastly, to my grandmother, MaryAnn. I know if she were here, she would be sounding the alarm on how proud she was of me, and for that, I will forever be thankful.

Additionally, I would like to acknowledge all the teachers and mentors throughout my education that have in some way paved the way for me to reach this point. From elementary to post-secondary education, I have had so many teachers influence my life in more ways than they know, and for that I will forever be grateful.

I would also like to acknowledge the participants of this study and all those individuals who have help to make this research possible. Without their time and experience, the completion of this work would not have been possible. Special thank you to Dr.Carolynn Dennis and Dr. Tony Gaskew for getting me to this point as well.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

School faculty are continually facing challenges associated with addressing cases of bullying within the school setting. Due to the consequences related to bullying, professionals and parents are eager to protect students and provide them with a safe learning environment. Many states require schools to implement anti-bullying policies, and often, there is the view of teachers as formal authority figures who influence the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policies within the schools (van der Zanden, Denessen, & Scholte, 2015). Given the teacher's crucial role, it is vital to the effective development of these policies to identify any potential factors that may influence the efficiency in both developing and utilizing the policies. It is necessary to determine how culture among school faculty may affect the development of better policies and methods in addressing incidents of bullying that will provide students with a safer learning environment. Also, such exploration will offer professionals the opportunity to address any potential cultural issues among school faculty that may influence their ability to implement anti-bullying policies and utilize methods of intervention adequately. Therefore, the focus of this study is to explore the culture among school faculty and how culture influences the implementation and utilization of anti-bullying policies within the school.

The chapter's focus is providing a brief understanding of the literature and identifying the existing gap within the literature. Additional relevant sections include the background of the literature associated with the focus of the study and the problem and purpose statements of the study. Also presented in this chapter are the research questions, theoretical framework, and the nature of the study. The potential social implications

associated with this study are the ability for professionals to develop strategies to address potential factors that may arise due to the cultural influences among school faculty. Also, how it influences a faculty member's willingness to utilize strategies developed by anti-bullying policies properly.

Background

There are various areas to study when discussing the background associated with this study. There have been many ways of exploring bullying issues. It is necessary to understand not only the consequences of bullying and the implementation of anti-bullying laws but also available research regarding the effectiveness of the policies and identifying the gaps in the research. Exploring each of these areas helps to not only develop an understanding of bullying fully but also helps to identify areas that require further research, which helps to create better programs and policies.

Jiménez-Barbero, Ruiz-Hernández, Llor-Zaragoza, Pérez-García, and Llor-Esteban (2016) and Datta, Cornell, and Huang (2017) provide information recognizing bullying as a social concern that has negative consequences for the adolescents who are victims or associated with bullying. Additionally, Boulton, Boulton, Down, Sanders, and Craddock (2017), Letendre, Ostrander, and Mickens (2016), and Bang and Park (2017) provide data showing the various negative consequences associated with bullying, including depression, psychosis, and suicidal ideation.

Sabia and Bass (2017) provide information regarding the implementation of anti-bullying laws at both state and local levels throughout the United States that require schools to develop anti-bullying programs. It is not only essential to understand the anti-

bullying laws, but also it is necessary to understand the effectiveness of these programs as well. Ramirez, Eyck, Peek-Asa, Onwuachi-Willig, and Cavanaugh (2016) provide information regarding professionals researching the effectiveness of anti-bullying laws and the programs associated with these laws. There are various strategies related to implementing and integrating these programs, and Hall (2017) emphasizes the importance of identifying effective and ineffective strategies established by anti-bullying programs.

There are various components associated with the effectiveness of the anti-bullying programs and their implementation; specifically, teachers play a crucial role in the development of these programs and the response of students. Gregus, Rodriguez, Pastrana, Craig, McQuillin, and Cavell (2017) identify the importance of teachers and their beliefs of the behavior and programs implemented within the schools to understand the effectiveness of the anti-bullying programs. Additionally, teachers play a crucial role in teaching students in various aspects of their lives within the schools. Oldenburg, Bosman, and Veenstra (2016) identify the importance of a teacher's role in the lives of students and their role in developing cognitive abilities and addressing potential social concerns. Despite these correlations, Ertesvag (2016) identifies the gap of studies not exploring the relationship between students and teachers regarding bullying. Additionally, it identifies the lack of research on the monitoring methods of teachers to respond to bullying.

Given the role that teachers play in the lives of students, Goryl, Neilsen-Hewett, and Sweller (2013) identify the teacher's crucial role in addressing bullying and how they

do not always identify bullying. Kennedy, Russom, and Kevorkian (2012) report that students believe their teachers do not intervene as frequently as they would anticipate. Despite the teachers' belief that they do intervene, they often only do in 15 to 18% of bullying cases (p.3). Additionally, Van der Zanden, Denessen, and Scholte (2015) examine the perspectives of teachers and how these perspectives influence how they identify incidents of bullying and manage bullying behavior within their classroom.

Problem Statement

There is a problem in educational institutions throughout the United States. That problem, specifically, is effectively implementing anti-bullying programs to address bullying concerns among youth in grades 9 to 12 (Jimenez-Barbero, Ruiz-Hernandez, Llor-Zaragoza, Perez-Garcia, & Llor-Esteban, 2016). Currently, approximately 28% of high school students report being bullied (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016, p.5). However, 14.8% of youth who report experiencing frequent encounters with bullying display signs of depression (Wagner, 2016, para. 8). Alavi, Reshetukha, Prost, Antoniak, Patel, Sajid, and Groll (2017) reported that of their 270 participants, 77% experienced bullying, and 68.9% reported suicidal ideation (para 18). Participants who reported experiencing bullying were 19 times more likely to have suicidal thoughts than their peers who had no history of bullying (Alavi, Reshetukha, Prost, Antoniak, Patel, Sajid, & Groll, 2017). This problem affects adolescents because students who are victims of bullying experience higher rates of depression, academic struggles, less social connection, and higher rates of suicidal ideation (Sabia & Bass, 2017; Bang & Park, 2017).

Many possible factors are contributing to this problem, among which include lack of teacher training to address bullying, teacher self-efficiency, and lack of incorporating teacher strengths in the development of anti-bullying programs (van der Zanden, Denessen, & Scholte, 2015). The literature reviewed for this study identified bullying rates, policy development, and anti-bullying program methods as the foundation for the focus of the researcher's studies (Hall, 2017). None of the literature reviewed looked at how culture among school faculty influence the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs. This study will fill this gap by contributing to the body of knowledge needed to address this problem by providing data to public policy decision-makers to formulate and change anti-bullying policies and the programs implemented in schools across the United States.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to improve understanding of how the school faculty perceive the organizational culture related to anti-bullying programs and how this influences the school faculty's response and utilization of strategies developed by programs implemented due to anti-bullying laws. Interviews of approximately ten high school faculty members with at least five years of experience will be analyzed. The use of these interviews will be to develop an understanding of how the culture among school faculty influences teachers and other school faculty members' responses and the use of anti-bullying strategies.

Research Questions

The basis for the following research questions is on the perceptions of faculty members and how they respond to anti-bullying policies in various ways. The culture

within the schools plays a crucial role in multiple areas of a teacher's career, and it is essential also to understand how their perception of such influences their implementation, behavior, and utilization of the anti-bullying strategies.

1. How does the school faculty's perceptions of their organizational culture influence their perceptions of implementing anti-bullying policies?
2. How does the school faculty's perceptions of their organizational culture influence their behavior while implementing anti-bullying programs?
3. How do the school faculty's perceptions of their organizational culture influence their utilization of strategies developed by anti-bullying programs?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that will act as the base for this study is the organizational culture theory. Organizations have a variety of cultures that can shape the behavior of professionals within the organization. This utilization of this theory has been to examine these cultures and understand how they influence behavior, activities, and perceptions. Organizational culture theory is useful as a framework for studies to understand how culture influences the implementation of programs into an organization (Rivard, Lapointe, & Kappos, 2011). By examining how the perceptions and experiences of teachers affect the application of anti-bullying programs from the scope of this theory, the study will provide an understanding of how culture amongst teachers influence this program and policy.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study will be a qualitative research method. Qualitative research is consistent with exploring and understanding how culture among school faculty influences the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs. Qualitative research provides researchers the opportunity to explore and understand how individuals perceive, explore, and view experiences within the world differently (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). By engaging with the research on a different and unique level, the researcher explores how participants respond to an issue (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The study will take a phenomenological approach, and an in-depth understanding of the culture among school faculty and how it influences anti-bully programs will be the focus. Answers for research questions in phenomenological studies come through in-depth interviewing of participants who are closely associated with the phenomenon (Davison, 2014). Therefore, I aim to collect data from in-depth interviews with school faculty members who are most closely responsible for utilizing anti-bullying programs and have developed behavior and experiences associated with the culture among the faculty.

Definitions

The focus of this section is to discuss definitions of terms used throughout the study that have multiple meanings. The included terms are also the key concepts of the study.

School Faculty/Educator: Any individual within the school setting responsible for promoting the education of the child, providing a safe environment, and developing and implementing anti-bullying strategies within the school including teachers, school

administrators, principals, and any other faculty within the school that would respond to an incident of bullying (Batalli, 2017).

Bullying: Any unwanted aggressive behavior identified among students by school faculty or educators that requires intervention or the implementation of necessary anti-bullying strategies (Doumas & Midgett, 2019).

The culture among school faculty: Any shared understanding or similar ideas among school faculty that are ongoing and transferred, which develop shared values, social meaning, and shared behaviors among the faculty (Murphy, 2015; Demirdağ, 2016).

Assumptions

Throughout the process of developing this study, there have been numerous assumptions that have emerged. One assumption is that I assume all the educators will understand the questions within the interview. Additionally, I believe that the educators will have knowledge of organizational culture and the possible organizational culture that exists within their school. Concerning the participants, there is also an assumption that I will get enough participants for the study and that the participants will provide honest responses to the questions.

There are also assumptions regarding the culture within the schools. Additionally, the presumption exists that the school faculty has an organizational culture that may potentially influence the response and behavior of the faculty. In conjunction with the faculty's willingness to respond to the questions, the assumption exists that the culture will not be the reason as to why the educators do not accurately answer the interview

questions. These are all assumptions to be considered, and it will be essential to verify that the participants understand organizational culture and the existence of it within their environment.

Scope and Delimitations

The selection of participants will focus on a set of characteristics. One characteristic will be that the participants will be working with the grade levels fifth through seventh. The participants will also have held their position for no less than five years. The targeted title positions for this study include teachers, principals, office faculty within the school, and custodial workers. The choosing of these individuals is because they interact daily with both the students and one another. They are potentially required to intervene in incidents of bullying, and they may be influenced by the culture that exists among themselves and their fellow faculty members.

By limiting and focusing on these characteristics, it does influence whether the findings of the study could be generalized or transferred into other populations. For example, focusing on school faculty who work with students in grades fifth through seventh may have different experiences than those working with students in other grades. Additionally, the size of the school and the location of the school may also influence the transferability of the findings due to the potential differences that may exist in other school districts. The culture among school faculty may differ in other school districts as well, and before the study, there must be an identification of these considerations.

Limitations

The limitations of this study include first that the study focuses on specific characteristics regarding the school faculty. As mentioned in the previous section, school faculty in other grade levels may have different experiences. Additionally, location is a limitation. In other school districts, counties, and states, the experiences of the school faculty may differ, and it may be difficult to generalize the findings of the study to other school districts. However, it is essential to acknowledge that although school faculty may have differing experiences, culture among school faculty exists, and policymakers need to consider to potential influences that these cultures may have on the utilization and development of anti-bullying programs within the schools.

Significance

This researcher will fill the gap in understanding how the organizational culture among school faculty influences the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs developed in schools across the United States. This study is unique because it reviews methods and strategies developed and utilized by school faculty by understanding how culture among the faculty influence their approach and use of plans designed by anti-bullying programs. School faculty play an important role in the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs and are formal authority figures in addressing bullying (van der Zanden et al., 2015). School faculty are responsible for responding to incidents of bullying and for deterring the behavior by intervening with adequate methods (van der Zanden et al., 2015). Understanding how the interaction between teachers, principals, and other school faculty

members influence their approach to utilizing anti-bullying strategies helps program development by considering these occurrences.

Summary

Throughout this chapter, there were numerous topics addressed that focus on the development of this study. The section also includes an introduction to the problem and the purpose of the study. Additionally, it contains limitations, assumptions, and delimitations. There was also a brief discussion and examination of the theoretical framework within this section. The chapter also discussed the nature, significance, and background of the study. Each idea helps to provide an understanding of the study and allow for an introduction to the next chapter where there will be further discussion of these areas.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In current literature, a gap exists regarding the exploration of culture among school faculty and the influence it has on the effectiveness of the anti-bullying program. The purpose of this qualitative study is to improve understanding of how the organizational culture among school faculty influence their response and utilization of strategies developed by programs implemented due to anti-bullying laws in Pennsylvania. By exploring this area, the study will provide data to public policy decision-makers to formulate and change anti-bullying policies and the programs implemented in schools across the United States.

Throughout the literature, a plethora of data exists regarding the effects of bullying on the bullied student and the student who is the bully (Alavi et al. 2017). Adolescents with exposure to various types of bullying in the academic setting often struggle with depression, academic struggles, and on occasion, suicidal ideation (Sabia & Bass, 2017; Bang & Park, 2017). Therefore, professionals have taken steps to implement policies that address bullying behavior within the academic setting. From the development of these policies, questions regarding the effectiveness of the policies have developed. Numerous variables factor into both successful development of programs and implementing the plans so that they are effective. Teachers and school faculty are among the most crucial factors in the effectiveness of these programs. Studies exist regarding the lack of teacher training to address bullying, teacher self-efficiency, and lack of incorporating teacher strengths in the development of anti-bullying programs (van der Zanden, Denessen, & Scholte, 2015). Further research is necessary to develop policies

and programs that are effective. Therefore, it is vital to acknowledge the role of the school faculty and each of the potential factors associated with school faculty that may potentially influence the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs.

Sections addressed within this chapter include a description of the literature search strategy and an explanation of the theoretical foundation for the study. Additionally, the section will provide an exhaustive review of the literature and key variables that relate to the concepts of this study. In conclusion, it gives a detailed description of the existing literature and the identified gap within the literature.

Literature Search Strategy

Throughout the collection of literature for this study, there were numerous databases, keywords, and terms, and phrases utilized to verify that the research reviewed was exhaustive and thorough. Databases included were EBSCO, Google Scholar, ProQuest, Criminal Justice Database, and Emerald Management. EBSCO was the primary search engine utilized during the collection of the literature. The utilization of ProQuest, Criminal Justice Database, and Emerald Management was necessary when articles were not available with full text. Additionally, Google Scholar was a primary search engine. However, most of the literature collected was from EBSCO. Each of the search engines provides various literature that added to the quality of this chapter.

There was the utilization of various terms, keywords, and phrases throughout the search for literature. There were terms utilized that rendered a specific type of literature related to a particular theme used within the review. When searching for literature about bullying and the effects of bullying, keywords and phrases included bullying, bullying

and school, bullying and effects, bullying and criminal behavior, bullying and criminal behavior in adulthood, and bully and schools and criminal behavior. Terms and phrases utilized to collect literature related to anti-bullying policies and the effectiveness include anti-bullying policies, effective and anti-bullying policies, anti-bullying laws, and anti-bullying laws and policies, and efficiency. Literature collected related to teachers and perceptions of anti-bullying programs and policies were extensive. There were numerous phrase combinations utilized to discover literature that adequately aligned with the study. Consistent keywords included school teachers or educators. These terms transitioned into phrases including school teachers or educators and bullying and perceptions or attitude or opinions. Additionally, pairing school teachers or educators with terms such as workplace culture and organizational culture, and anti-bullying laws yielded results. Each of these terms and phrases led to the discovery of numerous articles that developed potential themes to discuss related to this study.

Most of the keywords and phrases were utilized within the EBSCO database to discover the literature. However, many terms and phrases used to discover bullying literature were searched for within Google Scholar and EBSCO. If an article did not have the full text available, it was necessary to search for the words and keywords in the different databases. By doing this, the discovery of new literature occurred, and also it gained access to the full text of articles that were in the original database.

Theoretical Framework

At the end of the 1970s, the term organizational culture came into existence. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the recognition that the theory was an essential element

of success within an organization began (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2015). Given the importance of culture within an organization, researchers must consider how culture influences individuals within an organization. The purpose of this section is to discuss organizational culture theory and how it relates to the study.

The culture within organizations has various definitions (Lehman, 2017). According to Alvesson and Sveningsson (2015), organizational culture encompasses numerous individuals, and due to this, it is not a simplistic theory to discuss. The culture within an organization are shared thoughts and believes among a group of individuals who come from various backgrounds. However, these individuals experience a mental phenomenon that leads them to develop similar ways of thinking regarding specific situations that they may encounter within the organization (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2015). There are numerous assumptions developed from the relationships and realities developed within the culture of an organization.

Factors in the culture of an organization are vast and depend on the organization and the relationships within. Given the existence of this perspective existing since the 1980s, professionals need to consider how this theory influences and reflects the development of programs within various professions (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2016). Through the analysis of culture, professionals can address any concerns or behavior that may influence the development of programs and policies based on the perceptions and realities that exist within the organization.

The basis for this theory is due to the focus on the culture amongst school faculty. It is essential to recognize how culture influences behaviors amongst those who work

closely with one another in an organization. Therefore, the relationships and realities that exist amongst school faculty may potentially change approaches to policies and programs within the school. Identifying the overall perception that is common among school faculty will help to develop a more thorough picture of the understanding that exists among the faculty regarding various situations that school faculty regularly encounter.

The focus of the research questions within this study is to identify how culture amongst school faculty influences the effectiveness and utilization of anti-bullying programs within the school. By collecting data that will adequately answer these research questions, professionals will be able to understand further how culture relates to the development and implementation of anti-bullying programs within schools. It will provide a perspective of organizational culture that will benefit the development of these policies and provide an exploration of how culture among school faculty may require further research to understand further how it relates to other aspects of construction and utilization of strategies within schools.

Literature Review

Bullying within the school environment is not a new phenomenon (Jones & Augustine, 2015). However, it is a threat that is pervasive and potentially damaging to both the well-being and success of students (Hall & Chapman, 2018). Identifying strategies to provide students with a safe environment is the responsibility of many professionals. Therefore, acknowledging the effects of bullying on students and recognizing the importance of the role of all stakeholders is crucial. When determining the influence of these stakeholders, policymakers provide the opportunity to create

programs and policies that are more effective in addressing the issues associated with bullying.

Defining Bullying

Numerous definitions exist regarding bullying, and the definitions also may overlap with how some may define other aggressive behavior. However, distinctions do exist, and put simply, bullying stems from behavior that is repetitive, negative, and intentionally harmful. By identifying that the action is repetitive, school faculty can differentiate between bullying behavior and situations that are more playful (Thomas, Connor, Baguley, & Scott, 2017). Although definitions regarding bullying may differ in the terms used, overall, it refers to the same type of behavior that reflects negative consequences associated with the behavior of students. The goal of professionals in the school setting is to provide students with a safe learning environment. However, if bullying is persistent enough, numerous factors may influence youth. When a student feels safe at school, they perform better academically, engage more within the classroom, and develop better both socially and emotionally (Williams, Schneider, Wornell, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2018). Identifying the critical terms within the definition of bullying and utilizing those to identify these concerns help to improve the learning environment of the student. Additionally, given the importance placed on students feeling safe in school, various groups must be clear on the definition of this term within their district. These groups include parents, students, and school faculty. However, they must also be aware of the potential negative factors associated with incidents of bullying.

Effects and Factors of Bullying

The effects of bullying are influential in developing not only programs and policies but also defining bullying. Numerous exist on this topic, and therefore, it continues to be an area of discussion that is appropriate for further research. Factors of bullying are also beneficial to developing effective programs and developing practical training for those stakeholders responsible for implementing anti-bullying programs. Therefore, taking the time to explore these topics will provide a further understanding of both the policies and programs developed by schools and states to combat bullying within the school setting.

Suicide. Professionals are emphasizing the need to understand further the mental health of children and adolescents (Bang & Park, 2017). Suicide and suicidal ideation among youth have increasingly become a public health concern among professionals in the United States. Suicide and suicidal ideation have differing definitions. Suicide is when an individual intentionally causes harm to themselves, which results in death. In contrast, suicidal ideation includes thoughts of engaging in acts that may result in ending life (Lardier, Barrios, Garcia-Reid, & Reid, 2016). Although the United States has seen a decrease in suicides in recent years, there has been an approximate 21% rise in the age-adjusted suicide rate among youth ages 10 to 17 years (Lardier et al. 2016; Hinduja & Patchin, 2019, p. 333). Additionally, studies have found that suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth within this age range. (Hinduja & Patchin, 2019). Statistically, 17% of adolescents have committed suicide, 13.5% had developed a plan to carry out a suicide, and 8% have attempted suicide at least

once (Lardier et al., 2016, p. 214). In a study conducted by Alavi et al. (2017), approximately 69% of the participants reported suicidal ideation, and those who were victims of bullying were more likely than their peers who were not to report suicidal thoughts (para 3). These statistics provide professionals with an opportunity to understand further what is occurring among youth to lead to these alarming results.

Bullying victimization has begun receiving further attention regarding suicide research. Research has identified a correlation between suicidal attempts or ideation as well as additional mental health concerns, and school-based or online bullying among adolescents (Hinduja & Patchin, 2019; Bang & Park, 2017). Given the strong correlation identified, it is essential to consider all avenues related to bullying and suicide or suicidal ideation.

When professionals discuss bullying and the correlation to suicidal ideation, it regards the context of the victim. However, suicidal ideation does not only apply to the youth who are the victims of bullying. Studies have found that youth who are perpetrators of bullying are also at risk of suicidal ideation and death (Ladier et al., 2016).

Research often focuses on the effects of bullying on the target; however, it is important to consider the influences and effects on the perpetrator. Identifying bullying as a factor for suicidal ideation among youth is crucial because it provides the opportunity for professionals in identifying areas of how to adequately address both bullying and the effects of this behavior on youth. The development of programs and training can be more effective in preparing professionals for handling situations of bullying within the school setting. Therefore, professionals must step back and provide themselves with an overall

understanding of this phenomenon to provide communities, school faculty, and parents with the resources necessary to handle situations involving bullying adequately.

Effects into adulthood. The effects of bullying are not only present during the childhood of those involved in incidents of bullying throughout the adolescent life. Researchers have also identified bullying as predictors for certain outcomes into adulthood. Fergusson, Boden, and Horwood (2014) found that perpetrators of bullying in adolescents were a precursor for potentially violent behavior in adulthood. Also, they found that there was a correlation between bullying behavior and arrest in adulthood (Fergusson, Boden, & Horwood, 2014). Although much of the attention is on those who are victimized by bullying, identifying potential correlations of perpetrators of bullying and behavior later in life is important to the development of anti-bullying programs. Developing programs that address both the bully and the victim and training school faculty adequately to address these issues adds to the effectiveness of these programs.

Studies regarding adolescents who were victimized by bullying during childhood found that these experiences influence their behavior later in their lives. Individuals of studies who have reported being victims of bullying also reported participating in illegal activity in adulthood (Sansone, Lam, & Wiederman, 2013). Sansone, Lam, and Wiederman (2013) conducted a study that found that of the bullied participants, men were more likely to report a correlation between being bullied and their illegal charges in adulthood. Given the correlation between bullying and illegal behavior later in life, it provides even further evidence as to the importance of developing and implementing anti-bullying programs within schools. Therefore, further expanding understanding of all

factors associated with the effective implementation of these programs will help stakeholders to work towards a more strategic plan.

Pennsylvania Definition of Bullying

Each state, in some form, defines bullying. Pennsylvania law refers to both cyberbullying and bullying when defining this phenomenon. The law refers to any written, electronic, verbal, or physical behavior that is intentional. For it to be considered bullying, the behavior must be toward another student or group of students. Also, it must be severe and consistent and happen within the school setting (Pennsylvania Anti-Bullying Laws & Policies, 2017). It is important to acknowledge that it refers to the school setting. Therefore, this behavior must occur on school property, within a school vehicle, at a bus stop, or at any activity that involves the school in some capacity, i.e., it is sanctioned, sponsored, or supervised by the school. Additionally, the behavior must be so severe that it interrupts the operation of the school day, leads to a threatening environment, or interferes with the student's education in some form (Pennsylvania Anti-Bullying Laws & Policies, 2017). The Pennsylvania Law requires that schools provide a clear and concise definition of bullying within their policies (Pennsylvania Anti-Bullying Laws & Policies, 2017). By doing so, the school provides school faculty, parents, and students with a clear understanding of what behavior will be viewed as unacceptable and will lead to the consequences provided within the policy as well. With such a definition, school faculty can be more proactive because they have a concise understanding of what behavior they should be actively addressing within the school setting.

Anti-Bullying

In the United States, currently, there is no federal law against bullying, although there are federal laws that relate to bullying that address discriminatory harassment. Although there is no federal, all 50 states have implemented anti-bullying laws to address school safety and raise awareness regarding bullying. Under these laws, one definition of bullying is any aggressive behavior among students that is intentional and harmful (Hall & Chapman, 2018). There have been various ways identified in which these laws can help to reduce violent behavior within schools (Sabia & Bass, 2017). So, despite the potential for each state's definition of bullying to differ, many have the same goal of creating a safe learning environment for students and work to reduce violence. Therefore, it is important to understand the anti-bullying laws and programs within schools that have developed from these laws.

Anti-Bullying Programs

The focus of an anti-bullying program within a school is to develop programs that focus on prevention and intervention. Overall, these programs are effective in addressing bullying. The more integrated the programs are into the schools, the more likely they will be effective at addressing issues related to bullying. If a system for monitoring implementation is available, or the overall willingness and support from the faculty is positive regarding the implementation, the policies and procedures are more likely to be effective (Ahtola, Haataja, Karna, Poskiparta, & Salmivalli, 2013). Identifying the various factors that may influence the effectiveness of the implementation of anti-bullying programs and policies is important. There are various stakeholders associated

with this implementation. They are responsible for not only assisting students but also responsible for providing school faculty guidelines on how to address these concerns. Many studies identify the role of teachers in addressing these concerns and implementing these policies. However, various other groups may influence both the effectiveness of the policy or program and the effectiveness of the staff to implement these programs and policies adequately.

Given the complexity of bullying and how numerous factors influence it, anti-bullying programs and policies should also work to assist the students and alter the school environment. The use of these programs is for more than just providing policies and procedures to faculty to address incidents of bullying appropriately. They may also provide the opportunity to work towards changing the behavior and providing students with the necessary training to help and address incidents that occur within their surroundings (Solomontos-Kountouri, Gradinger, Yanagida, & Strohmeier, 2016). Various strategies help to train the students, which can help to combat bullying. For example, one strategy is to train students to identify when these incidents occur and how to respond when they do. It provides them the opportunity to identify ways to improve these situations and recognize not only their own emotions but also the emotions of others. Additionally, these programs can help to provide students with an understanding of to address and handle the emotions that they may experience. But more specifically, how to respond to these emotions in a non-aggressive way. Therefore, faculty can work to empower these students to help them appropriately respond when victimized and to recognize that they are supported, and they have the resources available to address the

incident that has occurred (Solomontos-Kountouri et al. 2016). The strategies developed by these programs should be all-encompassing and help to provide strategies to students, faculty, parents, and the community. Additionally, with the important role that school faculty play in the implementation and development of strategies for anti-bullying programs, it is important to consider how school faculty view and understand the programs. Additionally, understanding different strategies to implement these programs provides an understanding of the role and willingness of teachers to implement them correctly.

The passage of policies and programs by policymakers or the board of education does not necessarily lead to the automatic effectiveness of these programs. The implementation of these programs is complex and requires the efforts of numerous professionals (Hall & Chapman, 2018). One important step to consider in the development of anti-bullying programs is the environment or climate within the school and how bullying is affecting that climate. Different school cultures influence what strategies will be most effective within schools, because certain behavior that may expose a student to bullying in one climate may not be the case in another school climate (Jones & Augustine, 2015). Due to the influence they have on the effectiveness and implementation of the programs, it is important to consider the various school cultures. Therefore, stakeholders must acknowledge how each culture differs and which factors may influence those cultures, including location, age, and influence from outside sources. The development of these programs from the policies must be unique to the situation and school. By taking the time to understand not only the students but also the school faculty,

it becomes more likely that the programs developed will be effective and garner the results that professionals and the community desire.

Anti-Bullying Policies and Laws

Many anti-bullying laws that have come into legislation require schools to develop their programs and policies to address bullying within their schools. The schools receive a set of guidelines that they must adhere to when developing their programs and policies. Each of these laws may have varying definitions of bullying and may require the schools to define bullying in their terms (Stemple, 2018). Additionally, teachers and administration are responsible for implementing these policies at their discretion based on the definition of bullying that is in the specific school policies. Seeing as there are various definitions, programs that develop from these laws differ based on area and the school climate (Cron, 2016). School faculty have various responsibilities throughout the school day. Given the important role of school faculty, it is not surprising that they also must play a crucial role in the development and implementation of these programs and policies. They may appear as the front line, and therefore, are given more responsibility due to the passing of these laws. They also differ based on the views and utilization of the programs among school faculty. Regardless, the laws that are in place in all 50 states require schools to address the issue surrounding bullying, by implementing laws that meet the requirements of the law and the needs within the school environment.

Overall, the goal of these policies is that the discipline for bullying behavior is appropriate. In some states, the criminalization of bullying behavior may exist if it meets a specific criterion. Those states that have criminalized bullying have done so based on

two types of statutes. The first being harassment, and the second encompasses cyberbullying by criminalizing harassment via communications. Therefore, school faculty are not only responsible for addressing when bullying violates their codes, but also discerning when it has gone beyond these codes and require the involvement of law enforcement due to the behavior violating state law (Stemple, 2018). Given the extensive requirements associated with this law, it is important to consider how this not only influences the perspectives of school faculty but also how it affects their ability to report these incidents adequately. Anti-bullying laws are providing school administrators with the opportunity to develop effective programs. However, they are causing re-organization among school faculty so that they may adequately abide by all the requirements within the statute.

Along with the criminalization of specific harassment, some states have placed school administration under the requirement of reporting behavior that violates their bullying code (Stemple, 2018; Cron, 2016). This mandated reporting provides even further requirements of school faculty, which also would lead to the need for re-organization and extra work among school faculty (Ahtola et al., 2013). However, despite the extra work, school faculty still have a requirement to uphold not only their policies but also state policies to develop a safer learning environment for students. From the development of these laws, it is important to question the perceptions and effects that it has on teachers. They are not effective if the faculty do not receive adequate training and are supportive of the development of these programs.

Although all the states in the United States have developed anti-bullying laws, numerous differences are identifiable among them. Therefore, the requirements of school faculty in one state may differ from a bordering state. The development of these policies has led to various intervention strategies utilized within the school setting (Hall, 2017). Strategies such suspension, training of teachers, empathy and respect lessons within the classroom, and collaboration with parents have all been strategies that schools have utilized to develop programs that adequately align with the requirement of laws within their state (Hall, 2017). Due to the complexity and on-going process of implementing adequate policies, it is important to identify various approaches and the differences among both states and school districts throughout the United States regarding policies to combat bullying (Hall & Chapman, 2018). Identifying these differences not only allow for a further understanding of the policies, but also a further understanding of the implementation of these policies and the strategies that are most effective in providing a safer learning environment for students.

Pennsylvania anti-bullying law and safe school report. Pennsylvania has developed policies and laws that focus on addressing bullying within the school setting. Like many other policies, Pennsylvania defines bullying as any intentional act or series of actions that may be electronic, written, verbal, or physical. The behavior or act must be directed at another student or a group of students, and the act must occur in a school setting. Further, the Pennsylvania policy defines school settings by identifying that the action must happen in the school, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored event, at a bus stop, on a school vehicle, or any event that is supervised by a school official or

sanctioned by the school (Pennsylvania Anti-Bullying Laws & Policies, 2017). Although the school setting definition is defined, Pennsylvania law does allow for schools to include cyberbullying within their policies and off-campus bullying acts. If the action or behavior meets the definition provided by the states, then the schools are not prohibited from addressing these incidents as well (Pennsylvania Anti-Bullying Laws & Policies, 2017). Addressing off-campus bullying incidents continues to be a debate because many professionals argue about who should be responsible for addressing these situations where the act did not occur within the school setting. Therefore, it is important to identify that this is not prohibited by Pennsylvania law, and therefore, some schools may include this within the development of the school's policy.

Pennsylvania policy provides requirements to guide the development of the school's policy. The law requires that the school provides a definition of bullying that includes or reflects that of the state definition of bullying. Additionally, the definition and disciplinary actions associated with violating the policy must be adequately publicized for all individuals to view throughout the district (Pennsylvania Anti-Bullying Laws & Policies, 2017). The publication of the definition and disciplinary actions are important for not only the faculty but also the students and parents. By doing so, they are aware of behavior that constitutes bullying and the steps followed in the identification of such behavior among students.

Another crucial area of the law to consider is the requirements placed upon the school regarding training, reporting, and review of their policies. Pennsylvania law does require that schools provide mandatory training to faculty that addresses suicide, bullying

behavior, and school safety and security (Pennsylvania Anti-Bullying Laws & Policies, 2017). These pieces of training are crucial to developing a successful anti-bullying program; however, it provides the opportunity to explore further the implementation of other training to adequately address numerous factors that are crucial to the effectiveness of the programs and policies within the school. Additionally, schools are required to report to the state yearly on behavior that meets the defined qualities of bullying, and every three years, they are required to update the bullying policies within the district (Pennsylvania Anti-Bullying Laws & Policies, 2017). Updating the policies and reporting these incidents to help provide the schools the opportunity to identify potential necessary changes. The frequency of reporting and number of incidents help to guide the policy and provide state officials the chance to identify whether the state policy is adequately directing schools in the development of these programs within the schools.

Understanding the requirements placed upon schools through the Pennsylvania Anti-Bullying Law helps to guide an understanding of the policies and programs developed within the school districts. These guidelines not only guide school administrators but also guide the faculty within the schools who are responsible for effectively implementing these strategies and programs. And although schools may develop programs that differ, overall, they have similarities given the guidelines provided and developed by the state's policy.

School Faculty and Bullying

There are numerous stakeholders invested in developing effective anti-bullying programs within schools. However, the foremost influential and important figures are

those within the schools. School faculty are the front line at addressing this behavior within the schools. Identifying both their influence and their perceptions is crucial in developing effective programs and having adequate implementation. Among school faculty, there are numerous positions and potential ways of thinking that may influence responses and utilization of strategies developed by the programs. Therefore, it is important to consider all factors that may, in some form, influence the way that school faculty approach both the bullying situations and the development of programs that assist in addressing bullying among students adequately.

Teachers and Bullying

Teachers are exposed to and deal with numerous challenges throughout the school year. They are responsible for developing plans to adequately teach students what is expected of them throughout the school year while also developing character within the students. However, they are also responsible for the safety of the students while they are present at the schools. Due to this responsibility, perceptions and behavior of teachers towards the issue of bullying within the school setting is a crucial factor to consider. Understanding how they influence, implement and utilize anti-bullying strategies will help professionals to develop more effective programs and identify potential areas of training regarding this issue for teachers and other faculty within the schools.

Batalli (2017) conducted a study that involved 15 middle school teachers. The results of the study provide further insight into the need for further training regarding faculty as well as the need for further understanding of faculty regarding areas of bullying. Interviews of teachers in this study show reports of feeling unprepared to

address issues of bullying. Also, the teachers perceived that the focus of their role within the school was to teach the students and that addressing and implementing strategies for deterring bullying was not part of that role (Batalli, 2017). Although the perceptions of teachers are that they are responsible for numerous roles within the schools, it is important to acknowledge that for some, their primary goal is to provide an education for the students. If faculty do not perceive their role in addressing and implementing anti-bullying programs as necessary, it may be a factor that hinders the effectiveness of the program. Therefore, districts must take the time to not only properly train their faculty, but also be clear as to the role that they play in the development and utilization of these programs.

Studies have found that when school faculty are willing to intervene, student aggression and victimization within the school decreases. Therefore, providing the proper guidance and resources to school faculty to adequately and appropriately respond to bullying situations is crucial. At times, faculty may feel overwhelmed by the expectations of their role within the school (Letendre, Ostrander, & Mickens, 2016). However, with adequate training and defining their role, faculty are provided the opportunity to succeed in understanding how they fit into the puzzle of anti-bullying programs. The experiences, perceptions, and understanding of school faculty are all critical to developing appropriate programs. However, numerous factors may influence these experiences and perceptions among faculty.

Sustaining the dedication of school faculty to anti-bullying programs is vital for the program to be effective. Without such commitment, the implementation of programs

cannot be done successfully within the school. Additionally, professionals need to understand that although school faculty may be eager and dedicated to the program at the onset, over time, that dedication may waiver or change due to certain factors (Swift et al., 2017). For school faculty, there are often responsible for juggling a variety of priorities. Therefore, they may, over time, feel burnt out due to the numerous responsibilities they have to address daily. They may struggle to address these stressors, and without the proper time management skills and coping strategies, it may become an important factor to consider regarding their lack of dedication to these anti-bullying programs (Swift et al., 2017). The development of these anti-bullying programs requires the consideration of numerous factors that may influence effectiveness. Therefore, identifying the potential for such implementation to place more stress on school faculty must be a consideration. Additionally, adequately training staff to address these issues when they arise will help to create more productive faculty, which will reflect into all the roles that they are responsible for throughout the school.

Faculty may play numerous roles throughout the school. Due to this, it is important to develop adequate training and skills to handle all the responsibilities that they face daily. Although school faculty have a role in the development of programs and policies, they are primarily responsible for providing a safe environment for students and guiding them towards adulthood with the development of their characters as well. Therefore, students' perceptions of faculty within the school comes from not only the behavior of the faculty but also their approach to addressing behavior and situations among students.

Students Perceptions of School Faculty

Throughout the school day, students are interacting consistently with not only their peers but the school faculty within the school environment as well. Therefore, given the correlation of school and the development of the youth, identifying how students perceive and interact with school faculty to address issues within the school is an area that requires attention to develop a further understanding (Espelage, Polanin, & Low, 2014). Some studies have shown that students perceive that their teachers or school do not intervene effectively with incidents of bullying. In comparison, observational studies support this idea in that they found that school faculty only intervenes in approximately 15 to 18% of bullying incidents (Kennedy et al., 2012, p. 3). Due to this, it may lead to the potential of students not reporting incidents. They may view it as the faculty member will not intervene, or it may lead to the situation becoming worse. Regardless, it is essential to acknowledge that adult intervention is critical, especially if the goal is to change the dynamics of culture within the school (Kennedy et al., 2012). Despite school faculty and students having differing perceptions, school faculty need to change adequately. Still, in some circumstances, it may be necessary to shift their perceptions so that the implementation of programs and policies can be useful. Regardless, these interactions and perceptions between students and faculty lay the foundation for the climate that exists within the school.

Research has identified numerous constructive outcomes associated with the positive interaction between students and school faculty. Studies have shown that when students perceive support from their teachers, the school environment is less likely to

experience bullying situations, and students are also less likely to skip school (Kearney & Smith, 2018). These positive relationships between school faculty and students provide the students with the opportunity to develop skills to regulate their behavior in a more positive manner. The placement of focus is on developing positive relationships within the classroom, between faculty and students, as well as among students and their fellow peers (Kearney & Smith, 2018). Teachers carry the responsibility of being able to identify behavior that is bullying, and, in some cases, they may not have the proper training to identify these behaviors. However, they are encouraged to focus on developing positive relationships with appropriately helping to deter behavior that may lead to a school environment that interferes with the development of the students. And when the students acknowledge these approaches and skills, the students feel safe and encouraged by school faculty. Due to this, students are more likely to engage with their peers more appropriately and healthily.

The encouragement and support provided by school faculty are crucial to various factors within the school environment. It not only influences their personal experiences within the school but also affects fellow faculty and students. Additionally, the role of the school faculty ultimately influences the school climate. The climate of the school may be stressful or not, which is dependent on the involvement of the faculty and the perceptions of students regarding both faculty and fellow peers.

School Climate and Bullying

Numerous factors influence the school climate. The relationships among both students and faculty, faculty, and students and their peers are the primary motivators

driving the development of the climate within a school. The school climate reflects the experiences of these individuals, as well as values, norms, and structures developed within the school environment. The school climate is also known as the school culture (Espelage, Polanin, & Low, 2014). Identifying these variables is essential. However, it is even more critical to determine how each of the individual variables influences the development of a positive school climate or school culture. Various factors influence the climate or culture within the school. Each one plays a crucial role, and how students and faculty respond to these factors leads to the development of a specific culture or climate.

Differences within the community of a school help to develop a specific set of norms and values. Students and faculty identify and develop responses to a belief system that exists. An extensive amount of socialization occurs among students and their peers. However, it also occurs between students and faculty. With an accepted culture or climate within the school, individuals who display characteristics outside of those norms may experience rejection or bullying within that school. However, much like culture in modern society, the culture within schools differ from area to area. Therefore, rejection in one school may not be a rejection in another (Jones & Augustine, 2015). Therefore, identify how culture influences bullying is essential; however, it is equally as important to understand the culture to develop programs and policies that will adequately address this culture. By doing so, school faculty may develop strategies that will sufficiently address the culture and help to shift it among both the students and the faculty. By doing so, they will be more adapted to effectively implement these programs and create an environment that is safer, leading to a better learning environment for the students.

Culture Among School Faculty

Many studies related to bullying focus on the support that is needed by students to handle issues related to bullying. Additionally, much of the focus of research is on developing the necessary resources and creating a culture that is beneficial to the student and helps to increase the academic success of the student. However, a culture exists among the school faculty as well that may influence the effectiveness of these policies and programs as well.

The culture among school faculty leads to the development of shared values and behaviors. The on-going school faculty create the culture, and with the introduction of new employees into this culture, they must work regarding this culture, and often, it is influential. Specifically, a culture that exists will begin to influence the behavior of the faculty (Demirdağ, 2016). Culture guides how faculty respond to incidents that occur within the school. There are various levels of culture that may exist and identifying whether the culture is negative or positive determines the outcome of the behavior of the school faculty.

The culture among school faculty has the potential to be positive or negative. Schools that display an influential, positive culture develop behavior that is functional for the benefits of the students. Additionally, the faculty are more open to change and implementing policies that will better the schools (Demirdağ, 2016). However, negative culture breeds adverse outcomes. Faculty that engage in a negative culture are less willing to implement innovative changes. Lack of communication, low expectations, and conflict exist within these environments (Demirdağ, 2016). The type of culture that exists

considerably influences how school faculty both work together and work towards developing a safe learning environment for students. The culture influences school faculty within a variety of ways, and identifying the importance of the culture and the support that exists among them helps to develop an understanding of how school faculty respond to changes that occur within the school.

School faculty, specifically teachers, are also in need of support to adequately implement these programs and address incidents of bullying that occur throughout the school day (Batalli, 2017). School faculty need to receive not only the resources but also the knowledge that is necessary for the success of these programs. Given the differences in not only gender but also the approach used by teachers and school faculty, it may greatly influence how they respond to not only intervening in incidents but also their willingness to implement these programs (Batalli, 2017). As previously mentioned, it is crucial to shift the culture among both the students and the faculty. If the faculty culture does not support these implemented programs, there is less of a likelihood of changing culture among the students.

Scholars have repeatedly found that culture that exists within an organization may have positive or negative influences within that institution (Kearney & Smith, 2018). The consideration of culture as either a key issue or an issue is taken seriously for change to occur. When neglecting a shift in culture, it is unlikely that those desired changes will transpire. Regardless of the development of strategies or plans to implement a policy or program, it is necessary to address the culture within the organization. Therefore, the effectiveness of the implementation will be limited (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2015).

This idea is not limited to big businesses. There is a culture that exists among school faculty that may also influence the development and implementation of programs and policies within the school setting.

Support within an organizational culture helps to develop trust and enhance the satisfaction that school faculty find within their jobs. The placement of focus within the school is often on students. However, it also is necessary to focus on the well-being and attitudes of the faculty. If a faculty member is not satisfied with their job, it dramatically influences not only their quality of teaching but how they react to change within the workplace. If overall, leadership is lacking within the school, it will significantly influence the satisfaction that exists among faculty members (Hosseinkhanzadeh, Hosseinkhanzadeh, & Yeganeh, 2013). These are all critical components to the development and structure within the school. Without this positive approach to their job, it is difficult for faculty to effectively implement new policies and programs that are presented within the school, especially if the leadership and culture within the school are not supportive.

Often with the implementation of policies and programs within an organization, leadership is called upon to begin the process. There is not a different approach that exists within schools. When introducing anti-bullying laws into legislation, administration within the schools is called upon to develop plans appropriate for their district (Cron, 2016). Administrators, including the school board, principals, and teachers, are part of the process of developing implementation and utilization of the plan within schools. However, what state officials fail to acknowledge, is that the culture within that

organization, and potentially the leadership, need to be at a level of support to achieve the goals associated with the programs and to implement them effectively.

Studies regarding bullying have a look at a variety of factors. They have looked at the effects of bullying on both the aggressor and the victim. When discussing the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs, they use a lens of understanding regarding how training of school faculty and staff can help to improve the programs, and the crucial role of the teacher has always been important to understanding how to approach the issue and implement these programs. Cron (2016) provides insight into how leadership influences the implementation of these programs and the need for guidance to help foster learning on these policies. However, there is a failure to discuss how organizational culture among school faculty influences the behavior and responses to the implementation of these programs. If the culture within the school is unsupportive or negative, and frequently viewing bullying as an issue that is less important than another, it is essential to understand how that influences how faculty within the school respond to these policies, utilize them, and implement them within the school.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative study is to improve understanding of how the school faculty perceive the organizational culture related to anti-bullying programs and how this influences the school faculty's response and utilization of strategies developed by programs implemented due to anti-bullying laws. It will provide in detail both the design and rationale of the study. Additionally, the role of the researcher will be introduced and any relationships that may exist between the researcher and the participants, as well as any bias or ethical issues. The methodology of the study is also provided in detail within this chapter, including identifying the population, sampling methods, criteria for choosing the population, instrumentation for data collection, and the plan for data analysis. From there, the chapter will explore any issues related to trustworthiness, such as dependability, confirmability, and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

The development of research questions for a study is complicated but essential. They begin from a general idea that is sparked while conducting research related to the topic of interest. From there, it takes time to prune and develop questions that will adequately address the gap that has been discovered while appropriately guiding the methods of the study (Vandenbroucke & Pearce, 2018). For the current study, there were three research questions developed during the review of the existing literature. The research questions designed to guide this study are as follows:

1. How does the school faculty's perceptions of their organizational culture influence their opinions about implementing anti-bullying policies?

2. How does the school faculty's perceptions of their organizational culture influence their behavior while implementing anti-bullying programs?
3. How do the school faculty's perceptions of their organizational culture influence their utilization of strategies developed by anti-bullying programs?

The focus of this study is to further explore and understand culture among school faculty. Studies related to the culture among school faculty have shown a relationship that refers to various values, norms, and behaviors among teachers. It influences not only satisfaction within their positions, but also communication, willingness to develop and implement changes, and handle conflict within the school (Demirdağ, 2016). Given the extent of influence of culture among various aspects within the school environment, it is essential to understand how this may influence how school faculty implement and utilize anti-bullying programs that are developed within the school. Given the potential of negative culture influencing the implementation of changes within schools, the gap in the research regarding the connection between implementing anti-bullying policies and the culture among school faculty paves the way for further study.

Conducting qualitative research provides the opportunity to explore the experiences and social life of the participants of the study. It provides insight and understanding of intricate areas of study. Specifically, interpretative phenomenological studies offer researchers the opportunity to have participants to express how they make sense of their own world experiences. Through interpretative phenomenological studies, the focus of the research can be explored through a lens that provides an opportunity to understand in detail, the lived experience of the participants (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin,

2009). Through this research, school faculty explore their own experiences and how they perceive their role in the school's culture and the influence it has on the behavior of others within the school.

Role of the Researcher

In a qualitative study, the primary instrument is the researcher. Therefore, it is essential to understand this role throughout every stage of the research (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). As a researcher, my responsibility is to ensure the participants understand the purpose and the focus of the study. Additionally, I must take the time to assure that the study is conducted according to ethical procedures and principles as well as by following research standards. By following these steps, I will provide a study that is unbiased and represents the data collected in a way that it may further the researcher related to the topic in a way that is ethical and sound.

The participants within the study teach at a school within western Pennsylvania. The chosen school and the participants selected will remain anonymous throughout the study. However, the school that I plan to approach for participants is the school that I attended throughout my high school career. To maintain a professional relationship with teachers and faculty that I may personally know, I will approach the school through the principal and the superintendent, whom I do not have any prior relationship. I will contact all faculty equally, giving all the opportunity to participate in the study.

I plan to conduct the interviews within a neutral environment decided upon by both myself and the participant. Whether it be setting up an environment within the school if permitted or finding a local location that is both professional and appropriately

private to maintain the confidence of the participant. Possible examples for such a site would be a local library or a conference room in the administrative building of the school. Although I may have personally had one of the faculty members as a teacher, I need to focus on the study and the ethical and professional standards expected.

Methodology

Participant Selection

When selecting participants, it is crucial to consider the research questions of the study, and the participants whose points of view will provide the most detail and data to answer these questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). For this study, the participants will be selected based on their role as faculty members at their school district, which includes, but is not limited to, teachers, administrative staff, cafeteria workers, janitors, and school resource officers. The reason for including all members is because it is important to include those that exist within the school's culture as well as who is responsible for addressing and implementing policies related to bullying within the school. However, it is also important that participants are acclimated to the climate and culture of the school. Therefore, the participants must have five years of experience within that school district so that they may have been well adjusted and familiar with what exists within the schools. Additionally, participants will have involvement in addressing issues associated with bullying and received the training required by law related to bullying. Hence, they have exposure to the same expectations from the school district and the state of Pennsylvania. To verify that each faculty member meets these expectations, it will be necessary to not only discuss with them this criterion but also, before meeting with the

participants, talk with the principal about the requirements to identify the participants that meet these expectations.

Purposeful random sampling provides the opportunity for the study to appear more credible as well as reducing bias (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The participants chosen through purposeful sampling are selected because they can provide detailed accounts, they have knowledge of the culture within the school district, and they have a level of experience that would allow them to adequately answer the questions proposed to them during the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Additionally, within the school, there may be many faculty members. Therefore, purposeful random sampling provides the opportunity to choose faculty that have the appropriate experience, exposure, and understanding of the culture within the school (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Given the limited time and resources, it is not realistic to attempt to interview all faculty within the school.

In qualitative studies, there is no set rule related to sample size. Various factors within qualitative research influence sample size. For example, it is dependent on the purpose or discovery during the study and what is useful and credible. However, the goal is to answer the research questions rigorously and to do so in a manner that is both thorough and ethical (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Therefore, the goal of the study is to conduct at a minimum six interviews, and if necessary, to conduct further interviews to guarantee that the information needed is available and that each question has been answered in detail, allowing for enough analysis of the data.

The site chosen for this study is a high school located in Pennsylvania. The high school includes grades 7th through 12th, which provides for a span within the faculty to

have experience with various age groups. Additionally, due to Pennsylvania law, the school does have an anti-bullying policy in place, and faculty are required to acquire some form of training related to handling and identifying incidents related to bullying. To access the faculty and population of potential participants for this study, I plan to develop communication with the administrators of the school and ask permission to utilize the school as the research site. From there, I will ask for an in-person meeting to discuss the criteria for participants with the school administrator so that we may identify a pool of participants. Once faculty who meet the requirements have been recognized, I will send a recruitment letter that will provide information related to the study and my contact information for faculty members. Therefore, faculty may contact me to ask questions, so they develop a clear understanding of the focus of the study. I will send an informed consent form that will outline all the protective measures, such as keeping all names anonymous and keeping any information located in an area where no other individuals may access the data collected.

Data saturation is the point in which no new data or information and the point in which a researcher can answer the research questions of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Various factors may influence saturation. However, the element that is important to focus on and within my control is the sample size. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact sample expected for a study. However, when looking at a phenomenological study, the recommended sample size is between five to twenty-five, but to focus on having at least six participants (Mason, 2010). Therefore, I plan to identify at least 6 participants, but I

will allow for more if faculty members contact me with the desire to participate in the study.

Instrumentation

A semi-structured interview guide will be developed by the researcher to collect data. The first section will focus on demographics, which will include the number of years the school faculty member has been in their position and the position (teacher, principal, cafeteria worker, etc.) they hold at the school. The following questions will focus on understanding the anti-bullying program that is in place, and the school faculty members role and involvement in the implementation and the utilization of the program. Additionally, it will gather information related to the faculty member's view of the program and the effectiveness of the program. The interview guide will then have questions that focus on understanding the culture within the school and opinions and perceptions of the culture that exists (i.e., How does the culture influence the response to incidents of bullying within the school?). These questions will focus on not only understanding the culture, but also how the faculty member responds to the culture, engages with the culture, and views the influence of that culture. It will be essential to gather data related to both the overall culture as well as the culture that relates to the anti-bullying program that exists within the school.

Various resources will be utilized by the researcher to develop the semi-structured research guide. Existing dissertations related to both organizational culture and bullying will be identified through the Walden Library to use as a basis for the development of the interview guide. Additionally, the literature focused on developing semi-structured

interview guides will be used as well. Peer-reviewed articles on research such as culture, organizational culture, teachers, school faculty, bullying, anti-bullying programs, and anti-bullying laws will help to gather a thorough basis for the development of the interview guide.

Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

To recruit participants, the researcher will contact the proper school officials in order to distribute flyers and send emails related to the study to identify school faculty members that meet the criteria for the study. The participants will receive notification that all information will be kept anonymous and confidential. Those interested in participating will be provided an invitation and introduction to the study as well as an informed consent form.

The participants will receive an invitation to participate in a one-on-one interview. The interview will take place at a private location; however, they will also have the choice to conduct the interview via phone if they prefer further anonymity or confidentiality or via Zoom to maintain their safety due to COVID-19. The decision will belong to the participant on whether the interview will be in-person or via telephone or Zoom. They will receive an understanding of the procedures for the study, the study's purpose, their right to withdraw if they so choose, and their right to privacy.

The data necessary to answer the research questions will be collected during these one-on-one interviews. The interviews will last for a 60-minute time period, and the participants will be made aware that they may leave at any time during that 60-minute period if they feel any discomfort. The research will build rapport with the participants at

the onset of the interview. They will receive a number that will be utilized to identify all information and data collected during that interview. The interview will be conducted by the researcher and recorded via a tape recorder. The researcher will also take notes throughout the interview for comparison following the interview. The data collected during these interviews will be available for access only to the researcher.

At the end of the interview, the participant will have the opportunity to examine the notes taken during the interview if they so choose. Additionally, they will be aware that they may contact me at any point following the interview if they feel as though they have something to add or choose to withdraw something they had stated throughout the interview. The participant will also be asked that following the interview, if the researcher may contact them regarding any other follow up questions or information that may need clarified related to the study. They will be thanked for their time and provided with the contact information of the researcher for future use if necessary.

Data Analysis Plan

Patton (2015) states that it is essential to begin analysis while conducting fieldwork. Therefore, through the collection of the data and conducting the interviews, I will be sure to identify and note any themes that may emerge. By doing this, I will be able to confirm and disprove any themes that may arise and ask the question as to whether these themes are consistent findings throughout all the participants' responses. Additionally, it allows for the opportunity to identify saturation within the collected data further. For analysis, it is also essential to keep all the source's information organized, labeled, and with a date, so they are easily accessible and orderly for further analysis.

The first step of analysis will be to transcribe all audio recordings to a Word document. By doing this, it will be easier to compare each participant's response question by question. I have been reviewing qualitative data analysis software to identify which software will meet the needs of not only the study but my personal preference. The software that meets the requirements of this study is Quirkos. It is an inexpensive software program that provides the ability to store the transcripts from the study under password protection. Additionally, considering the time that goes into coding, Quirkos provides the resources needed to make this process run smoothly and faster (Quirkos, 2019).

From this resource, the transcripts, and an analysis journal that will be kept throughout the study, I will be able to review and immerse myself into the data. Various strategies can be used to analyze data (Patton, 2015). The most appropriate strategy for this study will be to review the data question by question. It will make it easier to identify the themes and codes that emerge. Also, it will make it easier to compare the responses of the participants and how they relate to one another.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Various complexities may arise throughout a study. As a researcher, it is essential to understand that this may occur and to be able to address these complexities if they are to arise (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Also, the study needs to have dependability.

Dependability is the ability to see the data as stable and consistent in the ability to answer the research questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To achieve credibility and dependability, perspectival triangulation will be utilized. By including a range of perspectives through

interviewing school faculty who have various roles, positions, and relationships within the organization, it provides a better understanding and exploration of the culture that exists. Also, it provides the opportunity for the data to be complex and to also identify if any disagreements or any variations exist in the participant's exposure to the culture within the school.

Transferability in qualitative research is the way by which the findings may be transferred or applicable in another setting or another context (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To maintain transferability, the researcher must be thorough in the analysis of the data while also developing a full description of the data. Achieving a full description is done by providing a very detailed description of contextual factors so that others can visualize and understand the study in a way that they can further understand the interpretations of the study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Lastly, regarding the trustworthiness of the study, confirmability must exist. As a researcher, I must understand how my own bias may influence the interpretation of the data. However, the findings of the study must be able to be confirmed and viewed in a way that the researcher's bias did not influence the interpretation of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The form of triangulation helps to achieve confirmability, which will be used in this study.

Ethical Procedures

As a researcher, my responsibility is to conduct this study in a way that aligns with the expectations of the university and aligns with the federal expectations. Additionally, it is the researcher's responsibility to maintain the ethical treatment of all human participants within the study, and this spans the ethical treatment of the data

collected from these participants. Therefore, to guarantee compliance with the expectations of Walden, it will be necessary to follow steps to receive ethical approval for the study.

The protection of the participants is crucial. Therefore, it will be necessary to ensure privacy and to securely store all data collected during the process of this study. The participants will be asked to sign an informed consent form and will be made aware of all aspects of the research and how the data will be stored and secured. The participant's identity, as well as the school, will not be released to further maintain privacy for the participants. Everything collected throughout the study, including transcripts, notes, tape recordings, etc. will be secured by password protection and only accessible by the researcher. In the case that back up documents are created, those too will be held in a secure location where only the researcher may access it. Storage of the data will be for no less than five years, and following those five years, destruction of the data will occur.

Summary

The focus of this section was to explore the methodology of the study. The chapter includes the steps for participation selection, including the population criteria and the sampling method. Additionally, this section has provided the instrumentation that will be used throughout data collection. The researcher's role, the data analysis plan, and issues of trustworthiness were all addressed in detail within this section. It provides a clear understanding of ethical problems to consider and how data and participants will be protected throughout the study and for years following the completion of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to improve understanding of how the school faculty perceive the organizational culture related to anti-bullying programs and how this influences the school faculty's response and utilization of strategies developed by programs implemented due to anti-bullying laws. This chapter includes the results of the study that was conducted to answer the following research questions.

1. How does the school faculty's perceptions of their organizational culture influence their perceptions of implementing anti-bullying policies?
2. How does the school faculty's perceptions of their organizational culture influence their behavior while implementing anti-bullying programs?
3. How do the school faculty's perceptions of their organizational culture influence their utilization of strategies developed by anti-bullying programs?

The chapter also discusses the conditions of the study and how, if at all, this affects the analysis of the results. Additionally, it provides a description of the participants and the process of data collection. This includes the number of participants, location of data collection, and how the data was recorded. The process followed to code the data is another area of discussion within this chapter. Lastly, evidence of trustworthiness is provided, and each research question is addressed.

Setting

The setting of the interviews in this study was via Zoom meetings. The participants each were in their own classroom at the school during a time that worked best for their schedule. All participants were alone in their classroom due to them

choosing times that were during their planning period during the school day. I conducted the interviews from my home office. The participants and I were working on limited timeframes; therefore, we were focused on moving smoothly through the interview, which allowed for focused and thorough responses.

Demographics

The participants of this study were to have at least five years of experience within that school district so that they were well adjusted and familiar with the setting within the school. Additionally, participants were to have some involvement with addressing issues associated with bullying and received the training required by law related to bullying. All participants interviewed for this study met these requirements. One participant had been in their position for 8 years, another for 32 years, a third for 5 years, a fourth for 21 years, and the last participant for 19 years. Based on the number of years within the school district, the participants each had enough experience to have adjusted to the culture within the school and to have experience with the protocol for bullying and addressing bullying.

One participant stated their position as transition/special education and learning support. Another participant stated their position was a reading teacher as well as a reading specialist. The remaining three participants stated their position as teacher. Three participants taught 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students, three participants taught 10th grade students, and four of the participants taught 11th and 12th grade students. The subjects or classes taught by the participants varied. Three of the participants taught English, one participant taught psychology, history, and economics, one participant taught biology,

and another participant stated they taught reading. Two of the participants stated they had been employed elsewhere. One participant had taught for two years in a school in West Virginia while the other participant had taught in Maryland.

The participants were also asked to choose which age range matched their age. The age ranges included less than 30, 30 to 34, 35 to 40, 40 to 49, and 50-above. There were no participants who fell into the age range of younger than 30 or 35 to 40. However, the participants who were 30 to 34 represented 40% of the population, 40% of the sample were 40 to 49, and 20% of the sample was 50 or older. There were four female participants and one male participant. The demographics are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

<i>Participant Selection</i>	
Participants	5
Age	
Less than 30	0
30 to 34	2
35 to 40	0
40 to 49	2
50 or older	1
Gender	
Female	4
Male	1

Data Collection

Once IRB approval was received, I contacted the site contact to begin having an email including the invitation to participate sent to potential participants. The participants

were informed in the email to contact me directly and separately from the email they received from the site contact. Participants then began to contact me via email, and I then forwarded the consent form. Once consent was received, I then scheduled a date and time to conduct the interview with each participant. Five participants were identified, showed interest, and were verified to have met the criteria of the study. There were five in-depth interviews conducted with school faculty. About ten minutes prior to each interview, I provided the participants with a copy of the interview questions for their review. Due to the current situation, COVID-19, all participants chose to conduct the interviews via Zoom to maintain safety.

Over a three-week period, I conducted one to two interviews a week using interview questions that were specifically designed for this study. Prior to the interview, the participants were informed that the interview may take a total of an hour. However, the length of the interviews ranged from 30 to 45 minutes. Each interview was recorded via the recording option on Zoom meetings. The recordings and notes taken during the interview were then saved on a flash drive and secured in a locked location. The participants shared their knowledge, feelings, and experiences regarding their perceptions of bullying, the school's culture, and the school's policy and approach regarding bullying.

Data Analysis

Upon completion of the interviews for the study, the recorded interviews were then put into transcribed form. The site SONIX was used to transcribe the audio. Once transcribed, the files were then saved to a flash drive for further review. Prior to

identifying codes and themes in these transcribed files, key words that had been identified throughout the duration of each interview were highlighted. While conducting each interview, key words that were frequently heard during all interviews were highlighted or made note of. In doing this, I was able to return to these keywords to utilize in the develop of themes during data analysis. According to Patton (2015), it is important to begin analysis during the process of conducting interviews. By doing this, I was able to easily identify similarities that existed throughout the interviews.

In the next step, each transcribed file was then uploaded to the software Quirkos to begin identifying codes and themes within each interview. I began this process by analyzing each interview individually at first. Then, I moved to identify codes that existed. I compared the responses to each question from each interview. Some of the codes that began to unfold during this step included constant, verbal, emotional, consequences, honesty, lack of consistency, turnover, comfortability, and misnaming. Following the coding, themes began to emerge between the responses from faculty that were interviewed. The first theme that emerged was the defining of the term bullying. The participants were first asked to provide their definition of bullying and how their personal perspectives influenced their definition of bullying. When reading the transcripts, I identified that the participants often acknowledge the difference between joking and teasing and one-time incidents versus bullying incidents which they identified as constant. Constant or repeatedly was a continual theme that was acknowledged in the participants response to defining bullying. Participant A stated, “it could be verbal, emotional, physical, mental, it completely throws my kiddos off task.” Many participants

stated similar responses to their definition of bullying and furthered by stating, for example, “a person is repeatedly doing something to someone who is not on the same, either social or emotional or intellectual level.” When asked how their personal experiences influenced how they defined bullying, the participants’ responses varied. Some participants focused on their past experiences from school, while others looked at their professional experiences. Additionally, one participant stated that “I don’t necessarily think that my personal experiences should cloud that.” A theme found, however, is that between both personal and professional experiences, many of those that felt those experiences influenced their responses it stemmed back to how children were treated. For example, one participant discussed how a relative was treated throughout their schooling while another discussed how their own child had experienced bullying as well. These tended to provide further insight into how these participants responded and defined bullying.

Another theme that emerged was related to the school definition of bullying. Of the five participants, only two participants were aware of the school having a definition of bullying. The participants stated that although bullying was discussed, the school did not have a clear program, definition, or understanding of what was considered to be bullying or how to address bullying. Which many identified as a concern, and provided a further theme related to the consistency of punishment related to bullying. When asked the policy for reporting and handling issues related to bullying, the lack of consistency became more apparent. One participant is quoted as stating, “there is no consistency here”. While another stated, “I couldn’t tell you a specific policy”.

The most common type of bullying that was identified among the participants was verbal or cyber. All the participants identified verbal; however, some went further to stating that cyber or electronic bullying was also an issue. For example, one participant stated “our big one is definitely verbal. And the social media like the text messages going back and forth, Facebook rants, the Instagram, the Snapchat. Those are awful”. Another participant followed this theme as well by stating “I think the most prevalent now is the electronic, they are cyber bullying each other”.

Faculty members were then asked to explain how they would respond to incidents of bullying among students. A common theme was identified in response to this question as well. Each faculty member responded that they would handle the situation according to their own standards. None of the faculty members stated that they would follow a particular protocol when responding to incidents that they would perceive as bullying. Many of the responses to this question made it clear that they observe the situation and respond accordingly. For example, one faculty member stated that “I can immediately stop instruction and just say, OK, we're doing this because I'm seeing this behavior.” However, it is important to note that the participant stated that their response may differ due to class size.

Overall, the common theme related to the definition and how the faculty handled bullying varied. Due to the unclear definition and policy, the faculty members tend to handle issues related to bullying on their own terms and based on their own definition. For example, one participant stated, “I think we more use our own. I literally had to look up what the school's definition was when I saw your question.” Additionally, another

participant stated “So, I don't honestly know if the school has a set definition. Unfortunately, I think schools treat every case differently.” The participants, in each interview, identified some form of inconsistency related to handling incidents of bullying. It was a common theme and concern throughout the interviews.

The next section of questioning focused on the culture among faculty specifically. The first theme to emerge within this section was related to what the participants like the most and the least about the school. The common theme related to what they liked the most about the school was the faculty they work with. For example, one participant stated “I love my department and who I teach with. We’re super, super close and we are all on the same page”. Additionally, two additional participants stated, “I like the people I teach with” and “The positive thing is that the faculty all really band together”. Of the five participants, 100% of them, in some way, stated that among faculty, there is a very positive culture. In response to what the participants liked the least about the school, two participants used the phrase “the money’s run the zoo”. Other participants stated this in other ways, for example, one participant stated, “inconsistency in the rules and regulations...if you know somebody, then you will get different treatment.” Another participant stated, “Our school culture as a faculty and staff is astounding. Like everyone who works there from the lunch ladies to the custodial staff, to the people who teach here, every single person, it feels like a family, our administration, not so much.” The culture appears strong among teachers and other faculty working directly with students regularly, but there appears to be disconnect with administration.

The participants were then asked if they work best as a whole, or individually, and if there is emphasis placed on one more than the other. The participants clarified that most work within smaller teams, rather than as a whole from grades 7th to 12th. However, within the groups or teams that are created, they do work well together, but not necessarily as a whole faculty. One participant stated “So I would love to say that we work really well as a team. The special ed works well as a team, but collectively not so much as a whole faculty anymore.” Another participant stated, “we work within groups. I wouldn't say the school works together.” When asked if emphasis is put on one more than the other, it was identified that teams are formed among specific grades. So in a sense, it was the theme that it was encouraged, but not necessarily provided as an opportunity. One participant stated “our school works better in teams, but we're not really given the opportunity to really do a lot of that”. Therefore, the idea of teamwork is there, but it is not necessarily implemented and followed.

The next set of questions developed an overall theme that connected. First, each participant identified that most students build a rapport with certain teachers, who they will then look to confide in when an incident occurs. This then also has an influence on how situations or incidents are handled. If the incident in question occurs in multiple situations, faculty members will often discuss within their teams what is occurring. For example, one participant stated, “we will constantly reassess and say, oh, well, we've heard that these parents are concerned that so-and-so is being bullied. This is what I see in my classroom. What do you guys see in your classrooms?” While another participant stated, “there is talk among people say, hey, watch this person in my class. This happens

and make sure that things don't escalate in half or in other classes.” Now while there is discussion among faculty members that teach specific grades, the lack of consistency appears to end with administration. For example, one participant stated that “we as a faculty severely struggle with, we're kept in the dark about a lot of stuff.” The theme here is that although faculty discuss incidents, once it reaches a higher level, they are often unaware of whether the situation was handled.

The final section of questions focused on professional development and the utilization of the school's policy. Regarding specific professional development related to the policy and/or bullying, the participants stated that this is lacking. One participant stated that “zero professional development is provided” and that “the school board does not approve professional development usually”. Another participant stated that they may send emails when they receive information related to professional development, but that is the extent of the professional development information that is provided. Certain professional development is bullying, however, in relation to bullying or bullying policies, development is lacking.

The participants stated that overall, they feel supported by fellow faculty members, but not necessarily administration. One participant made the comparison of “we are a ship with no captain. Another participant stated that at times, they often feel like they are more being scrutinized rather than being supported. For example, the participant stated when asked if they are supported by administration in implementing the school's strategies to addressing incidents of bullying that “It seems at some points that the investigation is more, I won't say accusatory, but it's like, what have you done? Are

you supporting me or are you blaming me?” Each of the participants in some way identified with this theme of lack of support from administration. However, they felt strongly that fellow teachers supported them in addressing issues that occur within their classrooms.

Throughout the data analysis phase, one main discrepancy was identified. The discrepancy was in relation to the school’s definition of bullying. Only two of the five participants were able to provide definitions that were school related, while the others’ stated they were not aware of the school’s definition. I believe this is an important factor within this study. First, it raises the question of why all faculty members are not aware that a definition exists. When reviewing the school’s student handbook, a definition of bullying is provided. Additionally, the handbook states that copies of the bullying policies shall be posted in each classroom within the school, on the districts website, and in a prominent location within the school. In the interview, one participant had commented on how this was stated in the handbook, however, the participant also stated that though the policy states this, there is no posting within their own classroom and is unsure as to whether this is the case in other classrooms. Therefore, this factor is important regarding the theme that has emerged related to consistency, or the lack thereof, within the school.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

As with any qualitative study, the concern of credibility and dependability are important to discuss. Throughout this study, the strategies utilized to maintain credibility and dependability was to incorporate perspectival triangulation. The participants in this

study, although mainly teachers, do have various years of experience. Additionally, they all teach various grade levels, which provides a unique perspective, and they also have various focuses within their positions. For example, participants were interviewed that have emotional support and learning support experience. The participants also teach a variety of subjects ranging from English to psychology. Additionally, three of the five participants had previous experience outside of the school that they currently are employed at. The participants had differing experiences because of that previous employment. One participant had previously worked in a school district where they had training on the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.

In addition to the perspectival triangulation, I was sure to be very detailed in the process as well as the responses received during the interview stage. It is important for dependability that the I be detailed, but also remove any of my own bias. By sharing and focusing on the specific responses of the participants, it provided for the opportunity to explore exactly what was found within the interviews. Additionally, by directly quoting the responses of the participants, further removal of any bias is achieved. By focusing strictly on the words of the participant, I was able to identify themes that arose throughout each of the interviews.

Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to improve understanding of how the school faculty perceive the organizational culture related to anti-bullying programs and how this influences the school faculty's response and utilization of strategies developed by programs implemented due to anti-bullying laws. Interviews of approximately ten

high school faculty members with at least five years of experience were conducted and analyzed. The interviews helped to develop an understanding of how the culture among school faculty influences teachers and other school faculty members' responses and the use of anti-bullying strategies. The interviews were analyzed and then used to address the three research questions that were identified at the beginning of the study.

1. How does the school faculty's perceptions of their organizational culture influence their perceptions of implementing anti-bullying policies?
2. How does the school faculty's perceptions of their organizational culture influence their behavior while implementing anti-bullying programs?
3. How do the school faculty's perceptions of their organizational culture influence their utilization of strategies developed by anti-bullying programs?

The data from this study was collected from a structured interview with five faculty members. The interviews were then carefully analyzed to find themes that would help to answer the research questions for this study.

Theme 1: Perceptions of the Definition of Bullying

The perceptions held among school faculty is important regarding both developing and implementing anti-bullying policies within schools. One of the first main focuses related to an anti-bullying policy is the definition of bullying. The first theme to develop from the responses during the interview process related to the definition of bullying. When reviewing the interview questions, it immediately became apparent that the definition of bullying within the school was not clear to many of the faculty members, and much of their definition related to their own personal understanding of bullying. One

participant specifically stated they had got on the school's website prior to our interview to find the school's definition of bullying. They stated that it was "worrisome" because there was no clear definition for bullying. Another participant stated, "I don't honestly know if the school has a set definition". Furthermore, another participant stated they do not view the school as having a set policy and that one area of improvement would be to provide clarity on what is considered bullying and what is not. While there were participants who were unfamiliar with the school's definition, two of the participants were able to provide definitions. It should be noted that the two participants who provided the school's definition have been employed for the longest periods, one participant being in their position for twenty-one years and the other nineteen years. In the definitions they provided, they each stated that the acts were to be harmful and intentional. Also, that it could be a series of acts or a single action. However, despite this definition, the participants still identified that there remains lack of clarity. From this, it was clear that the participants perceptions of the definition, or lack of their knowledge of the definition, affected their perceptions on how to properly identify an incident of bullying when it occurs. It is important to have a very clearly defined understanding of the definition of bullying. Without it, school faculty are not properly equipped with the knowledge needed to identify the behavior. The culture within the school related to how they perceive the definition influences how they implement strategies that may be identified or utilized to address any incidents that happen within the school.

Theme 2: Clarity in the School's Policy for Reporting and Handling Incidents

When asked to describe the school's policy for reporting and handling bullying, it became clear in the participant's responses that there was no clear policy in place for handling incidents of bullying. For anti-bullying policies to be effective, it is important for them to be integrated into the culture of the school (Ahtola, Haataja, Karna, Poskiparta, & Salmivalli, 2013). Participants for this study responded in such a way that their clarity related to the school's policy was lacking. Without an adequate understanding of the policy, school faculty are unable to properly address incidents that have or will occur. One participant stated that it depended on the teacher on how a situation is handled, while another participant stated "I couldn't tell you a specific policy, because it depends on who the kids are". Two participants stated that documentation was key, and that taking it to administration was important. Documentation was discussed as part of the school's way of reporting bullying, however, one participant stated, "I don't do a paper trail". Therefore, without a clear definition of bullying or how to handle an incident, there are times the participants are made to feel as though they have to prove the behavior occurred, which results in reluctance to provide the information to administration, which then results to simply handling the situation within their own individual classrooms based on their own knowledge rather than following a set policy.

The concern here resorts back to lack of clarity in understanding how to handle bullying situations. There is no set policy, leading to the perception that faculty members are left to their own resources and understanding of how to address these incidents. Due

to this, there is no continuity in what is identified as bullying and how to address an incident when it arises.

Theme 3: Verbal and Electronic Bullying

The participants acknowledge that the most common forms of bullying they identify are verbal and electronic. They identified verbal bullying which includes name calling or making fun of another student. While electronic bullying includes the various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. The participants identified that on these platforms, students would be engaging in further verbal attacks and ranting about students that they may have issues or disagreements with. Each type of bullying identified, however, played into behavior that these participants see within their classrooms as well. Although they may not personally view the situations that occur on the social media platforms, they are situations that are discussed within the classroom among students.

Theme 4: Lack of consistency and communication

A theme that continually emerged throughout the review of the interviews was discussions related to consistency and communication, or lack thereof. One participant stated that something they least liked about the school is “the inconsistency with rules and regulations.” Two other participants described it as “the monkeys are running the zoo”, meaning there isn’t always a firm approach and students tend to get away with incidents that they shouldn’t be. Another participant stated that they are looking for the school to take “a more definite stance on certain things”. Additionally, the participants discussed multiple times that when administration is made aware of incidents, it tends to

be “radio silence”, as one participant put it, afterwards and faculty are not made aware of anything related to the situation. Participants also stated that there is generally a lack of discussion related to the topic of bullying.

The lack of communication can be further seen in the lack of professional development that is provided. Without professional development, faculty are not being provided the proper tools and resources to adequately respond to incidents of bullying. They are also not being communicated to regarding the expectations of the school on how to handle situations or incidents within the school. They are often left to their own tools, and to handling situations for how they see fit. Therefore, students may experience a situation handled in one classroom is handled differently in another, which adds to the inconsistency that is experienced within the school culture as well. One participant stated, “zero professional development regarding bullying is provided to faculty...” which “I think deters a lot of people.”

Theme 5: Lack of a Positive Culture Between School Faculty and Administration

Another theme to emerge is that there appears to be a strong, positive culture among the teachers and school faculty that includes janitorial staff, food service staff, etc., but the culture doesn't appear to stretch to include administration. One participant described the culture within the school as “a ship with no captains”, while another participant stated that there appears to be “a strange dynamic between the principal and the vice principal” which tends to make handling issues difficult. One participant also stated that it often feels as though administration places the responsibility of handling a situation on the faculty member. The participant stated “you have to realize the burden is

placed on us to prove and deal with. It seems at some points that the investigation is more, I won't say accusatory, but it's like, what have you done? Are you supporting me or are you blaming me?" Additionally, another participant stated that teachers tend to try and make up for the lack of disciplinary action coming from administration (i.e. principal and vice principal) and conduct their own conflict resolution.

The lack of positive culture between administration and school faculty is further exemplified when participants discussed the high turnover of administration. It is difficult to build a strong culture with administration when they are continually changing. One participant stated that faculty members are used to taking care of situations, because of the high turnover that is seen among principals and vice principals. While another participant shared the same concern by stating, "having to adjust every single year or two years, it really makes your job so much more difficult if you know that you don't have the support of your administration."

Summary

While conducting this study, I felt confident in the five participants that were chosen to conduct the interviews. They provided responses that helped to understand their professional view within the schools, and their understanding of policies that are in place to handle incidents of bullying. Their various years of experience helped to further provide the information and data needed to adequately answer the research questions developed for this study. They were adamant in exploring their own experiences and providing usual information related to the topic for this study, which led to data that was needed to further the research related to this topic.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative study was to improve understanding of how the school faculty perceive the organizational culture related to anti-bullying programs and how this influences the school faculty's response and utilization of strategies developed by programs implemented due to anti-bullying laws. The results of this study are important to further the research related to the culture among school faculty, and how it relates to the implementation of anti-bullying policies and programs within schools. In order for these programs to be effective, a strong, positive school culture must be present. During the analysis of data for this study, the results help to provide a clear understanding of this school's culture, and how it relates to implementation of anti-bullying policies and strategies. The results led to discussion related to the definition of bullying that is identified by each participant, both their own and the school's definition. Also, it provided understanding of the inconsistency and lack of communication that each of the participants struggle with when handling incidents within the school. These are all important areas of discussion when related to implementing policies of any kind into an organization. Clear definition, support, consistency, and communication are key components of successful policies and programs.

Interpretation of Findings

Much of the participants' understanding of the definition of bullying related to their own personal understanding. They regularly acknowledge, even those who identified the school's definition, that the school lacks on providing a clear understanding of what behavior was and was not considered bullying. The lack of continuity in what

behavior is considered bullying and what is not is a concern when properly implementing a program or policies, which also appeared to be lacking at this school. The need for clear verbiage, protocol, and structure is a part of every strong program that is developed.

When these aspects are lacking, it can be detrimental to handling situations within the organization. The lack of this clarity showed to be a major area of contention and frustration among the participants. They desire that clarity to adequately handle incidents, because they have the best interest of their students in mind.

Additionally, the lack of support or positive culture with their administration also became very apparent throughout conducting and analyzing data from the interviews. Each participant stated that they felt very positive about the culture that existed between themselves and their fellow teachers (including janitorial staff and food service workers), however, the positive culture did not appear to be as strong between teachers and administration. This is difficult to build, however, when administration is continually changing. However, if a set policy related to handling incidents of bullying were in place, it may be easier to build the support and positive culture with the new administration that stepped in. When policies are built strong and implemented with support, any future individuals that are introduced into the organization would have an easier transition into understanding the culture that exists. However, it was clear between the participants who have held their positions longer and those with less years within the schools perceived different understandings of the policy and definition. It appears to be a lack of communication with new faculty members on the expectations related to handling situations related to bullying. The need for clear guidance is important in helping to

develop the perceptions of these programs among faculty and then in turn, how it influences their behavior and utilization of the policies that are in place. If support is lacking, they are less likely to have a behavior that aligns with the expectations of a policy, and they are less likely to utilize the strategies developed by the policy. When they are seeing no consistency among administration, they then struggle to implement those strategies that are in place. However, it is furthermore difficult when a clear understanding of how to handle situations is not provided to school faculty.

The success of policies and programs within an organization are greatly influenced by the culture that exists within that organization. If the organization is lacking a positive, supportive culture, implementing programs and strategies are more difficult. Furthermore, it becomes even more difficult if communication is lacking, and there is no consistency in the implementation. Throughout the interviews, the lack of communication and inconsistency was a major concern of each participant. Given their continual discussion of this topic, it provides further insight into the need for these two factors to be present so that the faculty members are well prepared to handle situations that occur.

Limitations of the Study

Although this study was conducted on a small scale with a total of five participants, I do not feel as though it deterred the outcome of the study. The participants were able to provide the information and data needed, however, it would be beneficial to see the results of this study on a larger scale. Additionally, the location and size of this school did not impede the results. The participants were able to clearly identify the school

culture that exists and to provide an understanding of the influence their understanding of that culture has on their perceptions, behavior, and utilization of anti-bullying strategies. If anything, the study further emphasized the need for a strong, positive culture for anti-bullying policies and programs to be successful and effective. While conducting the interviews, it became clear around the fourth and fifth participants that I had reached saturation. They were providing me with similar responses and continually emphasized that although they felt strongly about a positive culture with fellow faculty members, they lacked that support, communication, and consistency with their administration.

Recommendations

Recommendations that can be made for further research relate to conducting the study on a larger scale and in a different school district. It would be beneficial to include various members of the faculty, as well as the principal, vice principal, and any other administration that is involved with the development of these programs. By further delving into those perspectives, researchers would be provided with the opportunity to understand both the perceptions of faculty members whose jobs are to utilize these policies to address behaviors, while also exploring the perceptions of those administrators that develop the programs and are then responsible for communicating and enforcing the expectations of those policies.

Regarding recommendations for school faculty and administration, it is important to communicate with all faculty members openly and actively within the district. For a district to be successful in deterring bullying behavior, a clear definition of bullying must be provided not only to students, but also all faculty members so that they are aware of

when to step into incidents. Additionally, administration must remain consistent, regardless of the student or any other individual involved. The lack of consistency not only affects the students, but it also affects the desire of a faculty member to follow any procedures put into place for addressing situations that are related to bullying. Teachers and other faculty members should not be following their own approach to handling incidents of bullying, there should be policies, strategies, etc. in place to help guide them in providing the proper resources and help to those students, whether they be the bullied student or the bully.

Implications

The area in which this study was conducted includes various small to medium sized school districts. The students within these districts come from similar backgrounds and situations, therefore, the experiences in one district are very similar to those in another. Therefore, this study helps to provide faculty and administrators with the further understanding of the perceptions of faculty members on issues that relate to implementing anti-bullying policies. It provides them with the necessary data to address any changes that may be needed so that not only faculty are provided with the support desired, but so are students. Upon realization that the desire for communication and consistency are needed, administrators and faculty members can begin to work together to build programs that will help to support students and provide them with a safe learning environment that not only helps them to learn but encourages them to be kind to their fellow peers. Organizational culture is important on all levels. For an organization, including schools, to function effectively, the culture must be positive, supportive, and

consistent. The study shows the desire among faculty for these factors to be in place, and upon revealing this study, I hope that awareness is provided, and policy makers, administration, and faculty are encouraged to take the steps to improve the culture within school districts and to have the communication and consistency needed to develop humans that are assets to society.

Conclusion

When reviewing the purpose of the study and the interviews that were conducted throughout this study, it became clear that the role of culture among faculty has a strong hold on the effectiveness of policies and programs within a school district. Teachers play a very crucial role in the lives of adolescents, and because of this, they should be provided with the necessary support and resources needed for them to be successful. Where communication lacks and inconsistency is not the norm, school faculty are unable to adequately provide students with the learning environment they need to be successful themselves. Professional development is a starting point for getting on the right track to success, but also, clear communication and expectations are also necessary. The perceptions school faculty hold influences their decisions and responses. If they do not perceive this as being effective, they are more than likely to take their own steps to be sure to achieve the goal they desire. However, it should not be solely in the hands of the school faculty, i.e. teachers. Administrators should be providing the support and knowledge necessary to lighten the overwhelming load that teachers are already experiencing. Additionally, policy makers should be acknowledging the need for addressing adequate training for administrators and school faculty on how to properly

implement anti-bullying programs. It is said that “it takes a village to raise a child” and this study emphasizes how in our society, that tends to be the case.

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Appendix A: Invitation to Participate

Dear Invitee,

My name is Bethany Huff. I am a doctoral student at Walden University's Criminal Justice Program. I am kindly requesting your participation in a doctoral research study that I am conducting titled: The Influence of School Faculty Culture on Anti-Bullying Policies. The intention is to assess the culture among school faculty members to understand how this may influence the effectiveness of the strategies associated with anti-bullying policies. The criteria for participation are that you have held your position, or a school faculty position, for at least 5 years and are actively involved with addressing issues of bullying. Regarding actively involved, this means that the potential participant either intervenes when a bullying incident occurs or is reported to them, and they have some form of knowledge of the required protocols of the school regarding bullying incidents. Also, it is required that the potential participants have received some form of anti-bullying training. The study involves completing an interview, at a time and location that is most convenient for you. Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The study is confidential, therefore, your name or any other identifying information will be accessed only by myself, the student researcher. All identifying information will be encrypted and password protected.

If you are interested in participating in the study, please send an email to bethany.huff@waldenu.edu acknowledging your interest in the study. It is important that you do not reply to this email to maintain confidentiality. Please create a new message, and include only the email provided for me, the student researcher. Once I have received your response of interest, I will then send an Informed Consent letter, individually, to those who are interested in participating. We can then move forward with scheduling the time and location for conducting the interview. If you choose, the interview may be completed via Zoom meeting or another remote form of communication. The research and results of this study will be utilized in assisting social change to help ensure that the implementation of anti-bullying strategies are effective and that students are receiving the support needed for a safe and healthy learning environment. Thank you for taking your time to read this email.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

In the following section, please tell me about yourself.

1. What is your position within the school?
2. How long have you worked in this position?
 - a. Have you only worked at this school or were you previously employed elsewhere?
3. Select the choice that matches your age range:
 - a. Younger than 30
 - b. 30 to 34
 - c. 35 to 39
 - d. 40 to 49
 - e. 50 - above
4. **If a teacher:** What grade level do you teach?
 - a. What subject or classes do you teach?
5. **If a principal or administrator:** Were you previously a teacher? If so, for how long?

In the following section, please tell me about your perceptions regarding bullying, the environment among students, and the school's policy and approach to handling incidents of bullying.

1. How do you define bullying?
 - a. How do your personal experiences influence your definition or handling of bullying?

2. How does the school district define bullying?
 - a. Discuss any differences that may exist.
3. Please describe the school's policy for handling and reporting bullying.
 - a. What guidelines are in place for handling and reporting bullying?
 - b. Was this policy implemented prior to you beginning employment?
 - c. Were you a part of implementing the policy?
4. Describe the environment among students.
 - a. What type of bullying do you find most prevalent within your school?
 - b. Explain how you address incidents of bullying when they are brought to your attention or you witness an incident.
 - c. Explain how your efforts to address bullying may differ from the expectations of the policy or from fellow faculty members.
 - d. How do fellow faculty members often handle incidents of bullying?

In the following section, please tell me about the culture among faculty within your school.

1. Describe what you like the most and the least about your school.
2. Within the school's culture, do you believe faculty works better as a team or individually? Is there value placed on one more than the other?
3. How does the school culture among faculty effect the students' approach to making faculty aware of issues they may be experiencing with other students?
4. Among faculty, describe any conversations or discussions that have occurred related to bullying.

5. If there was one thing you would change about your school's culture, what would that be?

In the following section, please discuss any professional development related to bullying and how faculty within your school utilizes the policy in place.

1. Describe any opportunities for professional development related to bullying.
 - a. Are these opportunities required or optional?
 - b. How frequently are these opportunities provided?
 - c. Have you engaged in any development related to this topic outside of your school requirements or opportunities? If so, explain.
2. Describe the strategies you, the school, and your fellow faculty members use to prepare themselves to best handle incidents of bullying within the school.
 - a. What strategies do you find the most helpful? Least helpful?
 - b. What changes would you recommend for the current policy?
3. Describe the support provided from administration for you to properly and effectively implement these strategies in handling incidents.
4. Discuss the support from fellow faculty members, other than administrators, on working together to handle incidents and utilize effective strategies.