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BULLYING AND ITS FOUR FUNCTIONS: A STUDY OF YOUNG OFFENDERS IN JUVENILE JUSTICE INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT--*Bullying in secure settings has been identified as an ongoing and serious issue in a range of different countries. This study investigates the prevalence of bullying and victimisation in juvenile justice institutions in Malaysia, where research on this phenomenon has been particularly limited. It further explores the circumstances that underpin bullying behavior in the institutions. The study comprised a survey completed by 289 male and female young people, aged 12 to 21 years old, in 8 juvenile justice institutions, using the scale version of Direct and Indirect Prisoner behaviour Checklist (DIPC-SCALEDr). In addition, interviews were carried out with 16 young people and 8 staff members, comprising both male and female participants. The survey findings showed that 95 per cent of young people reported at least one behaviour indicative of bullying others, and 99 per cent reported experience of being victimized at least once in a month. The DIPC-SCALEDr scored significantly higher on physical, verbal and psychological forms of bullying and victimization. Nonetheless, young people reported higher score on sexual form of victimization. In the interviews, young people identified four circumstances underpinning bullying behaviour in the institutions, including 'protecting oneself from threatening events', 'exerting control over others', 'access to goods' and 'building alliances.' Most bullies hold more positive beliefs about the use of aggression and perceived bullying as a powerful tool which serves survival and protection for them. These findings may have implications for bullying perpetration and victimization prevention in juvenile justice institutions.*

Keywords--*bullying in secure settings, prison bullying, young offenders, aggressive behaviour, juvenile justice institutions.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The evolution in thinking about bullying in secure settings can be attributed to the pioneering work of Professor Ireland. Ireland (2002) has built upon earlier research to present a comprehensive definition of bullying in secure settings. Within secure settings, bullying has been recognised as a reliable subsection of aggression. The types of bullying and victimisation reported by offenders include direct or indirect forms. Direct bullying refers to overt

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aggressive actions that are easily identified as aggression by those either observing or hearing the behaviour, including physical and verbal attacks, sexual assault, psychological abuse, and theft-related aggression (Ireland, 2005). Indirect bullying is a covert aggressive behaviour, employed as a means to harm others through, for example exclusionary, defamatory and divisive behaviours such as gossiping, ostracising and spreading rumours (Ireland, 2005).In secure settings, both direct and indirect forms of bullying are prevalent, and impact negatively on both bullies and victims. This highlights the importance of taking both forms into account in defining and interpreting bullying in secure settings.

Much of the recent research reveals that the prevalence of bullying in secure settings is high, with over half of inmates involved in bullying either as bullies or as victims with significantly deleterious effects (Ireland & Power, 2013; Sekol, 2016; Ireland, Ireland & Power, 2016). In Malaysia, many of the institutionalized young people suffer from depression and maladaptive aggressive behaviour resulted from their institutional experiences (SUHAKAM, 2009; Mariamdaran & Ishak, 2012). More than half of young people in the institutions identified as highly aggressive, and it has been reported that physical, verbal and psychological forms of aggression were more prevalent (Hassan & Ahmad, 2015; Kamaluddin, Othman, Ismail & Mat Saat, 2016). Young people also showed serious symptoms of rule-breaking and aggressive behaviours during confinement (Badayai, Khairudin, Sulaiman & Ismail, 2016; Nasir, Zamani, Yusooff & Khairudin, 2010). Indeed, they also suffer from psychiatric disorders (Aida et al., 2014).

Involvement in bullying and victimisation increases risks of unhealthy behaviours and poor psychological health problems. Evidences suggest that the continuation of aggressive behaviour in secure settings appears to have an effect on later offending, and this has led to the failure of correctional facilities in reducing reoffending (Mulvey & Schubert, 2012; Lambie & Randell, 2013).Worst case scenarios are where bullying may lead to self-harm and suicidal ideation. Suicide rates among prisoners are five to eight times higher than in the general population (Fazel, Benning, & Danesh, 2005) and half of all suicides take place within one month of entering secure settings (Liebling & Crewe, 2012). In Malaysia, 1,535 deaths within 5 years (from 2003-2008) in secure settings (SUHAKAM, 2009). Indeed, both bullying perpetration and victimization associated positively non-suicidal self-harm and suicidal ideation (Wright, 2016).

The occurrence of bullying behaviour among young people placed in secure settings is very much a product of the interaction between the institutional environment and the young people themselves. On the basis of previous research on bullying in secure settings, Ireland (2012) proposed the Multi Factor Model of Bullying in Secure Settings (MMBSS)to describe the key interaction between a specific nature of the institutional environment and individual characteristics of offenders. The model argues that bullying in secure settings is driven by the institutional environment through two main pathways. The first pathway is about the interaction between institutional environment and individual characteristics. This suggests that institutional environment which reinforces individual characteristics prone to bullying. Penologists have long recognized the potential of the institutional environment to influence offenders' behaviour. Systematic explanations of institutional environment

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are most closely associated with the work of Sykes's model of deprivation. For Sykes (1958), the most significant pains are associated with deprivations such as the loss of physical liberty and the withdrawal of freedom, including the withholding of goods and services, the lack of heterosexual relationships, and the isolation from free community. These painful conditions generate enormous pressures which cannot be contained, and thus can increase the likelihood of misconduct behaviors, including aggression and bullying behavior. In relation to the loss of liberty and freedom, some scholars argued that aggression is more likely to occur in a higher security facility. Offenders housed in higher security institutions are assumed to have a higher propensity to engage in aggression or bullying during incarceration (Wener, 2012; Morin, 2013). The more their movement is restricted the more they perceive deprivation and the more they become violent. Prison systems sometimes house prisoners in long-term isolation for what seem to be punitive, and not only protective and managerial, purposes. By keeping prisoners away from most or all contact with other prisoners, it stimulates sensory deprivation and a restricted environment that leads to negative psychological reactions (Wener, 2012).

The justice systems may have felt that the rapid increase in institutional populations required more aggressive approaches to managing prisoners. Officers at more crowded prisons are most stressed and fearful of prisoners (Martin, Lichtenstein, Jenkot & Forde, 2012; Maculan, Ronco & Vianello, 2013). For this reason, they tend to use coercive methods by leaving prisoners locked in cells or dorms for longer. Scholars have argued that the physical state of secure settings influences the way staff and offenders interact, which in turn affects offenders' behaviour (Sekol, 2016; Ireland et al., 2016). Offenders in fact may have become more aggressive and difficult to manage (Morin, 2013). Institutional staff cultures vary considerably, and these variations have significant consequences for the quality of life of prisoners. These cultures should be understood in relation to the constitution of staff power. The sphere of power may involve coercive or authoritarian (hard power), and it may also operate more lightly (Crewe, 2011).Presumably 'soft power' encourages closer relationships between prisoners and staff, and the good relationships available to make prisoners comply (Crewe, 2011; Drake, 2008). Nonetheless, greater use of coercive controls in states with more punitive orientation does not promote lower levels of aggressive behavior (Wooldredge & Steiner, 2015; Damboeanu & Nieuwbeerta, 2016; Klatt,Hagl,Bergmann& Baier, 2016). Where organizational culture is hierarchical, authoritarian and disciplinarian in nature, negative staff-prisoner relationships can result.

Another pathway proposed by Ireland (2012) is 'desensitization' pathway. This pathway assumes that the institutional environment where bullying occurs so frequently that it is normalized and where the perceived threat of bullying is high contributes to desentization to bullying. Such desentization may promote beliefs and attitudes which are likely to encourage bullying. Officers and staff members may also contribute to desentization to bullying in secure settings. Studies reveal that the increased risk of prison bullying can be understood in relation to officers' and staffs' attitudes which are supportive of bullying (Ireland et al., 2016; Sekol, 2016). Ireland et al. (2016) argued that the attitude of admiring bullies and negatively appraising victims increases the occurrence of bullying in secure settings. Officers and staff members believed that bullying is a normal aspect of individual interactions in the institution. Bullying is tolerated in the institution and staff members often ignored to help victims of bullying. Sekol

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(2013) revealed that staff often ignore problems amongst young people in residential care, and they generally burn out and use violence as a means of punishing and controlling young people. As a consequence, young people do not have much respect for staff and often perceive their authority as lacking legitimacy. When individuals do not perceive the authority being exercised as legitimate, they are unlikely to follow the rules that stem from that authority (Meade & Steiner, 2013).

Findings from these studies highlight the importance of developing a healthy social environment in secure settings by promoting positive staff cultures, improving staff-inmate relationships and enhancing staff attitudes towards controlling bullying perpetration an victimization.Scholars have argued that variations in staff cultures are affected by organizations that control their day-to-day work routines and the difficulties in conforming to organizational rules leads to negative work culture (Crewe, 2009). Staff that feel least positive about their own working lives were more negative in their views of inmates (Crewe, Liebling & Hulley, 2015). In effect, they were less likely to deliver meaningful support and services to inmates. The less supportive staff are, the greater the adjustment difficulties among the inmate population (Pinchover & Attar-Schwartz, 2014). Therefore, it is crucial to provide staff with support, education and training to increase staff efficiency at residential care (Kendrick, 2011). Supportive staff may contribute to positive perceptions of the institutional environment and the promise of a better quality of life (Day, Brauer & Butler, 2015; Kuo, Cuvelier & Huang, 2014). However, what appears to be a somewhat positive staff ethos might lead to some negative prisoner outcomes and vice versa. Favourable attitudes towards inmates by showing excessive trust and avoiding using authority might, for example, lead to some negative behavioral outcomes. In contrast, strict institutional administration systems may be expected to cause a decline in misconduct due to a pervasive deterrent message (Bierie, 2011).

Bullying and victimisation in secure settings is a very complex problem that requires innovative solutions. To provide solutions, further understanding about causal factors behind this phenomenon is needed. This mixed method study primarily seeks to contribute to and extend current understandings of bullying and victimisation in secure settings. It seeks to investigate the prevalence of bullying perpetration and victimization and to explore the circumstances that underpin bullying perpetration among young people in juvenile justice institutions in Malaysia.

II. METHOD & MEASUREMENT

Sample

The study conducted mixed methods approaches, began with a survey and followed up by in-depth interviews. The survey study involved male and female young people aged between 12 to 21 from eight juvenile justice institutions in Malaysia. Of 8 institutions included in the sample, 5 were male institutions and 3 were female institutions. In the survey, data from 294 young people were obtained; nonetheless, due to the incomplete self-reports, only 289 young people involved in the analysis with a 98.6 per cent response rate. Thus, the final sample comprised 182 males (63.0%) and 106 females (36.7%) with an average of 15.6 years old. The majority of young people (87.9%) were serving their first institutional sentence and the rest (12.1%) were sentenced more than once.

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Most of them (67.5%) have been sentenced more than a year and 32.5% less than that. Their convictions ranged from property crimes (35.4%), drug-related activities (18.3%) to status offences (53.5%).

In depth interviews were carried out in 2 juvenile institutions after the completion of the survey study. Using a purposive sampling technique, 16 young people who had participated in the survey study (at the first phase) were interviewed. Of these, 8 were females (obtained from a female institution) and 8 were males (obtained from a male institution). Included in in-depth interviews were 8 staff members aged between 28 and 47. Of these, 4 were males and 4 were females. Also, 2 staff members completed higher school, 3 were diploma holders, and 3 more were degree holders. Their position in the current institution was, or can be, related to their educational levels. Included in these interviews were 2 institutional guards, 3 social workers, a psychologist, a teacher and an administrator. They had been working in the current institution between 3 years and 12 years. Overall, they were diverse in background information.

Measures

The Direct and Indirect Prisoner Behaviour Checklist – Scaled Version Revised (DIPC-SCALEDr, © Ireland, 2007) was used to examine individuals' tendencies to engage in behaviour indicative of bullying and/or being bullied. The DIPC-SCALEDr contains 126 items describing both direct and indirect experienced events and actions and is separated into two sections: self-report victimisation (68 items) and self-report bullying (58 items). All items are classified into six subscales that have proven to be reliable for both bullying and victimisation: physical, verbal, sexual, psychological, theft-related and indirect. Each subscale consists of between 2 and 33 items for each self-report, and each item is addressed by indicating either 'never', 'rarely', 'sometimes', 'often' or 'always'. Participants were asked to identify frequency of actions and events that have occurred in the past month. Interestingly, the DIPC-SCALEDr can be used to put participants into five categories: pure bullies, pure victims, bully-victims, non-involved and casual-involvement. The DIPC-SCALEDr has strong consistency in measuring bullying and victimisation with overall consistency .97 for self-report bullying and .95 (see Ireland & Ireland, 2008). Similar to this, the pilot study also reported strong consistency with Cronbach's alpha .96 for both bullying and victimisation self-reports.

Procedure

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the University Ethics Committee (UEC), University of Strathclyde, Scotland. Also, the permission to conduct the study in 8 juvenile justice institutions was supported by the Malaysian Economic Planning Unit and approved by the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia. For the survey study, all 8 institutions were approached in different manners at particular periods of time. All young people in each institution available at the time of the study invited to participate. A script containing detailed consent statement information was verbally explained to young people. The questionnaires were then distributed and completed in groups of 5 to 10 young people in a communal area of the institutions. For interviews, 2 institutions were also approached separately. All young people and staff members were interviewed individually. During the

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interview session, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions. The interviews were audio recorded, with participant consent. The anonymity and the voluntary nature of the participation were guaranteed.

III. RESULTS

Prevalence of bullying perpetration and victimisation in juvenile justice institutions

With regard to bullying perpetration, 95 per cent reported at least one behaviour indicative of bullying others in the past month. As with this, about 93 per cent reported at least one behaviour indicative of bullying others directly and 87 per cent reported at least one behaviour indicative bullying others indirectly. Overall, 15 participants (5.2%) reported 'never' to behaviour indicative bullying others. 'Verbal', 'Psychological' & 'Physical' forms of bullying behaviour were more prevalent than other forms with Mean between .70 and .93 (see Table 1). With regard to victimization, almost all (98.9%) participants reported one incidence of being bullied during the one month period. Of these, about 98 per cent reported one incidence of being bullied directly, and 99 per cent reported experiencing at least one behaviour indicative of being bullied indirectly. Overall, less than one per cent responded 'never' to behaviour indicative of being bullied.

Table 1: Descriptive statistic of bullying perpetration and victimisation

	Bullying (n=289)		*Victimisation (n=289)*	
Forms	*M*	*Never (%)*	*M*	*Never (%)*
Physical	0.70	20.4	0.97	8.3
Verbal	0.93	11.5	1.15	9.0
Sexual	0.68	65.7	1.18	53.5
Theft-related	0.51	23.2	0.74	5.9
Psychological	0.90	36.3	1.12	47.3
Indirect	0.65	13.1	1.09	3.5

For the 'Physical' form of bullying, almost 80 per cent participants (79.6%) reported physical bullying in the past month and the rest never committed such behaviour. Similar to this, almost 80 per cent participant (76.8%) reported engaging in 'Theft-related' form of bullying behaviour. Turning to 'Verbal' and 'Indirect' forms, more than 85 per cent participants involved in such forms of bullying and less than 20 per cent never reported such behaviour. Meanwhile, less than 35 per cent young people reported 'Sexual' bullying. For 'Physical' and 'Verbal' forms of victimisation, slightly more than 90 per cent participants reported being bullied physically and verbally in the past month. Similar to this, more than 90 per cent participants reported 'Indirect' and 'Theft-related' forms victimisation. Turning to the 'Psychological' form, about half of participants (53%) reported such victimisation. Meanwhile, less than half of participants (46.4%) reported being bullied sexually. Overall, every young person

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experienced more than one forms of bullying perpetration and victimisation at least once during the one month period.

Table 2: Individual predictors of bullying

		n = 289	
Predictors	*d*	*SE*	*p*
Time spent in the institution	0.193	0.042	0.002
Visitation	-0.087	0.041	0.036
Contact	-0.171	0.060	0.000
The experience of punishment	0.154	0.059	0.001
Gang membership	0.245	0.061	0.020
Drug use	0.128	0.059	0.040
Smoking	0.180	0.068	0.001

Table 2 shows individual predictors that are expected to influence bullying behaviour. Out of 10, only eight characteristics and experiences significantly predicted bullying behaviour. With the exception of 'visitation', the influences of predictors on bullying are slightly moderate. The 'gang membership' factor shows the highest influence among other predictors with Somer's d =.245. This indicates that there is a corresponding increase of 24.5 per cent in bullying behaviour to those affiliated with gang in the institution. Turning to 'self-harm', this predictor reported influence of Somer's d =-.205. The value indicates that there is a corresponding decrease of 20.5 per cent in bullying behaviour for young people who experienced self-harm. 'Time spent in the institution' reported significant influence on bullying behaviour with Somer's d =.193 and highly significant (p <.01). The value indicates that there is a corresponding increase of 19.3 per cent in bullying behaviour by increasing amount of time spent in the institution. The situation for 'visitation' is different. Although it reported a weak association, it shows a significant negative influence on bullying behaviour (Somer's d = -.087). This indicates that for every frequency of increased visitation, there is a corresponding decrease of 8.7 per cent in bullying behaviour. Similarly, there is also a negative influence on bullying behaviour for 'contact' predictors. For contact, the degree of influence is Somer's d =-.171 and highly significant (p <.01). This value indicates that the tendency to bully others by 17.1 per cent is due to never having contact. With regard to 'punishment', there is significant influence on bullying with Somer's d = .154. It explains that there is a corresponding increase of 15.4 per cent in bullying for those who experienced punishment inside the institution. Turning to the 'experience of drug use', there is also significant influence on bullying with Somer's d = .128. It reveals that young people who used drugs before incarceration are predicting increase of 12.8 per cent in bullying behaviour. Similar to this, 'smoking' reported influence of Somer's d = .180. This means that there is predicted increase of 18 per cent in bullying behaviour for young people who are smokers.

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Bullying and its four functions

Survey findings support that bullying and victimisation are enduring and perennial problems in juvenile justice institutions. Regardless of the forms of bullying, young people in secure settings hold specific beliefs about the use of aggression. Obviously, young people who reported higher levels of involvement in bullying behaviour hold more positive beliefs about the use of aggression in secure settings as compared to non-bullies.In the interviews, young people identified circumstances that underpin bullying behavior in the institutions. For young people, bullying seems to serve at least four functions, including 'protecting from threatening events' (PROTECT), 'exerting control over others' (CONTROL), 'access to needs' (NEED) and 'building alliances' (ALLY). These functions were believed to make their life more secure and endurable in secure settings. These findings also supported by staff members.

Of 24 participants, including both young people and staff members, 83 per cent agreed that bullying behaviour is a form of rightful retaliation: that is, it protects their sense of self-integrity in response to threats. For the most part, 'threat' is understood as occurring when an experience is perceived as degrading or in other words disrespectful. As shown in the Table 4, Gina (18, female, pure-bully) described 'fight' as a circumstance where she felt disrespected. Perceptions of 'disrespect' seemed to be very challenging for some young people. In this context, respect seemed to be equated with performed deference and disrespect referred by most bullies in terms of one's experience of being treated in impolite ways by other young people or in a way that is not in one's favour. This seemed to result in emotional insecurity and feelings of disempowerment. To confront these feelings, therefore, some young people generally attempted to display their superiority by bullying others. In this regard, most bullies reported to utilize verbal and physical attacks as their first choice.

Table 3: Example of interview quotes demonstrating four functions of bullying

Functions	Quotes
PR0TECT	'Honestly, I'm afraid of these kids but when someone starts to fight with me, I've got to fight back. I don't want to be a puppet. (…) One more thing, I will go mad if someone reports on me or whatever I'm doing to the staff. I will find them no matter what. I will ask her, until she admits it. I'm not stupid. I slapped her face. I tapped on her head.' (*Gina, 18, female, pure-bully*)
CONTROL	'I have to follow whatever they ask. These kids want me to respect them. For them, respect is about doing whatever they ask you to do. It's like their rules. Sometimes, they ask me to clean their clothes or bed or wash their dishes. I don't want to do it. It isn't my job. I'm not fighting against them. I just don't want to do it. (…) They also did it to others, especially new comers. If we don't want to do what they want, they will do whatever they want to us.' (*Noah, 18, male, pure-victim*)

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NEED	'I take (things) whenever I want. I don't take it if I don't want it. I'm not like them. Whenever they want to use, they use it. But, whenever they don't want to use it, they keep it in the locker for ages. Such a stupid idea. Since they don't use it, it's better give it to me. That's why I take it.' (…) Sex? Mmm… people do it when people want it. Right? These 'jambu' (sexual victims) they like it too. Tell me who doesn't like it.' (*Dani, 16, male, pure-bully*)
ALLY	'They (bullies) bully these newcomers. They ask them to do this and that. After a month, they become friends. It always happens. (…) Maybe because these kids (victims) always do whatever bullies ask. Bullies must be happy to be treated like that. Then, they become friends. (…) They (bullies) sometimes gossip about others. Sometimes isolate each other. Because, they don't want their friends making new friends.' (Sami, 36, male, staff member).

In the interviews, majority of young people and staff members (79.2 %) also agreed that bullying serves as a disciplinary technique. Bullying, as perceived by some participants, was use instrumentally to purposely exert control over others, as to the acceptable mode of behaviour in the institution.As explained in the Table 5, Noah (18, male, pure victim) agreed that the risk of being bullied seemed to increase in accordance with the non-conformist attitudes of young people especially. Newcomers, initially at least, appeared to be less likely to integrate into not only an institutional system, but also the informal social culture. All pure bullies and some bully-victims seemed to agree that conforming to the rules in secure settings is very important. In order to enforce the rules, all pure-bullies and bully-victims reported that they often use verbal and psychological forms of bullying. Coercive physical violence was also used against young people to enforce compliance, but this option was exercised, for the most part, as a last resort for most bullies.

Some young people and staff members (75.0%) reported that bullying behaviour functions to fulfil needs and desires related to the acquisition or retention of material goods. In the institution, access to material goods is very limited. Driven by a lack of self-control or impulsivity, some bullies reported that they became involved in theft in order to avoid scarcity of goods. As explained in the Table 5, Dani *(16, male, pure-bully)*seemed to assert their moral right to take someone else's property for personal use. The concept of 'sharing' in the institution, and the justification that 'I steal from the rich' seemed to serve to intensify the theft-related behaviour by neutralizing the feelings of guilt. In relation to the needs, also, some young people agreed that bullying behavior serves to fulfill sexual needs. For some young people, same-sex activities were always tolerated and therefore prevalent in the institution.

Paradoxically, some young people and staff members (79.2%) reported that bullying may actually serve as the first step towards friendship or alliance. As explained in the Table 5, Sami (36, male, staff member) suggested that some bullies become friends, or at least become friendly acquaintances, with those they victimized. It is because,

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when bullies ask for a favor (or force) and victims agree to do (or be forced), this open up a door for further communication between them. Eventually, they would have opportunities to 'break the ice' and find something in common. Also, similar to Sami, some participants also agreed that bullying serve to secure friendship. In particular, an individual may secure their friendship by gossiping and spreading rumors about others. By this, it prevents their friends from making new friends in the future.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The extent of bullying and victimization in secure settings can be understood in relation to young people's perception of bullying behaviour. Some young people seemed to maintain at least minimal commitments to the bullying norm in the institutions. Commitments to bullying are maintained when some young people hold more positive beliefs about the use of aggression. To survive in the institution, some young people were interested in achieving two important things: power and resources. Power, in this context, means experiencing respect from other young people. Respect served to generate kudos among young people and it involves not being treated with contempt, being influential and being listened to. 'Being respected' affords self-protection and recognition (Darwall, 1977) and these can help to ameliorate feeling of insecurity and frustration in the secure setting (Crewe, 2009). In the institutions, some young people seemed to gain respect by generating fear in others. For them, young people who are feared are more respected (see Sykes, 1958; Irwin, 2005). To be feared, and thus respected, some young people bullied others. Additionally, some young people were also interested in achieving resources in the institutions. Resources here mean fundamental needs (i.e. material goods, friends, intimate relationships). Like power, fundamental needs are important for young people's survival. However, needs available to young people are likely to be limited in the institution and thus desirable. To get what they want, some young people engaged in different forms of bullying behavior.

In institutions, bullying was actually perceived as a prime means through which to achieve access to not only resources but also power (Wood, Alleyne, Mozova & James, 2014). Pure bullies as well as bully-victims, nonetheless, tended to justify their acts of bullying for the purpose of self-protection, discipline building, building alliances and access to fundamental needs. Using such excuses, bullying behaviours were seen as – at least – acceptable (if not 'right') by the young people who engaged in bullying but not by the legal system or non-bullying young people. Sykes & Matza (1957) argued that some young people use excuses and justifications to rationalize deviant behaviour and make deviant behaviour possible under circumstances of desperation. This enables the persistence of such behaviours by freeing young people from the moral force of the law and the guilt of participation in misbehaviors (Sykes & Matza, 1957). These circumstances, in particular, relieve pure-bullies as well as bully-victims of the responsibility of their actions by claiming bullying actions are accidental or due to forces beyond their control, for example, some bullies engaged in theft-related bullying for the purpose of meeting needs. Scholars argue that the denial of responsibility is the key technique that validates one's acts of deviance, or at least makes them more palatable to live with (Sykes & Matza, 1957; Bandura, 1990; Cohen, 2001). Indeed, the

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validation of action is most likely to be associated with persistent bullying or other misconduct behaviour in secure settings.

In institutions, 'the world of the delinquent is the world of the law-abiding turned upside down and its norms constitute a countervailing force directed against the conforming social order' (Sykes & Matza, 1957, p. 664). In this study, bullying seemed to be accepted by most young people and some staff members as to make young people's life more secure and endurable in institutions. Although bullying seemed to be perceived as harmful, most bullies accept the function of bullying as a viable solution to the poor living conditions in the institution. Therefore, most bullies seemed to agree that bullying is part of institutional life i.e. that it is viewed as cultural norm rather than sub-cultural phenomenon. Bullying reflects habits acquired by young people as members of an institutional society (Allison & Ireland, 2010), through which these members perceive bullying behaviour as normative. Although some young people imported bullying or aggressive traits into the institution, most bullies seemed to agree that their involvement in bullying were more likely to be shaped by the culture within the instituton. Thus, some young people alter their behaviour, values and aims within the institutionto conform to this normality which is widely understood as a process of adaptation. As a culture, the ideas of continuity, creation, accumulation and transmission are key.

The normalization of bullying can be related, first, to the desensitization effects (see Ireland, 2012). In this study, most of young people reported involvement in bullying either as bullies, victims or bully-victims. It is reported that every young person committed or experienced 'Verbal' or 'Indirect' forms of bullying at least once during the period of one month.It is seemed that an institutional environment where bullying occurs so frequently that it is normalized, and where the perceived threat of aggression is high, contributes towards a desensitization to bullying. Such an effect then exaggerates some young people's stable dynamic individual characteristics, promoting beliefs and attitudes which are likely to encourage aggression (Sekol, 2016). To support this, Ireland (2012) in her comprehensive model of prison bullying, Multifactoral Model of Bullying in Secure Settings (MMBSS), argued that bullying is likely to be reinforced by the social environment that is encouraging of bullying or aggression. This is called a 'desensitization pathway'. In the context of this study, desensitization to bullying is a reduction in emotion-related physiological reactivity to actual bullying (Carnagey, Anderson & Bushman, 2007). When aggression or bullying stimuli are repeatedly presented in a positive emotional context (for example, rewards for bullying actions, excitement in gang-membership), distressing reactions are reduced. Once desensitization has occurred, desensitized young people might be less likely to notice aggressive events, perceive fewer or less severe injuries, and have less negative attitudes towards bullying. For these reasons, any occurring bullying is likely to be accepted by especially pure-bullies and bully-victims.

Secondly, the normalization of bullying in the institution can be related to the adaptive nature of bullying. Bullying is adaptive toward problems faced in the environment that influence individuals to simply behave in a way that, as some young people perceived, would improve their living conditions (Volk, Camilleri, Dane & Marini, 2012). As perceived by bullies, there are four functions of bullying directly related to their survival and success in

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the institution: self-protection, exerting control, access to fundamental needs and building alliances. These outcomes could be the result of bullying itself. In other words, the potential adaptive function of bullying at the individual level is increasing opportunities for these four purposes. Therefore, bullying is not homogenous and different forms of bullying are likely to to arise in response to different selection purposes or pressures. Also, bullying done by pure-bullies may differ in important ways from bullying done by bully-victims. Bullying done by bully-victims has more of a reactive function and may be the product of dysregulation and therefore may be less objectively adaptive than the bullying performed by pure-bullies (Volk et al., 2012). Indeed, the adaptiveness of bullying normalized bullying behaviour in the institution. Overall, the extent of bullying and victimisation in secure settings can be understood in relation to the normalization of bullying.Some staff members, too, perceived bullying among young people as normal in the institutions. In this study, some staff members perceived that one of the essential aspects of institutional bullying is that it is transmitted from generation to generation, meaning the form of traditional behaviour which has been developed by incarcerated persons is successively learned by each generation. Interactional norms between young people are passed down and imbued with symbolic meaning, or special significance; bullying, in this sense, represents the transmission of cultural, interpersonal norms. Yet the reality about the attitude of staff members towards bullying can be understood in relation to the collusion amongst staff members around the use of aggression in the institution. In this study, some staff members reported the difficulties in controlling young people in the institutions, and thus some staff members seemed to cede authority to longer-serving offenders, in order that the latter might manage other offenders. This seemed to allow particular young people to act aggressively towards others at anytime and anywhere in the institution and justifying their aggressive actions as morally corrects – to manage other offenders. In fact, as reported by young people, some staff members used physical coercion or verbal humiliation as formal disciplinary procedures or as a mechanism of social control in institutions. The use of unofficial coercion was common and seemed to scare and intimidate young people. Nonetheless, staff members seemed to rationalize such coercions as an everyday operating procedure and legitimize its use. This culture actually ‘tuned up’ bullying culture among young people in the institution. In this regard, some staff members seemed to accept aggressive culture and even collude with some young people to induce aggression. Indeed, staff cultures have significant consequences for the quality of life of young people (Liebling, 2007). In the secure setting, therefore, bullying has been such a perennial problem, and both young people and staff members play a role in the extent of such problems. Indeed, they are part of the same system, and each group relies on the other to continue the occurrence of bullying and victimisation (Edgar, 2005).

In secure settings, young people reported benefits from being aggressive and considered bullying as the purpose for ‘protecting from threatening events’, ‘exerting control over others’, ‘access to goods’ and ‘building alliances’. For these reasons, it would seem that bullying was seen as normative behaviour by especially pure-bullies and bully-victims in juvenile justice institutions. For their survival, pure-bullies and bully-victims tended to use different forms of bullying for differents purposes. Interestingly, the findings of this study are supported and advanced the Multifactoral Model of Bullying in Secure Settings (MMBSS; Ireland, 2012). In line with MMBSS,

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this study supported that any occurrence of bullying is likely to be reinforced by the social environment that is accepting of aggression. This is called 'desensitization pathway'. To be specific, this study discovered that bullying occurs so frequently in juvenile justice institutions and is normalized by both pure-bullies and bully-victims. Some staff members also showed beliefs and attitudes which were likely to collude and accept aggression in institutions. This contributes to desentization to aggression and bullying amongst young people.

The study has implications for future practices in juvenile justice institutions. This study identified, in Malaysian welfare run institutions, efforts to address bullying and victimisation concentrating principally on controlling and preventing the occurrence of bullying and victimisation. This research suggests that this phenomenon does not occur in isolation and both the cause and the required responses are multi-faceted and intertwined. As explained previously, bullying behaviour was maintained when young offenders rationalized such behaviours and when key conditions increase individuals' vulnerability to being bullied. To address these, therefore, educating young people could be the best solution. It can be done by educating them about the nature of bullying and victimisation, its effects as well as how to handle bullying situations. Young offenders might be ignorant about what constitutes bullying. Education of this nature, in particular, can raise young offenders' awareness of the wrong of their actions and thus decrease the likelihood to engage in bullying.

However, there is one condition in the institutions that actually plays a big role in increasing the risk of bullying and victimisation. That is, overcrowding. Studies suggest that prison size influences behaviour inside prison, and they argued that violent and disruptive behaviour were produced by overcrowding (Martin et al., 2012; Bierie, 2011). It may be that the overcrowding shapes the condition of causal factors and thus increases the likelihood of disruptive behaviour. Recently many countries have been condemned by the European Court of Human Rights for inhuman and degrading treatment because of the conditions of detention imposed on an institution in an overcrowded condition (Maculan et al., 2013). As explained previously, inhuman and degrading treatment leads to young people' participation in bullying. To minimize the prevalence of bullying and victimisation, therefore, it is a priority to prevent overcrowding in secure settings. This could be achieved by diverting status offenders and non-serious offenders away from the juvenile justice system, reducing the effective lengths of institutional sentences, and providing more correctional facilities. To foster these, it requires the interventions of the government, the juvenile justice system, the Court for children and those who have influence in maintaining order for children and young people.

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