

Regulating Aggression in a Classroom: Anti-Bullying Practices of Teachers

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Abstract

Classroom bullying can be either prevented or intervened at schools by the teachers and other involved parties. The focus of this study was teachers' involvement in this process of regulating bullying. As a result of qualitatively studying the anti-bullying methods of 11 teachers of one elite school in Kazakhstan, it has been identified that teachers of that school tend to give a preference to prevention of bullying over intervention. This is the result of their self-perception as successful and effective value inculcators, who can prevent bullying arousal at the school through transmitting the values of respect and unity than through observing and reporting on bullying according to their watchmen identity. This study presents a new outlook on the perceived level of bullying, teachers' anti-bullying methods, self and social identities and shows how they are all interlinked through the prisms of Situational Crime Prevention and Identity Control Theories.

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One of the extreme interactions taking place in the class is bullying and one of the main responsible figures to end it are teachers. School teachers usually have authority and hold some power within the class. The way the teacher acts might affect the environment of the class and the behavior of the students. Thus, the teacher appears to be a central figure in the situation of school bullying happening. Knowing the variety of tools, they use, how they make choices to prevent and intervene, and the roles they play when it comes to bullying incidents are of great interest to be researched.

Therefore, this study aimed to identify various ways of regulating bullying instances by teachers of one elite Kazakhstani school through one-to-one conversations with them. I explored the differences of perceptions and methods of teachers in regard to addressing the issue of bullying through the prisms of Situational Crime Prevention Theory and Identity Control Theory. I looked for particular types of prevention and intervention of such an aggressive interaction, and the role that teachers have assigned themselves in experiences and stories they shared. This study considered all types of anti-bullying practices used by teachers, which can be either learned through practice or any anti-bullying policy trainings.

To obtain such data, this capstone project aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the role of the teacher in regulating aggression in the classroom through the perspective of Identity Control Theory?
2. What are the anti-bullying methods used by the teachers of one elite Kazakhstani school?
3. What do teachers' prevention methods focus on more in terms of Situational Crime Prevention Theory?

In general, revision and analysis of previously used practices is a necessity as according to the report of National Center of Public Health Care of The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 19-20% of girls and boys of 11 years old have experienced bullying more than one times within two months prior to the study conducted by the center (Abdrakhmanova, 2019). Therefore, this study might contribute to a better development of anti-bullying practices and training and improvements of overall bullying situation. Considering the roles of value inculcators and watchmen that teachers of this study have identified with, this study might be scaled and continued as a quantitative research in future to make more generalizable results. Such results might be used to develop new and revise practiced approaches. While the results of this study can be reapplied and used at schools in order to identify their own methods and make suggestions on a micro level of each school by using Situational Crime Prevention and Identity Control theories too to identify the roles and focus of teachers in their anti-bullying practices as well. Therefore, this explorative research might be of high importance for the areas of teaching, education, child development, and educational research in general.

Literature Review

Social Control and Schools

By aiming to research the issue of bullying, one of the broad topics that this research has addressed is the social control. The social control can be imposed through various institutions, such as religion, education, government, etc., which teach people to obedience to the ruling ideology allowing it to be reproduced and preserve its power (Althusser, 1971). Such teaching takes on different forms at every institution, in particular, at schools, children acquire not only subject- and field-related knowledge, but learn social behavior rules and norms too. Those can be transmitted to them as part of their school curriculum and school codes, and children are expected to follow what they should and should not do accordingly.

As Althusser posed, that way education becomes one of the Ideological State Apparatuses, which controls the society and its members by spreading the ideology of the ruling class and educating them on what they should believe and do and who they should obey and follow (1971). In all of that the role of the teacher is an immense one as they provide most of the school education to the students and make a decision about delivering the ideology or not. The teacher also decides how and when should it be passed, and there appears the dilemma of choosing between prevention and intervention of rule-breaking. When discussing such a rule-breaking as bullying, it is also important to how do teachers prevent and intervene it and what do they focus on more in combatting bullying. Therefore, this literature review focused not only on the exploration of studies of bullying, but more on illustrating the global outlook on bullying and identifying effective approaches in preventing and coping it.

The Definition of Bullying

Even if anti-bullying methods differ from country to country, from one school to another, there appears to be a more or less commonly accepted definition of bullying. Reviewing the available literature shows that there are common components which all researchers point out as necessary when considering this issue. As Rigby states it, a behavior to be identified as bullying needs to be acted on repeatedly, have different power dynamics of the actors involved, and cause some sort of harm (2017). The same idea is shared by Chen and Chen, who have provided their survey participants with one definition of bullying to share a common understanding of it. In that definition, they have identified similar components, which are repetitiveness, harm, and power (Chen & Chen, 2018). Based on the varying nature of the harm caused, bullying is classified as physical, verbal, social, psychological, and cyberbullying. For instance, verbal bullying is the one, where the harm is caused to a victim verbally (Mogonea & Mogonea, 2021) and cyberbullying is the one where

the harm is caused through the means of Internet, social networks, and electronic devices (Jones & Augustine, 2015).

Thus, considering prior studies, this study approaches bullying as an aggressive harmful repetitive behavior, which is directed towards the victim with lesser power than the bully (Rigby, 2017; Chen & Chen, 2018). Defining bullying this way is important, as such a behavior can be indeed complex to identify and be mistaken for a conflict among students. However, as Simmel defines conflict as opposition existing between two equal parties, which allows their integration and unification in one society (1904), it is clear that bullying is not a conflict. Even though students might be equal for the teacher, the power dynamic among them is different: there is a more dominant student-aggressor harming the student-victim (Mogonea & Mogonea, 2021). The aggressor appears to develop aggressive behavior, which has no goal of unifying with the victim or victims themselves. Thus, it is not a conflict, it is an extreme case of conflict as Simmel would put it (1904). The bully is an aggressor, who harms the victim at the moments of encounter, he or she reacts to the victim's personality or a situation not in a thoughtful manner, but on rather situational impulse (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). In particular, the aggressor reacts to a situation, where there is an opportunity to act aggressively. In such a situation in a class, there is an aggressor capable of harming a victim and a victim without protection.

The Role of the Teacher and Situational Crime Prevention Theory

According to the routine activity theory (RAT), that is what is needed for a crime to happen. The formula of crime involves an offender, a target, and no protector of the target (Clarke, 1997). In school bullying cases, a student-aggressor is an offender, as he or she commits a crime of bullying, the victim is a target, and the teacher is a guardian, who is unable to prevent the crime from taking place. The aggressor is the one, who makes the choice to act violently, while the teacher is the one, who makes a choice, knowingly or

unknowingly, to address it or not (Clarke, 1997). The choice that the teacher makes can be influenced by the teacher's age, gender, work and life experiences, school agenda or any other factors. This way, bullying can be explained by rational choice theory (RCT) too. Instead of focusing on RAT and RCT separately, this study has chosen a situational crime prevention theory (SCP), which unites them both, as the main theoretical framework. Even though bullying may not be considered as a legally punishable crime in most of the cases, it has all components of a crime to be prevented. And the SCP states that in order to prevent a crime from happening, the situation in which it happens needs to be changed. If a crime takes place, it means that the environment for a crime was favorable and allowed it to happen in the first place. Therefore, as Cornish and Clarke put it, the risks and efforts involved with committing a crime should be increased, the opportunities for it to take place should be minimized, made unrewarding, and inexcusable (2003). These are the five parameters of situational crime prevention for which the anti-bullying methods would be checked and marked on their effectiveness.

Global Anti-Bullying Methods

As a result of reviewing the anti-bullying methods used worldwide, several methods for prevention as increasing the number of school safety tools as cameras and having a box for students to approach school administration directly (Chen & Chen, 2018; Rigby, 2017) and methods for intervention as organizing peer support groups and mediation between the bully and the victim have been found as most effective (Hurst, 2001; Rigby, 2017). While methods of lecturing students and direct sanctions, that are used by many teachers worldwide, were found the least useful by the studies of Chen and Chen in Taiwan (2018) and Rigby in Australia (2017). When taking these tools as an example and comparing them to the parameters of SCP, it shows that as safety cameras might record the situations of bullying and provide proofs of it, it makes committing bullying inexcusable, riskier and more impossible

in terms of not being caught. This changes the setting of the crime for the aggressor and makes this measure an effective one indeed. While, the method of lecturing students addresses none of the parameters, working only with the bully and leaving the favorable situation unchanged. However, many teachers still follow the methods of lecturing and other ineffective anti-bullying methods and the reason for that might be linked with the teachers themselves, their backgrounds, experiences, roles they take upon. Therefore, this study has conceptualized the anti-bullying practices and experiences of school teachers on a micro level.

Methodology

The Method

In order to be able to map different experiences of teachers on a micro level, I used qualitative methodology by organizing in-depth semi-structured interviews, which lasted 51 minutes on average. An interview allowed gathering in-depth, detailed information about current anti-bullying practices used by school teachers (Rapley, 2007). The setting of the semi-structured interview enabled them to speak extensively and give full answers as the questions (see Appendix A) asked were rephrased, changed, or added based on their experiences. The same question might not lead different interviewees to share with the content of similar nature and semi-structured interview setting allowed to overcome this issue. In general, among studies of anti-bullying school practices, it is common to choose qualitative methods to collect data as it enables getting more elaborated answers as a response in contrast with quantitative data (Lekunze & Strom, 2017). For instance, the study of Lester and Maldonado was able to set out a number of recommendations for one school's anti-bullying program, which they have studied by interviewing and analyzing the responses of nine school teachers (2013).

The Case

Within this study, the teachers of one elite Kazakhstani school have been interviewed online. The identities of participants as well as the identity of the school, where participants of the study work, are kept confidential. This has been done in order to increase the level of openness and willingness to participate of the teachers. In general, the school was chosen based on the convenience of its selection. Before conducting the study, I already had contacts of two teachers, who worked at that one school. Also, I knew that the teachers are aware of the concept of bullying and there will not be a need of introducing it. This has been achieved by the school by conducting anti-bullying trainings with psychologists and online anti-bullying trainings for the teachers. In general, the school is being positioned as one of elite non-private schools in Kazakhstan as it has good funding for improving educational conditions of the students and including organizing teacher trainings too.

Sample. The sample of this study includes 11 teachers (Teacher 1 – Teacher 11) of various backgrounds and subjects that they teach at the school. The participants are predominantly females, with only 2 of them being males. Their ages range from 24 to 43. They have total teaching experiences of 2 to 22 years and at their current school, all of them are teaching for 1 to 10 years. Such a diverse sample allows focusing on both teachers' experiential differences and similarities and differences of their approaches used to prevent and combat bullying.

Recruitment of the respondents. For recruiting participants, the method of snowball sampling was utilized. First, two teachers from the school known prior to the study were contacted and asked to share their experiences and perceptions after giving their oral consents (see Appendix B). Then, they were asked to direct to other 3 to 4 teachers working at their school. Such nonrandom selection allowed gathering more detailed information on a sensitive topic as bullying and teacher experiences as study participants were choosing to participate on their own and were not pushed by their institution to participate as it might have happened

in the case of contacting the school itself. As the study of Sadler, Fullerton, Lee, and Lim found out, when it comes to such sensitive topics, having trusting relationships with participants is the key (2010). As the participants were recruited through referrals, they were assured of the trustworthiness of the researcher and protection of their data as they have been informed that their colleagues have shared their phone numbers. Thus, this recruitment strategy was based on teacher referrals serving as a sign of trust to the researcher.

Limitations. Although, teachers were informed of the confidentiality and how their phone numbers have been reached, not all contacted teachers responded positively or replied at all, which was also accepted as a decline. As some of the teachers pointed out when declining participation, teachers have full work schedules and also their own personal matters to deal with. That is the reason why only 11 out of 23 teachers agreed to participate. Moreover, the topic itself might have been the reason for some not to participate, as might not have wanted to disclose their experiences of bullying in class and personal lives. Although, the study tried to make their participation as confidential as possible by having online interviews and turning off videos during it. However, in one interview, an online format caused a problem as the participant had a weak Internet connection, and it took a bit longer time to conduct an interview. Aside from that, there were no other limitations of the chosen data collection method.

Findings and Discussion

As a result of conducting eleven interviews and analyzing data, the following chapters have been organized around teachers' perceptions of the school's bullying environment, their backgrounds and perceptions of bullying, their various anti-bullying prevention and intervention methods, and their bullying regulation identities.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Bullying Environment

One of the main consistent statements of the participants of the study has been related to the teachers' view on the school's bullying environment. All eleven participants have stated that there is very low or almost no bullying at the school. Two teachers (Teacher 8 and 9) with total experience of teaching for 22 and 15 years, respectively, expressed that they did not see bullying there at all. Although, based on that, it could be said that the current bullying situation is positive, the school still seems to have cases of bullying. 8 out of 11 teachers have shared from 1 to 3 instances, 11 bullying instances in total. Those instances either took place before or are even taking place now. While the majority of them happened in the participant's class, 2 cases were from the experiences of their colleagues. By analyzing the incidents and teachers' backgrounds who have shared them, it has been concluded that having seen bullying at work or in life before leads teachers to see and identify more cases of bullying. Only Teacher 1 who had also provided an example from her previous work-related experience did not see any bullying cases at school.

Even though, Teacher 8 and 9 are one of the most experienced teachers, they have not seen bullying previously at their work and life, while the teachers who have seen bullying before were mostly providing examples of current school bullying during their interviews. For example, Teacher 11, who have seen bullying in a class, when she was a student as well as Teacher 6, who has also seen bullying in her life experience, shared that, there is a tendency of psychological bullying taking place for a short period of time for 1–2 days and a bit more at the school. Such bullying as said takes place occasionally in slight forms of “jokes” [шутки] and “mockery” [издевки] and targets some students on the base of their academic performance on exams or their answers to the teacher's questions in the class. The teachers also said that this short-term bullying cases usually stop when there is no reaction by the student at which it is targeted. In their nature, most of the specific examples shared by the

teachers were predominantly examples of psychological group bullying, yet they lasted longer.

For instance, Teacher 7, who has also shared with the example of bullying happening in the class of her daughter studying at a different school, provided an example of psychological group bullying happening at this school too. Teacher 7 said that there is a class, where a girl has been bullied by her classmates by not being let to sit on the place she wants, not wanting to work with her in a group. As the teacher learned later, the girl has also been bullying the class by not wanting to work, spend time and collaborate with them for various classes and competitions before, and it might have turned the class against her too. This same case has also been shared by another teacher, Teacher 4, who apparently teaches at the same class. As she reported, there was a situation, when this girl approached her and even if it has been shared in a joking manner, the girl said that she might come to the school one day with a “guitar” case, where a pistol might be hidden to shoot everyone, beside the teacher. This is an indeed severe case of bullying happening at this school as it has been stated by both of the teachers. Even though, there might be some victim-students, who may not react to bullying, others might respond and react to it more sharply and experience severe complications due to that. Even though, this situation of two-sided bullying has been taking place for another year, and it was not progressing much positively as it can be understood from the girls’ words, not all teachers teaching that class knew about it and others too. Due to this example, the teachers’ perceptions of their positive school bullying environment can be indeed questioned.

It can be questioned even more by the existence of various cases of physical bullying happening at the school. While sharing their perceptions, many teachers said that “there is no physical bullying, there can be psychological bullying and even compared to other schools, there is not much of it” (Teacher 6). Although, this can actually also be opposed by some of the examples provided by the teachers. Teacher 3, who has seen bullying in her class while

studying at school, shared a case of physical bullying with elements of psychological bullying. According to Teacher 3, there was a class at the school, where one boy had been bullying his boy classmates. One day, when she had entered one of her classes, that boy has been pulling his hand toward one of the students and when he saw the teacher enter, he immediately pulled it off. Even though, she was not sure whether there was indeed a punch, based on the tense atmosphere in the class and how other boys stood near the bully boy, the teacher concluded that there might have been some extreme elements of physical bullying involved as well. As Teacher 3 shared, “most of the class was scared of him [that boy], and he sat with one or two of the boys all the time, and they changed too. These boys, when the class ended, they packed his bag.” This shows that there were already minor elements of physical bullying before this extreme punch case, and also psychological pressure and harm imposed to the victims by more powerful aggressor-student.

Even if examples above and more cases were happening at the school, apparently not all teachers were aware of that, as Teacher 8 and 9 were firmly opposing the probability of seeing any case of bullying in their school. The possible reason might be that as teachers were saying themselves in that they do not talk about bullying and disclose much of the bullying happening in their classes with each other. Otherwise, it was found that teachers’ lack of experience in seeing bullying at their previous works and lives influences their seeing of bullying, as teachers who have shared bullying cases happening at the school predominantly had prior experience of seeing bullying. Moreover, it might be the issue of bias associated with the teachers’ position in resolving these cases of bullying, which will be later discussed along with the teachers’ identified roles.

Teachers’ Backgrounds and Perceptions of Bullying

Another finding is that the length of the teaching practice influences how teachers perceive and understand bullying. More experienced teachers tend to perceive bullying in

terms of its components: repetitiveness, harm, and power (Rigby, 2017; Chen & Chen, 2018). While sharing about how she understands bullying, Teacher 11 with an experience of teaching for 17 years said that those can be “moments of aggression, which can get worse and develop into bullying... it is when it happens systemically and is directed to a certain object.” As the definition of bullying was not provided to the teachers within this study, it is particularly informative that the teachers of this school tend to identify bullying according to its elements agreed upon by the global research communities. Not informing the teachers of the definition has been an intentional step in order to see how do they perceive it themselves without any influencing information provided by the research. However, many of them were informed about it, yet not by the study, but through their trainings, where they might have learned the definition of bullying and its components. All the teacher-participant said that they attend yearly trainings organized by psychologists of their school and eight teachers said that they participated in online anti-bullying courses. Teachers considered both types of the trainings educative and helpful in terms of learning to detect bullying. Other three teachers did not mention the online courses, yet one of them, Teacher 3, has been on her maternity leave for about four months already and that might be one of the reasons why she did not take part in that course. Otherwise, teachers were mainly sharing that they have been satisfied with the knowledge that they have acquired from the course, although marking that the trainings had more informative nature than practicing one. And that is why the experience of teachers might influence their bullying perceptions, as more experienced teachers had a chance to both learn and practice more in combatting cases of bullying.

Therefore, this might have been the reason why least experienced Teacher 4, 6, and 10 with 2–6 years of total teaching experience did not identify those elements and did not describe bullying accordingly indeed. Even though, they have also participated in both online and offline trainings on anti-bullying and learned information about bullying and anti-

bullying, they lacked the practice. The practice might have been the element through which they could have solidified their knowledge and which was overlooked by the anti-bullying trainings. In their descriptions of bullying, Teacher 4, 6, and 10 tended to connect bullying more with the victim-students' behavior and their responses to the bully. For example, Teacher 10 paid considered the situation happening at her class as bullying more, when the student in her class exclaimed to others "We're all stupid," after being repeatedly psychologically mocked because of his academic performance. Thus, in the case of a less experienced teacher it is not that bullying was noticed based on its components, yet on the reaction that might follow some bullying and attracted the teacher's attention. This example would agree with Teacher 6, who shared that when there is no reaction, sometimes bullying might not be considered as something of importance to be noticed by some of the teachers.

And one of such most severe reactions that Teacher 6 could not have left unnoticed and shared within the study has been the example of a girl in his class being bullied. The girl in was bullied because of her nationality, she was Korean and was told by her classmates that she must eat dogs as she is Korean. As a result of this, the girl had started scratching her arms with a blade in the toilet. Although, she did not cut her hand, unless the teachers noticed it and the class teacher got involved, it might have led to unpredictable and severe consequences. Even if most of the teachers said that in the case of repetition of the psychological bullying acts and hostile aggressive relationship between two students or more, the element of the victim-students reaction also seems to play a role in how quick teachers would notice it and take measures. And as it has been found, mostly new or teachers with few teaching experiences tend to make their decisions in regard to bullying and seeing student's behavior as bullying predominantly based on the existence of reaction by the victim-student and its severity.

Teachers' Anti-Bullying Methods. Prevention

Discovering the factors affecting teachers' perceptions of bullying and identifying it happening at the school helps to answer when will teachers act and not. However, then there is a question of how will they act and will they prevent it or just intervene when it is already taking place. Even though, teachers claimed that there is a low level of bullying at the school, previous chapters proved its existence relying on the examples provided by teachers and leading to a possible explanation of that, which will be further described in accordance with the teachers' identities.

Although, many of the teachers believe that the students of the school are well-behaved and busy with studies and extracurricular activities, and therefore they do not bully, as we have been talking more and they were opening up, the list of activities and methods utilized by the teacher's and the school in order to prevent the cases of bullying formed and became apparent. It has been identified that teachers' self-perception as value inculcators leads to their focus on anti-bullying prevention. As a result of analyzing the methods used by teachers and their focus through the prism of Situational Crime Prevention, it can be claimed that teachers tend to focus more on prevention, predominantly by teaching the students the values of society, its rules and norms. This is connected with the way they perceive themselves as it has been identified through the Identity Control Theory. While this connection will be explained in the chapter on the teachers' identities more, this chapter focuses more on the use of the methods related to the factors of Situational Crime Prevention Theory. Despite the major focus on value inculcation element of removing excuse factor, all other methods and factors, such as increasing the risks, reducing the rewards and provocations, and increasing the effort, seem to be present in the school teachers' practices too.

Remove excuses. Removing excuses of the bully can be reached through various ways like informing and setting the rules regarding the crime to follow, assisting compliance

of the parties involved and so on. Even though, the teacher-participants did not mention excuses themselves literally, most of the key measures used at the school seem to be directed towards this factor. First of all, all teachers said that the method used at their school, which they evaluate as satisfactory and working, is nurturing all the time values of unity and respect amongst students through group work in class and class outings and competitions between classes. This way they are teaching the students in practice of the values that will prevent them from aggressively behaving towards, disrespecting another student or students at their school and outside of it. This is usually run by all the teaching body and administration of the school. Moreover, the students discuss these values during their class hours with their class teachers or through various topics on their subject classes with their teachers. This way the students are introduced to the “human values” [человеческие ценности] both in practice and theory as respect, tolerance, and honesty, which all work so that the students know that “all (people/students) are equal” [мы все равны] (Teacher 8). As she said, they all tend to inform their students and “talk about school values, about some human values, that we don’t do things that we shouldn’t do.” According to the responses of the 6 teachers out of 11, they tend to focus the most on one prevention method, the value inculcation, and thus they aim to create a respectful and tolerant environment this way. By inculcating values more and more effectively, teachers believe that the bullying rates will not rise as much at the school now and in the future too.

The values that teachers want to spread can be also traced in and are backed up by the set student behavior rules, like not disturbing each other while speaking, which are more informal and up to being disqualified from the school due to bullying someone severely and so on. As the students are aware of such rules and punishments for breaking them, they are less likely to break them. Thus, this appears to be also linked with value inculcation as the teachers inculcate not only the values, but also the rules and behavior codes to the students.

This is a clear element of a social control and ideological apparatus, which sets out what is to be followed and not. Another moment regarding the school rules are also that the students are not allowed to use neither nicotine nor alcohol. Thus, they are controlled in terms of this excuse of theirs too. Apart from that, teachers occasionally change where some students sit by rotating their pairs and groups to work on their school tasks and activities. This is also useful as students do not always work with the same classmates and are not pushed to work due to some other students' pressing. Being informed of the list of school rules to follow and working with different students on group tasks in addition to mainly being instilled with values of the school and the society makes it more inexcusable for students to bully others.

Increase the risks. Beside taking away the excuse, there are methods that the schools use considering other factors, such as increasing the risks of committing bullying, are considered too. The most severe consequence that the school can impose for breaking the school rules is dismissal from the school. The students know that if they are caught breaking the rules, which are already set, and they are informed about, there might be a severe punishment. This punishment is usually decided on the disciplinary teacher meetings, which are organized confidentially from other non-participating parties as other teachers, students, and parents. After such a meeting, the students are either alerted of their behavior and put under strict control of the class teacher and the school administration or as a result of the discussion and school investigation done prior, they might be expelled immediately, depending on the severity of what they have done. Knowing that there are such high risks, the bully might be less prone to bully a victim, at least publicly. The risks of bullying non-publicly are also increased by the destigmatization of whistleblowing, which has been present before. As teachers, who have shared with their own school experiences said, "It was not acceptable before to tell about it to the teacher. We sort of would try to solve the problems of ours on our own" (Teacher 11). Although, now students seem to be more open to having

discussions about their class and behavior with their teachers. As reported by the teachers, talking with the students is one of the methods how teachers both prevent and even might solve bullying on its early stages.

Reduce the rewards. Changing the seats and group mates of the students might also be used to prevent bullying from happening, not only by taking away the excuse of the bully-student in the future, but also reducing the immediate reward. As the bully aims to harm the victim, this harming act in itself might be the reward for the student. Changing where the students sit might reduce the probability of bullying arousal, as the bully will not be interacting with only one or a particular group of classmates. As it has been in the example of Teacher 3, where the boy was bullying his boy classmates, after the teacher allowed him to sit in the front row and work only with girls, the bullying incidents seen in that class lowered. Although, it has been an act of intervention in that case, next incidents of bullying have been prevented by that too. As the situation favorable of bullying changed and student had no longer an opportunity to bully his classmates in the class as before, he gradually stopped bullying them as he was not getting the reward of feeling more confident in the regard of that. This method might be used by some of the other teachers for both prevention and intervention of bullying as well.

Reduce provocations. Aside from decreasing the reward, decreasing provocations might be also used and working at the school. Provocations might be reduced by neutralizing the peer pressure. This can also be traced from the previously mentioned methods of inculcating the values of tolerance and respect to the students. As teachers are talking a lot about the importance of respecting each other and instilling these values, the students become more accepting of their peers, their mistakes, and made choices. Thus, they might be getting unprovoked to bully, as they see others as equal and respectable and do not see a favorable to

bullying situation as a provocation and opportunity for their aggression. Thus, it can be seen that the value inculcation method is used by the teachers even within this factor too.

Increase the effort. Apparently, the teachers and the school have incorporated another factor that might prevent bullying from happening too. The method of controlling the tools and Internet usage of the students is used to increase the effort for the bullying to be committed. This method is predominantly used to lower the instances of cyberbullying. As Teacher 11 has said, the school blocks the students from entering not-academic websites and they “cannot open social media via school Internet” too. This has a definitely a positive control element, as it becomes harder to impose each other to cyberbullying at school and be the victim of cyberbullying from the outside too.

There has also been a suggestion mentioned by Teacher 7, which can be used as a bullying prevention measure, that can ease the implementation of other factors and in particular the value inculcation method. After taking the course, Teacher 7 made a suggestion for the school administration and pointed it out that there might be less and less severe bullying if parents of all the students will also be attending various anti-bullying awareness raising courses too. Although, this has not yet been implemented, there is already such a suggestion aimed at preventing bullying early on, not only with the cooperation of teachers, but parents as well. This way, Teacher 7 hopes that the work, which is being done by teachers, might be even more strengthened and supported by the parents of all students. Parents can also transcend the same values and the same codes to their children by being educated on them on the trainings.

Thus, so far, it can be seen that the teachers do not call them and highlight the factor on which they are affecting through their actions, they heavily rely on these prevention measures aimed at removing the excuses of, increasing the efforts and risks for the actions of, and reducing the rewards for the bully and the provocations to start bullying. Even though,

utilizing all five factors present in the Ronald Clarke's crime prevention theory and beyond might be the reason of the low presence of bullying at the school, the teachers have indeed provided examples to question the effectiveness of these methods used. Therefore, the method of value inculcation, in particular, can be questioned more as teachers tend to rely on it heavily and consider it as most effective. After discussing the teachers' intervention methods and their role in it, the connection of the identities of the teachers and their perceived level of bullying at the school will be discussed too in the following chapters.

Teachers' Anti-Bullying Methods. Intervention

Aside from prevention, there are also various anti-bullying intervention methods used at the school too. Therefore, this chapter concentrates on the role of the teacher in intervening the cases of bullying happening at the school. As the teachers have stated during the interviews, they are the ones who observe and watch over the students during their class time, which takes up for the majority of the time that students spend at schools. Considering this, one of the teachers even said that all teachers are like "watchmen" [вахтеры] (Teacher 6) as they are those who observe the interactions happening in the class and notice them. And this is a good descriptive of the teachers' attitude and their social and institutional positioning word for what they do in terms of bullying intervention. The role of watchmen does not burden the teachers' responsibilities as it positions them as people to watch and intervene at the moment, yet not as the ones, who are responsible for solving and stopping the bullying in the long term.

As the "watchmen", when teachers notice bullying, all the teacher-participants said that they rely upon more or less the same scheme. The scheme, which is followed in the case of all types of bullying by the teachers is the following: the teacher informs the class teacher, then the psychologist of the school, after the teacher might inform the head of the educational work department and the parents of the students, and might also talk to the class where

bullying is taking place. This procedure might vary depending on the type, the extent, and the severity of bullying that teachers notice, although it mainly affects how soon the class teacher will be contacted or whether the parents and the head of the educational work department will be contacted by the teacher personally or not. Usually, the teachers rely on the class teacher to inform the parents and the head of the education work department, but they are also open to communicate with them, especially in more severe cases. Moreover, if the case of bullying is severe and continues for a long period, all teachers teaching the class in which it is happening would be involved in the teacher meeting organized by the head of educational work department. In all of these interventions, the teachers shared that in bullying intervention “the primary role is the class teacher’s” [Первостепенная роль это конечно у классного руководителя], while the teacher has more of a “watchman” role, who can notice, share about, and report the bullying situation that has taken place to other parties as including the class teacher, psychologists, parents, and school administration.

As it was mentioned, this procedure might be also changed based on the needs of students involved and the type of bullying happening. When it is the physical bullying, seven teachers expressed that they would stop the physical bullying happening at the moment, while only Teacher 3 said even though it is important to stop it, it is also important not to harm the student getting bullied even more while doing so. Only one teacher, Teacher 7, mentioned that after that she would ask for medical help immediately if needed. And another teacher, Teacher 9, said that she would write a report about any case of physical bullying to the director of the school straight away, while in general most of other teachers would inform the teacher and the psychologist only, or the school administration too mainly depending on the severity of the case. In the case of psychological bullying, apart from the usual procedure, teachers see the importance of talking to the whole class themselves more and asking the assistance and advice of the psychologists in doing it more effectively. In that case, they have

also mentioned more about the need of reminding the students of the school values of solidarity and community too. Thus, the teachers tend to associate themselves with their value inculcator roles even when intervening bullying cases too.

On its hand, in the case of group bullying, the answer did not differ much as it can be either psychological or physical group bullying, teachers are just more cautious of them as they perceive group bullying as a more severe case of bullying, where individuals are involved. When the group commits physical bullying, Teacher 1 said that it would be good to record the situation taking place and Teacher 4 said that it might be better to get psychologists from the outside to get involved apart from the ones working at the school. Teacher 4 and 6 during talking about any group bullying mentioned that in order to combat a bullying case, finding the authoritative figure in the eyes of the students involved might ease the anti-bullying work done. They believe that the students would follow the advice given by the people they respect more than others. It can be anyone: the class teacher, teacher, parent, older class students, and even their peers.

Lastly, when it comes to cyberbullying, it was expressed by Teachers 1, 5, 8 that it is hard to notice it, as it is not something which might be physically seen at school. Teacher 2 said if he would see it online, he would make a screenshot of it and share with the class teacher, while Teacher 3 and Teacher 11 would contact the IT specialist of the school or police to stop the bullying happening. In all of these cases of bullying, most of the teachers expressed that they are also likely to talk to and slightly change the way they teach at the class, where bullying has happened. When working with the students who have bullied or have been bullied, most of the teachers said that there will be slight difference in terms of talking to them at different times and asking different questions, changing the places they sit at in the class. For instance, Teacher 6 said that he would support the student getting bullied and praise him or her more in the class to help them gain some confidence, while other

teachers, Teachers 3, 5, and 7, expressed that even if there is bullying happening or not their relation to students does not change, and they perceive them all as equal as before.

Thus, in all the cases and methods applied by the teachers, even though teachers might take more actions, predominantly they act as someone, who informs other actors after noticing it, whether those are the class teachers, parents, psychologists or heads of educational work department. Even if they do talk to the class about bullying, they do not put themselves mainly in the position of the one to solve it, as there is a class teacher. Moreover, they express that, the parents might also join them in that by becoming more active in talking to their children after school. In particular, when it comes to the parents, all teachers said that the parents should be involved in solving the situations of bullying more and notified about the cases happening by the school mostly by the class teacher, who can give the full description of the situation happening based on the information gathered from all subject teachers. Thus, teachers see themselves only as some secondary watchmen, because the school does not assign them with the most responsibility in solving the issue and they are not willing to take up more of it too. Such perception of the teachers' role in intervention of bullying impacts on their reluctance to intervene when it happens.

Teachers' Bullying Regulation Identities

Describing the prevention and intervention methods of the teachers showed that while performing those, they create and get assigned to various identities. According to the Identity Control Theory, there are various identities with which people relate based on the behavior and meaning that they assign to themselves as individuals and professionals and by their group members and the society (Stets & Burke, 2005). On their turn, people tend to control their self and social identities created according to these assigned meanings by them or other people. As it has been stated, the preventive and more individual professional role that teachers get attached to is value inculcators and the group role of theirs is being watchmen

when it comes to bullying intervention. The levels of existing bullying at the school can showcase both the success and failure of the teachers in fulfilling and adhering to these roles. This study found that teachers' self-perception as inculcators of values makes them see less of bullying at school as they are the interested party in that question, who directly influence its presence. By seeing bullying less and performing less of a watchmen role, they convince themselves of their value inculcator role fulfillment (Stets & Burke, 2005). This way, by preserving their self-identity integrity, teachers might neglect some of the bullying cases happening at the school, which leads to a skewed perception of the school's bullying environment. Therefore, the perceived low level of bullying at the school by teachers is an implication of their bias as value inculcators.

As a result of it, they do not share and talk about the cases of bullying with each other, although it might have positively affected the current bullying situation at the school and hindered future ones. As all teachers expressed, the cases discussed at the disciplinary meetings are not disclosed to others and teachers themselves do not discuss bullying happening with each other as well. This might be the reason why some of the teachers think that there is no bullying at the school at all. If more teachers were informed of that, the way they perceive their anti-bullying courses and trainings might have been different, too. As the Teacher 9, who has never seen bullying happening at her current school, said, she had participated in the online anti-bullying course mainly to get the certificate and know a bit more about bullying in theory as she does not see any practical value of that. And the way teachers approach their bullying education might affect whether they would be able to notice and identify bullying as such. For instance, while two of the teachers had been sharing the examples of bullying, they could not identify the type of bullying happening even if they were the ones who underwent both psychologist trainings and online courses. Therefore, as it has been mentioned in the chapter on teachers' backgrounds and perception of bullying, some

teachers are more prone to seeing bullying as they are more experienced and know the value of attending those trainings. While others who have not seen it before identify not only bullying cases more reluctantly, but are in the first place less attentive during anti-bullying training. Thus, combatting bullying is not the matter of the students and the teachers themselves, but more of the level of awareness about the bullying among the teacher body of the school. As this study found, reflecting on their identities and sharing on existing bullying cases might lead teachers to combat school bullying more effectively as they would have a closer to reality picture of the bullying environment of the school.

This can also be achieved by involving the student body in the process too, both in prevention and intervention, and thus that way reducing the effect of the teachers' bias. Even though, as many teachers said, when they were students, whistleblowing was not unaccepted, now it is one of the ways of preventing bullying from continuing. On that regard, it can be said that the work is already in progress and teachers are informing and inculcating the values, which students should have. Although, the things against which they must stand up should also be made clear and saying about their presence should be normalized even more. Currently, there is some work done on it, but such whistleblowing moments are in mostly initiated by the teacher. As Teacher 7 said, sometimes she talks to the students during their break about students' behaviors concerning her in the class. Yet, she and others did not say much about the student approaching them themselves, apart from the case of the Teacher 4, where there was a two-sided bullying happening and the girl came to her with a warning about her future actions. However, due to the lack of communication among teachers, others did not know about it and some of them, as Teacher 7, did not observe the class as closely before organized disciplinary meeting. In that case, if students had been more initiative, some of them could have approached other teachers too themselves. Thus, the teachers' "watchmen" role is limited to their class and they might not always see the bullying

happening, as some students might be more prone to show it in other classes and not theirs. Therefore, there indeed might be a need of supporting more whistleblowing and sharing experiences of teaching in the classes among the teachers. That way, even the teachers, who did not notice bullying before in the class, where other teachers have claimed to see it, might become more cautious and attentive.

On that regard, the importance of sharing about bullying and discussing it with colleagues should probably rise at the school in order to combat it more effectively utilizing all the watchmen-teachers, observing and working with the class. Therefore, there might be a claim made that teachers should take a more active role than just being the watchmen by actively intervening in the bullying cases and not closing their eyes on them due to their perceived successful fulfillment of value inculcator identities. As some of the teachers, who do not want to cross the role of the class teachers in terms of bullying intervention, said, the teachers might not have the time to do that as they primarily should teach the students on their subjects. However, they have all also agreed on their role outside of only educating children about field-specific knowledge, but also the values that would help them become better people, community members and citizens. Thus, as they find the time to follow their value inculcator identities, they might also reconsider their watchmen role and become more active in it at by sharing with others with what they saw and were told about from the students. Returning to the idea of social control brought up in the beginning of the paper, it can be stated that the social control element hugely influences teachers, though their focus on prevention over intervention needs some reconsideration to be made.

Conclusion

As this study showed on the example of one elite Kazakhstani, the perception of teachers not only of bullying, but of themselves impacts on which methods of bullying regulation will be utilized and how effective they will be. The regulation of such an

aggressive behavior as bullying in the class might have various forms and methods, both in terms of its prevention and intervention. The nature of the bullying happening, its extent, and severity, all also affect how and what will be utilized by the school and its staff to combat the issue. Even if there seems to be more or less one procedure to intervene the bullying shared by the teachers, working at one school, there still might be various evaluations made on the severity of the bullying cases they see and the likeliness of noticing them and reporting to the class teacher. Otherwise, when teacher-participants do notice it, they all inform the class teacher, the psychologist, and then if the case is severe, they would also inform the parents and the head of the educational work department themselves instead of relying only on the class teacher in that regard. This is an actively working scheme, as a result of which disciplinary meetings including all the involved parties and discussing the cases of bullying have been held at the school. Despite having a clear scheme to follow as watchmen, teachers of the school under study see themselves more as value inculcators, which leads them to focus more on prevention of bullying rather than its intervention. Therefore, although, the methods utilized at the school might be rated as effective according to Situational Crime Prevention Theory, they might be questioned in their appropriate and unbiased use when applying the Identity Control Theory.

As it has been pointed out, teachers' focus on prevention of bullying, their idea of successful value inculcator role fulfillment, and the lack of sharing about presence of bullying with each other leads teachers to having a skewed view of the bullying and their reluctance in following their social identity of watchmen. This is the reason why some teachers perceive the school's environment as having none of the bullying cases and might have struggled more in answering bullying intervention related questions. Even though, the teachers claimed that the methods they use are effective and successful and as according to the Ronald Clarke's situation crime prevention theory, all factors needed to reduce bullying are present, the

teachers focus on their value inculcator role might be the main reason why not all teachers are informed about present bullying cases at the same level.

In conclusion, this study was able to identify the anti-bullying methods, teachers' focus in terms of prevention of bullying and anti-bullying in general, and teachers' roles in regulating aggression. Thus, answering these research questions, there is now information on the anti-bullying methods used by teachers of this elite Kazakhstani school and its teachers' value inculcator and watchmen roles. To study other schools, the same procedures and methodology might be applied too and the roles that teachers identify with and are assigned by can be found out too. This might allow making the anti-bullying work done at schools more effective in terms of both preventing and intervening bullying, and making it more open to discussion topic amongst students and teachers. Therefore, this study might make a useful contribution for the regulation of aggression in their classes by teachers of one Kazakhstani school, and even other schools and institutions in the country if being shared.

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Appendix A

The Interview Questions

1. Can you please tell what is your age?
2. How many years have you worked as a teacher?
3. How many years have you worked as a teacher at this school?
4. What behavior is generally accepted called bullying? Do you agree with such a description?
 - a. *Follow-up question* (if there is a necessity, like not understanding or taking too much time to formulate an answer, the Russian translation of bullying – “travlya” will be mentioned): I mean, what kind of student behavior can be called as travlya?
5. When have you first learned about bullying/travlya in general?
 - a. *Follow-up question*: Have you learned about it during your education or on a training at your current or previous school or earlier in life?
6. What is the position of your school regarding bullying in the class, fighting bullying?
 - a. *Follow-up question*: Have there been any anti-bullying training sessions during working at this school?
 - b. *Follow-up question*: What about your previous working place?
 - c. *Follow-up question*: How do these positions differ from the position of the school that you studied at as a student?
7. What do you think teachers should do in case of physical bullying?
 - a. *Follow-up question*: What would you do in such a case?
 - b. *Follow-up question*: What kind of actions have you undertaken when there were instances of physical bullying in your class?
8. What do you think the teacher should do in case of group bullying?

- a. *Follow-up question:* What would you do in such a case?
 - b. *Follow-up question:* What kind of actions have you undertaken when there were instances of group bullying in your class?
9. What do you think the teacher should do in case of psychological bullying?
- a. *Follow-up question:* What would you do in such a case?
 - b. *Follow-up question:* What kind of actions have you undertaken when there were instances of psychological bullying in your class?
10. What do you think the teacher should do in the case of Internet bullying?
- a. *Follow-up question:* What would you do in such a case?
 - b. *Follow-up question:* What kind of actions have you undertaken when there were instances of Internet bullying in your class?
11. What types of severe bullying have you noticed throughout all the time working at this school?
- a. *Follow-up question:* What kind of actions have the teachers undertaken to stop and prevent repetition of those cases?
 - b. *Follow-up question:* What was the position and actions of the school in these cases?
12. What are the relations and actions of your colleagues towards bullying in class?
- a. *Follow-up question:* What about bullying cases in their classes?
 - b. *Follow-up question:* What about in other classes?
13. What do you think is the proper best way to deal with bullying in class?
- a. *Follow-up question:* Have you used this method at class yourself?
 - b. *Follow-up question:* How do you rate the anti-bullying methods used at your school?
14. How do you work with the students of the class, where bullying has taken place?

a. *Follow-up question:* How do you work with the victim or victims?

b. *Follow-up question:* How do you work with the bully or bullies?

c. *Follow-up question:* Do you work with their parents?

15. How much do you think parents should be involved in solving bullying situations at school?

Appendix B

The Oral Consent Script

Good day! My name is Elmira Yussupova. I am a fourth-year Sociology student at Nazarbayev University. Currently, I am conducting interviews as a part of my capstone research on the topic “Regulating aggression in a classroom: Anti-bullying practices of teachers”. My research aims to explore existing and practiced anti-bullying practices of teachers, identify their effectiveness in prevention of bullying, and locate the role of the teacher in regulating the aggressive situation in the classroom. Thus, I am particularly interested in the teacher's stories of regulating instances of bullying in a class.

I was suggested to approach you to take part in this study by one of your colleagues, who has taken part in this research and has been interviewed already.

Study procedures:

Now, I am inviting you to take part in an interview that will take about 1 hour. During the interview, I will ask you about 15 questions, some of which are more about general information about you, your working experience and understanding of bullying. After such general questions, I will ask you more about instances of school bullying that you have encountered in your classroom, anti-bullying practices that you know about and used or would have used in a variety of situations of bullying.

Before proceeding to the interview itself, I will introduce you to the possible risks and benefits of participating in the study and ask whether you agree under the terms of voluntary participation to participate in the study.

Risks:

There might be some risks involved in taking part in the study as it could make you remember some sensitive instances of bullying that you have encountered in your class and the interview might take more prolonged time. Therefore, you might find taking part in this interview as distressing. In order to reduce the possible distress caused, there is an opportunity to not answer or end the interview earlier. In participating in this study, you do not need to answer questions that you do not want to answer or that make you feel uncomfortable. You can withdraw (stop taking part) at any time. Other than that, there are almost no risks other than being identified as a teacher of your school in case the name of the school that you work at gets identified. The chances of that are low as the study does not mention the name of the school and has no direct referral to it. Thus, the chances of your identity getting identified are low, also considering that there are about 12-15 teachers participating in this study.

After describing the possible benefits of your participation, I will also describe the particular steps I am taking to protect the confidentiality of your identity within this study.

Benefits:

It is unlikely that there will be direct benefits to you as of now, however, by better understanding bullying and anti-bullying practices used, this study might contribute to a better development and improvements in future teacher training. New approaches to bullying in class might be developed, and available ones can be revised. Thus, this research might be of high importance for the areas of teaching, education, child development, and educational research in general. As a result of such developments in teacher training and education, you might also benefit from the reduction of bullying instances at schools and your classes subsequently.

I will keep the information that you tell me during the interview confidential and will be saved in a folder secured with a password. Information I put in my report will not identify your identity in any way. Therefore, I also ask you to not disclose it yourself and not use your identifiers as your names, surname and so on during the interview. Any data from this research which will be shared or published will be the combined data of all participants. That means it will be reported for the whole group, not for individual persons.

Voluntary participation:

- Your participation in this study is voluntary.
- You can decide to stop at any time, even part-way through the questionnaire for whatever reason.
- If you decide to stop participating, there will be no consequences to you.
- If you decide to stop, I will ask you how you would like me to handle the data collected up to that point.
- This includes returning it to you, destroying or using the data collected up to that point.
- If you do not want to answer some of the questions, you do not have to, but you can still continue to be in the study and proceed to other questions.
- If you have any questions about this study or would like more information you can email me, Elmira Yussupova at elmira.yussupova@nu.edu.kz

This study has been reviewed and cleared by the Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, you may contact:

Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee

E-mail: resethics@nu.edu.kz

Consent questions:

- Do you have any questions or would like any additional details?
- Do you agree to participate in this study knowing that you can withdraw at any point with no consequences to you?