DOES AN ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AFFECT THE OCCURRENCE OF BULLYING?

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Table of Contents

Chapter Three:

3.0   Methodology

Chapter Four:

4.0   Findings from Data Collection

Chapter Five:

5.0   Findings

Chapter Six:

Word Count: 15,322

For Darragh

I declare that this dissertation is wholly my own work except where I have made explicit reference to the work of others.

I have discussed, agreed and complied with whatever confidentiality or anonymity terms of reference were deemed appropriate by participants in the project.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation reports the findings from interviews with employees carried out within the author's organisation. The question presented in the study surrounded the question of can the culture of an organisation effect the occurrence of bullying?

One of the main findings from the study was that company culture within the author's organisation in the eyes of the employees is that of a friendly, open culture. The employees interviewed believed that the culture was one of dignity and respect and all behaviours that were not acceptable are very clear within the organisation.

Each respondent expressed their own individual views on why bullying can occur in organisations and some of these opinions varied. The interviewees believed each individual have their own personality. Some personalities may be more abrupt that others. They may attempt to push the boundaries in the workplace through bullying behaviour. But this is not with the organisation's blessing. An organisation will stop bullying through its culture.

What was of particular interest throughout the interviews was the general consensus that the personality traits of both the victim and the bully may begin the occurrence of bullying. However, if the organisation impedes bullying from occurring and makes it explicit, then bullying will not prevail.

Acknowledgments

APPENDICES

1. Consent Form

2. Standards Of Behaviour

    (Extracted from author's organisation)

3. Interview Questions

4. Interview Responses:

    a. Respondent A

    b. Respondent B

    c. Respondent C

    d. Respondent D

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the reader with an introduction to the topic being studied. The author will outline the rationale for the study, followed by the structure of the dissertation. Following on from this chapter, the author will present a comprehensive literature review that includes previous debates on the topic will be presented, which will lead to the research question, aims and objectives. This is followed by the methodology, limitations to the study, findings of the author's study and conclusion.

The topic chosen for this study surrounds the debatable subject of workplace bullying and why it continues to be a problem for organisations. The author has chosen to study the subject of bullying from the view of organisational culture and how culture can affect the occurrence of bullying. As both topics of bullying and culture have vast and extensive information on them, the author has chosen to focus on key areas. This includes what elements of culture can effect bullying and how effective is the presence of an anti-bullying policy in preventing bullying in the workplace? The author investigated whether the existence of an anti-bullying policy affects employee behaviour or is it the culture that actually shapes behaviour in the workplace. Is there a gap between an anti-bullying policy and practice?

What is evident from the study carried out is the important role the organisation has in relation to bullying and undesirable behaviour. The author examined the importance of managerial style and leadership vision in relation to the culture of an organisation. What managers communicate and what behaviours they convey, has a fundamental effect on employee behaviour. Organisational leaders must create a healthy work environment in which bullying is not accepted. In the event of bullying, organisational intervention is crucial in mediating the situation and facilitating the outcome. Organisations are required to look at reasons why the bullying has occurred. Organisations need to examine the culture as a possible antecedent of bullying. Or perhaps the HR strategies or policies existing may encompass a bullying work environment. What became clear to the author was the importance of an anti-bullying policy being linked with the culture. An existing anti-bullying policy will not on its own prevent bullying. It is only when it is incorporated into the organisational culture, it will be effective.

1.1   Rationale for the Study

The rationale for this study emanated from the growing research and literature into the topic of workplace bullying. The contentious topic of bullying has presented the author with a keen interest in its subject. Many

high profile cases such as Liz Allen versus Independent Newspapers 2001 (Moffatt, 2006), and the Waterways Ireland case (Gosling, 2005), highlight the concern in relation to bullying, how it occurs, and its effects on both the victim and the organisation. What is of particular interest to the author is how organisational culture can affect the occurrence of bullying.

The author's interest also comes from working in a Lean Manufacturing organisation that promotes dignity and respect for all employees. The organisation, Lake Region Medical Ltd, employs over 700 people in its plant in New Ross, over 700 people in its plant in Minnesota and through a recent acquisition; 80 people in Galway. The organisations culture was the foundation on which a continuous improvement / lean strategy was employed. There is a culture of teamwork, flexibility and embracing change that is driven from management. It is quite evident within the organisation that there is a genuine mutual respect between the management of the organisation and the employees. However, bullying cases do still occur with the organisation. The recent acquisition of another organisation in Galway also interests the author in relation to culture and the possibility of a culture clash as a result of the acquisition. The difference in both plant's respective cultures can be challenging and could possibly open the door to workplace bullying.

1.2 Structure of Dissertation

The structure of the dissertation consists of 6 chapters structured as follows:

1 Introduction.

2 Literature review Bullying

3 Literature Review Culture

4 Methodology

5 Findings

6 Conclusion

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

In recent times and in today's volatile economic environment the subject of workplace bullying is gaining more academic interest and debate. There are numerous reasons for the occurrence of workplace bullying and the effects can be damaging for all involved. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between an organisation's culture and the occurrence of bullying.

Huge focus and attention has been placed on the personality traits of both the bully and the victim (Costigan, 1998). Research has also been carried out on the organisational setting and sector. For example ample literature exists on the problem surrounding the retention of nurses in the public sector in the UK due to the frequency of bullying (Murray, 2009). The problem of bullying in the nursing workforce has given rise to health care organisations setting behavioural standards to address disruptive behaviour in the workplace. The Forces of Magnestism was developed by the American Nurses Credentialing Centre (ANCC, 2008) which acts as an advocate for nurses who are bullied in the workplace. Magnet hospitals promote and value nurse input, create conditions for nurses to report workplace bullying and create a favourable culture that combats bullying in the workplace (Murray, 2009).

The purpose of this paper is to gain an insight into the main aspects of cultures and how they may affect the occurrence of bullying. Firstly the author will begin by presenting recent literature and academic debate on bullying, its causes and impacts on both the individual and the organisation. Following this the author will present literature on some organisational cultural theories, perspectives and models. The relationship between bullying and culture will be then investigated.

2.2 Bullying

Vast academic debate surrounds bullying in terms of an agreed global definition. A general consensus exists on the factors that must be evident in order to define certain behaviour as bullying. These factors are *frequency* and *duration*. Some additional factors are also taken into consideration and these include the *deliberate intent* that surrounds the behaviours and in addition the fact that the behaviours are *unwanted*. These factors are imperative in defining bullying as there must be a clear separation between what constitutes bullying from actual managerial style. If an employee is given a task that they deem unfair on a one off occasion, this does not constitute workplace bullying. There must be the elements of frequency and duration evident.

It must be noted the terms harassment and bullying tend to follow hand in hand. However they do not represent the same thing. Harassment differs from bullying in terms of its frequency and duration. Harassment is accepted usually to be a one off occurrence while bullying is not, it must be repeated.

Douglas (2001) has provided a definition that would appear to have encompassed all the factors mentioned that constitute bullying:

"Workplace bullying constitutes unwanted, offensive, humiliating, undermining behaviour towards an individual or group of employees. Such persistently malicious attacks on personal or professional performance are typically unpredictable, irritable and often unfair. This abuse of power of position can cause such chronic stress and anxiety that people gradually lose belief in themselves suffering physical ill health and mental distress as a result".

Examples that constitute bullying include gossiping, spreading rumours, humiliating others, being hostile to others, setting unreasonable tasks or deadlines, physically attacking others and threatening violence to others. There are many different types of bullying. For example: individual bullying, predatory bullying, dispute related bullying, bystander bullying, subordinate bullying, organisational bullying and supervisory bullying.

2.3 Why Bullying Occurs?

The reason for bullying has received some debatable interest. Bullying can occur as a result of a number of things. The literature that follows presents some previous theories on the prevalence of bullying such as personalities, organisational setting and social and political factors etc. However what cannot be justified as bullying and merely brushed off is the view of a 'personality clash' between two employees. Bullying behaviour allows for unwanted behaviour from one person to another and that should not be an acceptable behaviour in the workplace.

Although the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between culture and bullying, other factors can also give rise to the prevalence of bullying. In order to understand the phenomenon of bullying all other factors that may contribute must be investigated.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Much of the early literature places the source of bullying on the work environment that surrounds it (Leyman, 1996, Vartia, 1996).While some scholars and researchers argue bullying in the workplace is done through a pattern of action and reaction, in the personality of those involved – the perpetrators and the victims (Randall, 1997). More recently society,

economic, social and political factors have been suggested as main contributors to the occurrence of bullying.

Costigan (1998) outlines the traits of the bully and the victims are the factors that cause bullying. Vartia (1996) argues specific personality profiles of the victim are important in understanding why bullying may occur. These profiles or characteristics can include indicators of weakness such as shyness, anxiety and depression. Victims tend to have difficulties in coping with stressful situations and prefer to avoid conflict. However this theory has been questioned due to the possibility of the management just trying to avoid dealing with conflict. Bullies or perpetrators on the other hand are insecure and feel powerful by humiliating others. They tend to have what is known as an abrasive personality.

Work-related antecedents of bullying have been focused on in other studies. One dimension includes various characteristics of a job such as role conflict, lack of skill, lack of goal setting etc can all attribute to the occurrence of bullying. Douglas (2001) suggests bullying occurs as a result of stress such as job insecurity, organisational change etc. Another dimension attributes bullying to the level of the team. Competition between co-workers, autocratic leadership and lack of support from co-workers can all foster the existence of workplace bullying.

A third dimension surrounds organisation climate and hierarchy, which suggests goal driven organisations with instructive communication styles cultivate high levels of bullying. The workplace can be a natural environment for differences and bullying to occur. Employees may have different beliefs, values, cultural background etc which all can provide a climate for conflict and bullying. Along with that employees may also be required to work in highly stressful and competitive environments which may heighten these differences. An organisations' structure, group norms and status can contribute to escalating differences that can lead to bullying.

2.4.1 Status Inequalities and Relational Power in Organisations

The workplace context is an arena immersed by power relations. How these power relations play out has imperative consequences. An imbalance of power can also attribute to why people bully in the workplace. This can include supervisory bullying etc. (Leymann, 1996) suggests one of the main reasons for the occurrence of bullying is due to the lack of leadership or deficiency in leadership behaviour. A perspective that is referred to as the "routine activities" model argues motivated offenders and bullies must congregate with suitable targets in the absence of capable guardians or management (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Routine activities refer to those day

to day activities and interactions between the bully, the victim and supervisors or management.

2.4.2 Victim

Previous research suggests that powerlessness is a core determinant of being a victim. Visible factors that can attract bullying behaviour include race, ethnicity, sexual orientation etc. These factors are likely to create vulnerability and can make the employee an easy target. Bullies tend to socially isolate their victims and can use these differences to their advantage. (Zapf et al. 2003). Differences in social class status can lead to employees becoming victims of unwanted behaviour. Employees who are poorly paid can often be targets for disrespect and bullying by supervisors.

2.4.3 Bullies

Research has suggested the bully has certain personality traits that contribute to their bullying behaviour. These traits can often be long-standing disturbances in their personality that begin in late adolescence and continue into life and into the workplace. Sometimes the bully may not even be aware of the impact their behaviour is having on others. They tend to have difficulty in sustaining relationships in the workplace with co-workers. Examples of typical bully behaviours include paranoia, obsessive-compulsive, avoidant of giving an opinion, likes to be centre of attention,

moody, angry etc. They tend to pick someone who is perhaps different in race or religion or someone who is vulnerable and quiet as their victim.

2.4.4 The Organisational Structure

Organisational culture is often referred to as a factor that contributes to the occurrence of bullying in the workplace. The "routine activities" model as previously referred to provides a framework for examining an organisations culture in terms of illustrating how routine activities in an organisation can sometimes lead to bullying behaviour. The organisational culture itself can create bullying through various ways i.e. supervisory methods, incoherent procedures or policies, chaotic organisation, competitive environment, a blame culture and tolerating aggressive behaviour. The author chose two of these above possible contributors to bullying behaviour to elaborate on as they relate to organisational culture as a possible determinant of bullying.

2.4.4.1 Process Bullying

When domineering organisational policies and procedures are employed employees can often feel victimised by them, in particular if they deem them to be unfair. Examples of these policies can include withdrawal of overtime or bonuses if targets have not been reached. This is a form of organisational bullying. Policies and procedures that are essential to creating a culture of dignity and respect that punishes bullying behaviour must be integrated within existing procedures and policies. There is a fine line between

reasonable and fair management control and bullying, which often may not be abided by.

2.4.4.2 Chaotic Organisation

Proficiency and consistency are very important aspects of a successful and good functioning organisation. They are the required foundation and glue for an organisational culture of dignity, respect and professionalism. In chaotic organisations managers may take the route of bullying behaviour in the absence of consistency and government. Managers or supervisors may resort to this type of direction in order to get things done as quickly as possible. Bullying may be more frequent as a result of chaotic procedures and direct personal supervision.

2.5 Effects of Bullying

Due to the significant effects that can occur, as a consequence, work related bullying is beginning to become increasingly acknowledged as a huge social issue with devastating effects. The effects of bullying can be detrimental to the individual involved, the organisation and to bystanders. '*Bullying can be a crippling and devastating problem*' (Adams and Crawford 1992). Bullying can echo through a group within the organisation and destroy positive communication and relationship norms. A negative climate can exist as a result. There is numerous literature in circulation surrounding the impact of

bullying on both the individual and organisation involved. The author attempts to encapsulate a summary of the impact as follows.

2.5.1 *Individual Impact of Bullying*

The impact of bullying can be very traumatising for the individuals involved. The impacts can be physical, psychological and also negative in terms of the trust in the organisation. If employee's feel their case has not been dealt with efficiently, effectively or fairly they can lose all trust and confidence in the organisation and management.

In terms of the possible psychological impact, psychologists have argued there is a relationship between stress and bullying. Stress can have serious implications for an individual such as feelings of being unable to cope, absenteeism from work and it can also manifest itself into physical illnesses. Some individuals may choose to leave the organisation as they see no other solution to the problem. The impact can stay with the individual long after the case has been dealt with

The physical impact can include loss of appetite, depression, low self esteem, heart palpitations etc, and can be as a direct result of the psychological impact endured. The social impact can be in terms of failure in relationships with partners, colleagues and general working relationships. Bullying can be seen to cause more stress than any other work factor.

2.5.2 *Organisational Impact of Bullying*

The effects of bullying for an organisation can be in relation to direct and indirect costs. Absence from work by the victim produces a cost for the organisation. Victims or bullies often leave the organisation which produces an increase in staff turnover. The organisation can then run the risk of being perceived as accepting the behaviour which may in turn escalate the issue of workplace bullying. If employees assume bullying behaviour is accepted it may become a norm in the workplace.

Colleagues and bystanders can be sometimes overlooked in terms of bullying when actually being an observer can be just as stressful. There may be a fear of speaking up in relation to the possible repercussions. Therefore the negative consequences can be far more in existence that an organisation may consider. What has not received a huge amount of attention is the unfavourable impact on the culture and reputation of the organisation as a result of bullying. A dysfunctional culture can occur if unacceptable behaviours such as bullying are accepted in the organisation.

2.6   Organisational Response to Bullying

Due to the significant and possible detrimental effects of bullying in an organisation huge onus lies with the employers of the organisation. Employers have a duty of care to prevent bullying occurring and also to deal with it effectively and appropriately when it does occur. Vicarious liability exists in terms of workplace bullying and places the responsibility on the organisation to take action once the issue is brought to their attention. If the organisation fails to do so, they are liable for the consequences. Given the high costs that are associated with bullying and the existence of anti-bullying legislation, bullying can be seen as a transgression that the management of an organisation are required to react to. Employers are required to intervene in order to combat bullying before it occurs with the presence of an anti-bullying policy.

2.6.1   Anti Bullying Policy

A reasonable method for employers to prevent bullying is to have an anti-bullying policy in place. The purpose of an anti-bullying policy is make employees aware of what is and what is not acceptable within the organisation. These policies tend to be found in the back of company handbooks and may sometimes be forgotten about if not easily assessable. Organisations should make the policy available clearly in sight, and evident within the organisation.

16

However, written policies tend to increase employee's expectations that action will be taken in the event of bullying. Therefore it is imperative for an organisation to abide by and enforce their policy of zero tolerance to bullying behaviour. Failing to live up to these expectations is particularly damaging for all involved especially the victim.

However, literature surrounding bullying and anti-bullying policies is silent in terms of measurement (Beaumont & Pate, 2009).

2.6.2 Organisational Intervention

The onus lies with the employer once an issue of bullying of any form is brought to their attention. Responding to bullying is a matter of organisational discipline with the aim to modifying the bullying behaviour, protecting the victim and preventing other employees from engaging in similar unacceptable behaviour. When conflict is at an early stage mediation is typically used. In some cases counselling and training may be provided. However the responses that can be taken can vary greatly with each organisation. Some argue that perhaps the organisation focuses on the bully and not enough on the victim (Hubert, 2003). The size of an organisation can also affect the way in which it responds to bullying. Larger organisations tend to have written formal policies and have better resources and HR capability to do so.

2.7 Organisational Culture

2.7.1 What is Culture?

The theory of organisational culture has been evolving since the 1970s and has received significant research interest with the emergence of influential academics such as Schein (1992, 2009). The main interests from the researchers have been in relation to the link between both the organisational and individual behaviours. Every organisation has a culture. Whether weak or strong, culture has very powerful influence throughout an organisation.

Many definitions exist on what exactly culture is. Denison (1996), suggests culture is the deep structure of an organisation which is rooted in its values, beliefs and assumptions that are held by its members. It can be described as a pattern of basic assumptions that are discovered or developed by a given group in an organisation. Organisational culture can simply be described as *'the way we do things around here'*.

Schein (2004), defines culture as

"A pattern of shared tacit assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaption and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems".

It has been referred to as the "glue that holds organisations together" (Goffee and Jones, 2006). It has a number of roles – it differentiates one

organisation from another, it can be a driver of commitment and it can be a driver for employee engagement. It can refer to the shared values, beliefs and expectations within an organisation. Values form the heart of the culture and are the basic beliefs of the organisation.

2.7.2 Perspectives on Culture

As mentioned the term culture has many different definitions. Deal and Kennedy (2000) highlight the importance of values, rites and rituals, heroes and cultural networks in relation to culture and organisational performance. They measured organisational effectiveness in terms of feedback and risk. Using these considerations they classified organisational culture into four categories:

1. **With the Tough Guy Macho Culture:** feedback is very quick and rewards are high. However, this culture can be a very stressful one to operate in.

2. **The Work Hard / Play Hard Culture:** low risk exists but feedback is also very quick. Quality and the Customer are important to the company. Jargon and meetings can be a character of this type of culture.

3. **The Bet Your Company Culture** is a culture of big decisions being made but the results are not evident for years.

4. **The Process Culture:** little or no feedback exists, consistent results based on how things are done as opposed to what is to be achieved.

However these classifications of culture are very much outdated and do not allow for flexibility.

Charles Handy (1996) suggests the culture of an organisation and the way in which it works has a major effect on performance and organisational results. He argues there are four main forms of organisational culture. These include Power, Role, Task and Individual. Each of these cultural patterns are characterised by a different Greek God. Each of the cultures work on different assumptions on power and influence, how people think and learn and what motivates employees. Each of Handy's cultures has their own strengths and achieving the correct balance between all is imperative. The combination of all four cultures is what Handy classifies as good management of an organisation.

1. Power Culture (Zeus God)

Handy suggests in this type of culture power is distributed among only a few within the organisation. Few rules and little bureaucracy exist.

2. Role Culture (Apollo God)

This type of culture bases itself on the role or the job to be carried out. People have clear tasks within a defined organisational structure. The culture derives from the position one has in the organisation and not on the experience they may have.

3. Task Culture (Athena God)

In this type of culture expertise is very much evident as opposed to role and power. It draws resources from different parts of the organisation in order to solve a particular problem. Numerous meetings between various departments can be an example of this type of culture. Each employee has responsibility within the organisation with the intent to meet strategic objectives. Power does not specifically lie with top management only.

4. Individual Culture (Dionysus God)

This type of culture differentiates itself from the previous three as the individual sees the organisation there to help the individual achieve their purpose and not the other way around. This culture tends to surround professionals such as doctors etc as they recognise no boss. This type of culture is great if it is the professionalism or experience of the individual that is the essential talent of the organisation.

2.7.3 Perspectives on Culture & Bullying

Culture provides a code of behaviour that more or less tells employees what is appropriate and what is not. Culture shapes behaviour within an organisation. It is created by top management and the responsibility to acknowledge and cope with deviant behaviour such as bullying, lies with them. It is suggested unless there is a supportive bullying culture within the organisation, bullying is less likely to have grounds to develop. Culture in an organisation therefore can be a prevailing factor in extracting bullying or encouraging the prevalence of bullying.

Rayner, Hoel and Copper (2002), see organisational culture as a major cause in the prevalence of workplace bullying. As culture determines what is desirable or not, it is to be expected that it will also affect employee's reactions to bullying and inappropriate behaviour. Research from Vartia (1996) identifies a highly stressful and competitive environment can be associated with a high level of bullying compared to an organisation that is not highly competitive. One of the reasons for the occurrence of bullying in fact was due to the competition for tasks, promotion or approval.

Other aspects of an organisations culture that can foster bullying can include accountability, low moral standards, ineffective disciplinary procedures and organisational changes. Organisational change can lead to increased vertical bullying and the relationships between managers and employees can be

greatly changed. Managers may engage in authoritarian management style in order to implement those changes as effectively as possible despite the effects their behaviour may have on employees. It could be suggested therefore that bullying behaviours or aggressive methods can be used by managers as a means of achieving organisational goals despite the high levels of stress that may result for employees. Role conflict and role uncertainty can occur during organisational change. Vartia (1996) found there is a significant relationship between role uncertainty and exposure to bullying.

2.7.3.1 Schein's Layered Phenomenon

Many perspectives on culture have very little relevance in relation to bullying. However Schein's (1992) study on culture allows the author to relate the layers in his study, to an organisation and how their aspects can affect the prevalence of bullying.

Schein's research into organisational culture surrounds the layered phenomenon. He suggests there are 3 layers to culture and argues only declarations can be made about elements of the culture and not the culture as an entity. Schein suggests that these three layers as follows only become powerful when they become existent without awareness of them i.e. employees know what behaviours are acceptable and don't feel the need to question them. 'It is just what is done around here'.

❖ *Artifacts*

According to Schein (2009) these are the easiest level of culture to observe when you enter in to an organisation. They are the visible manifestations of an organisation. These are what you can see, hear and feel. At the level of artifacts culture is very clear but you don't fully understand why employees are behaving they way they do. They can include the norms of the organisation. Norms are employees expected modes of behaviour i.e. appropriate dress code or communication with each other. Visitors to an organisation can often see this level of culture.

❖ *Espoused Values*

Values can refer to the guidelines that affect how people behave. Organisational values are anything that has personal worth or meaning. They are typically based on moral and societal beliefs. Shared values produce beliefs. Values represent the shared beliefs on what is right and desirable in the organisation. These values are the bases for norms that tell employees what is acceptable and appropriate in certain situations. However espoused values in an organisation are often high ethics and may not always be expressed in use. There may be a difference in the value espoused and the values in actual use.

❖ *Assumptions*

To understand this deeper level, the history of the organisation is very important. What were the values, beliefs and assumptions of the founders of the organisation? Basic assumptions are unconsciously held. They have been learned over time at a conceptual level (Schein, 2009). They are deemed right and the acceptable way to perceive, think and feel about problems in the organisation. Schein believes the fundamental nature of culture is the values and beliefs that work so effectively they become non-negotiable and become tacit assumptions.

2.8   Leadership and Culture

The dynamics of leadership including its effects on individuals, groups and organisations have attracted increased attention from many scholars in recent years. Organisational culture is a combination of many factors including the organisations history, its founder, its policies and practices etc. It can be argued however that the most powerful and influential determinant of an organisations culture are the leaders. The leaders are the people within the organisation who set the tone, define the values and norms and create and promote acceptable behaviour. What is seen lower down is reflective of what is happening above.

Managerial style of these leaders is crucial in determining the culture within the organisation i.e. dictatorial, democratic, authoritarian etc. Leaders play a vital role in the occurrence of a dysfunctional behavioural culture. Behaviours in an organisation come from top down, from the management to the floor. Their signals get institutionalised throughout the organisation. For example if a leader or top manager does not treat all employees with dignity and respect and is allowed to do so, this will be recognised throughout the organisation and may lead to a duplication of behaviour.

What leaders pay attention to sends very powerful messages throughout the organisation. What is punished and what is rewarded? How do they react to change and to problems? Is the code of ethics followed by the leaders? How

do they communicate with all employees? Who gets promoted? All these behaviours are vital influencers on an organisations culture. The leader sets the tone for their employees to follow through their own visible behaviour. Assumptions, behaviours and values are communicated through their behaviour and through informal messages. Therefore culture and leadership are intertwined and are major influences on how individuals behave in the organisation. A well designed anti-bullying policy can be in place, a dignity and respect code of conduct may be communicated to employees in mission statements but have no value whatsoever to employees if they are not valued and adhered to from the top.

Previous literature exists on leadership and culture, focusing on the possible effects of an abusive leadership. *There will be significant costs associated with abusive leadership, manifested through an unethical organisation culture'* (Grandy, G, Starrat, A, 2009). Management need to be aware of their behaviours and the effect they have on the organisation.

Previous studies have been carried out on bullying through cross-level assessment; individual, group and organisational (Harvey & Heames, 2006). What resulted in the research carried out was bullying can overflow to other levels in the organisation. Leaders and managers need to take these findings into consideration when trying to combat bullying behaviour in the organisation.

First Order Externalities

Second Order Externalities

Direct / Indirect

Field II

Bully / Group Interaction
(Messo Level)

Field I

Bully / Victim Interaction
(Dyadic Level)

IMPACT

IMPACT

IMPACT

Field III

Bully / Organisation
Interaction (Macro Level)

Direct / Indirect
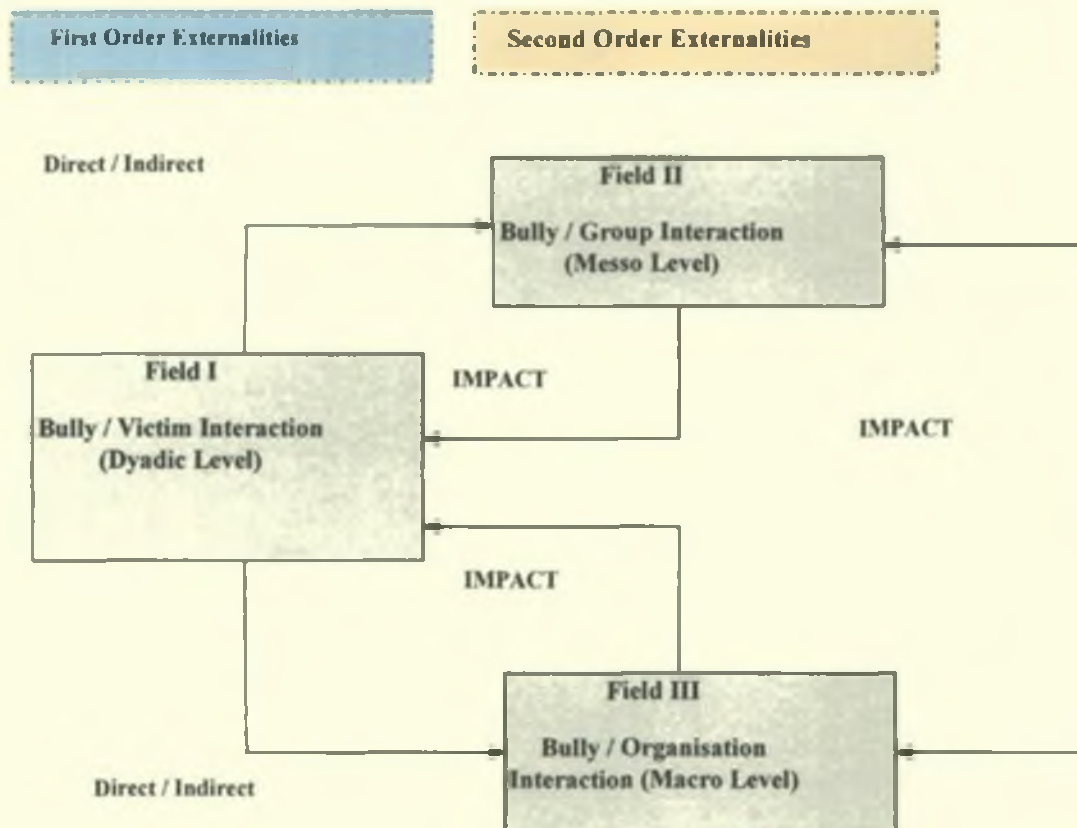
Figure 1: Cross Level Assessment of Bullying   Reference: Harvey & Heames, 2006

2.9 Strength of Organisational Culture

Several methods have been used to describe organisational culture. A general consensus surrounding culture agrees it can be seen as the way things are done in an organisation etc. Aspects of culture that have gained increased academic interest include behaviours, norms and values that formulate a culture. Another aspect of culture that allows for academic interest is in terms of the strength of a culture. Organisational culture serves as a source of consistent behaviour in an organisation. It can be seen to frame employee's assumptions about organisational procedures and processes. Schein (1992) highlighted that cultures in an organisation provide employees with a way of giving meaning to their daily lives, setting guidelines on how to behave and reducing anxiety associated with an uncertain environment.

A strong organisational culture allows for increased behavioural consistency across individuals in an organisation. When there is evidence of a strong culture in an organisation, employees know what is expected of them. They know how they need to behave in the workplace in order to comply with procedures and policies. Agreed basic assumptions and values in an organisation foster behavioural consistency and overall can increase organisational performance (Deal and Kennedy, 2000).

However, if an inappropriate culture exists in an organisation, this can be detrimental in terms of employee's behaviour and the organisation's success. Where a bullying culture exists, it would prove very complex to change. It would be crucial for the organisation to investigate where this culture derived from, in terms of the

values and beliefs of the employees. Visible artifacts of a bullying culture can include the use of bad language or swearing, physical interaction such as shoving and pushing. These visual artifacts can be recognised and can be stopped perhaps more efficiently than the underlying basic assumptions of the employees which are at a conceptual level.

2.10 Conclusion

Within any organisation there may be a variety of cultures based on status, orientation, history, power etc. They can provide breeding grounds for employee conflict. Previous studies have shown beliefs and shared expectations can be used as indicators of an organisations culture (Baltharzad, Cooke & Potter, 2006). Understanding these cultures in terms of behaviours and norms can give an insight into dysfunctional behaviours, such as bullying in an organisation (Baltharzad, Cooke & Potter, 2006). Vast literature exists on relationship between management style and behaviour within an organisation. Research carried out has shown managers could encourage anti-social behaviour by condoning or passing off certain behaviours as part of the organisation (Archer, 1999).

From the literature surrounding culture and its effect on the workplace, it is apparent elements of organisational culture can produce a dysfunctional organisation. (Griffin, Van Fleet, 2006). Rayner, Hoel and Copper (2002), see organisational culture as a major cause in the prevalence of workplace bullying. As culture determines what is desirable or not, it is to be expected that it will also affect employee's reactions to bullying and inappropriate behaviour. The author will investigate further through data research collection, the relationship between culture and bullying and how the right culture may inhibit the occurrence of bullying behaviour. In addition to this the author will investigate the effectiveness of anti-bullying policies. The author will question how effective the implementation of an anti bullying policy is in relation to behaviour and the culture.

2.11 Research Problem

Saunders et al (2003) agreed that philosophy is an important part of the research process and stated the way that we think about the development of knowledge unintentionally affects the way that research is performed.

Sankeran (1992) asserts that the research problem is the starting point of all research studies and refers to the entire situation, wherein the research identifies a possible need for research and problem solving. The research process therefore provides the researcher with a framework that motivates what information is to be collected and by what method.

The research on which this paper is based focuses on workplace bullying and culture. The area of organisational culture and its impact on bullying is becoming more recognised. Culture as a concept is a debatable topic as it is very hard to define what organisational culture is and it is not a physical object. There are numerous literatures on organisational culture. However there is very little research into the link between culture and workplace bullying.

2.12 Research Question

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between organisational culture and workplace bullying. The research question as

defined by Sekeran (1992) is a clear, precise statement of the question or issue to be investigated, with a goal of finding a statement. The research question behind this study is:

"Does organisational culture have an impact on the occurrence of workplace bullying?"

The research question also lays foundations for formulating a set of key research objectives for this study. The research objectives will be the goals for this study and the author can focus her research on these objectives.

2.13.1   Research Objectives:

- ❖ To investigate what elements of organisational culture can affect the prevalence of workplace bullying?

- ❖ To investigate whether the existence of an anti-bullying policy affects the occurrence of workplace bullying?

- ❖ How linked is the anti-bullying policy in the author's organisation with the culture?

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the reader with the research methodology employed for this study. Initially the research problem has been identified and then the research question and objectives were presented. A description of the research approach is outlined which includes what type of approach has been chosen and the reasons why. A description of the type of research employed follows and explains the way in which data will be collected for the purpose of this dissertation. It will outline the objectives of both the primary and secondary research methodologies employed. Following this, the author clarifies the type of research instrument used.

3.2 Research Approach

The use of theory in this study was through an *inductive* approach. Using an inductive approach the theory follows the data. This allowed the author to study a small sample of employees within the organisation and then develop a theory as a result. The inductive approach for the purpose of this study was more effective due to the sensitive nature of the subject of bullying. Qualitative data was used with the inductive approach through means of semi-structured interviews.

3.3 Secondary Research

Secondary data has been defined as 'data that have already been gathered by researchers either within or outside the organisation' (Sekaran, 1992). The secondary research carried out for this study consists of a literature review on the subject of organisational culture and bullying. Secondary research was used to establish as much background information as possible. This data was collected from a review of the current and relevant literature on bullying and culture. Numerous books, academic publications, relevant websites and electronic databases were used.

3.4 Primary Research

Primary literature is known as grey literature and can include Government publications, reports, company reports, etc.

3.4.1 Quantitative Versus Qualitative Approaches

Quantitative research procedures are structured research techniques, which analyses figures and statistics from a sample of the population. The advantage is that it provides current information that mirror sample opinions. The results can be analysed promptly and accurately due to the numeric answers.

Qualitative research is undertaken to explore an area to understand it better. It is non-mathematical and non-statistical in its manner. The researcher has the freedom to explore the chosen topic deeper and can change the course of analysis. It tends to seek a deeper, more emotional response. Methods used for qualitative research include interviews, focus groups, in-depth interviews and observation.

Distinctions between quantitative and qualitative data

Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
Based on meanings derived from numbers	Based on meanings expressed through words
Collection results in numerical and standardised data	Collection results in non-standardised data requiring classification into categories
Analysis conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics	Analysis conducted through the use of conceptualisation.

Table 1:   Reference: Adapted by Saunders et al, (2003)

3.5 Types of Research Collection

Research collection can be done through primary or secondary research collection. Secondary data can include qualitative and quantitative data. An example of a secondary data collection method is surveys. Primary data collection can be through the use of in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, observation or focus groups. The type of research collection employed depends on the type of information the author wishes to gain for the purpose of answering the research question. It is imperative to select the correct, most suitable method.

3.5.1 Survey

Survey based data can be data that has been collected through various methods such as census or ad hoc surveys. Surveys allow data to be compiled and made available for secondary analysis. They produce quantitative data as opposed to qualitative data. The author felt this type of data collection was not suitable for the purpose of this paper due to its sensitive nature.

3.5.2 Observation

Observation as a method of data collection can be very rewarding depending on the research question. It involves watching what is happening in an environment and how people behave. Participant observation is qualitative in its nature as it is associated with the meanings attached to actions.

Structured observation is quantitative and relates to the frequency of the actions as opposed to why. The analysis complexity will vary depending on which method of observation is employed and on the research question. Due to the subject of this paper observation of a bullying occurrence would be too complex to carry out as a bullying situation cannot be premeditated in order to assist the observation.

3.5.3 Focus Group

A focus group consists of a number of people, typically 8 to 12 people, brought together to focus on a particular issue. An interactive discussion takes place where points of view and responses are encouraged. The people involved in the group are selected based on what they may have in common with the topic being discussed. However, as the subject of this paper is in relation to personal and sensitive issue, focus groups would not be appropriate. The author feels however, if the paper was merely based on the topic of culture on its own, perhaps use of a focus group may be applicable.

3.5.4 Questionnaire

Questionnaire type research collection involves respondents answering the same set of questions regarding a particular topic. Questionnaires can be done in person, over the telephone or also through non contact such as answering questions after using a product or service. However in order for the data to be effective, the questions must be designed carefully to ensure

the data required will be answered. As this paper is exploratory based and required use of open ended questions, a questionnaire would not be effective.

3.5.5   Semi – Structured Interview

An interview is a discussion between two or more people with an intended purpose of responding to a particular topic. It can be described as a conversation between interviewer and respondent with the purpose of obtaining certain information from the respondent. This might appear to be a simple matter, but the achievement of a successful interview is much more complex. Cohen (1976) describes interviewing as that 'like fishing, interviewing is an activity requiring careful preparation, much patience, and considerable practice if the eventual reward is to be a worthwhile catch' cited in Bell (2005). Interviews are viewed by many researchers as an invaluable piece of research as they provide information taken verbally from respondents. Bell (2005) defined the advantages of interviewing to include flexibility. A skillful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe response and explore motives and feelings which the questionnaire can never do.

Sanders et al (2003) would contend that managers are more likely to agree to be interviewed, rather than complete a questionnaire, especially where the interview topic is seen to be interesting and relevant to their current work. An interview provides them with an opportunity to reflect on events without

needing them to write anything down. This situation also provides the opportunity for the interviewees to receive feedback and personal assurances about the way in which information will be used. However, the disadvantage is that interviews can be time consuming, it is a highly subjective technique and there is a danger of bias.

3.6   Research Instrument Employed

For the purpose of this study a qualitative approach was adopted by the author that combined both primary and secondary research. The author chose to conduct semi-structured interviews in a manufacturing organisation. The structured interview can be inflexible and seen as generating a slanted analysis. Closed answering questions can lead to ambiguous findings. It was under this assumption that the decision was taken to use a semi-structured interview format.

Due to the sensitive nature of the subject of bullying the author believed use of semi structured interviews allowed flexibility for the interviewer but they also provided focus for the interview that allowed all questions to be asked. Use of semi-structured interview allowed the respondent to be probed about their experiences with bullying behaviour in the organisation. The interview was audio-recorded and then transcribed using the actual words that were

used. This task provided time limitations for the author therefore key people within the organisation were interviewed. These included:

- ❖ **Supervisor** - who had experience in dealing with previous bullying cases

- ❖ **General Operative** on the production floor - who has recently been the victim of a bullying incidence

- ❖ **Production Manager** - who has some experience with bullying cases

- ❖ **HR Director** - who implemented the dignity and respect culture and the organisations Standards of Behaviour guidelines

3.7   Interview Content

A semi-structured interview was drafted. This format was used to allow for deeper probing on particular issues, as it was felt that this facilitated the collection of amplified information. This framework allowed for interviewees to discuss issues specific to their own particular interests and experiences in the organisation which are considered the most suitable for the personal and sensitive information being examined. The interview questions were designed with the aim of answering the research question, aims and objectives. Some of the questions derived from the literature

presented in the literature review. The areas that were assigned particular focus on included behavioural norms and leadership within the organisation.

3.8 Data Collection Protocol

There are three areas which require ethical considerations by the researcher: ethical approval, consent and confidentiality

Approval:

Ethical approval was sought from the HR Director of the organisation.

Consent:

All participants taking part in the research were required to provide written consent prior to completing the interview

Confidentiality:

All data was coded to ensure anonymity and confidentiality for all participants. All the information gathered was stored in a secure location until project is completed and then will be destroyed.

3.9   Limitations

Due to the time constraints of this study –the author interviewed key people
to obtain valuable insight into the topic of the impact of organisational
culture on bullying. Another disadvantage surrounding the method of semi-
structured interviews is the possibility of the interviewer influencing the
interviewee by the type of questions being asked. The author was very aware
of this and aimed to design the interview questions in a non biased and
effective manner.

Another limitation is the reluctance of the interviewee to give information
that may be crucial to the research. The author aimed to choose the most
suitable interviewees for this purpose. Misleading or unclear questions may
lead to incorrect information found, therefore the author made an effort to
explain all questions etc as clearly as possible. The interviewer may lack the
necessary skill or experience and the interviewees may be unwilling to
openly share all the aspects that the interviewer wished to cover.

3.10   Interview Comparison Table

Strengths:	*Targeted:* Focuses directly on thesis topic.
	Insightful: Provides perceived casual inferences.
Weaknesses:	Bias due to poorly constructed questions.
	Response bias
	Inaccurate due to poor recall
	Reflexivity: Interviewee gives what the interviewer wants to hear

Table 2:   Reference: Adopted by Yin, 1994.

Saunders et al (2003) would say that the interview will be shaped by the interviewer. This will be the opportunity to calm if required, the interviewees' uncertainties about providing information. It is also imperative for the interviewer to express their obligation to confidentiality by not talking about the information obtained from other interviewees.

3.11   Recording and Transcribing

All interviews were recorded by Dictaphone. The key advantage of this was to prevent the interviewer from focusing more on note taking as opposed to listening carefully to the interviewee. The researcher chose to use a Dictaphone as it captures all the exact words spoken by the interviewees that

could have been accidentally missed through note taking. Yin (1994) reports that no other method is as accurate for interview data capture. The Dictaphone allowed the researcher to listen in detail afterwards to what the interviewees said. The one disadvantage of using the Dictaphone was in relation to the time it took to transcribe all the data.

3.12   Summary

The methodology chosen for the project allowed the researcher an excellent means to answer the research problem. One disappointing aspect of the research was that due to time constraints. The researcher ideally would have anticipated interviewing additional employees in the organisation in order to gain valuable knowledge, however time constraints prevented this from occurring. However, overall the selected method of data research proved valuable and effective for the purpose of gaining an insight into bullying behaviour in the workplace.

4.0 FINDINGS FROM DATA COLLECTION

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the findings from the data collected by the researcher within the organisation. The primary source of the information is as a result of a series of semi-structured interviews with various employees of the organisation in different employment positions. Different views and opinions were received throughout the interviews which presented the author with the opportunity to gain vast insight into why bullying may occur and how the culture can affect this.

4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Private semi structured interviews lasted approximately forty-five minutes to one hour and were recorded with permission and then transcribed. The interview questions were structured to provide data for comparison but also allowed for variation of answers. However, the interviewee was allowed flexibility in answering, provided the response remained within the extent of the question. The author used probing questions where necessary to gain further deeper answers to some of the questions.

The interviews were carried out for the purpose of answering the research question which is *"Does an organisational culture affect the occurrence of bullying?"* The research objectives included:

- What elements of organisational culture can affect the prevalence of workplace bullying?
- Does the existence of an anti-bullying policy affect the occurrence of workplace bullying?
- How linked is the anti-bullying policy in the author's organisation with the culture?

4.5   Coding Respondents

To ensure anonymity for all participants of the interviews the author has chosen to code each respondent as below. This ensures confidentiality and respect to all participants of the interviews.

Respondent	Code
General Operative	A
Supervisor	B
Production Manager	C
HR Director	D

Table 3:   Codes for Interview Respondents

4.5.1 The Respondents

The author would like to make the reader aware for the purpose of this paper why the respondents were chosen for the interviewing process.

Respondent A is a General Operative working in the organisation as a line lead on the production floor. The respondent has been the victim of a bullying case last year with a co-worker in the same department. The respondent was chosen due to her first hand experience with bullying in the organisation and why she felt the bullying occurred. The respondent provided an insight into how she felt the organisation dealt with the bullying case.

Respondent B is a Supervisor in another department who had experience in dealing with a previous bullying case on their shift. The respondent provided the author with valuable insight into behaviour and values within the organisation.

Respondent C is the Production Manager who has some experience with bullying cases. In most cases the supervisor of their shift would deal with any issues along with HR. However, the Production Manager would deal with those cases that may require their assistance.

Respondent D is the HR Director. Valuable information was gained from interviewing this respondent in terms of organisational culture. This was due

to the fact that the HR Director implemented the dignity and respect culture
and the organisations Standards of Behaviour guidelines.

4.6 Presenting the Findings

The author will firstly present the findings from the respondents carried out
during the semi-structured interviews, under the various aspects of culture
and bullying. From this, in the following section the author will then relate
these finding from the respondents to the existing literature on culture and
its relationship with the occurrence of bullying. As the subjects of both
culture and bullying are extensive in their literature, the author has chosen to
select the only key aspects of both topics in order to answer the research
question. For example, aspects of culture such as policies and procedures
were not examined as thoroughly as the author would have wished for due to
time constraints. However, the author has chosen the main aspects and
themes of both topics that are deemed highly relevant.

4.7 Categorization

When analyzing qualitative data the first activity is to classify the data into categories. Grouping data into appropriate categories allows for it to be analysed effectively. Saunders et al (2003) state 'they provide you with an emergent structure that is relevant to your research project'. These categories are as a result of the literature review carried out by the author. They are guided by the research question and objectives on which this paper is intended. From the categorization of the data, the author will recognise themes and relationships based on the literature presented in the literature review.

4.8　What is Bullying?

The definition of bullying has many aspects to it. Bullying has moved away from the more physical behaviours to psychological. Responses to this question varied by each respondent.

Respondent A considers bullying as:

'Someone constantly saying something about you and making sure you hear it. Something not very nice that makes you feel uncomfortable. Someone you have to avoid in work'.

Respondent B believed:

'Bullying was a deliberate act to undermine someone or make them feel inferior'.

Respondent C suggested that previously they considered bullying as very confrontational situations.

'Physical examples and intimidation would have been what I considered bullying to be. However, from recent times and situations I hear about in other organisations, withholding information from other workers would be deemed as bullying. Although I don't know if I agree with that, it depends. If it was done intentionally I would maybe say yes, it is bullying'.

Respondent D considers bullying to be:

'Behaviour directed at one person that is not welcomed. It can be only even twice and to me that is bullying'.

4.9   Why Does Bullying Occur?

Bullying can occur due to various reasons. Although the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between culture and bullying, all other factors that can affect the occurrence of bullying were investigated.

Respondent A stated that she believed bullying occurred when someone took a dislike to a co-worker and brought their behaviour to the workplace. Respondent B believes that bullying occurs for a number of reasons. He believes sometimes a person's personality can be very abrupt and this comes across in how they treat people. However, respondent B believes everybody has a different personality but that should not be allowed to impact on any other persons work.

'Personality does come into it a little I do believe, but certainly it is not a reason for bullying to happen. But if they are let get away with it, they will continue.'

Respondent C believes even if the bully has a certain personality, bullying will not occur if the organisation stops it.

'If people are that way inclined (bullying behaviour) outside of the organisation, and then they come into work & try to push the boundaries, if they are left to do that & behave in that way, then they will. However, if the organisation does not accept that behaviour, then the bullying behaviour will not succeed.' The respondent also believes bullying can be as a result of power, responsibility and subcultures. *'Subcultures can also contribute to bullying, people in various departments have their own behaviours.'*

Respondent D states *'if people think they will get away with it, they will certainly try to. However, if the organisation does not tolerate bullying behaviour, they will stand out like a sore thumb '.*

She continued to state *'personality does come into why people behave in a bullying manner; however it is the culture of the organisation that will not allow the behaviour to foster'.*

4.10   Culture of the Organisation

All respondents had their own views on what they considered culture to be. When asked what they considered culture to be, there was an agreed response of 'the way things are done here'.

Respondent C mentioned he had studied culture previously and it had always remained fixed in his mind throughout everything he did in the organisation.

Respondent B suggests culture gives a good understanding of what is and what is not accepted in the organisation. He suggests the code of conduct within the organisation is a highly visible artifact of the culture.

'The culture here shows everyone in the organisation how to behave. What is acceptable and what is not. People are under no illusions here.'

He states:

'The culture in our organisation definitely does keep bullying a minor issue here. If there is something that is going on, it is nipped in the bud & stopped very quickly. Everything is monitored very closely in here, but in an effective manner. There is a very clear code of conduct and everyone must abide by it'

Respondent D responded that culture is the heart of an organisation.

Respondent A was unable to define culture in terms of theory but believes that in Lake Region Medical the culture is of respect for all.

4.11 Behavioural Norms

Norms are employees expected modes of behaviour i.e. appropriate dress code, language, or communication with each other. Visitors to an organisation can often see this level of culture. Culture at this level is very clear and can have immediate emotional impact. (Schein, 1992)

4.11.1 Communication

Communication is regarded highly within the organisation. Respondent C argues there can never be too much communication within an organisation. Managers etc should *'almost be trying to over-communicate perhaps'*. *'There are the morning meetings every morning with all department reps where we keep everyone up to date on projects, orders etc'*. He also added the weekly briefings and director briefings keep all employees up to date whilst also providing a two way communication feedback process. Employees can bring their questions forward and *'all opinions are welcomed'*.

It must also be noted that as a general operative on the floor, respondent A agreed that all opinions are welcomed. She also added:

'*When I started 7 years ago, there has been huge change in terms of communication, atmosphere, the way things are done etc'.*

Respondent B agreed in terms of the good communication within the company and believes that once employees feel they are involved and kept up to date on events, they will become more engaged in appropriate behaviour.

'*There is huge open communication here. Employees buy into it once they are involved and told about things. Communication is so important in terms of getting the right messages across to employees. It almost reinforces the culture here.*'

Respondent D, who was primarily involved with the communication overhaul some years ago within the organisation, believes communication is very powerful. . '*The objective of the communication review was to develop a clear and effective two-way, formalised communication system. As a result of this the open door policy developed and in addition the Lake Region Medical Standards of Behaviour. The standards are communicated continuously and lead by example from the leaders.*'

4.12 Values

All respondents agreed that both continuous improvement and teamwork were clear values held by the organisation. Respondent B believes teamwork and co-operation are very evident within the company.

'A co-operative atmosphere is very much valued here. Across the board there is help from everyone. It is very easy to say this isn't my department so why should I help, but you don't do that here'.

Respondent A believes quality is very much a value of the organisation. *'Product quality is highly emphasised, and this is evident in all the procedures we have to follow.'*

Respondent D believes *'the flexible culture here lends itself in supporting the value of continuous improvement'.* She continues to state *'people are part of a team here, opinions are listened to. It is not always viable to implement every opinion but they are listened to'.*

4.12.1 Leadership

Values refer to the guidelines that affect how people behave. These values are driven from top management. As previously mentioned in the literature review, the most powerful and influential determinant of an organisations culture are the leaders. The leaders are the people within the organisation who set the tone, define the values and norms and create and promote

acceptable behaviour. Respondent B believes along with team work, the organisation valued each employees input. He felt the organisation valued their workforce and this was evident in how employees were treated by the leaders.

'Any issues you have, no matter how big or small, time is given to you. People's feelings are taken into account. As a supervisor, if an employee comes to me with a problem, I firstly thank them for coming to me with the problem. I think this is driven from top down. Feedback is appreciated.'

He continued to agree that people within the organisation are *'well looked after. The small touches are appreciated such as the Easter Eggs for everyone, the service awards and the perfect attendance photo with the Vice President. People won't directly tell you, but you know they appreciate it. It is a vibe you get outside here. People know the organisation looks after their workers.'*

4.13 Management Style

'The management style of the organisation is very much collaborative', believes respondent D, the HR Director. Respondent A continued to agree that the managerial style is very fair within the organisation.

Respondent B, a production supervisor suggests he has not found anyone in a managerial role in the organisation that is not approachable. '*When praise is needed to be given it is given from management. It helps you stay focused on what is right and expected of you*'. He continued to state that the culture in the organisation is very much driven from the managers and how they speak to others. '*I have never seen any manager speak inappropriately to anyone. Morale is huge here, and that is driven from management.*'

Respondent C, the production manager believes '*people are not shy about pulling others up here if they are not behaving right.*' He continues to state he would hope members of his own team such as production supervisors would be able to approach him if he did or said something that they were not happy about. '*I would encourage them to anyway; however I know it is very hard to tell your boss if you were unhappy with something.*' He continues to state however there may be one or two directors or managers he would be very careful with in his approach. Not all of them are as approachable as others.

4.14 Disciplinary Procedures

An aspect of an organisations culture that can foster bullying can include ineffective disciplinary procedures and policies. Each respondent was asked

how they thought conflict was resolved in the organisation. They were also asked did they deem the disciplinary procedures to be fair.

Respondent C suggested that a lot of low level problems get sorted by the line leads or team leads before they become a problem. The issues that get escalated to the supervisor are dealt with as fairly and quickly as possible. *'Unfortunately when the issue gets to the supervisory level, it gets formal and must go down the procedural route'.* He states all employees know how to behave and any deviant employees get dealt with immediately before it escalates into something bigger.

Respondent B responded that the procedures within the organisation are very fair and are very much needed for a consistent route to follow. Respondent D stated procedures must be fair for both the organisation but also the employee.

Respondent A did not have a substantial response to the question but said when an employee behaves in an unacceptable manner they are brought down the disciplinary route and give statements on what happened. However, in her bullying situation, respondent A does not feel her case was dealt with as quickly as she would have wished for. She felt it was only when it was brought forward to the HR Director, was it dealt with appropriately and effectively as she wished for.

Respondent D believes the disciplinary procedures operating in the organisation are very fair and consistent. *'You must always be consistent and be seen to be as fair as possible when dealing with conflict and discipline'.* She continued to state how imperative it is to always tell the employee what you are doing and why. *'You must be fair to both the perceived victim and bully. I try to be a facilitator as much as possible'.*

4.15 Anti-Bullying Policy

When asked did respondent A have any knowledge on the anti-bullying policy within the organisation, she responded by saying she only knew it was in the handbook and we had one. When probed what she thought of the policy, the respondent did not have a strong opinion. She said she knew we had one and what she knew of it, it was fair.

Respondent D stated it was a legal requirement and it was abided by at all times in all cases. The respondent also stated that during all employee inductions, new beginners were made fully aware of the consequences of bullying behaviour and how it is unacceptable within the organisation. During induction, the respondent also gives examples of previous bullying cases that have resulted in detrimental consequences, in an effort to reiterate the seriousness of bullying.

Respondent C stated that he knew, as the production manager, the existence of the anti-bullying policy and that it was always restated in any bullying case.

4.16 Strength of Culture

The respondents were asked did they think there was a strong culture within the organisation. As previous, respondent A did not have substantial information in relation to bullying but believes that in Lake Region Medical the culture of respect is very evident.

Respondent B believes the organisation has '*built up a very good culture here*'. He suggested there is a good understanding of what is acceptable or not. The respondent continued to suggest that '*one of the stronger messages you get from the company and management is respect*'. He thinks the culture is a strong culture and is also the right type of culture.

Respondent C said there is a strong and healthy culture very much evident throughout the plant. '*At times it can be a hard place to work, it is tough but it is always fair. It is definitely the best place I've worked and it is the best culture I've seen; always trying to improve. We have respect from our Standards of Behaviour*'.

Respondent D states the strength of the culture within Lake Region Medical is that of a strong, very open and friendly culture. '*Single status is very*

important here. When there is a new person we also try to find them a buddy so they blend in. It is very important that you blend in within the workplace'.

She continues to reiterate how the Continual Improvement Programme within the organisation *'lends itself to the flexible culture that is established'. We don't just make decisions on change; we set up teams from all areas in order to encapsulate all opinions. Some of the best ideas have come from those meetings'.*

5.0 FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the key findings from the data collected by the researcher at Lake Region Medical. The primary source of the information results from a series of semi-structured interviews carried out with various employees of the organisation. The interviews were carried out for the purpose of answering the author's research question which is:

"Does organisational culture have an impact on the occurrence of workplace bullying?"

The research question also lays foundations for formulating a set of key research objectives for this study. The research objectives were the goals for this study and the author focused her research on the following objectives:

- To investigate what elements of organisational culture can affect the prevalence of workplace bullying?

- To investigate whether the existence of an anti-bullying policy affects the occurrence of workplace bullying?

- How linked is the anti-bullying policy in the author's organisation with the culture?

The findings from the data research collection presented clear, unambiguous results. The author varied the questions throughout each of the four interviews in order to encapsulate the most effective data for the purpose of answering the research question. The author recognised the varied responses from each of the interviewees. However, a clear and definite pattern emerged from each of the interviews. The author feels this is as a result of each interviewee being an employee of the same organisation operating under the same culture.

The author will now present her findings based on the interview questions asked and the responses received. The author will relate the responses received to the existing literature surrounding the effect of culture on workplace bullying. Each research objective will also be analysed.

5.2 What Constitutes Bullying?

There is ample academic debate surrounding an agreed definition of workplace bullying (Bailien & Neyens, 2009), (Einarsen, 1999). However, the general consensus surrounding bullying lies with the factors that must exist in order to define certain behaviour as bullying. These factors include frequency, duration and intent (Rayner, 1997). From the research data collected, this consensus was very much evident. Respondent A reiterated

the frequency aspect of the definition when she stated *'someone constantly saying something about you'*.

Respondent B clearly stated bullying was a 'deliberate intent'. While respondent D argued that behaviour can be deemed bullying when carried out just twice in fact.

It was clear to the author throughout the data collection process; a pattern had emerged in relation to the definition of bullying. All respondents viewed bullying as behaviour that was certainly intended by the bully and more importantly unwanted. These factors are very important in defining bullying behaviour. They must be present in order for behaviour to constitute bullying.

5.3 Why Bullying Arises?

Numerous antecedents of bullying have been highlighted by many researchers such as Vartia (1996), Leymann (1996), and Douglas (2001). These antecedents of bullying include competitive environment, status, personality of the victim and the bully, leadership style, culture and conflict resolution. Costigan (1998), places huge focus on the personality traits both the bully and the victim in terms of the possible occurrence of bullying behaviour. Vartia (1996), states actual specific personality traits of the victim are crucial to understanding why they become the victim. From this

literature the author probed the interviewees on various antecedents of bullying such as leadership / managerial style of the organisation, how they considered conflict was resolved and what they deemed the culture of the organisation to be.

What was very interesting to the author was in fact, all respondents did believe the personalities of the bully and the victim may have triggered the occurrence of bullying initially. However, respondent C believes other factors such as power, responsibility and subcultures can also contribute to workplace bullying.

Respondent C stated if people have the typical personality type of the bully, they will try to push the boundaries in the workplace. Respondent B agreed with this and added how each employee has a different personality; however this should not impact on bullying behaviour developing.

However, the respondents believed once the organisation does not tolerate this type of behaviour, it will not cultivate. It was evident all respondents believed bullying should not be accepted by the organisation. It is not tolerated in the organisation. In fact it was stated people who behave in such a manner will 'stand out like a sore thumb here'. The respondent, the HR Director, highlights how every employee must treat each other the same way, with dignity and respect. Those employees who do not behave this way are noticed very quickly.

5.4 Culture

Culture is essentially the essence of any organisation. It has been referred to as 'the glue that holds organisations together' (Goffee and Jones 1996). The theory of culture has received significant interest from many researchers such as Schein (1992) and Deal and Kennedy (2000). The relationship between behaviour within the organisation and culture has received increased interest and debate. The organisational factors that are most influential in guiding acceptable behaviour include the history, values, vision of leaders, stories and norms. These factors all contribute to the culture and are important factors in determining the type of behaviour within the organisation.

When the interviewees were asked what they considered culture to be, the author felt respondent A did not fully comprehend the term 'culture'. However, the author gave examples of the elements of culture such as open door policy. The author felt the respondent, a general operative in production, did have a clear understanding of the culture within the organisation, but perhaps does not refer to it as culture. She could not fully verbalise the term culture. She referred to culture as *just the way we do things here'*. The author feels the culture is embedded and sustained within the organisation, it is almost subconscious.

It was very evident from the data research collection that the culture of the organisation was very much driven from management. This was reinforced by one response which stated how the interviewee has never seen any manager or director speak to any employee inappropriately. However, as this interviewee was the production manager himself, the author would hope he was not biased in his view or response.

5.5   Behaviour

Following the probing questions on culture, the author asked the interviewees how they regarded communication within the organisation. Communication is a behavioural norm within an organisation. Norms are employees expected modes of behaviour. Communication can be regarded as a visible artefact of culture (Schein, 1992). Deal & Kennedy (2000), highlight the importance of values, heroes, rites and rituals and cultural networks. Organisations most effective & quickest cultural network is communication. Organisations with strong cultures communicate exactly how they want their employees to behave (Deal & Kennedy, 2000) Communication allows the boundaries of acceptable behaviour to be reaffirmed. Deal & Kennedy (2000) classify culture into four categories in relation to feedback and risk.

A pattern emerged from each interviewee's response to communication within the organisation. Communication is evidently regarded highly with Lake Region Medical. More effectively, a two way communication feedback process operates within the organisation. Respondent B believes that once employees are involved and kept up to date on events, they become more engaged in appropriate behaviour. The communication within the organisation fosters the strong culture and teamwork behaviour.

Appropriate standards of behaviour can be reaffirmed through the various communication mechanisms in an organisation. Unacceptable behaviour can be made apparent. Deviant or unacceptable behaviour therefore will *'stand out like a sore thumb'*, believes respondent D. Rayner & Cooper (1997), argue if the tolerance for unacceptable behaviour such as bullying increases in an organisation, it will become a socially accepted behavioural norm. It will also give way for more bullying behaviour. The organisation operates under an open communication policy and this operates under a two way system. This allows management to communicate their strategies and issues across the board, whilst allowing employees to voice their opinions. What was clear to the author was such open lines of communication allows for employees to bring any problems as well as *opinions* to management, such as bullying or unwanted behaviour. Respondent B reaffirmed this by stating how he firstly thanks any employee who may come to him with a problem such as the victim in the bullying case he dealt with. The culture is of open

communication allowing employees to bring forward problems and trusting management to deal with them.

5.6   Leadership & Managerial Style

Leaders can be seen to be the most powerful determinant of organisational culture and accepted behaviour (Van Fleet, 2006). What leaders reward, punish, and pay attention to are major influences on the employees and behaviour within an organisation. Einarsen (1999) argues bullying will only take place if the leaders let the bullies do so. Leaders are creators, victims and products of culture (Schein, 2009).

Managerial style can be seen to be an antecedent of bullying in the workplace. Archer (1999) carried out a study of culture and bullying in the fire service. From this, it was evident an authoritarian managerial style existed. Management was very hierarchical and almost operated in a Para-military culture. Power became the managerial style within the fire service and bullying behaviour was seen as the norm. Handy (1996), also argues organisations based on power and policy are principally power based cultures. '*The culture recognises only expertise at the base of power*'. A culture exists where behaviours are condoned that would not be in any other organisation.

Recent studies on managers tackling bullying behaviour in a UK public sector organisation have presented findings in relation to mistrust and low morale. Managerial style was typically of command and control, with a high percentage of bullying cases evident. When managers attempted to tackle the problem and implement dignity charters and anti-bullying policies, they found the trust was still gone and low morale existed (Beaumont & Pate, 2009). The initiatives had no effect on the employee's perceptions and trust in the leaders. In the author's opinion trust is very hard to gain back from employees. These new policies implemented alone would not gain the trust of employees and build morale. The management style would also require change, as it is from the management style that the behaviours derive from.

Responses from the data collection method employed by the author highlighted how the culture of Lake Region Medical was very much driven from the leaders and top management. Respondent B believes the organisation and its leaders value each employee and their input. This was reiterated from Respondent D, the HR Director, who stated *some of the best ideas have come from employee input and those departmental meetings'*.

From the interviews, the respondents believed the managerial style within the organisation is very fair and this is reflected in the low bullying rate within the organisation. They clearly trust the leaders and management of the organisation. In the author's opinion, this is due to the dispersed power and responsibility throughout the organisation. Decisions do not lie

exclusively with top management. All opinions are taken into account, even if they are feasible or not. Respondent D, the HR Director who is very much involved in organisational decisions stated how employee input and ideas are always listened to and valued, even if it is not possible to implement. The culture focuses not only on what is good for the organisation but also for the employee. Handy (1996) sees this as the fourth God of Management. 'The organisation exists to help the individual achieve his purpose'. (Handy, 1996)

5.7 Anti-Bullying Policy

There is a gap in the literature surrounding the success of anti-bullying policies in an organisation (Beaumont & Pate, 2009). Huge focus is placed on defining bullying behaviour, investigating why it happened and then tackling the problem. Although it is a legal requirement for an organisation to have an anti-bullying policy in action, the author queries whether they are actually effective in combating bullying. The purposes of anti-bullying policies are to express those behaviours that are not acceptable. They provide the organisation with a code of conduct to follow. Management can use these procedures when dealing with bullying behaviour. However, does their existence have any effect on the occurrence of bullying?

Respondent A stated she knew the organisation had an anti-bullying policy and that it was in the handbook. When asked what she knew about the policy, she stated it was presented to her during investigation of her bullying case. She said she thought it was a fair policy. When asked was that all she knew of the policy, she replied yes. Respondents B & C both said they knew it was in the employee handbook and they referred to it in any case of bullying behaviour.

5.8   Objective One:

To investigate what elements of organisational culture can affect the prevalence of workplace bullying?

In terms of what elements of culture that can affect the occurrence of bullying, the author would suggest certainly the behaviour of management and the leaders is crucial. As suggested, the vision of the organisation and the behaviour of each employee come from top down. Throughout the data research interviews it was obvious high regard was held for the leaders of the organisation. This was as a result of the management adopting the approach of 'do as I do' and not 'do as I say'. This approach is fundamental to the culture of an organisation. Behaviour of each employee results from what management do and how they direct the culture. From the literature review on the UK Fire Service (Archer, 1999), it was evident the

management style that existed was very much authoritarian. Employees saw this type of leadership and management control as the way things were done and re-enacted it with each other. They believed this type of negative behaviour was acceptable.

Values are a very important element of culture. Values represent the shared beliefs on what is right and desirable in the organisation. What the leaders' value will be represented down to each individual. They are embedded into the organisation and are as a result of history, vision and the beliefs of the leaders. Values are a deeper level of thought and perception and they drive employee behaviour. It is apparent in the organisation on which the interviews were based, the prevailing values that are driven from the leaders are teamwork, product quality and open communication.

5.9   Objective Two:

To investigate whether the existence of an anti-bullying policy affects the occurrence of workplace bullying?

The investigation of the existence of an anti-bullying policy affecting bullying behaviour is as a result of exploring existing literature and from the findings of the interviews undertaken.

The bullying rate within the organisation studied (approximately 3 per year) is very low in comparison with the number of employees, approximately 750. However, the author does not think the policy has a direct effect on the behaviour of the employees.

Respondent A did not have substantial knowledge on the policy, just on its location. It was apparent efforts were made by the HR Director during new employee inductions to highlight the organisations stance on bullying behaviour. However, the only time apart from employee inductions respondent A was presented with the policy, was during her bullying investigation. This is a reactive way of using the policy in combating bullying. Use of anti-bullying policies should be in a proactive manner and not reactive. In the author's opinion, the policy should be restated in the director briefings to all employees and the policy placed in view for all employees in each department.

Previous studies have been carried out on the success of anti-bullying policies in organisations (Beaumont & Pate, 2010). This study suggests anti-bullying policies 'are put in place to cure the immediate problem'. However, the study also suggests literature on measuring the value of these policies is absent. In the author's opinion, the existence of the anti-bulling policy does not have a powerful effect on employee's behaviour within the organisation. The author suggests it is the culture that drives acceptable behaviour. The

anti-bullying policy is perhaps merely a guideline on what behaviour is not

acceptable but it does not have a powerful effect on employee behaviour.

5.10   Objective Three:

How linked is the anti-bullying policy in the author's organisation with

the culture?

Anti-bullying policies and behaviour need to be part of the culture of the

organisation and not just a policy to follow. What was evident from the

interviews was how each respondent believed the culture of the organisation

was a powerful factor in the behaviour of employees. They believed the

culture of the organisation provided employees with a code of conduct in

which to behave. It also allowed bullying behaviour to be evidently

recognised. Respondent D stated how employees would become very

obvious if they carried out undesirable behaviour. In the author's

organisation the culture is very strong. The culture comes from

management. Each individual throughout the organisation is aware of how

to behave. *'They are under no illusions'* (Respondent B).

In the author's opinion, the culture is the essence of the organisation on

which its success lies. The distinct boundaries of unacceptable behaviour

such as bullying are very much evident through the culture. The anti-

bullying policy is part of the culture but it does not drive the culture. The

policy is used in an attempt to set guidelines for bullying behaviour and in conjunction with the culture. It provides recommendations for targets and managers in dealing with deviant behaviour. It can positively affect employee expectations in the organisation but only if they are used appropriately and proactively

However, in the author's opinion, it is the Standards of Behaviour within the organisation that drive the culture of dignity and respect. These Standards of Behaviour are the fundamental nature of the culture in which the employee behaviour originates from.

Figure 2:   Reference: Standards of Behaviour Lake Region Medical Ltd 2010

5.11 Limitations

The author was faced with a number of limitations during the course of this research paper. The subject of bullying is that of a sensitive one. This required the author to approach a previous victim of bullying in the organisation for the purpose of analysing the topic of bullying. The author chose this interviewee as the author had previously dealt with her for other work related issues. It was also imperative for the success of the interview for the author to explain to the interviewee, the purpose of the study. The author had to make the interviewee aware, who is a previous victim of bullying, that all information was highly confidential and part of the author's college course, not a HR function.

The author ideally wanted to interview the bully in this case also but felt doing so might draw upon previous negative feelings which could possibly be re-enacted again. In addition, in order to encapsulate fully the relationship between culture and bullying, it would have been valuable to interview more than one victim of bullying. This would have presented the author with valuable insight into bullying behaviour.

The author is aware three out of the four interviewees were in managerial positions within the organisation. They were selected based on their experiences in dealing with deviant behaviour within the organisation. The author feels that perhaps they may have a different view on the existing

culture as a result of their position. The author would hope their responses were of a non-biased nature. Although respondent C mentioned he has been working in the organisation for five years in different positions.

The organisation on which the research was carried is a non-unionised organisation with a culture of dignity and respect. Preferably, the author would have liked to carry out the data research collection in a unionised organisation for comparisons on the culture.

6.0   CONCLUSION

The major interest from previous studies has been directed towards culture and individual behaviour. The author chose to develop on these studies and investigate the relationship between culture and bullying behaviour within an organisation. Bullying can occur through a number of reasons, i.e. personality of the bully or the victim, organisational setting, unfair policies and procedures, managerial style etc. The author chose to examine how an organisational culture can affect the occurrence of bullying. When bullying occurs in an organisation, it is usually seen as a symptom of a deeper problem. The source of the problem may lie in the culture of the organisation.

What was apparent from the research undertaken was the obvious link between organisational culture and employee behaviour. Culture is the fundamental nature of an organisation and is driven by the leaders. Firstly, culture can create a healthy work environment in which bullying behaviour does not foster. Secondly, the culture of an organisation can communicate how bullying behaviour is not tolerated.

What is key to the success of a good culture is when these values, beliefs and assumptions work effectively together. They become non negotiable within the organisation. If bullying does occur within an organisation that does not tolerate it, it happens without the organisations blessing. In

addition, the speed at which the organisation deals with the bullying is fundamental to the culture. Trust in the organisation could be potentially lost if bullying behaviour is not effectively and promptly dealt with. The trust may never be regained, which could be detrimental to the culture.

What came of huge interest to the author was in relation to the research surrounding the effectiveness of anti-bullying policies. An employee from production did not have substantial knowledge on the anti-bullying policy within the organisation. She was aware of its location in the handbook but was unable to tell the researcher of the policy content. The remaining interviewees were aware of the policy, but the author would question was this merely due to their managerial positions within the organisation. Undeniably, organisations require a systematic program in place to deal with bullying, but this requires much more than being reliant on referring to a policy. It needs to be fully incorporated into the culture in order to reinforce the behaviours. Increased awareness and training is required on bullying and the corresponding policies. Communicating this will fully integrate it into the culture. The author feels there is huge scope for further study into the effectiveness and integration of anti-bullying policies in an organisation.

The author has presented her findings in relation to culture and bullying and has carried out the data collection within her organisation. The author is fully aware how the outcome of the interviews may be influenced due to the culture of dignity and respect promoted within the organisation. The

findings may have produced different results if carried out in an organisation with a different culture or in a unionised organisation. Therefore the findings presented from the data collection carried out must be noted are as a result of a dignity and respect culture within an organisation.

6.1 Author's Reflection

The author personally has found this study a huge learning experience. When the author first began studying the topic of bullying, she had a strong belief that the personalities of the bully and the victim were the main antecedents for the occurrence of bullying. The pinnacle point in the study for the author was as a result of findings of the data collection. It was very much evident how the culture of an organisation is a powerful determinant of employee behaviour. The responses from the interviews carried out highlighted how the behaviour that is accepted is very much evident when entering the organisation. This is derived from the culture. *'People are under no illusions here'* (respondent B). The author feels this was one of the most powerful statements throughout the interviews. The culture informs employees what is and not acceptable, including bullying.

The author would conclude that it is the culture that is the determining factor in an organisation in relation to condoning or condemning bullying behaviour.

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Date: _____   **To:** _____

I am carrying out a research project for my Bachelor of Honour's Degree Dissertation in the National College of Ireland on organisational bullying. The proposed title of the project is

'Does organisational culture have an impact on the occurrence of workplace bullying?'

I am writing to request your participation in the research. Your participation will be on a voluntary basis, you may quit at any time. Your involvement in the study would require you to take part in a semi-structured interview. The interview will last no longer than 60 minutes. The interview will be recorded by Dictaphone. The focus of the interview is to help gain an insight into organisational bullying from those who work in an organisation.

Any information obtained during the research will remain confidential. All data collected will be coded by the researcher immediately. The results will be locked within a secure cabinet. The names of those involved in the research project will not be published or made known. Once published, the recordings will be destroyed immediately following *its* analysis, in order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of all those involved in the study.

Regards,

Emma O' Brien

HR Department

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

At all times treat each other with dignity and respect.

Seek to understand before reacting.

Choose a positive attitude.

Don't walk past, do something to make it better.

Aim to be better today than yesterday.

Do the right thing, not the easy thing, have the courage to challenge:

Your own and others assumptions.

Over commitment.

Unfairness.

Any breach of these standards.

Complacency.

Talking behind anyone's back.

Does an Organisational Culture Affect the Occurrence of Bullying?

<u>Interview</u>

1. What is your understanding of workplace bullying?

2. Have you ever witnessed bullying in the organisation? If so, can you describe what happened?

3. Are you aware of any anti-bullying policy in place in the organisation?

4. If yes, how do you know about this policy?

5. What is your opinion of this policy?

6. What is your understanding of organisational culture?

7. How would you describe the culture within Lake Region Medical?

8. Do you think there is a strong culture within the organisation? Why?

9. What do you consider is the most important <u>value</u> in your work – i.e. continuous learning, respect for each employee, promotion, status, rewards?

10. What do you think other employees in the organisation value?

11. How do you think conflict is resolved in the organisation? (Fairly for employee? Very procedure driven – rules, processes etc)

12. How does the organisation deal with employees who display behaviours that are unacceptable?

13. Do you feel employees are highly regarded and valued in the organisation?

14. How is communication regarded within the organisation? What types of communication mechanisms are used?

15. Is it the communication within the organisation effective?

16. How would you describe the managerial style of the organisation?

17. What do you think contributes to bullying in an org or in LRI?

18. Do you think the culture of this org helps sustain a low rate of bullying or helps to prohibit bullying etc?

Interviewee A:

Q. What is your understanding of bullying?

A. It is someone constantly saying something about you and making sure you hear it. It could be hitting you when going past you. Someone you have to avoid because they make you feel uncomfortable.

Q. What is your understanding of culture?

A. The company here values quality. That is our culture, quality and the customer. The company doesn't tolerate bullying either. We all have to respect each other.

Q. Do you think the culture here is strong?

A. Yes. We all have to get on. That is a good thing.

Q. What do you value in your work and in the organisation?

A. Respect for everybody. That is what I value. But sometimes people don't see everything that way. Things aren't always as clear as they should be.

Q. Are you aware of an anti-bullying policy in this organisation?

A. Yes, I am aware of it. It is in the handbook. It was shown to me in my bullying case. I think it is a fair policy.

Q. Have you ever experienced bullying in the organisation?

A. By one person, yes, over a few months. I would be walking down corridors and she would walk past me and nudge me deliberately. She would make horrible remarks continuously that she knew I would hear. I didn't say anything back to her. She did it again one day when I was with my friend. My friend then told the line lead. I was told to give my side but in the office I felt I was made out to be a bully also. I felt so bad about it all I didn't want to come back to work. We were both brought together and told the behaviour was not tolerated and to stop.

A few months later it kept happening. I went to the HR Director and asked her why wasn't the witness called up to be interviewed. She said she did not know there was a witness, she was not told this. Even the day after I called up to HR, she (the bully) tried to hit me again with her coat in the locker room. The remarks continued again. Then she hit off me again another day and I told her not to do that again. She then started shouting at me. She told Brian (supervisor) I hit her. Then I was called in and she made a complaint against me. Breeda (HR Director) brought in Mike (Senior Supervisor) and I said that I felt very unhappy about how the case was dealt with initially. I thought I was going to cry then.

They took another statement from me. She (bully) had all lies in her statement. They didn't know who to believe, I knew that. Then they moved her onto another shift opposite to my hours. I still try to avoid her if I do pass her. I feel it would have been sorted sooner if the witness was brought in and questioned in the first place. I felt I couldn't come into work. I kept taking vacation days. I did lose some friends also. I do believe that. People listened to one story. I wouldn't wish it on anyone. Worst few months of my life. I don't know why she started on me; I try to get one with everyone. Maybe because I am a line lead and I had to tell her stuff to do. But I really do believe it could have been sorted quicker. But then some people can be liars here and that is not good. But I am happy where I am now. My friends were really mad, they were afraid to say something in case they got involved.

Q. How do you think conflict is resolved in the organisation?

A. You are brought in for a statement. I think it is fair.

Q. Do you feel employees are highly regarded here?

A. Yes we do feel highly regarded from the general atmosphere. We could go to a supervisor if we had a problem. Opinions are welcomed here. When I started 7 years ago there has been huge change with everything like the communication, atmosphere and even the machine lines on the floor. Definitely a lot better.

Interviewee B:

Q. What is your understanding of bullying?

Bullying is certainly very detrimental if not dealt with in an appropriate manner. People may be afraid to come into work. Majority of people will have seen or witnessed bullying of some sort either in workplace, society or school.

I would say it is a deliberate act to undermine someone or make them feel inferior. When I say deliberate, maybe it might not always be deliberate? Sometimes a person's personality may be abrupt & not well mannered. The manner in which they speak to people may not be what you perceive to be right or correct. The person who is on the receiving end over a period of time can feel undermined or intimidated. Or they could be afraid to do their job. Bullying seems to be more psychological now; you never want the physical side of it either in the workplace. I suppose you could compare it to school, kids won't want to go to school. Same with employees, they won't want to go to work. Anybody can't be on the receiving end. But you should never have to on the receiving end of it in work.

Q. What is your understanding of culture?

A. I would Lake Region have built up a very good culture. There is a good understanding of what is and not acceptable. There is very much a team culture here. There are weekly briefings that keep employees up to date. People on the floor appreciate that. They know where the company is going. There is also a massive focus on continuous improvement here. The focus is on keeping the company as successful as it is. At briefings we would always ask if employees had any questions. There is huge open communication here. Employees buy into it once they are involved and told about things. There is a big focus on 'we' here, in all the meetings and projects. There is no 'us' and 'them'.

The culture here I would also say is continuously learning & respect for each other. One word to describe the culture is respect. That is definitely one of the stronger messages that you get from the company and from the management.

Continuous improvement is huge here, what we did yesterday we can do better tomorrow. But as a team. The culture helps with this – everyone wants to help everyone for the good of the organisation. People feel they are looked after here. They feel the company looks after them. The small touches are appreciated like the Easter Eggs, service awards, perfect attendance pictures with the vice president. People won't tell you directly but you just know they appreciate it. It is a vibe you get outside here, people know the organisation looks after employees. There is a general vibe people like working here and it is a great place to work.

Q. So you think communication is highly regarded here then?

A. Absolutely yes.

Q. Do you think the culture here is strong?

A. I would say it is very strong yes. And I would say it is the right type of culture.

Q. What do you value in your work and in the organisation and what do you think others may value?

A. Atmosphere is huge here and very much what I value here. Also across the board there is help from everyone. It is very easy to say this is not my department so this is not my issue but you don't get that here. Everyone helps each other out. There is huge cooperation. But you don't just do it, you show how to do it. I have seen huge changes here. The organisation has got very big. You can run the risk of becoming too big & anonymous. As a supervisor it is your job to prevent that on your shift & maintain your culture. Then you find every supervisor is singing off the same sheet. They give the same message –it maintains the culture.

Q. Are you aware of an anti-bullying policy in this organisation?

A. Yes, I am aware of it. It is in the handbook. It was shown to me in my bullying case. I think it is a fair policy.

Q. Have you ever experienced bullying in the organisation?

A. Yes I have on my own shift. I have seen the effects of it. The victim came to me, said he was feeling uncomfortable and unhappy in a situation. There was an intimidating environment with

someone. So once they come to me I have to do a complete investigation. I ask them what particular instances stand out to them over a period of time- try to get as much detail as possible. But in this case there were no witnesses.

The person was working in the clean tank. Only ever 2 of them in the clean tank at one time. The victim did not ever see the bully speak to anyone else the way she spoke to him. I tried to find out as much as i could. She was different towards him in front of others. But it wasn't all the time, one week could be fine, the next not fine. It was very inconsistent. He couldn't deal with that.

I made Joe aware (Head Supervisor), then HR to let them know a complaint was made. Also there was a history there with the bully, she was previously on a final written warning for bullying behaviour. I told him (victim) I was going to investigate the complaint and I told him we appreciated he brought this forward to us, but why not sooner. He said he tried to sort it himself before he came forward. He tried to be friendly with her. Now, she was always very polite to me as her supervisor. She would go above and beyond things. The clean tank was her kingdom, that was the only was I can describe it to you. She didn't like the radio on, her job had a high level of responsibility with it because the product leaves the area after her. She is a very organised person, she always follows the procedures on products. He needed a lot of reassurance. He would ask her the same questions 2 weeks later that he already asked.

The outcome is they are still in the same positions. I check in on them though, I keep a close eye on things. But I don't raise the issue with them. During the investigation each of them were dealt with individually. We reiterated to Brid (bully) it was unacceptable. When we looked at it there was no one incidence that could be classified as bullying. But at the same time you could see Wojciech (victim)was feeling uncomfortable. A lot of time was spent on the case. As much was needed anyway. We didn't want problems to occur on the shift. The procedures that are in place are fair and there needs to be a certain route to follow. All parts of the conflict were taking into consideration. Joe (overall supervisor) gave almost an outside view as he doesn't directly work with Brid and he has experience in dealing with bullying cases in a previous job. Work is a major part of our lives & if you feel uncomfortable going into work, you will be at home dreading it

before you come in. It will affect your work & the people around you. I am happy with the conclusion.

Q. How do you think conflict is resolved in the organisation?

A. It is very clear cut what is and not acceptable here. People are not under any illusions. There is a clear route with all procedures. People know what is expected of them. When you mark someone's card & it happens again, it really is not acceptable. You will always get the detail and find out what happened. You deal with it accordingly.

Q. Do you feel employees are highly regarded here?

A. Yes we do feel highly regarded from the general atmosphere. We could go to a supervisor if we had a problem. Opinions are welcomed here. When I started 7 years ago there has been huge change with everything like the communication, atmosphere and even the machine lines on the floor. Definitely a lot better.

Q. How do you describe the managerial style here?

A. I haven't found anyone in a managerial role here that is not approachable. Any issue I've ever had I can approach management. I would work more closely with Joe. His focus is always on doing better. When praise is needed to be given, it is given. It then keeps you focused. Any issues you have no matter how small the time is given to you. Thought goes into it. People's feelings are taken into account. If someone has an issue on the floor you thank them for coming to you. You then take time to deal with it. If I had an issue with my supervisor I would have no problem with telling him and bringing it to his attention. Feedback is always appreciated here.

Q. What do you think contributes to bullying in the workplace?

Does Organisational Culture Affect the Occurrence of Bullying?
Data Research Interviews

A. Everybody has a different personality but it should not be allowed to impact on another person's work. Personality does come into it a little I would say. But it is not a reason or an excuse. You have to behave in a certain way with co-workers. All you should be is courteous and polite.

Brid's personality was abrupt. We had to make her aware of this. It was totally unacceptable and we Had to stop it so people around her could also see we stopped it. In a place like this where you have so many people, you are always going to have something that raises its head. In any walk of life you will have people who just don't get on. But for the sake of work and maintaining a good environment and good working relationship unacceptable behaviours must be dealt with. I think that's the message the company gets across and they do it very well. We all have to respect each other. If there is something that is going on it must be nipped in the bud. The culture definitely does help keep bullying a very minor issue here & it does come from the very top. I've never seen any manager speak inappropriately to anyone here. Morale is huge and will be down if bullying happens. Then why would you want to give it your all in work if that is the case?

Interviewee C:

Q. What is your understanding of bullying?

Before I read some notes on this I would just thought bullying was very confrontational stuff. I never would have thought continuously withholding information from someone that affects their job would be bullying. Physical examples & intimidation would have been what I thought bullying was. Now on paper I can see how withholding information could be bullying but it depends on how bad it was and if it was done intentionally. I still don't know though if I would call it bullying? It's more like picking on someone and more at the same level to each other. Its more ignorance or bad manners why they do it I think. It is intentional though. Trying to wear someone down.

Q. What is your understanding of culture?

A. It is simply the way we do things around here. I've studied culture before and it has always stuck in my mind in everything I do in the organisation. Here it is a good healthy culture. It can be a tough place to work sometimes, its tough but it is always fair. It is certainly the best place I've worked in & the best culture I've worked in. The company are always trying to improve. But it is done the right way. Continuous improvement is very important to us. We have respect from our Standards of Behaviour but I think our culture is continuously learning and improving. People are not shy about pulling others up here if they are not behaving right. No one is afraid to tell someone they are not happy about the way they spoke to someone. I'd like to think my employees would tell me if they were not happy about something I did or something I said. I would encourage them to tell me anyway. I know it is very hard though to tell your boss if you were unhappy with something they did.

Q. So you think communication is highly regarded here then?

A. Absolutely yes.

Q. Do you think the culture here is strong?

A. Yes there is a healthy culture here, positive. Visitors comment on it & the friendliness of the employees. It is good to get the feedback.

Q. What do you value in your work and in the organisation and what do you think others may value?

A. For me personally it has always been about learning. I try to pass it onto my supervisors also. If things don't work out at least you have tried. You've learned what not to do. I think others value the security we give them. They appreciate the pressure & if they work hard their future is secured. I hear it another company in Waterford, people are constantly criticising the management and the way they run the place. Management giving in to unions is a big problem other companies face but luckily not us. We are doing well and people know the hard work pays off.

Q. Are you aware of an anti-bullying policy in this organisation?

A. Yes, I am aware of it. It is in the handbook. It was shown to me in my bullying case. I think it is a fair policy.

Q. Have you ever experienced bullying in the organisation?

A. There are not very many bullying issues here but I suppose the recent one yes. (Regarding interviewee A). But really the more I think about it, I don't know could you really call it bullying. We never really got to the bottom of it, we just separated the two. It was hard to believe who was telling the truth. It was always hard to see the truth. There was definitely a disagreement and confrontation between the two. I personally found it hard to see who was bullying who there and was it even bullying. Or were they just having a go at each other. Not a personality clash, that is not an acceptable excuse, but there was certainly argy bargy. We could never really see though who was telling the truth but we had our suspicions Josie was being confrontational but I don't know if you could call it bullying? From what I could see Marie was well able to stand up for herself. She was able to give as good as she got.

Both of them were upset & in the HR office we had floods of tears from both of them when we brought them together. It was hard to tell who was more upset and telling the truth. The only option we had was to separate them on opposite shifts. We kept them in the same department though because that way we could keep an eye on Josie in case it happened again. I was aware of her situation and history so we could see if it happened again.

The incidences always happened outside of the work room. It could have been because Marie was friends with the team leads etc and Josie thought they were a click. I don't know really. Josie may have picked Marie out of that group because she was more vulnerable and more accessible. It was like she was going against the group by getting at Marie. In my head I could never come to the conclusion that Josie was bullying Marie. We could only go on what we were told and what we could see. We needed to take everything into account. The company just wouldn't tolerate that sort of behaviour . The organisation would not allow Josie to be as tough as she wanted to be here. That is her personality. There is not a peep out of her now.

I haven't been involved in any other case apart from that and I am here 5 years.

Q. How do you think conflict is resolved in the organisation?

A. A lot of problems get dealt with at low level by the line leads or team leads. They can handle some of the problems on the floor. Sometimes they can be resolved before it becomes a problem. Some things that get escalated to supervisor level are dealt with as fairly as possible. It is certainly much more formal in other places I have worked in. But unfortunately when it gets to senior level it gets formal and it goes by the procedures completely. Employees know how to behave here; they know how to act and not to have a problem here. Deviant employees are dealt with immediately. Supervisors try to deal with it as best they can before it goes to HR.

Q. Do you feel employees are highly regarded here?

A. Small things here make a big difference.

Q. How do you describe the managerial style here?

A Most managers here you can bring an opinion to, but not all of them though. There is one or two I would be very careful with. But most are very open.

Q. What do you think contributes to bullying in the workplace?

A. I find it very interesting that if people are that way inclined (bullying behaviour) outside the organisation – they come into work and try to push the boundaries. If they are left do that and behave in that way then they will. But if the organisation does not accept that behaviour, they won't get away with it. Once they know the boundaries, that's it. They know it is not accepted. In here most people don't want the hassle. They just want to do their job. How do you find out what we don't see though? There may be issues that we might not see. But are we open enough here for people to bring it forward? People appreciate the openness that we do have. I think power & responsibility can also contribute. Perhaps subcultures can cause bullying. People in various departments can have their own behaviours. The engineering department here are famous for that.

Q. Do you think the culture of the organisation helps to sustain the low rate of bullying?

A. I would definitely say yes. I've been here 5 years at different levels and I have never really seen any bullying incidences apart from that one case last year. But I still don't know if I would even call that bullying.

People here know how to behave and it is clear from when you walk in the door.

Interviewee D:

Q. What is your understanding of bullying?

I consider bullying to be unwanted behaviour and certainly repeated over time. But I do think bullying could be a behaviour that is repeated twice.

Q. What is your understanding of culture?

A. Culture includes all the things that make up the organisation. It refers to how people are treated. There are some people who don't treat people with the dignity and respect that they should but they are not doing it with the organisations blessing. It is the organisations responsibility to stamp this out.

There is very much an open culture here. Single status is very important here. For example there are no car spaces saved for directors. First come first served for the best car spaces. The canteen does not have round tables. This encourages clicks. The tables are long, that way people will sit in with others.

There is a friendly culture here. When there are new starters we try to get them a buddy. Blending in is very important here. The continuous improvement programme here also lends itself to the flexible culture here. We don't just make decisions on change; we set up teams from all departments. We value all input. Some of the best ideas have come from those meetings.

Q. Do you think the culture here is strong?

A. Yes, very open and friendly.

Q. So you think communication is highly regarded here then?

A. There is a lot of communication here. There are meetings between departments, director briefings etc. There is an open door policy at all times. The standards are communicated but we must lead by example.

Q. What do you value in your work and in the organisation and what do you think others may value?

A. I think that I am approachable & I value that. People know they can come to me. I value giving people time. I also like developing people here.

I think others here value they are part of a team. Opinions are listened to. Recognition is giving. Rewards may not be monetary but recognition is certainly given. I think people also value the security we give them. Their jobs are secure.

Q. Are you aware of an anti-bullying policy in this organisation?

A. Yes, I go through it personally myself in inductions. This highlights to the new starters into the company how important the organisation takes bullying. We deal with the policy on the first day by HR. It shows how serious we take it. We need to do that. We also have the Standards of Behaviour that are visible around the plant. But that is just telling people what you do. The real way to bring it home is by taking action. The bully and the victim always will have other people waiting to see what happens. It needs to be handled very quickly. That way you are pinning your colours to the mast.

Q. Have you ever experienced bullying in the organisation?

A. I have not ever witnessed bullying here but I have dealt with some cases throughout the years.

Q. How do you think conflict is resolved in the organisation?

A. You must be consistent in conflict. Must be seen to be as fair as possible. It is so important to always tell people what you are doing and why. That is so important. Must be fair to employees, both the bully and the victim. You cannot just believe the victim immediately, must investigate by questioning the bully.

Sometimes it is good to go the informal route first. But you can only judge that when you hear the case. I try to be a facilitator as much as possible. The quicker any incidence is resolved, the

better. But in all cases you have to make a judgement. Everything must be documented, even if informal.

Q. Do you feel employees are highly regarded here?

A. The psychological contract is so important. It makes people feel valued and important. For example when we put the entire 4 cycle shift on Saturdays nights recently, anyone who had queries I met them one by one on an individual basis. I listened to all their concerns.

Q. How do you describe the managerial style here?

A I would say the managerial style here is very much that of a collaborative one. We always take opinions into account. We try to facilitate them as much as possible.

Q. What do you think contributes to bullying in the workplace?

A. I think both the bully and the organisation contribute to bullying. People who bully here stand out like a sore thumb though. That is because it is not accepted here.

If people think they can get away with it they will try. I suppose you could kind of relate it to the church and the abuse. That standard was acceptable and no one questioned it.

I think personality does come into play but an organisation stops it through its culture. I think the culture here very much sustains the low bullying rate.