The Way to Help Chinese Bullied Children?
The Study of Kiva Anti-bully Program in China from Cross-Country Comparisons

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Abstract. In recent year, school bullying has been one of the most concerning issues in school management and has severe impact on the mental health of students, but Chinese schools do not have a systematic project regarding to it. Kiva as one of the most successful bullying intervention project in western courtiers can be enlightening to Chinese schools, so this study aims to advanced our understanding about cultural conflict from cross-country perspective when it comes to carry out KiVa in China to deal with school bullying. The methodology used in this study is literature review written by both western and Chinese scholars. Result is including the main process of KiVa in Finland; cross-country comparisons of Individual and national-wide characteristics; cross-country comparisons of Western and Chinese parents' perception of school bullying. It is analyzed and concluded that KiVa may encounter challenges in China, because of collectivism of both Chinese students and teachers, power distance between Chinese students and teachers, and also the expectation and attitude of Chinese parents.

Keywords: school bullying · KiVa in Finland · cross-country comparison · cultural difference

1 Introduction

As one of the most widespread types of violence in school, bullying has been recognized as a worldwide public health problem. In Jan 2019, UNESCO issued a report named "School Violence and Bullying: Global Status and Trends, Drivers and Consequences" which mentioned that over one third of the teenagers have suffered from school bullying [1]. One of the survey conducted by a group of Chinese professors shown that in 2019–2022, 32.4% students from elementary to senior high school were bullied by others for at least one time [2]. It can be concluded that people should attach great importance to school bullying home and abroad, but school bullying prevention is to some extend neglected in China due to the fact that people misunderstood bullying concept in the past [3].

Ever since 1970, oversea scholars have been managing to solve this issue and implementing quite a few programs and projects, like Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in Norway [4]. Sheffield Anti-Bully Program in Britain [5] and Sevilla Anti-Violencia

Escolar [6] among which KiVa (Kiusaamista Vastaan) is considered to be one of the most effective way for anti-bullying in school. KiVa aims to decrease bystanders 'reinforcement of bullying and increases bystanders' support of victims [7] through 10 monthly two part 45-mintues teach-led lessons with the ultimate goal of reducing bullying and victimization, which not only succeeds in reducing school bullying but also releasing anxiety and depression. [8] Although China is behind western countries in term of school bullying prevention, many experts and professors take the chance to learn from KiVa and try to modify its process to make it more suitable for Chinese schools 'climate. However, when learning lessons from the west, we should pay attention to the cultural differences between China and the western countries.

By means of reading studies, it is discovered that there are studies talking about how to adopt KiVa to China regarding to the national policies and legislations, but a few of them discuss it from the cross-cultural perspective. To address this question and fill in the research gap, this current study aims to advanced our understanding about cultural conflict from cross-country perspective when it comes to carry out KiVa in China to deal with school bullying. More Specifically, this study will analyze:

a) the main process of KiVa in Finland
b) cross-country comparisons of individual and national-wide characteristics,
c) cross-country comparisons of Western and Chinese parents' perception of school bullying

2   Method

Literature Research Method
The methodology used in this study was adopted from Isil Karatuna, which consisted of the following steps: (1) identify the research questions, (2) search for relevant studies, (3) select appropriate studies, (4) collate, summarize and report results [9].

The study was designed to answer the following questions: 1) what is KiVa? 2) how does cross-cultural difference affect implementing KiVa in China? 3) Will Kiva be successful in China? Studies were searched in two databases: Pubmed and CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure). A variety key words were used to search appropriated studies, which were "school bullying"; "school bullying intervention"; "KiVa"" kiVa in China"; "school bullying in different cultures" and "cultural difference". Extensive terms were intentionally used at this study to capture a greater number of studies and avoid some of them being disregarded. Due to the fact this study planned to fill in the gap, the studies of cross-culture school bullying were not directly located in both databases. The reference studies were extended to school climate and bullying victimization from parents and cross-country comparisons as well as other kinds of bullying, like work place bullying in different cultures. In summary, after reading a certain number of western and Chinese studies, it is generally agreed that cultural differences exist and will have the influence on the two parties. The goal of reading these studies was to extract the essence of cultural conflict and diversity, and the characteristics of people from the west and the east. Both Chinese and Western written studies were included since the aim of this study was cultural comparison.

3 Result

3.1 Bullying Definition and Victimization

The definition of bullying provided by Olweus was focused on intentionally negative or aggressive acts which are repeated for more than one time. It was also further indicated that in bullying there is a certain level of power or strength imbalance. The victim has difficulties in defending himself or herself during the bullying. Power imbalance favoring the perpetrator is quite important and also associated with the general issue of who is to define when bullying has occurred or occurs. The perceived imbalance is likely to be linked with some objective factors, like physical strength, difference in number in one culture, self-confidence, popularity in the class room [10].

3.2 The Key Process of Kiva in Schools

To begin with this study, it is significant to understand how KiVa implemented in Finnish school. Part one, develop courses for students to prevent school bullying. The purpose of these courses is to guide them know more about bullying and its harm, educate bystanders to understand and support victims of bullying. One of the characteristic of KiVa is to arouse the empathy of bystanders so that they are more likely to stop and intervene when they see school bullying [11]. Part two, set up emergency response mechanism. In each school implementing this program, a team of three teachers or other school personnel along with the classroom teacher, addressing each case of bullying that comes to their attention. Here is the chart indicating the whole process of KiVa [12]. The first step is to identify whether this is bullying case. Second, individual discussions are organized with the victims to give them comfort and security that school is on their side and would manage to end bullying for good. Third, individually discuss the bullying case with each perpetrator in case they make up story or excuse for the incident. Forth, the school team meets with the perpetrators as a group to further confirm the agreements are made individually. Fifth, there is a follow-up meeting with the victims to ascertain that bullying has stopped. An Improvement in the situation is requirement for the sixth phase, in which again a meeting is held with the perpetrators or victims as a group to make sure that bullying has stopped permanently. From this whole process, it is easily spotted that the most vital step is to arouse students' responsibility to intervene bullying and empathy for victims as well as report a school bullying case in the first place, after that, the following steps can be taken place (Fig. 1).

3.3 Cross-Country Comparisons of Individual and National-Wide Characteristics

Explanations for cross-nation differences can be sought in a number of areas. A model coming from the EU Kids online project suggested five country factors of importance, the first of which is cultural values [13]. It has been one area of considerable research. Hofstede [14] developed a theory of cultural values as a mean of explaining many behavioral differences found in western countries and China. In the latest version, including power and distance (PDI), individualism and collectivism (IDV). PDI is defined as the
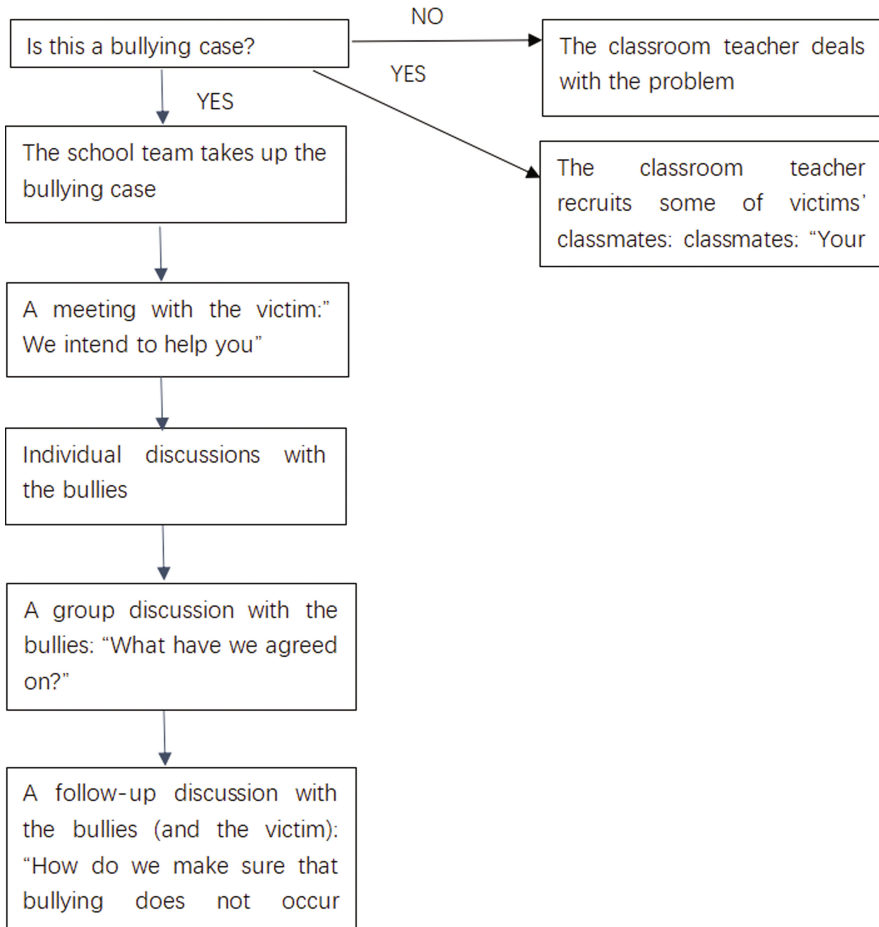
Fig. 1. Procss of KiVa (Karna et al., 2013) [12]

extent to which the less powerful member of institutions and organization within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. It describes the dependent or independent relationships between superiors and subordinates in family, school, company institution or other social contexts. Individualism refers to societies with loose ties, where individuals are expected to look after themselves and immediate family, whereas in collectivism, people are integrated from birth onward into cohesive in-groups which protect them in exchange for loyalty to the group. Western countries general score high on IDV, and Asian countries, specially China sores low on IDV (high on collectivism) [15]. This set of value which emphasizes larger power distance, higher moral discipline and higher strength of social norms and less tolerance of deviance in Chinese culture, might has impacts on both students and teachers in China.

3.3.1 Lower Rate of School Bullying Reporting in Collectivism Than Individualism

On one hand, the value above prevents students from reporting school bullying because they might consider telling teachers or others is a way of betrayal which is violating the harmony of the whole class or the sake of students [16]. On the other hand, some bullying behavior are regarded as a collective conduct with the purpose of maintaining group conformity in China [17, 18]. Such belief may result to teachers or school management team underestimate the seriousness of potential or existing school bullying.

3.3.2 Different Handling of School Bullying by Teachers in Collectivism and Individualism

Additionally, with the regard of higher respect for collectivism, Chinese people tend to have their own principle which is minimizing problems to make it settle down easily and quickly. The further explanation is that when encountering case of school bullying, teachers or school management team will focus on the core event only. The main purpose is coping this event in order to please the victim. [19] Rather than addressing the school bullying case to the rest of students to call for attention and empathy, they would prefer keep it between the victim and the perpetrator to minimize the impact on other students.

3.3.3 Different Awareness of School Bullying by Parents from Western and Chinese Families

After reading several studies, data supports that western parents report higher frequencies of nonphysical bullying victimization of their child compared with Chinese Parents [3]. With the respect to educational expectation, Chinese parents consider school is a place for their children to learn from knowledge, instead of a place to cultivate personalities. Therefore, Chinese parents tend to place predominant emphasis on academic achievement and often overlook students' behavioral and mental health needs [20]. If their children are not physically hurt, Chinese parents will probably not consider it with school bullying [21]. In the contract, parents in western countries worry less about academic performance. This cultural difference regarding to educational expectation might be associated with Chinese parents' lower awareness of their children's bullying experience [3].

4   Discussion

Taking above result into consideration, can KiVa be successful in China using the original format? The answer may probably be no as there is a vital factor which is cultural difference. For student themselves, with collectivism in China, students are believed to be less likely to report bullying in the first place. In their mind, they have the possibility to think that it is better to stay quite in order to protect the reputation of the whole class or even school. In addition, it saves both teacher, rest of the students and their own trouble for not reporting the incident as teacher may have to spend more time in dealing with it and also it may occupy other students' time and energy. Besides, in articles related to

power distance, scholars hold the opinion that the Chinese have a comparatively larger power distance than the western [14]. In the circumstance of school bullying, it possibly links with the power distance between teachers and students. In Chinese culture and traditional Chinese classroom, teachers are in charge of the whole class, giving out orders and assignments, while students passively listen. Such teacher-led and students-followed pattern has been last for decades. Students are replied on teachers' tutorial and authority, which may lead to a result that students and teachers are not in a closed relationship to report their own feelings or experiences. However, the key point of KiVa is to announce the existing of school bullying, otherwise the following steps cannot be performed accordingly. For teachers, who are focused more on academy, may have the tendency to pay less attention on matter other than academic requirement. Even if they receive someone reporting a school bullying, they are likely to minimize the impact and settle this issue in private. However, this is against KiVa's process to formally address the incident to avoid repeated harm. For parents, there is a study regarding to how parents educate their children on school bullying. One of the conclusion is that parents hold a negative attitude towards it. They teach children to stay out of school bullying and do not get engage to avoid trouble [21], while KiVa tries to cultivate the empathy of bystanders. It seems like Chinese parents are holding different opinion with KiVa's attention.

KiVa may encounter difficulties when implementing in China due to fact that the culture is different between western countries and China, mainly on individualism and collectivism. With collectivism, it is much likely to sacrifice a minority of people for the sake of the majority, which may result in that less attention is given to victim(s) and maintaining group stability is seemed to be of high priority. Besides, with larger power distance in collectivism, it is hard to develop a close or equal relationship between students and teachers, which is likely that students refuse to report any bullying cases as they believe it probably be useless. Although full of challenges, KiVa still provides Chinese schools with a good example to handle school bullying. What are needed to do is to modify and adjust KiVa to make it more suitable in Chinese culture.

The advantage of this study can be found in two ways. As English major student, profound understanding of both Chinese and western culture and the sense of the impact of cultural difference on many issues were formed and cultivated. Therefore, when studying school bullying and KiVa in China, cross-country comparisons was taken into consideration and we discovered the academic vacancy regarding to this topic. This study filled the gap of cultural conflict from cross-country perspective when it comes to carry out KiVa in China to deal with school bullying. It provides some viewpoints on cultural consideration and helps to adopt Kiva in order to make it more suitable to implement in China.

The disadvantages are also can be seen in below. Due to major and professional knowledge, this is quantitative research. Curtained studies have been thoroughly read and analyzed to draw a conclusion. What's more, this study is focused on the overall theories of the characteristics of Chinese and western people which have been aligned with many scholars to a large extend, but it may not be the exact manifestation of each individual. This study was discussed hypothetically due to the fact that no experiments and tests has been done to launch KiVa in China. In the coming future, it is hoped that

a formal experiment can be taken out in Chinese school and a more practical study can be written by then.

5 Conclusion

To sum up, this study analyzed KiVa from a cross-cultural perspective and concluded that KiVa may be not able to succeed in China due to the fact of the existing of cultural difference between western and Chinese people in term of three aspects which is students, teachers and parents.

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