


1-1-2015

Attitudes And Perceptions Of High School Principals With Regard To Bullying In Their Schools

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**ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS WITH
REGARD TO BULLYING IN THEIR SCHOOLS**

by

CORNELIUS JAMES LEWIS

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

2015

MAJOR: CURRICULUM AND
INSTRUCTION

Approved By:

Advisor

Date:

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wonderful parents, Walter and Mary. I could not have possibly asked for two more loving people to call mom and dad. I thank you both for your nurturing, discipline, generosity, honesty, and candor. Dad, you have instilled in me the value of hard work and the knowledge that independence is its own reward. Mom, for reasons well known to you, I find your strength and endurance to be something remarkable. You taught me to be informed and learn lessons thoroughly, so that when I speak I will not do so foolishly. It is because of what you as my parents provided me, there is a fire in my belly that simply will not die out. The two of you define what it means to be called mother and father, and I am ever more grateful that I can call you mine. It is because of whom you are, that I was able to become who I am. For this, I cannot say it enough, thank you...thank you...thank you.

With love and the deepest gratitude,

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost I want to say thank you to my Lord and Savior, for it is only through him, that I can do all things!

Collectively, I want to thank my dissertation committee, I have the deepest gratitude and appreciation for your willingness to take on this project. Just for me, you all decided to stay in the fight when so many others walked away. Thank you for your time, your efforts, and your desire to help one more student take it a step further.

Dr. Marc Rosa, it was you who brought me to Wayne State University and explained to me why it is the ideal college to attend. After walking across the entire campus with you, I knew I had landed some place special. I am so very grateful for that day, and the many others that I was able to avail myself of your guidance. I must say to you, as usual, you were right.

Dr. Sharon Elliott, an angel and warrior on my behalf. I never saw you coming, but I am so grateful that you here.

Dr. William Hill, thank you sir for your patience beyond patience, and your encouragement when my spirit was totally defeated. I appreciate your availability and your support throughout this endeavor.

Dr. Janice Green, for as long as my brain has memory cells I will never forget what you made possible for me. In a world where you have to worry so intensely about someone doing something to you, it is so wonderful to acknowledge when someone has done something incredible for you. I thank you so much mam.

Dr. Geralyn Stephens-Gunn and Dr. Janice Hale, thank you for letting me see the example, you inspired me more than you will ever know.

I would like to thank the principals and assistant principals who took time from their busy schedules to complete the survey on Qualtrics. Without your input, this study could not have been completed.

Ms. Veronica Bilat, thank you for helping this novice researcher become a more methodical one.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to extend a grand thank to each professor I have encountered throughout my collegiate career. Sandra Jenkins, Saundra Sumner, Margaret Hoard, and Lori Lucas, I thank you for all of the assistance you have provided me through the years.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Bullying is an epidemic that has aggressively invaded the education system. Bullying has been responsible for many school related tragedies that include, but are not limited to, declines in academic performance, increases in adolescent suicide, and in some cases, homicide. School principals and teachers have attempted to develop strategies to combat bullying, but the aggressive behavior continues to be prevalent in schools. Research has suggested that managing bullying behavior effectively should be a collaborative effort that includes all stakeholders in education. To develop a tactful and effective response to bullying, these groups must understand what bullying is and why it occurs.

Bullying is defined as a physical, verbal, and/or psychological attack or intimidation that is intended to cause fear, distress, or harm to the victim (Farrington 1993; Rigby 2002). To be categorized as bullying, the act of aggression must be intentional, systematic, and involve an imbalance of power (Farrington 1993; Rigby 2002). The bully's aggressive behavior tends to involve an imbalance of power between the victim and the bully (Olweus 1993; Stassenberger 2007). This imbalance in power could be due to the victim's smaller stature, the victim's association with an unpopular/minority group, or the victim's fear itself, that may prevent any opposition to the bully's efforts (Ma 2001; Marsh, Parada, Craven, & Finger, 2004). Fear and peer pressure also are factors that contribute to the likelihood that adolescents may engage in aggressive behavior. Students, either as the bully or the victim, may feel pressured and/or trapped in their positions during bullying episodes. Victims tend not to report incidents of bullying to adults out of fear of retaliation, or a lack of confidence in their belief that they could

be helped (Bradshaw, Brennan, and Sawyer 2008). It is because of this reaction, that bullying has become one of the most common aggression-victimization cycles in the school system (Bradshaw et al., 2008). School principals and teachers must create an environment where children would feel safe enough to report being victimized (McNamee & Mercurio 2008), so that bullying activity can be minimized.

To create an environment where students feel safe in reporting incidents of bullying, principals and teachers again, must understand what behavior is considered bullying, know the effects of such behavior, and be equipped to detect when bullying has occurred, so that a proper response may be rendered. Hazler (2001), conducted that gaged the attitudes and perceptions of violence from the administrators' and teachers' prospective. The study revealed administrators and teachers felt that physical threats or abuse were more serious than verbal abuse, and were more likely to rate physical aggression as bullying. Hazler's study also concluded that physical aggression was more serious than verbal or emotional aggression. Hazler's study also shed light on another form of bullying that was new at the time of his study. The new method of bullying is known cyberbullying. Cyberbullying provides a direct contrast to how the participants responded in the study, with regard to what they considered to be more serious aggressive or bullying behavior.

Cyberbullying is an aggressive relational form of bullying. It is considered aggressive in the sense that the victim can be affected very quickly in being exposed or humiliated across a broad spectrum in a short period of time. While not inflicting any direct physical pain, cyberbullying can cause extensive emotional suffering that has been linked to suicide and other acts of violence (Hazler, 2001). The results of Hazler's study revealed that the group overall, was ill-prepared to address bullying in the school setting.

Principals are in place as the governing entity within the school setting. It is the role of school principal is to implement and enforce acceptable school policy (Young, Hardy, Hamilton, Biernesser, Sun, and Niebergall, 2009). In order for principals to combat bullying behavior effectively, school policy and enforcement must be fair in the eyes of all stakeholders (teachers, counselors, students, etc). An all-inclusive approach to school administration would give the stakeholders a spirit of ownership in the school. This approach could also reinforce desired behavior among students between home and school environments, as well as reform attitudes that initially contributed to the undesired behavior (Young et al., 2009). As parents are able to monitor their children at home, teachers spend a fair amount of time monitoring students in the classroom. With the proper training, teachers could develop a skillset that would enable them to detect when students display atypical behavior. For example, students who are normally outspoken and interactive may become quiet and withdrawn after being victimized by a bully. Victims may also exhibit attention deficits brought on by the stress of being bullied, ultimately causing a decline in academic performance. An ability to detect when a student has become a bullying victim is extremely important, as bullying does not always occur in an overt fashion (Young et al., 2009).

Purpose of the Study

Bullying is a pervasive, unacceptable form of aggression that has many negative outcomes both for the person doing the bullying and the individual who is the victim. School principals are responsible for creating a safe environment for all students by maintaining order in the school setting. The ability of principals to combat bullying may depend on their attitudes regarding aggressive behaviors in their schools. This study will focus on the attitudes of high

school principals with regard to bullying in their schools and the effectiveness of intervention policies to decrease bullying among the students.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and associated hypotheses are ikaddressed in this study:

1. To what extent is there a relationship between perceptions of bullying and effectiveness of school policies regarding bullying?
2. Do perceptions of bullying differ relative to the geographic area in which the school is located?
3. Do perceptions of bullying differ relative to the size of the school?

Hypotheses:

H₁: A relationship exists between perceptions of bullying and effectiveness of school policies related to bullying.

H₀₁: No relationship exists between perceptions of bullying and effectiveness of school policies related to bullying.

H₂: A difference in perceptions of bullying exists among schools located in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

H₀₂: No difference in perceptions of bullying exists among schools located in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

H₃: A difference in perceptions of bullying exists between large and small schools.

H₀₃: No difference in perceptions of bullying exists between large and small schools.

Significance of the Study

While research supports the theory that bullying is predictive of victimization, research also suggests that this is not always the case. According to (Schafer, Korn, Brodbeck, Wolke, & Shulz 2005), bullying in primary school (from 7 years of age) predicted bullying in secondary school. In addition, victimization in primary school did not necessarily predict victimization in secondary school. The findings of Schafer and his colleagues are motivation for this study to determine if principals feel that proper intervention at the appropriate time will be a strong combatant against bullying. Hopefully this study will provide insight regarding school principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of any current school policy regarding bullying, provide suggestion on ways to strategically modify policies to strengthen the victims and defenders during incidences of bullying, or prompt bystanders to act in welfare of the victim. If aggressive behaviors can be harnessed early on, it might be possible to minimize the long-term effects of bullying. The goal is to help prevent incidents of school violence such as the 1996 Columbine High School or Sandy Hook Elementary shooting incidents. These acts were committed by individuals who were likely victims of bullying, considered outsiders among peer groups, or suffered from psychological/ behavioral issues that were likely long-term effects of being targeted by bullies.

Assumptions of the Study

The assumptions for this study include:

- Bullying is a pervasive behavior in schools, with principals, assistant principals, and teachers are aware of bullying among the students.
- Most school districts have formal policies regarding bullying and appropriate disciplinary actions are used with students who bully others.

- Principals and assistant principals participating in the study are expected to respond to the survey questions honestly.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations could limit the generalizability of the study findings:

- The study is limited to high school principals and assistant principals in Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne Counties.
- The study is limited to public schools and does not include charter or private schools.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for this study:

Principal	Educator who holds the executive authority over a school (chancellor, headmaster, etc.)
Assistant Principal	Primary assistant to the school principal who aids the principal in overall administrative duties, policy implementation, curriculum management, and disciplinary actions.
Bully	Any person who demonstrates repetitive aggressive behavior that purposefully hurts another person, ultimately resulting in a systematic abuse of power (Olweus 1993).
Cyberbullying	The use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages that are threatening or intimidating in nature.
Defender	One who intervenes out of a desire to help or rescue the victim during incidences of bullying.
Victim	A person who is harmed, injured, or killed as result of a crime, accident, or other event or action.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Bullying is an aggressive behavior that intentionally causes harm. It is often repetitive, and usually involves an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim (Olweus, 1993). Bullying may take place in a traditional / direct form (name calling, hitting, shoving, etc.), or in a non-traditional yet direct format (cyberbullying). Bullying behavior has been responsible for many school-related tragedies that have resulted in mass shootings, single target homicides, and many suicides. Despite the damage that bullying may cause, the “reward,” or gain in power (social status), has continued to make bullying thrive as a repeated behavior among peer groups. Throughout this review, the works of many researchers will be discussed, with regard to their evaluation of students who are bullies and those who have been victimized. This research provides information on causes of aggressive behavior (bullying), environments conducive to bullying, principals’ and teachers’ perceptions of bullying, their role in combatting bullying behavior, and the long-term effects of bullying on the bullying dyad.

Prevalence of Bullying

Olweus (1993), one of the leading authorities on bullying, defined a bully as a person who demonstrated repetitive aggressive behavior that purposefully hurts another person and ultimately results in systematic abuse of power. However, when defining a subject who bullies students with disabilities, a slightly different definition of bully is found in *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2006)*. This type of bully is defined as a blustering browbeating person; one who is especially and habitually cruel to weaker individuals. According to a report by the Health Resources and Services Administration (2004), children with specific disabilities (e.g., learning

disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, medical conditions that affect a child's appearance, obesity, hemiplegia, diabetes, and stuttering) are prone to bullying. This report further documented the need to conduct research on the relationship between bullying and students with special needs.

According to a study conducted by the Harvard School of Health in 2009:

- Male bullies are nearly four times as likely as non-bullies to grow up and physically or sexually abuse their female partners.
- By age 24, 60% of former school bullies will be convicted of a criminal charge at least once.
- Schools with higher reports of bullying scored 3 to 6% lower than schools that had strong anti-bullying policies in place.
- Schools that have anti-bullying programs reduce bullying by 50%.
- Bullying is at its worse in middle school, with a reporting rate (bullying incidents) as high as 44%, while elementary and high schools reported bullying problems at 20%.

The most recent bullying statistics reported by the Bureau of Justice, US Department of Health and Human Services, and the Cyberbullying Research Center, provided evidence that bullying continues to plague schools. A culmination of data from 2011/2012 revealed that:

- 37% of students reported being bullied at school.
- 17% of students are bullied by other students.
- 20% of students reported being made fun of.
- 20% of students reported being physically bullied.
- 5% of the students felt excluded from activities they wanted to participate in because of bullies.

- 85% of bullying incidents occurred inside the school, while incidents on exterior school grounds, on the bus, or while walking home tallied at 11%.
- 29% of students actually reported the bullying to someone at their school.
- 52% of students reported being cyberbullied.
- 33% reported that the cyberbullying also included threats made online.
- 25% of students reported having been bullied repeatedly via cell phone or internet medium.

Bullying Behaviors

Several factors may contribute to adolescents' involvement in bullying behavior. Children who bully their peers tend to come from home environments where parents use authoritarian, harsh, or punitive child-rearing practices (Espelage 2000). This notion directly supports other research that suggests that bullying behavior may be an act of rebellion due to the bully's exposure to a dysfunctional or abusive home environment. For example, children who are exposed to parental intimate partner violence (IPV) in the home may interpret physical violence as an effective way to deal with conflict or gain power in a relationship (Dodge, Bates, & Petit, 1990). Furthermore, parental conflict increases the risk for poor emotional regulation in children (Kim, Pears, Capaldi, & Owen, 2009), and thus for physical and psychological victimization from peers (Dodge, 1991; Dodge et al. 1990; Hubbard & Coie, 1994; Schwartz et al., 2000). Parental conflict also has an effect on the manner in which parents interact with their children. According to the spillover theory, emotions, affect, and mood associated with marital conflict generalize the parent-child relationship, resulting in verbally critical and physical forms of punishment (Buehler & Gerard 2002; Krishnakumar & Buehler 2000). In addition, parents who are in abusive relationships may reduce involvement in the lives of their children, thus creating

an uncertain social environment, reducing social and emotional support for their children (Erel & Burman, 1995; Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000). For the bully, aggressive behavior in the school setting may serve as a means of self-empowerment, in a manner that is not possible to achieve at home.

Individuals, who do not have strong bonds to social institutions such as family or school, tend to deviate in social behavior (Osgood, Wilson, O'Malley, Backman, and Johnston, 1996). This perspective is derived from the "social control theory," which suggests that externalizing problem behaviors may stem from a low level of attachment to social groups of which the adolescent is a part (Hawdon, 1996).

Pace and Zappulla (2009) explored the attachment styles and commitment attitudes among adolescents, and how the internalization or externalization of problem behavior might be affected. A total of 535 students, which included 267 male and 268 females, with ages ranging from 16 to 18 years of age, participated in the study. The participants completed a two-part questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire focused on attachment style, referring to the participant's attachment to social institutions (family, school, etc.). The items addressed several facets that contribute to adolescents' attachment styles. The confidence level of the adolescent, the comfort level with regard to closeness, and the need for approval were measured by the participants' responses to statements (e.g., "I feel confident that people will be there when I need them;" "I find it difficult to trust or completely depend on people;" or "I find it hard to make a decision unless I know what other people think"). The second part of the questionnaire focused on commitment from an ideological standpoint. The items on the commitment questionnaire obtained information regarding the participants' attitudes about religious beliefs, occupation, friendship, dating relationships, status/position within the family unit, and sexuality.

Pace and Zappulla (2009) hypothesized that insecure attachment styles and commitment would have a significant effect on whether adolescents would internalize or externalize (act out) problem behavior (e.g., bullying). They concluded that the adolescents' ideologies or commitment level was negatively related to problem behavior. The study revealed that an adolescent's attachment style could largely determine if problem behavior would be internalized or externalized. Adolescents with secure attachment styles and higher levels of commitment generally had a healthy identity status (Berman, Weems, Zamora, 2006) and were less likely to externalize problem behavior. Furthermore, a serious lack of social acceptance on any level could be a driving force behind an adolescent's willingness to participate in adverse or aggressive behavior (Berman et al., 2006).

Warning Signs of Bullying

According to resources listed on an anti-bullying website (Warning Signs of Bullying, n.d.), parents and teachers should be aware of several warning signs to detect when a child is becoming the victim of a bully. Warning signs associated with bullying are:

- *Unexplained bruises or injuries of any kind.* It is common practice for a bullying victim to offer unbelievable explanation for bruises or injuries for which a bully is responsible.
- *Destruction of property.* Children may start to have their clothing torn, jewelry stolen, or their electronic gadgets ruined. These types of incidents spontaneously can occur within a short time frame.
- *Faking of illness.* Victims often are afraid and want to avoid the bully at all costs, so they begin to fake illness so that they do not have to attend school.

- *Skipping meals.* The dinner table is normally a setting where children tell parents about their day. Bullying victims may suddenly start to avoid family meal times to avoid discussing what happened during the day at school.
- *Academic decline.* In school settings, victims of bullying tend to be less popular students who ordinarily perform well academically. Teachers and parents may notice a decline in achievement levels when this type of student becomes a victim of a bully. The victim may start to skip certain classes, avoid coming to school altogether, or attend classes and not be focused on learning.
- *Hurting themselves/suicide.* Victims of bullying often become depressed due to physical abuse and social climate change to which bullies subject them. Female victims of bullying have been found to cut, scratch, or bite themselves to cope with being bullied. This self-destructive behavior may vary, and because of the victims' depressive situations, the self-destruction tendencies may lead to suicide.

Adolescents' and Children's Attitudes Regarding Bullying

Research has found that one's attitude may also be a predictor of all kinds of spontaneous and deliberate social and nonsocial behavior (Glassman & Albarracin 2006) that might include bullying (Salmivalli & Voeten 2004). In research, attitudes are defined as general and enduring, concrete or abstract evaluations of a person, group, or issue and are based on beliefs, emotions, and behavior (Petty & Cacioppo 1986).

During attitude research, a distinction is made between implicit and explicit attitudes of adolescents with regard to bullying. Implicit attitudes are impulsive, spontaneous, uncontrolled emotional reactions, and evaluations, while explicit attitudes refer to deliberate, reflective, controlled, consciously self-reported evaluations (Gawronski & Bodenhausen 2006). Research

focused on these attitudes are usually centered on explicit (deliberate, thought out) statements, and are assessed via Likert scales, with participants generally asked to rate the extent to which they agree with various statements about bullying (Boulton et al. 2002; Menesini et al. 1997; Salmivalli & Voeten 2004).

After exploring various reasons that could lead an adolescent into participating in bullying activities, factors that shape the attitudes of adolescents toward bullying must be considered. These attitudes can determine the extent to which adolescents bully their victims. Research has already provided evidence that social factors, such as group membership and peer pressure, as well as individual factors such as physical strength, aggressiveness, and empathy influence bullying behaviors (Rigby 2004).

Researchers found that explicit attitudes had low to moderate predictive power for bullying behavior and indicated that adolescent's explicit bullying attitudes were not always in accordance with their bullying behavior (Boulton et al. 2002; Rigby 2004). Salmivalli and Voeten (2004) reported that although the majority of children explicitly disapproved of bullying, they were still directly or indirectly involved in bullying activity. The researchers concluded that the children involved in the study were aware that bullying was a socially unacceptable behavior, but chose to give socially acceptable answers on the questionnaire (Salmivalli & Volten 2004). Similarly, it was discovered in another attitude study, that children explicitly rejected bullying on the questionnaire, but had more relaxed implicit (spontaneous, uncontrolled) attitudes, which were more in accordance with bullying behavior (Nosek 2005).

Social Acceptance

Social acceptance is extremely important to adolescent peer groups. That importance is evident at a very early age. The notion that the involvement of children in peer groups may have

an influence on incidents of aggression or bullying is no surprise, given that children's interest in, and tendency to associate with friends/social groups is of great importance by the age of five to six years (Nesdale et al 2007). Children have a natural tendency to seek inclusion when and where inclusion is available. The need for acceptance may be another strong explanation of why bullying activity is perpetuated among peer groups. Most children do not want to be on the outside of what is socially acceptable, and some may be willing to assimilate into deviant behavior to be included among peer groups. This is ironic, because in most cases, victims are bullied by a group of their peers within the school setting (Olweus, 1993).

An observation study by Atlas and Pepler (2000) revealed that peers were involved in approximately 80% of bullying episodes, by either actively participating in the bullying or serving as a passive audience for the bully. The length of the bullying was directly related to the number of peers present during the bullying episode. Bullies need an audience to be successful at such activity. The insurmountable humiliation is what makes it difficult for the victim to overcome the bully's taunts. An audience, coupled with the victim feeling overwhelmed, is what promotes the power of the bully.

Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, Osterman, and Kaukiainen (1996), identified six roles that adolescents might assume as part of the audience during a bullying incident. An individual may be (a) the bully, (b) the assistant to the bully, (c) re-enforcer to the bully, (d) the victim, (e) the defender of the victim, or (f) the outsider. These roles are inter-changeable. The bully may become the victim or the outsider can become the defender of the victim. The re-enforcer to the bully or the assistant to the bully could be overcome with guilt and turn into passive observers, assuming the outsider role. Aside from the victim, the outsider suffers high levels of anxiety as he/she witnesses a bullying episode. In the article, "How Witnessing Bullying Impacts

Bystanders,” Gordon (2014) referred to this anxiety as the “bystander effect.” Gordon noted that research suggested that kids who witness bullying behavior may be as much at risk psychologically as the victims or bullies. The bystander effect occurs when an individual or group of individuals, witnesses a bullying incident and no one responds in effort to intervene.

Gordon (2014) noted that several factors contribute to the bystander effect. Bystanders see bullying behavior and know that it is wrong, but they are uncertain about what to do. Ridding themselves of uncertainty is important for bystanders. Knowing how to respond appropriately may stop a bullying episode and prevent other potential bullies from attempting the same behavior. Fear is another factor that perpetuates the bystander effect. Bystanders fear becoming the bully’s next target or being ostracized by other audience members for defending the victim. The bystander may also suffer from another condition that Gordon referred to as the “approach-avoidance conflict.” This conflict occurs when there is a strong desire to help the victim, but then there is an even stronger fear of consequence for intervening. The bystanders may experience anxiety, and even begin to exhibit characteristics of an individual who has been bullied. As a result of witnessing bullying episodes, bystanders tend to avoid areas where bullying has occurred, may choose not to attend social events, join cliques, or fall victim to peer pressure.

Bullying and victimization in the traditional sense has been the focus of this literature review. Traditional bullying refers to the face-to-face physical torment to which bullies subject their victims. The school environment is where bullying typically happens. However, further research on bullying has revealed that technology allows bullies to take their aggressive behavior beyond the school setting via cyberspace. Cyberbullying is an intentional harmful behavior that occurs through a variety of electronic and cyberspace mediums (David-Ferdon & Hertz 2007). The danger to victim is that the aggression can occur at any time, damage can spread very

quickly, and the platforms (web postings, video blogs, mass emails, or text messages) are difficult to trace back to the source. Research has shown that traditional bullies are often cyberbullies as well. Cyberbullies constitute a subgroup of traditional bullies in schools, which is a strong implication that traditional bullying could lead to cyberbullying (Raskauskas & Stoltz 2007). Cyberspace is simply another medium through which bullying and victimization may occur. Juvonen and Gross (2008) reported that there was a sevenfold higher risk of being bullied online among those who were repeatedly targeted at school. The researchers took these findings and concluded that cyberspace was not a separate risky environment. They reported that cyberspace is used as a forum that is an extension of the school grounds (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Furthermore, the researchers went on to report that heavy use of cyber communication tools posed less risk for being a target of bullying than in-school bullying experiences, suggesting that it is not the tools that are the problem, but rather the bully's use of those tools that cause the problem (Juvonen & Gross 2008).

What is the perceived severity with regard to effects of cyberbullying? In the past, the severity of cyber bullying was given minimal consideration. Victims did not report incidents of traditional or cyberbullying to their parents or an adult in the school setting, because they thought that adults lacked the specific knowledge to help them or they feared having the access to their devices restricted (Bauman 2009; Blake & Louw, 2010; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Mishna et al. 2009). Instead, victims turned to their peers for support. The consequence resulted in victims not getting the proper help needed to deal with their experience (s). In addition, the victim typically garners no support from peers if the peers do not consider the victim's experience as severe enough to warrant any attention (Slonje & Smith 2008). These findings speak directly to the notion that a central element in intervention against all forms of bullying, is to raise awareness of

seriousness and consequences of bullying, and to encourage youngsters to stand up for victims and not to reinforce the bully (Salmivalli, Karna, & Poskiparta, 2010).

Recent studies have focused on identifying characteristics of individuals who are at risk for bullying or victimization in cyberspace. Individuals who engage in, or are the victims of cyber aggression, have unique characteristics in comparison to their peers. For example, adolescents who are perceived to be more powerful or threatening in real life, were found more likely to be victims of cyberbullying compared to trends in traditional bullying (Vandenbosch & Van Cleemput 2008). More research suggested that members of both groups (cyber aggressors and cyber victims) share similarities, in that both groups possess poor psychosocial functioning, have difficulties in school, and have poor parent-child relationships (insecure attachment = deviant behavior). In addition, Hinduja and Patchin (2008) found that traditional bullies were more likely to be online victims than traditional victims were to be online bullies. Adolescents who were less likely to engage in aggressive acts face-to-face might be willing to exhibit aggressiveness in the “safety” of cyberspace. The irony in this case is that behavior that could have such disastrous results would have a safe or untraceable space in which to occur.

The potential for aggressive behavior starts to become evident among adolescents at an early age. According to Zastrow and Kirst-Ashman (2013), moral development occurs throughout life, but happens primarily between adolescence and young adulthood. They also noted that moral development takes place at multiple levels. The levels are pre-conventional, conventional, and post conventional. At the conventional level, moral thought is based on conforming to conventional roles (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2013). The conventional way of thinking is attributed to a desire to please others and be socially accepted. Bullies torment their

victims to gain power among their peers, and they need others to witness their displays of power (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2013).

Proper reinforcement needs to occur during the socially formative years described in the theory of moral development. If not, a child could be set on trajectory that would entail familial dysfunction, social inadequacy, behavioral problems, and insecure attachment styles that could result in a troubled being (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2013). Research using a longitudinal design found that bullying and victimization that occurs at age 8 years is predictive of bullying and victimization at age 16 years (Sourander, Helstela, Helenius, & Piha, 2000).

A study conducted by Marsh, Parada, Craven, and Finger (2004) explored causal relationships between bullying and victimization and assessed them as continuous variables. Four thousand male and female students ranging in ages from 12 to 18 years were included in the study. Participants were from eight different schools throughout Sydney Australia, with data collected at three different points in time over the course of one year. Marsh et al. (2004) found that the correlation between bullying and victimization increased over time. Bullying and victimization had a reciprocal relationship, in that one dynamic reinforced the other.

Bullying is a pattern of behavior that is perpetuated in the most complex fashion, with no simple solution to the problem. Long term, both the bully and the victim can be expected to suffer psychological damage. The bully may continue his/her aggressive behavior and ultimately go on to be involved in more serious or criminal activities. Without intervention to the aggressive behavior that victims are exposed to during bullying episodes, victims could on to suffer social incompetence, mental anguish, and host of other issues that could negatively affect them, not just beyond school grounds but also beyond the school phase of their lives (i.e., adulthood).

Gender Differences in Bullying

Several research studies have focused on the issue of gender differences in bullying behaviors, and results have suggested that the common idea of bullying as characteristic of boys is incorrect (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Lagerspetz & Bjorkqvist, 1994). More research has revealed that the difference in bullying among boys and girls lies in the types of aggressive behavior enacted (direct vs. indirect or relational), rather than in the actual incidence of male and female subgroups (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992). Middle school girls often bully using relational aggression, which occurs more often as name calling and social exclusion (De Almeida, 1999; Vail, 2002). While girls were vicious with acts of social exclusion, rumors, and name calling, girls were also found to be more sympathetic to their victims than boys. These findings provide evidence of more emotional scarring that occurs among girls who are bullied than in incidences of bullying among boys (Bacchini, Amodeo, Vitelli, Abbruzzese, & Ciardi, 1999).

Girls may target their bullying victims because of their emotional instability, looks, weight, or academic standing (Harris & Petrie, 2003). Other indirect or relational ways that girls bully their victims is through gossip, slander, spreading of rumors, and exploitation of friendships. These relational act of aggression are the primary weapons that girls may use to humiliate each other (Olweus 1993).

Research has shown that boys bully and were bullied by others substantially more frequently than girls (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simmons-Morton, & Scheldt, 2001). Boys also tended to be more physical than girls during incidents of bullying (Bacchini et al., 1999; Craig, 1998; De Almeida, 1999; Glover, Gough, Johnson, & Cartwright, 2000; Olweus, 1993). According to Ross (1996), boys who bully are generally one to two years older than their

victims, and typically are involved in bullying girls as well. Boys tend to bully because of their victims' physical weakness, short tempers, or do so because of who the victims are socially associated with (Harris & Petrie, 2003). Craig (1998) further reported that male bullies victimize more physically while they are in lower grades, but in higher grades, victimization occurs more often in the form of verbal aggression.

Stakeholder Roles in Combatting Bullying

The first step in eliminating bullying is to eliminate the culture of denial associated with bullying and establish an effective school policy acceptable to teachers, counselors, administrators, and other stakeholders. The policy should be fair in the eyes of all stakeholders, be administered consistently, focus on positive behaviors, and be even-toned, which would require educators and support personnel to actively participate (Young, et al., 2009). To implement a policy that is perceived as fair and that will be enforced by all personnel, the principal must train staff as well as faculty in methods to combat bullying, and establish a forum for students to have input concerning their perceptions of school climate. School counselors, as change agents for positive school climate (American School Counseling Association, 2003), should work closely with the principal to implement anti-bullying programs and support school policies. Each member of the school's personnel would have crucial role to play within the guidelines of a successful anti-bullying program/policy:

Principal:

As the governing entity within the school, the principal assumes the role of guideline enforcer/disciplinarian. This role should be performed in a manner that is nurturing and positively demonstrative. This approach mirrors a healthy parenting style, which can result in effectively correcting the bully's behavior without bullying the bully. The goal is to correct the

negative behavior, and reform the attitudes that lead to the bullying behavior. Will and Neufeld (2002) asserted that the leadership demonstrated by the principal is critical in establishing the school environment. The principals' knowledge / implementation of anti-bullying programs are essential in support of school staff and other stakeholders working to reduce bullying on the school campus. Principals must understand the seriousness of bullying and provide clear definitions and direction. In addition, principals should enforce building and district policies that clearly outline what is considered acceptable behavior (Will & Neufeld, 2002).

Teachers:

Teachers spend a great deal of time with students in their classrooms and are able to observe them in an isolated setting. With observation skills developed in their training, teachers would be able to detect when students display behaviors that are atypical of their personalities. For example, students who are normally outspoken and interactive may become quiet and withdrawn when victimized by a bully. Victims of bullying might also experience attention deficits and find it difficult to concentrate in school, ultimately causing an academic decline. Well-trained teachers would be able to detect, document, and render the appropriate response to these indicators of bullying. Juvonen, Graham, and Schuster (2003) found that although teachers understood the social context of bullying, they did not understand the best way to intervene in bullying and many times considered this a personal problem of the victim rather than a problem requiring cooperative response. Teachers have typically had this reaction due to a lack of training and/or enrichment on how to deal with bullying.

Astor, Meyer, and Behre (1999) suggested that the most effective bullying prevention occurred when teachers who were familiar with students were present and willing to intervene in a bullying incident. Having a greater number of teachers participating in supervision during

recess and breaks were likely to lower the number of bully and victim problems in the school (Olweus, 1993; Peterson & Skiba, 2001). Further research suggested that if school personnel were to be successful in preventing acts of bullying, caring school cultures that fostered respect must be developed that integrated parent participation programs that established and maintained school security procedures and safe school programs (Harris & Petric, 2003; Olweus, 1993, 1999; Peterson & Skiba, 2001; Rigby, 1996).

Counselors:

The American School Counselor Association model (ASCA, 2003) states that school counselors should be school leaders who advocate for students and work in collaboration with other stakeholders to remove “barriers to academic success” (p.25). To provide teachers and other school personnel with support as they help students, school counselors should work collaboratively with administrators. Significant in meeting the challenge of bullying is helping school personnel understand personal characteristics of students and their roles in bullying. Although students who are bullies and those who have become victims are primarily at risk, all students in school are at risk for problems that often last into adulthood. Suicide, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, legal trouble, poor performance in school and work, and lack of involvement in socially accepted activities are just some of the difficulties resulting from bullying (ASCA, 2003).

Bauman and Del Rio (2006) conducted a scenario-based study that allowed them observe how a population of school counselors reacted to three different types of bullying situations. The study first sought to find out if the counselors would respond differently to portrayals of the three types of bullying: physical, verbal, and relational. The next aspect of the study was to gauge if school counselors responded differently relative to whether they had participated in anti-bullying

training or had not participated in this type of training. Lastly, the researchers probed to find out if school counselors working in schools with anti-bullying programs answered in a different way than counselors whose schools had not implemented anti-bullying programs.

The results of the study reported that the school counselors rated all three types of bullying (physical, verbal, relational) as being at least moderately serious. However, there were some significant differences in how the group of counselors perceived the different types of bullying. The counselors rated physical and verbal bullying as more serious than relational bullying. They felt greater empathy for students who had been bullied physically and verbally when compared to students who had experienced relational bullying. The counselors tended to intervene during instances of verbal bullying than in relational bullying (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006). The respondents also suggested stronger interventions with bullies when bullying was verbal as opposed to physical and relational, and they described stronger intervention with victims of physical bullying than with victims of relational bullying (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006).

School counselors with bullying training perceived relational bullying to be more serious did school counselors without bullying, and were more like to intervene in relational bullying than counselors without the training. Bauman and Del Rio (2006) also noted an increased sensitivity to relational bullying among counselors in this sample who received bullying training. The school counselors who worked in schools with anti-bullying programs in place proposed stronger interventions for bullies in physical bullying scenarios and were more likely to intervene in instances of verbal and relational bullying than counselors who worked in schools that did not have an explicit anti-bullying program in place (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006).

The American School Counselor Association (2005) noted that though there is vast research in the field with regard to bullying intervention from the perspective of the teachers and

school administrators, school counselors are virtually absent from the literature. School counselors make a contribution to students' academic success, career paths, and social development. School counselors, in working with the entire school population, may be cognizant of underlying school climate concerns such as bullying. The ASCA (2005) also reported that school counselors have been educated to understand and help students in regards to social concerns, implement/evaluate programs, and be authorities at interpersonal communication skills. School counselors take on both preventative and responsive roles in their function (ASCA 2005). It is therefore, extremely important to gauge whether or not school counselors are prepared to effectively respond to bullying situations in the school. School counselors can tend to be left out of the loop when school staff is being trained on how to deal with bullying, as they are not regarded as primary contacts for students in the school (ASCA 2005). Rigby and Barnes (2002) stressed that students who have been victimized may feel that bullies face no consequences, and reporting the bullying incident to an adult is pointless. Students are unlikely to ask for help if they are attending schools that fail to sanction student who are bullies consistently or schools that choose to overlook bullying occurrences. The students perceived that a school climate that ignores bullying was no different than a school climate that accepts bullying (Rigby & Barnes, 2002).

Technology Specialist:

Cyberbullying is an aggressive form of relational bullying. This behavior is considered hostile because the victim's undesired exposure or humiliation occurs quickly across a wide spectrum (internet), and relational, because it does not involve any direct physical harm to the victim. While it does not directly harm the victim at first, cyberbullying results in a great deal of emotional suffering and often is linked directly to suicide occurrences and other acts of violence.

Beran and Li (2005) conducted a study that examined the relationship between cyberbullying and bullying in a school setting. The researchers sought to determine if students involved in school bullying were also involved in cyberbullying, and if these behaviors contributed to academic difficulties in school. The results of the study not only showed a positive relationship between cyberbullying and school bullying, but also suggested that victims of cyberbullying, are likely to use technology to bully others (Beran & Li, 2005). Cyberbullying is quite difficult to harness, as the act can be carried out quickly, anonymously, and across a broad spectrum in a short time. According to a report by the New York State Education Department (ND), the greatest challenge for school administrators in relation to bullying, is to figure out a way to legally and effectively deal with behavior that takes place off the school campus that may endanger the health or safety of pupils within the educational system or adversely affect the educative process. The New York State Education Department cited case law which recognized though students may be disciplined for conduct that occurred outside of the school, particularly cyberbullying or sexting Coghan v. Bd. Of Educ. Of Liverpool Cent. School Dist., 262 AD2d 949, there is also case law which upheld that the regulation of bullying, particularly cyberbullying and sexting, which may involve the right of free speech and expression, there are constitutional limitations on the ability of a school district to restrict these behaviors or punish students for engaging in them Tinker v. Des Moines Indep. Community Sch. Dist., 393 US 503, 1969 (NYSED, ND). For these reasons, it is imperative that the technology specialist be equipped to monitor students' use of computers anywhere in the school where they would have access to one. This could possibly be achieved by installing a software program that would prevent potential cyberbullies from the using the computers in an unauthorized or undesired manner, therefore decreasing incidents of cyberbullying. Parents could do the same in their

homes where students may have access to computers, cell phones, or other communication devices.

Students:

Principals and teachers may collaborate to identify some of the social/academic leaders among the students. These individuals will be utilized as peer counselors. Troubled students are more likely to speak openly with their peers than with teachers or principals about problems they are having in or out of school. Langdon and Preble (2008) stressed the importance of perceptions of bullying with the regard to school climate, and note that many students do not wish to involve adults when they have been bullied, often because of fear of retaliation from the bully. Schools must create an open environment in which students feel safe enough to report incidents of bullying (McNamee & Mercurio, 2008). As teenagers themselves, peer counselors would have access to information via various social circles within the school that teachers or principals would not. Of course, if the matter is serious, peer counselors would be required to report the issue to a supervising teacher for the peer counseling program or to the school principal. There may be situations that require members of law enforcement be involved, and the peer mediation group would obviously not be equipped to handle.

Parents:

Parents, much like teachers, are able to observe students in an isolated environment (i.e. at home). Parents may quickly observe changes in behavior, have access to their child's electronic devices, or overhear phone conversations that may reveal if their child is a bully or a victim. According to Blank et al. (2010) the effectiveness of parental training in bullying

prevention and intervention has not been established. However, Rivers, Poteat, Noret, and Ashurst (2009) reported that teaching parents about how witnessing bullying and violence could influence the emotional health of children would be largely beneficial in helping parents handle bullying occurrences when their children are involved. Barboza, Schiamberg, Ochmke, Korzenlewski, Post, and Heraux, (2009) reported that watching television and use of other media resources is a significant factor in bullying behavior. Therefore, providing training for parents regarding time management and appropriate use of electronic devices is strongly suggested as effective tools for combatting bullying. Bradshaw, Sawyer, and O'Brennan (2009) argued that; (a) establishing social norms that reward nonviolence and reduce the stigma of backing down within the community, (b) teaching parent communication skills, and (c) helping them change family norms from pro-bullying behaviors (retaliation) to having respect for intelligent and nonviolent interactions (Bradshaw et al., 2009).

Director of Community Relations:

In the text The School and Community Relations, authors Bagin, Gallagher, & Moore (2007) state that no community relations plan or organization will function successfully until employees know exactly what they are expected to do and understand the limits of their authority. The authors go on to say that if a school system employs a community relations director or representative, that individual, by working through the principals, can be a great help to the teachers (Bagin et al., 2007). In addition, the director of community relations would have a background that would enable him/her to see the community relations value of school/classroom activities that may be overlooked by teachers (Bagin et al., 2007). The director of community relations is responsible to know the school and the people in community (Bagin et al., 2007). The director of community relations would be instrumental in helping the school

administration to implement and enforce anti-bullying policies that would be acceptable to all stakeholders.

Principals' Perceptions of Bullying In the School Environment

According to Thomsen (2002), educators are often unaware of elements that create an atmosphere for violence. He reported that this lack of knowledge in recognizing violence included: (a) lack of understanding violence, (b) role dominance involved in violence, (c) lack of knowledge of negative behaviors that create violence, (d) occurrences of bullying behavior, (e) denial of effects of bullying behaviors, and (f) lack of understanding of effects of parental neglect. When educators treat bullying as normal developmental behavior and dismiss incidences of bullying as minor problems, imposing penalties for inappropriate behavior becomes awkward (Thomsen 2002). Harris and Willoughby (2003) noted that teachers identified bullying as a major problem in their school. These teachers supported victims and wanted bullying acts eliminated from their school. However, one in three teachers indicated that they did not possess the ability to stop bullying. Similarly, in an earlier study by Rigby & Slee (1991), teachers admitted that they were intimidated by bullies on occasion and believed that the school administration was responsible to confront and punish the bully.

The school principal probably plays the most important role in preventing bullying in schools. The principal's leadership style and level of commitment, combined with the attitudes and beliefs of teachers and parents, are essential factors in minimizing bullying (Rigby, 1996). Harris and Petrie (2003) emphasized that schools that are characterized as safe typically are led by principals who foster a school climate based on principles of belonging and caring among students, faculty, and parents. They also acknowledge that educators must understand and identify negative effects of bullying on overall school climate by communicating the importance

of eliminating acts of bullying to all stakeholders. The principal's presence and leadership in the school is a major factor regarding the reduction of school bullying. Harris and Petrie (2003) reported that there is a paucity of research on principal's perceptions of bullying on the school campus.

A study by Harris (2004) focused on the perceptions of bullying among Texas middle school principals. The study was guided by for four key questions:

1. What types of bullying do middle school principals in Texas perceive at their school?
2. Where do middle school principals perceive bullying occurs on the campus?
3. How safe do middle school principals consider their schools?
4. What measures do Texas middle school principals think should be taken to prevent bullying at school? (Harris, 2004, p. 22)

The results of the study revealed that there is a difference in the perceptions among principals and students, with regard to the types of bullying that occurs on campus. Reflecting on previous research that was based primarily on student reports in general, middle school principals in the Harris (2004) study reported different levels of awareness of bullying on their campuses than what the students reported in a study by Harris and Petrie (2003). For example, Harris and Petrie (2003) found that the most common type of bullying that students reported was name-calling. The Texas middle school principals Harris' 2004 study reported being most aware of rumors being spread. Harris and Petrie (2003) found 13% of students surveyed from age 12 to 18 had been called insulting words often referring to race/ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, or sexual orientation. In contrast, 8.5% of Texas middle school principals reported being aware of name calling among students at their schools. Harris and Petrie (2003) also found that 22% of

students reported that they were aware of students being hit or kicked at least sometimes, yet more than 50% of the Texas middle school principals reported being aware of this type of bullying behavior occurring at least sometimes on their campus. In addition, Harris (2004) found that 43% of secondary students observed other students being left out of activities occasionally, with 24% observing this behavior happening most often on their campus. Middle school principals in the Texas study (35.6%) reported being aware of this type of behavior sometimes, and only 5.1% indicated they were aware of students often being left out of activities.

The Texas middle school principals did not report a high level of awareness of where incidences of bullying occurred on their campuses. Again, previous research revealed students were more aware of bullying in specific locations than middle school principals in the Harris (2004) study. Isernhagen and Harris (2003) reported that 79% of students indicated that bullying occurred at least sometimes in the classroom, whereas 73.6% said that bullying occurred during extracurricular activities or recess. Yet, in this study, only 37.3% middle school principals were aware of bullying in the classroom at least sometimes, but less aware of bullying at extracurricular events and during initiations of clubs and teams, with only 20% reporting being aware at least sometimes.

With regard to how safe middle school principals in Texas perceived their campuses to be, the study showed that the principals believed that they and the faculty were supportive of the students and that their schools were safe. Research suggested that teachers do not believe other school personnel are doing what they should do to reduce bullying (Harris & Willoughby, 2003) and that teachers are often not sure how to handle bullying (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003). An even greater concern is that students do not feel that teachers or administrators are willing to step in and stop bullying when they see it occurring (Harris & Petrie, 2003; Unnever &

Cornell, 2003; Willoughby, 2002). In addition, Harris (2004) found that when students were asked if administrators were interested in stopping bullying at school, 24% of students did not think that they were, and 34% admitted that were not sure. Students reported nearly the same results with the regard to teachers intervening when they see bullying take place. These findings suggested that students did not feel safe or supported as principals liked to believe. Further research reported middle school principals feeling that their schools are safe. A study by Harris (2004) found that 39% of students indicated that they always felt safe at school, and 45% said that they usually felt safe. Bowles (2001) found that more than 160,000 students across the k-12 spectrum skip school every day because they do not feel safe from being bullied. Approximately 10 years after, Lerman (2010) indicated that about 160,000 students are absent from school on any day because they are afraid of being bullied.

The last question of the study probed to determine what measures the Texas middle school principals were taking to prevent bullying incidences at school. The study showed that principals acknowledged that staff training, teachers discussing bullying in their classes, and additional supervision by staff, as well as developing policies focusing on what the school could do to decrease bullying were proactive ways to minimize bullying on their campuses. The study also revealed that most principals believed that to minimize bullying on their campuses, some form of punishment should be applied immediately and automatically to the bully.

The results of many studies show agreement that staff training, discussing bullying with students, increasing supervision, and developing specific policies for bullying were measures that principals should take to reduce bullying on their campuses (Olweus, 1993, 1999, 2001). However, Hyman and Snook (2000) suggested that escalating punishment for bullies and using automatic and punitive-type discipline established a school ethos that could be too negative for

children. Garrity, Jens, and Williams (1997) concurred that because bullies often come from families that use harsh discipline measures (e.g., “tit-for-tat” punishments) that reinforced the behavior in bullies have been unsuccessful. The researchers continued that while a need exists for appropriate consequences that are immediate, emphasis should be placed on helping the bully find more appropriate ways to channel his/her negative behavior and help the victim become more assertive in a positive, constructive manner. The recommendations from the study on perceptions of Texas middle school principals indicate that the success of the school principal regarding being the school leader, largely depends on the support of school personnel and community members.

Harris (2004) recommended that:

- Principals need to listen to students and parents about how often and where bullying occurs.
- Create a strategy or plan where students can confidentially report bullying incidents without fear of reprisal.
- Principals should be more visible in areas where children are frequently bullied, and they should better prepare their staff in bullying awareness and prevention.
- The principal should make sure that the campus has adequate supervision in areas in the school where bullying frequently occurs.
- The principal should conduct annual surveys with students, teachers, and stakeholders to better understand how students feel about school safety.

- The school principal, the staff, and stakeholders should participate in training to better understand how bullying exacerbates feeling of limited support and general safety.
- With institutional approval, principals should develop or adopt clear and concise policies in dealing with bullies.
- Rather than using punishment for bullies that is automatic and punitive, principals should devise intervention plans that focus on developing character education programs. Bullies and victims need to develop skills that teach children how to positively interact with each other and to be sensitive and supportive of children who are ethnically, economically, socially, or physically different. (p. 14)

Flynt and Morton (2004) conducted a study to understand principals' perceptions of how bullying was related to students with special needs. Seventy-five Alabama elementary school principals were selected to participate in study that focused on their perceptions of bullying on their campuses in general, as well as their perceptions of bullying in their schools regarding students with disabilities. Similar to the Texas principal perception study (Harris, 2004), the Alabama principals were given response options they could use to indicate how agreeable they were several statements regarding bullying on their campuses. The Alabama principals were also asked more direct questions about anti-bullying policies, teacher training/preparation, school climate, etc.

Results of this study were aligned with the consensus in popular media, that bullying is widespread in public schools. One could assume that bullying behavior, combined with concerns pertaining to students with disabilities, would lead pandemic problems with this population

(Flynt & Morton, 2004). Responses from the Alabama principals did not support this assumption. The respondents largely viewed bullying as a minor problem on their campuses and none perceived the behavior to be a major problem. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents reported their school had an anti-bullying policy in place. The principals' perceptions of students' involvement in bullying incidents very likely reflected the diverse nature of disabilities and the broad continuum of behaviors that may be exhibited (Flynt & Morton, 2004). Students with mental disabilities were more likely to be victims, while students with behavior disorders tended to be perpetrators of bullying behavior. Ninety percent of the respondents reported that students with disabilities were victims on some occasions and the bullies in other instances. The participants in the Flynt and Morton (2004) study did not think that special circumstances/conditions among students were important factors in determining the likelihood of bullying incidents.

Principals and teachers have differing perceptions of bullying and ways to address the behavior. Kevorkian, Russom, and Kennedy (2008) conducted a study to explore the differences in administrator and teacher perceptions of bullying in schools. The study results revealed significant differences in perceptions of bullying among administrators and teachers, and a difference in administrators' and teachers' perceptions regarding their respective roles in bullying prevention. Teachers in this study felt more strongly that educators played an important role in bullying prevention within the school, while administrators felt more comfortable in communicating with the parents of bullying victims as a way to decrease bullying (Kevorkian et al., 2008). Results of this study were reflective of an earlier study conducted by Bandura (1977). The focus of Bandura's study was self-efficacy, an individual's belief in his or her ability to produce at designated levels of performance in specific situations. Bandura examined the level of

confidence that that administrators and educators had in discussing a bullying incident with the parents of both the bully and a bully's victims. Results of Bandura's study revealed that educators often fail to communicate bullying issues effectively to the parents of the parties involved until they understand their role and feel they have the appropriate skills. The self-efficacy of administrators and educators could greatly increase with the development of bullying policies and procedures focused on communicating with parents of bullies, victims, and bystanders (Bandura, 1977).

Summary

In exploring the literature surrounding the topic of bullying, little research speaks specifically to how high school principals perceive bullying or how they should deal with the behavior. However, a common thread in the literature is the need for anti-bullying policies to be in place. A key component to the effectiveness of any prevention policy is the interpretation of the policy by administrators, teachers, students, and parents (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). Principals should be aware that teacher and administrative perceptions of bullying in schools affect the school climate and subsequent safety of students. The collaborative efforts of principals and teachers are important to the success of anti-bullying initiatives for the school environment (Astor, Meyer, & Behre, 1999; Astor, Meyer, & Pitner, 1999; Benbenishty & Astor, 2005; Marachi, Astor, & Benbenishty, 2007).

Statistical trends regarding bullying show increases in the number of bullying incidents, as well as increases in the number of methods in ways in which the behavior is perpetuated. The bullying epidemic has graduated from incidents that involve name calling, pushing, or hitting onto mass displays of embarrassing video footage or aggressive slanderous campaigns via computers, cell phones, or other electronic devices equipped for mass communication. Because

of this evolvement in bullying behaviors, it is important for school principals to evolve in their understanding of the behavior. Principals differ in their perceptions of bullying in their schools, and thus differ in their response to bullying incidents. Providing inservice training for school principals could result in the ability to develop and implement effective policies/ approaches to combat bullying behavior and improve the overall school climate.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The methods that were used to collect and analyze the data for this study are presented in this chapter. This chapter presents topics that include a restatement of the problem, research design, variables in the study, setting for the study, participants, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

Restatement of the Problem

Bullying is a pervasive, unacceptable form of aggression that has many negative outcomes, for bullies and their victims. School administrators are responsible for creating a safe environment for all students by maintaining control on bullying behavior. The extent to which administrators can control bullying may depend on their attitudes regarding these aggressive behaviors in their schools. This study's purpose is to examine the attitudes of school administrators with regard to bullying in their schools and the effectiveness of intervention policies in controlling bullying among the students.

Research Design

The research design selected for this study was nonexperimental and correlational. This research design was used to examine perceptions of school administrators responsible for controlling bullying behavior in their schools. Nonexperimental correlational research designs are used when data are collected using surveys and participants receive no treatment. The independent variable is not manipulated with this type of research design. Data were collected using Qualtrics, an online survey program.

Variables in the Study

The primary dependent variable in this study is perceptions of bullying in the schools.

The independent variables include:

- Perceptions of types of conduct categorized as bullying
- Perceptions of gender differences in student bullying
- Perceptions of social characteristics of victims
- Perceptions of social characteristics of bullies

In addition, the principals provided their personal characteristics (age, gender, educational level) and professional characteristics (years as a high school principal, years as a teacher). The participants also provided information regarding their school (number of students, number of teachers, number of administrators, location) and types of bullying that occurs in the school. Data on policies on bullying and bullying prevention programs also were obtained for the study.

Participants

The participants in this study were high school principals in public school districts in Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne Counties. There are approximately 231 high schools located throughout the three counties. The inclusion criteria for the study were: principal, assistant, or person responsible for discipline in a public high school.

Sample Size

To determine the sample size that would be appropriate for the study, a power analysis was conducted using G*Power 3.1 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). A regression analysis with five predictor variables, an alpha level of .05, and an effect size of .25 requires a minimum sample of at least 92 participants to achieve a power of .80. Adding additional

participants to increase the sample to 140 could result in a power of .95. Figure 1 presents the power analysis for this statistical analysis.

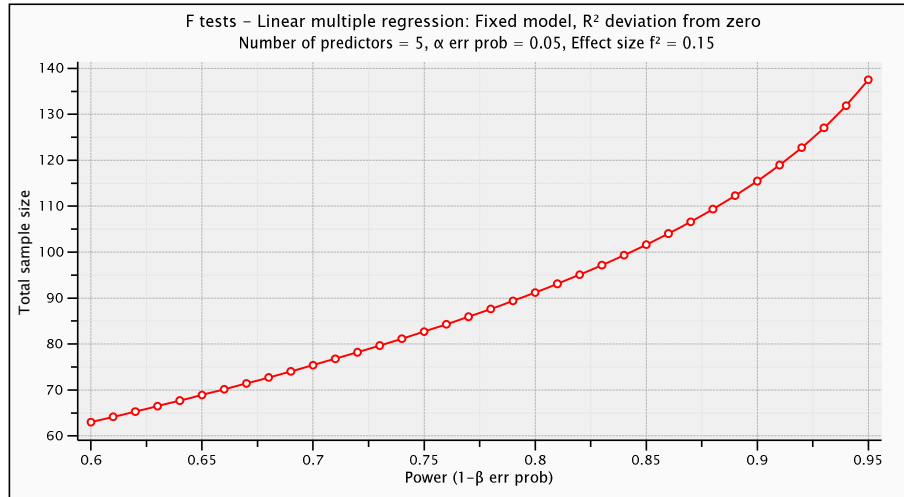


Figure 1: Power analysis for multiple linear regression analysis with five predictor variables, alpha level of .05, and effect size of .25

Survey Instrument

The Bullying Survey, a published survey on bullying by Garner (2003) was used to measure perceptions of social, psychological, and academic effects of student bullying. The survey has five parts to measure bullying behaviors in high schools. The five parts include a short demographic survey, perceptions of bullying, perceptions of types of conduct categorized as bullying, perceptions of gender differences in student bullying, perceived social characteristics of bullying victims, and perceived social characteristics of bullies.

Scoring. The principals or administrators in charge of discipline in the school rated each item using a 5-point Likert scale, with a 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 indicating strongly agree. The responses to the items on the subscales were summed to calculate total scores for each subscale. Mean scores were obtained for each subscale by dividing the total scores by the

number of items on the subscale. The use of mean scores yield scores in the original scaling (1 to 5), allowing the outcomes on the subscales to be compared directly.

Reliability. Reliability was determined by using Cronbach alpha coefficients to assess the internal consistency of the items. The alpha coefficient for the total scale was .80, with the individual subscales ranging from .28 for the bully subscale to .85 for the social characteristics of students who are victims of bullying. The alpha coefficients for two of the subscales, bully, and social characteristics of students that bully other students, were below acceptable levels, but the internal consistency for the total scale was considered adequate for use in research. The internal consistency of the instrument was tested after collecting data from the principals to determine its reliability with the Michigan sample. The overall reliability of the instrument was .81 for the principals and assistant principals in the study.

Validity. The content validity was assessed by a group of experts (Garner, 2003). The experts included teachers, counselors, and administrators from three different high schools in Corpus Christi Independent School District, as well as a group of college professors at Texas A & M University campus. The findings of the experts were that the instrument had good content validity.

Data Collection Procedures

After the Wayne State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) provided an approval to conduct the study, the researcher began the data collection process. The researcher used Qualtric survey software to develop the survey. The first page of the survey was the research information sheet that included all elements of the informed consent, including the purpose of the study, the principals' role in the study, assurances of confidentiality, and voluntary nature of the study. At the end, the principals were given two alternatives, one to accept and move forward

with the survey. The second alternative was to not agree to participate, with the principal exiting the program.

The participants who agreed to participate were asked to respond to the survey items. At the end of the survey, they were thanked for their participation and asked if they wanted a copy of the results. If they wanted a copy, they were directed to another section to leave their school address. By having a separate section for the address, the participants' anonymity was retained.

The principals were given two weeks to complete the surveys. After two weeks, the researcher sent emails thanking the principals who had returned their surveys and asking those who had not returned their surveys to take the time to complete them. Four weeks following the beginning of the data collection process, the link to the survey was removed.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data from Qualtric survey software were downloaded to a file for analysis using IBM-SPSS ver. 22.0. The survey responses were checked for completeness, with surveys having a substantial number of missing responses removed from the file. The results of the statistical analyses were presented in three sections. Frequency distributions and measures of central tendency and dispersion were used in the first section to provide a profile of the sample. The second section used descriptive statistics and Pearson product moment correlations to provide baseline data on the subscales measuring bullying. The third section of analyses presented the results of the inferential statistical analyses that were used to test the hypotheses and research questions. A criterion alpha level of .05 was used in making decisions on the statistical significance of the inferential statistical analyses. Table 1 presents the statistical analysis for this study.

Table 1

Statistical Analysis

Research Questions and Hypotheses	Variables	Statistical Analysis
<p>1. To what extent is there a relationship between perceptions of bullying and effectiveness of school policies regarding bullying?</p> <p>H₁: A relationship exists between perceptions of bullying and effectiveness of school policies related to bullying.</p> <p>H₀₁: No relationship exists between perceptions of bullying and effectiveness of school policies related to bullying.</p>	<p><u>Dependent Variable</u> Perceptions of bullying</p> <p><u>Independent Variable</u> Effectiveness of school policies related to bullying</p>	<p>Pearson product moment correlations were used to determine the strength and relationship between the six subscales measuring bullying and effectiveness of school policies related to bullying.</p>
<p>2. Does perceptions of bullying differ relative to the geographic area in which the school is located?</p> <p>H₂: A difference in perceptions of bullying exists among schools located in urban, suburban, and rural areas.</p> <p>H₀₂: No difference in perceptions of bullying exists among schools located in urban, suburban, and rural areas.</p>	<p><u>Dependent Variable</u> Perceptions of bullying</p> <p><u>Independent Variable</u> Location of school</p>	<p>A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine if a difference exists on the six subscales measuring bullying by the location of the school (urban, suburban, and rural). If a statistically significant difference is found on the MANOVA, the between subjects effects was examined to determine which of the six subscales are contributing to the statistical significance of the findings. Scheffé a posteriori tests were used to determine which of the locations are differing from the others on the subscales which differ significantly.</p>
<p>3. Does perceptions of bullying differ relative to the size of the school?</p> <p>H₃: A difference in perceptions of bullying exists between large and small schools.</p> <p>H₀₃: No difference in perceptions of bullying exists between large and small schools.</p>	<p><u>Dependent Variable</u> Perceptions of bullying</p> <p><u>Independent Variable</u> Size of the school</p>	<p>A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine if a difference exists on the six subscales measuring bullying by the size of the school (small or large). If a statistically significant difference was found on the MANOVA, the between subjects effects was examined to determine which of the six subscales are contributing to the statistical significance of the findings. The mean scores were examined to determine the direction of the differences.</p>

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the findings from the statistical analyses used to provide a description of the sample and answer the research questions. The chapter is divided into four sections. Frequency distributions were used in the first section to describe the sample and the characteristics of the school and its bullying history. Descriptive statistics of the scaled variables are included in the second section to provide baseline information for the reader. The third section of the chapter addresses the research questions and tests the associated hypotheses. The final section of the chapter included unanticipated results statistical analyses.

Bullying is a pervasive, unacceptable form of aggression that has many negative effects, for bullies and victims. School administrators are responsible for creating a safe environment for all students by maintaining control on bullying behavior. The extent to which administrators can control bullying may depend on their attitudes regarding these aggressive behaviors in their schools. This study focused on the attitudes of school administrators with regard to bullying in their schools and the effectiveness of intervention policies to control bullying among the students.

Description of the Sample

The link to the survey was sent to all high school principals and assistant principals in Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne counties. Approximately 270 principals and assistant principals were sent links to the survey on Qualtrics. Of this number, 44 completed the survey for a response rate of 16.30%.

The participants were asked to provide information on their personal characteristics. Frequency distributions were used to summarize the responses to these items. Table 2 provides results of these analyses.

Table 2

Frequency Distributions: Personal Characteristics (N = 44)

Personal Characteristics	Number	Percent
Age		
30 to 40 years	12	28.6
41 to 50 years	21	50.0
51 to 60 years	6	14.3
Over 60 years	3	7.1
Missing 2		
Gender		
Male	25	61.0
Female	16	39.0
Missing 3		
Highest level of completed education		
Master's degree	18	41.9
Education specialist	19	44.2
Doctorate	4	9.3
Other	2	4.7
Missing 1		

The largest group of principals and assistant principals ($n = 21$, 50.0%) were between 41 and 50 years of age, with 12 (28.6%) participants indicating their ages were between 30 and 40 years of age. Six (14.3%) participants were between 51 and 60 years of age and 3 (7.1%) were over 60 years of age. Three participants did not respond to this question.

The majority of the participants ($n = 25$, 61.0%) were male, with 16 (39.0%) reporting their gender as female. Three participants did not answer this question.

Eighteen (41.9%) of the participants had completed a master's degree and 19 (44.2%) participants had obtained an education specialist certificate. A doctorate degree was reported by

4 (9.3%) of the participants and 2 (4.7%) reported other as their highest degree. One participant failed to respond to this question.

The principals and assistant principals were asked about their professional characteristics. Frequency distributions were used to summarize the responses. See Table 3 for results of these analyses.

Table 3

Frequency Distributions: Professional Characteristics (N = 44)

Professional Characteristics	Number	Percent
Position		
Principal	29	67.4
Assistant Principal	14	32.6
Missing 1		
Length of time in present position		
Less than 1 year	6	14.0
1 to 5 years	21	48.7
6 to 10 years	10	23.3
11 to 15 years	3	7.0
More than 16 years	3	7.0
Missing 1		

The majority of respondents (n = 29, 67.4%) reported their positions as principal, with 14 (32.6%) indicating their positions were assistant principals. One participant did not respond to this question.

Six (14.0%) participants reported they had been in their present positions for less than 1 year and 21 (48.7%) had been in their present positions for 1 to 5 years. Six to 10 years in their present position was reported by 10 (23.3%) principals and 3 (7.0%) reported time in their present position as from 11 to 15 years. Three (7.0%) participants had been in their present positions for more than 16 years. One participant did not answer this question.

The participants were asked to their experiences in education, the years as a principal, and years as a teacher. Table 4 presents the results of the descriptive statistics used to summarize the responses to these questions.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics: Experiences in Education (N = 44)

Education Experiences	Number	Mean	SD	Median	Range	
					Minimum	Maximum
Time worked in education	7	22.14	8.88	22.00	12	37
Years as a principal	23	7.76	6.07	7.00	1	21
Years as a teacher	31	10.26	5.83	9.00	3	28

The participants had worked a mean of 22.14 (SD = 8.88) years in education, with a median of 22.00 years. The range of time in education was from 12 to 37 years. The participants indicated they had worked for a mean of 7.76 (SD = 6.07) years as a principal. The range of time as a principal was from 1 to 21 years, with a median of 7.00 years. The mean time the participants had worked as a teacher was 10.26 (SD = 5.83) years. The median length of time as a teacher was from 3 to 28 years.

The participants were asked to provide information about their schools. See Table 5 for the results of the frequency distributions used to summarize the responses to these items.

Table 5

Frequency Distributions: School Characteristics (N = 44)

School Characteristics	Number	Percent
Type of school		
Traditional public school	27	64.3
Alternative high school	3	7.1
Other	12	28.6
Missing 2		
Number of students		
1 to 500	10	23.8
501 to 750	8	19.0
751 to 1,000	5	11.9
1,001 to 1,500	8	19.0
1,501 to 2,000	8	19.0
More than 2,000 students	3	7.1
Missing 2		
Geographic location of the school		
Mostly urban	5	11.6
Suburban	35	81.4
Exurban (beyond the suburbs, but not rural)	1	2.3
Rural	2	4.7
Missing 1		

The majority of participants (n = 27, 64.3%) were working in traditional public schools, with 3 (7.1%) participants working in alternative high schools. Twelve (28.6%) participants were working in other schools. The largest group of principals (n = 10, 23.8%) had 1 to 500 students in their schools. Eight (19.0%) principals were working in schools with 501 to 750 students, 1,001 to 1,500 students, and 1,501 to 2,000 students. Five (11.9%) participants were working in schools with 751 to 1,000 students and 3 (7.1%) participants were assigned to school with more than 2,000 students. The majority of schools (n = 35, 81.4%) were located in suburban areas and 5 (11.6%) schools were located in urban areas. One (2.3%) school was in an exurban and 2 (4.7%) schools were located in rural areas.

Bullying in the Schools

The participants were asked about bullying in their schools. Frequency distributions were used to summarize the participants' responses to the bullying items are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Frequency Distributions: Bullying in the Schools (N = 44)

Bullying in the Schools	Number	Percent
Bullying is a problem in school		
Yes	27	62.8
No	16	37.2
Missing 1		
Type of bullying occurring in school		
Physical aggression	6	13.6
Verbal aggression	18	40.9
Hazing	2	4.5
Cyberbullying	33	75.0
Other	3	6.8
Number of bullying incidents in past year		
None	7	23.3
1 to 5	9	30.0
6 to 10	4	13.3
More than 10	10	33.3
Missing 14		
Effectiveness of bullying policy		
Very ineffective	1	2.3
Ineffective	1	2.3
Somewhat ineffective	4	9.3
Neither effective nor ineffective	5	11.6
Somewhat effective	21	48.9
Effective	8	18.6
Very Effective	3	7.0
Missing 1		
School has a bullying prevention program or bullying curriculum		
Yes	26	60.5
No	17	39.5
Missing 1		
Involvement in bullying prevention program		
Students	16	36.4
Teachers	17	38.6
Parents	4	9.1
Principals/Assistant Principals	14	31.8
Other	15	34.1
Involvement in administering the program(s) or curriculum in school		
Students	8	18.2

Bullying in the Schools	Number	Percent
Classroom teachers	15	34.1
Principal	10	22.7
Related service professionals (e.g., psychologist guidance counselors, social workers)	15	34.1
Nonprofessional support staff (e.g., bus drivers, cafeteria staff)	1	2.3
Parents	2	4.5
Personnel from community service agencies (including police)	4	9.1
Professional consultants	2	4.5
Proprietary curriculum consultants	1	2.3
Other	7	15.9
Types of conduct considered to be bullying behavior		
Intimidation	23	52.3
Physical aggression	23	52.3
Verbal threats	23	52.3
Verbal taunts (e.g., name calling put-downs)	22	50.0
Sexual harassment	22	50.0
Teasing	21	47.7
Racial and ethnic harassment	21	47.7
Threatening gestures	20	45.5
Social alienation (e.g., exclusion, shunning, snubbing)	20	45.5
Relational aggression	19	43.2
Intellectual intimidation	18	40.9
Extortion	15	34.1
Other	12	27.3

The majority of participants ($n = 27$, 62.8%) reported that bullying was a problem in their schools. When asked what types of bullying was occurring, the participants indicated that cyberbullying ($n = 33$, 75.0%) was the most often reported type of bullying, followed by verbal aggression ($n = 18$, 40.9%), physical aggression ($n = 6$, 13.6%), hazing ($n = 2$, 4.5%), and other ($n = 3$, 6.8%). Seven (23.3%) principals reported they had no bullying incidents in the past year, with 9 (30.0%) indicating 1 to 5 incidents. Six to 10 bullying incidents were indicated by 4 (13.3%) of the participants, with 10 (33.3%) reporting more than 10 bullying incidents in the past year.

All of the schools had a bullying policy in effect. When asked to indicate the effectiveness of the policy, the largest group of participants ($n = 21$, 48.9%) reported the policy was somewhat effective, while 8 (18.6%) reported the policy was effective. Five (11.6%)

indicated the policy was neither effective nor ineffective. Twenty-six (60.5%) participants reported that the school had a bullying prevention program or bullying curriculum. Students (n = 16, 36.4%), teachers (n = 17, 38.6%), parents (n = 4, 9.1%), principals/assistant principals (n = 14, 31.8%) and other (n = 15, 34.1%) were involved in the bullying prevention program.

The participants were asked to identify the individuals who were involved in administering the program(s) or curriculum used in the school. Their responses indicated that related service professionals (e.g., psychologists, guidance counselors, social workers; n = 15, 34.1%) and classroom teachers (n = 15, 34.1%) were the most likely to be involved, followed by principals/assistant principals (n = 10, 22.7%). The participants (n = 8, 18.2%) reported that students were involved in administering the program. Other individuals who were involved in administering the program were nonprofessional support (n = 1, 2.3%), parents (n = 2, 4.5%), personnel from community service agencies (e.g., police; n = 4, 9.1%), professional consultants (n = 2, 4.5%), proprietary curriculum consultants (n = 1, 2.3%), and other (n = 7, 15.9%).

The types of conduct that were considered to be bullying behavior included intimidation, physical aggression, and verbal threats (n = 23, 52.3%). Other behaviors that were considered to be bullying were verbal taunts and sexual harassment (n = 22, 50.0%), as well as teasing and racial and ethnic harassment (n = 21, 47.7%). Threatening gestures and social alienation (n = 20, 45.5%) also were considered to be bullying behaviors, as were relational aggression (n = 19, 43.2%), intellectual intimidation (n = 18, 40.9%), and extortion (n = 15, 34.1%). Twelve (27.3%) also indicated other but provide no additional information on the specific types of behaviors that were considered bullying.

The principals and assistant principals were asked to indicate the interventions that were used in their schools to address verified acts of bullying behavior. They were given a list of

possible interventions and instructed to check all that apply. As a result, the number of responses exceeded the number of participants. See Table 7 for the frequency distributions used to summarize the responses.

Table 7

Frequency Distributions: Interventions Used to Address Verified Acts of Bullying Behavior (N = 44)

Interventions used to address verified acts of bullying behavior	Number	Percent
Counseling	24	54.5
Out-of-school suspension	23	52.3
Conference with bully	22	50.0
Detention	19	43.2
Warning	19	43.2
Increased supervision and monitoring of the student(s)	18	40.9
In-school suspension	14	31.8
Restorative justice (providing a remedy for the wrong done)	13	29.5
Peer mediation	11	25.0
Community service	7	15.9
Expulsion	7	15.9
Other	12	27.3

The intervention that was used most often was counseling (n = 24, 54.5%), with out-of-school suspension (n = 23, 52.3%) and conference with the bully (n = 22, 50.0%) often used as interventions for bullying behavior. Detention (n = 19, 43.2%), warning (n = 19, 43.2%), increased supervision and monitoring of the student(s) (n = 18, 40.9%) also were used as interventions for bullying behavior. Other interventions that were used less often included in-school suspension (n = 14, 31.8%), restorative justice (providing a remedy for the wrong done; n = 13, 29.5%), peer mediation (n = 11, 25.0%), community service (n = 15.9%), and expulsion (n

= 7, 15.9%). Twelve principals and assistant principals indicated “other” as the type of intervention used for bullying, but did not provide any further explanations.

The participants were asked to indicate interventions that were used in their schools for working with targeted students. They were given a list of five different types of interventions and asked to indicate all that applied. The total number of responses exceeded the total number of participants. Table 8 provides the summary of the responses using frequency distributions.

Table 8

Frequency Distributions: Interventions Used to Work with Targeted Students (N = 44)

Interventions used to Work with Targeted Students	Number	Percent
Counseling	29	65.9
Encouragement of student to seek help when targeted	20	45.5
Mediation/conflict resolution with an adult mentor	20	45.5
Increased supervision and monitor of the student	19	43.2
Peer mediation	11	25.0
Other	5	11.4

Twenty-nine (65.9%) principals and assistant principals indicated they used counseling as an intervention when working with targeted students. Twenty (45.5%) of the participants indicated they encouraged students to seek help when targeted and used mediation/conflict resolution with an adult mentor to work with targeted students. Increased supervision and monitoring of the student was used by 19 (43.2%) participants to work with targeted students. Eleven (25.0%) participants reported they used peer mediation to work with targeted students. Five (11.4%) principals and assistant principals indicated they used other interventions for working with targeted students, but did not provide any further explanations.

The principals were asked to rate their schools in regards of being a safe environment for their students. See Table 9 for the frequency distributions that summarized the responses to this item.

Table 9

Frequency Distributions: Safe and Healthy Learning Environment (N = 44)

Safe and Healthy Learning Environment	Number	Percent
Physically safe		
Excellent	10	26.3
Very good	20	52.6
Good	8	21.1
Fair	0	0.0
Poor	0	0.0
Missing 6		
Emotionally/socially safe		
Excellent	9	23.7
Very good	16	42.1
Good	13	34.2
Fair	0	0.0
Poor	0	0.0
Missing 6		
Intellectually safe		
Excellent	9	23.7
Very good	22	57.9
Good	7	18.4
Fair	0	0.0
Poor	0	0.0
Missing 6		

Ten (26.3%) of the principals and assistant principals indicated their school was an excellent physically safe learning environment, with 20 (52.6%) reporting the school had a very good physically safe learning environment. Eight (21.1%) reported good as the physical learning environment for their school. None of the principals reported their schools physical learning environment was either fair or poor. Six principals and assistant principals did not answer this question.

Nine (23.7%) of the participants reported the emotional/social learning environment of their school was excellent, with 22 (57.9%) indicating their school's emotional/social learning environment was very good. Seven (18.4%) participants were in schools with good emotional/social learning environments. None of the participants reported their schools' emotional/social learning environment was fair or poor. Six participants did not respond to this question.

When asked to rate their school as being intellectually safe and providing a healthy learning environment for all students and adults, 9 (23.7%) participants rated their school as excellent and 22 (57.9%) indicated very good. Seven (18.4%) participants reported their school environment was good in terms of being intellectually safe and providing a healthy learning environment for all students and adults. None of the participants rated their school's environment as fair or poor. Six participants failed to respond to this question.

The participants were asked to indicate the primary recipients of their anti-bullying programs. They were asked to indicate all that applied. As a result, the number of responses exceeded the number of participants. The results of the frequency distributions used to summarize the principals' and assistant principals' responses are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Frequency Distributions: Primary Recipients of Anti-bullying Programs (N = 44)

Primary Recipients of Anti-bullying Programs	Number	Percent
Whole school	16	36.4
Individual students	13	29.5
Groups of students	13	29.5
Parents or guardians	8	18.2
Individual grade levels	7	15.9
Classroom teachers	7	15.9
Principals	5	11.4
Related service professionals (e.g., psychologist, guidance counselors, social workers)	5	11.4
Individual classes	4	9.1
Nonprofessional support staff (e.g., bus drivers, cafeteria staff)	2	4.5
Families	2	4.5
Members of surrounding community	0	0.0
Other	3	6.8

Sixteen (36.4%) of the participants indicated that their anti-bullying programs were focused on the whole school, with 13 (29.5%) of the participants indicating that the primary recipients of their anti-bullying programs were individual students and groups of students. Parents or guardians (n = 8, 18.2%), individual grade levels (n = 7, 15.9%), and classroom teachers (n = 7, 15.9%) were the primary recipients of anti-bullying programs in their schools. Five (11.4%) participants reported that principals and related service professionals were the primary recipients of anti-bullying programs, with 4 (9.1%) indicating that individual classes were the primary recipients of their anti-bullying programs. Two (4.5%) principals and assistant principals indicated that nonprofessional support staff and families were the primary recipients of their anti-bullying programs. Three (6.8%) of the principals and assistant principals indicated

“other” as the primary recipients of their anti-bullying program, but did not provide any additional explanations.

Scaled Variables

The survey responses to the bullying survey were scored using the author’s protocols. Mean scores for the six subscales had possible scores that could range from 1 to 5. Higher scores on each of the subscales indicated higher agreement with each of the statements. The mean scores were summarized using descriptive statistics for presentation in Table 11.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics: Bullying Survey (N = 44)

Bullying Survey	Number	Mean	SD	Median	Range	
					Minimum	Maximum
Perceptions of bullying	42	3.19	.39	3.29	2.43	4.00
Conduct characterized as bullying	42	3.96	.51	4.00	3.00	5.00
Gender differences in bullying – male	41	2.87	.42	2.88	1.88	4.00
Gender differences in bullying – female	41	3.11	.40	3.13	2.13	4.00
Social characteristics of students who are bullied	39	3.37	.45	3.40	2.38	4.30
Social characteristics of students who are bullies	39	3.28	.35	3.20	2.60	4.00

The mean score for the subscale measuring perceptions of bullying was 3.19 (SD = .39), with a median of 3.29. Actual scores ranged from 2.43 to 4.00. For the subscale measuring conduct characterized as bullying, the mean score was 3.96 (SD = .51). The median score was 4.00, with actual scores ranging from 3.00 to 5.00. The mean score for gender differences in bullying – male was 2.87 (SD = .42), with a median of 2.88. The range of actual scores was from 1.88 to 4.00. The range of actual scores for the subscale measuring gender differences in bullying

– female was from 2.13 to 4.00, with a median of 3.13. This mean score had a mean of 3.11 (SD = .40). Social characteristics of students who are bullied had a mean score of 3.37 (SD = .45), with a median of 3.40. Actual scores for social characteristics of students who are bullied were from 2.38 to 4.30. The mean score for the subscale measuring social characteristics of students who are bullies was 3.28 (SD = .35), with a median of 3.20. This subscale had scores that ranged from 2.60 to 4.00.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The data analyses addressed the three research questions and tested the associated hypotheses using inferential statistics. A criterion alpha level of .05 was used to make decisions on the statistical significance of the findings.

1. To what extent is there a relationship between perceptions of bullying and effectiveness of school policies regarding bullying?

H₁: A relationship exists between perceptions of bullying and effectiveness of school policies related to bullying.

H₀₁: No relationship exists between perceptions of bullying and effectiveness of school policies related to bullying.

Pearson product moment correlations were used to determine the relationship between perceived effectiveness of school policies on bullying and the six subscales measuring principals' and assistant principals' perceptions of bullying. See Table 12 for results of these analyses.

Table 12

Pearson Product Moment Correlations: Perceptions of Effectiveness of School Policies on Bullying and Perceptions of Bullying (N = 44)

Perceptions of Bullying	N	r	p
Perceptions of bullying	42	.04	.793
Conduct characterized as bullying	42	.25	.115
Gender differences in bullying – male	41	.08	.631
Gender differences in bullying – female	41	-.02	.911
Social characteristics of students who are bullied	39	.15	.359
Social characteristics of students who are bullies	39	-.05	.776

The results of the correlation analysis were not statistically significant. These findings provided evidence that perceptions of the effectiveness of school policies on bullying were not related to the subscales that measured perceptions of bullying. Based on the lack of statistical significance, the null hypothesis of no relationship was not rejected.

2. Do perceptions of bullying differ relative to the geographic area in which the school is located?

H₂: A difference in perceptions of bullying exists among schools located in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

H₀₂: No difference in perceptions of bullying exists among schools located in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

The planned multivariate analysis of variance used to determine if perceptions of bullying differed relative to the geographic location of the school could not be completed. Of the 44 principals and assistant principals who completed the survey, 35 were working in schools that were located in the suburbs. As a result of the lack of variability in the geographic location of the school (independent variable), the planned analysis could not be completed.

3. Do perceptions of bullying differ relative to the size of the school?

H₃: A difference in perceptions of bullying exists between large and small schools.

H₀₃: No difference in perceptions of bullying exists between large and small schools.

A one-way MANOVA was used to determine if there was a difference in perceptions of bullying between the large and small schools. The six subscales measuring perceptions of bullying were used as the dependent variables in this analysis, with the size of the school used as the independent variable. The size of the school was categorized as large and small using a median split of the participants' self-reported student populations in their schools. Table 13 presents the results of the MANOVA.

Table 13

Multivariate Analysis of Variance: Perceptions of Bullying by Size of School

Hotelling's Trace	F Ratio	DF	p	η^2
.10	.52	6, 31	.790	.09

The comparison of the perceptions of bullying by the size of the school was not statistically significant, $F(6, 31) = .52, p = .790, \eta^2 = .09$. Based on this finding, the mean scores on the six subscales measuring perceptions of bullying did not differ between principals and assistant principals who were working in small and large schools. To explore the lack of statistically significant difference by the size of the school, descriptive statistics were obtained for the six subscales. See Table 14 for the findings of this analysis.

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics: Perceptions of Bullying by Size of School

Perceptions of bullying	<u>Small Schools</u>			<u>Large Schools</u>		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Perceptions of bullying	21	3.19	.41	17	3.24	.39
Conduct characterized as bullying	21	4.00	.51	17	3.85	.48
Gender differences in bullying – male	21	2.86	.47	17	2.93	.37
Gender differences in bullying – female	21	3.08	.46	17	3.13	.34
Social characteristics of students who are bullied	21	3.44	.42	17	3.28	.49
Social characteristics of students who are bullies	21	3.27	.26	17	3.28	.46

The comparison of the mean scores for the six subscales between the small and large schools provided evidence that the differences were not sufficient to be considered statistically significant. The lack of statistically significant differences between the principals and assistant principals working in small and large school on the six subscales measuring perceptions of bullying provided support for not rejecting the null hypothesis.

Ancillary Findings

A MANOVA was used to determine if participants' perceptions of bullying differed between principals and assistant principals' response to the question, "Is bullying a problem in your school?" Twenty-five (64.1%) participants answered yes and 14 (35.9%) answered no. The dependent variables in this analysis were The six subscales measuring perceptions of bullying were used as the dependent variables in this analysis, with the results presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Multivariate Analysis of Variance: Perceptions of Bullying by Response to Bullying is a Problem in School

Hotelling's Trace	F Ratio	DF	p	η^2
.49	2.59	6, 32	.037	.33

The results of the comparison of the six subscales measuring perceptions of bullying by participants' responses regarding bullying being a problem in their school was statistically significant, $F(6, 32) = 2.59$, $p = .037$, $\eta^2 = .33$. The effect size of .33 was large, indicating the result had both statistical significance, as well as practical significance. To determine which of the six subscales was contributing to the statistically significant result, the between subjects effects were examined. See Table 16 for results of this analysis.

Table 16

Between Subjects Effects: Perceptions of Bullying by Size of School Response to Bullying is a Problem in School

Perceptions of bullying	N	M	SD	DF	F	Sig	η^2
Perceptions of bullying							
Bullying is a problem in school	25	3.31	.30	1, 37	4.95	.032	.12
Bullying is not a problem in school	14	3.03	.48				
Conduct characterized as bullying							
Bullying is a problem in school	25	3.95	.57	1, 37	.06	.815	.01
Bullying is not a problem in school	14	3.99	.43				
Gender differences in bullying – male							
Bullying is a problem in school	25	2.85	.41	1, 37	.21	.615	.01
Bullying is not a problem in school	14	2.92	.46				
Gender differences in bullying – female							
Bullying is a problem in school	25	3.01	.37	1, 37	3.98	.054	.10
Bullying is not a problem in school	14	3.26	.41				
Social characteristics of students who are bullied							
Bullying is a problem in school	25	3.31	.46	1, 37	1.14	.293	.03
Bullying is not a problem in school	14	3.47	.43				
Social characteristics of students who are bullies							
Bullying is a problem in school	25	3.29	.36	1, 37	.18	.670	.01
Bullying is not a problem in school	14	3.24	.35				

One subscale, perceptions of bullying, differed significantly between participants who thought bullying was a problem in their school ($M = 3.31$, $SD = .30$) and those who did not consider bullying to be a problem ($M = 3.03$, $SD = .48$), $F(1, 37) = 4.95$, $p = .032$, $\eta^2 = .12$. This result indicated that principals and assistant principals who thought that bullying was a problem in their schools were more likely to have higher scores for perceptions of bullying than those who did not consider bullying to be a problem. The subscales remaining did not differ, indicating that while there were some differences in the responses to the items on the subscales, they were not sufficient to be considered significant.

Summary

The results of the statistical analysis that was used to describe the sample and address the research questions for the study have been presented in this chapter. Conclusions and recommendations for practice and research are included in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

On any given day within the school setting, students have the potential to be engaged in bullying behavior, either as the bully or as the victim. Bullying is an epidemic that has aggressively invaded the school system. Bullying is the physical, verbal, and/or psychological attack or intimidation that is intended to cause fear, distress, or harm to the victim (Farrington 1993; Rigby 2002). To be categorized as bullying, the aggressive behavior must be intentional, systematic, and involve an imbalance of power (Farrington 1993; Rigby 2002). The imbalance of power comes in various forms, including having a smaller physical stature, being associated with unpopular or minority groups, or being low socioeconomic status (Ma 2001; Marsh, Parada, Craven, & Finger 2004). According to Olweus (1993), bullying is the repeated exposure of the victim to the negative or aggressive behavior that Farrington and Rigby described. Olweus (1993) noted that repeated exposure occurs because of the asymmetric status or power relationship between the bully and his/her target.

Bullying behavior could be attributed to many school-related tragedies that have occurred, including adolescent suicide, homicides committed by the bully or victim, and mass school shootings (i.e., the Columbine school shootings, the Sandyhook Elementary school shootings, or the Virginia Tech campus shootings). The school setting is an environment in which adolescents should be able to learn, socialize, be enriched, and realize their full potential as individuals. School principals and teachers have a responsibility to create and maintain a school environment in which students feel safe and have confidence that something will be done should they become the target of a bully (McNamee & Mercurio, 2008). To create such an

environment, principals and teachers should understand what behavior constitutes bullying, be able to detect when bullying has occurred, and provide effective response to the behavior in their schools (Mcnamee & Mercurio 2008).

Bullying is a pervasive, unacceptable, form of aggression that has negative consequences for bullies and victims. School principals and teachers are charged with combatting bullying behavior in the school setting to insure a safe learning environment for all students. The extent to which principals and teachers are able to combat aggressive behavior may depend largely on how they regard bullying. This study focused on the attitudes and perceptions of high school principals with regard to bullying in their schools, and the effectiveness of intervention policies that may or may not be in place to combat bullying among students.

Findings

Three research questions and associated hypotheses were addressed using inferential statistical analyses. Decisions on the statistical significance of the findings were made using a criterion alpha level of .05 for this study.

The responses to the first research question “To what extent is there a relationship between perception of bullying and the effectiveness of school policies regarding bullying?” was tested via Pearson product moment correlations. The findings indicated no statistical significance in the relationships between principals’ perceptions of bullying measured by perceptions of bullying, conduct characterized as bullying, gender differences in bullying – male, gender differences in bullying – female, social characteristics of students who are bullied, and social characteristics of students who are bullies and the effectiveness of school policies regarding bullying. Due to the lack of statistical significance, the null hypothesis was retained. There was

no relationship between perceptions of bullying and the effectiveness of school policies relative to bullying.

The second research question, “Do perceptions of bullying differ relative to the geographic area in which the school is located?” sought to determine if perceptions of bullying differ relative to geographic location. The underlying assumption behind this question was that the principals and assistant principals in rural or suburban schools would have different perceptions of bullying than principals and assistant principals in urban school settings. The expectation was that principals in assistant principals in the urban schools would have a heightened perception of bullying or behaviors that would be considered bullying, due to the higher number of bullying incidences that might occur in their schools.

The intended multivariate analysis could not be completed to determine any statistical significance between perceptions of bullying and geographic location of the school, because 35 of the 44 participants that completed the survey worked in schools located in suburban areas. The lack of variability in geographic location of the schools made it impossible to complete a thorough analysis. This lack of variability in responses was also one of several limitations that developed throughout the study.

The third research question, “Do perceptions of bullying differ relative to the size of the school?” focused on whether or not perceptions of bullying differ relative to the size of the school. Again, the underlying assumption behind this question is that bullying would be more prevalent in a larger school, and that principals/assistant principals might have higher perception level of bullying behaviors than the principals in smaller schools. A one-way MANOVA was used to determine if there was a difference in perceptions of bullying between large and small schools. The results indicated that the comparison of the perceptions of bullying between large

and small schools was not statistically significant. The null hypothesis is once again retained, as the results show that there is no difference in perception of bullying relative to the size of the school.

An additional analysis was used to determine if principals' and assistant principals' responses on the six subscales differed between those participants who indicated that bullying was a problem in their schools and those who did not think bullying was a problem. The results indicated that perceptions of bullying differed. Participants who considered bullying to be a problem had significantly higher scores on perceptions of bullying than participants who did not think the behavior was a problem in their schools. The remaining subscales did not differ between the two groups.

Conclusions

After analyzing the results from this study, it was interesting to find that principals' attitudes and perceptions of bullying did not differ with regard to policy effectiveness and the size of the school in which they worked. The geographic location could not be factored into the analysis because the majority of respondents, (35 out of 44), were principals and assistant principals who worked in suburban school districts. However, the 44 respondents provided some insight into how principals perceived bullying and the effectiveness of anti-bullying policies.

The participants were asked to respond to several questions that probed the nature of bullying in their schools. When asked if bullying was a problem in their schools, 27 participants indicated yes. Participants that failed to provide a response this question, did so, not because bullying was is not a problem in their schools, but because they may have observed behavior that could be categorized as bullying, but do not perceive it as such. The participant possibly felt that

a viable answer could not be given, as the response options were limited to yes or no. In future studies on this subject matter, a question of this nature should be open-ended.

When asked to indicate the type of bullying that occurred in their schools, 6 participants reported incidents of physical aggression, 18 reported verbal aggression, 2 reported hazing activities, 3 reported other as a response, and 33 participants reported cyberbullying were major bullying behaviors in their schools. While the majority of participants indicated cyberbullying was a problem in their schools, the other behaviors currently categorized as bullying should not be considered less serious. Cyberbullying appears to be a more prevalent form of bullying, especially among adolescents. The responses in this study differed slightly, but were similar to responses given by participants in a similar study conducted by Hazler, Miller, Carney, and Green (2001), with regard to violence in schools from the perspective of school administrators and teachers. In a study conducted by Hazler et al. (2001), results revealed that administrators and teachers felt that physical threats or abuse were more serious than verbal threats, and were more likely to rate physical aggression as bullying, as opposed to verbal taunts, social exclusion, etc. (Hazler et al., 2001). The study also revealed that the participants in Hazler's study believed that physical aggression was more serious than verbal or emotional aggression (Hazler et al., 2001). The concept of cyberbullying was a newer concept at the time of the study, and was not heavily reported by the participants. Overall, Hazler and his colleagues were able to conclude that the administrators and teachers, who participated in their study, were ill-equipped to combat bullying in their schools. Given that 33 of the 44 participants in this study indicated that cyberbullying was an issue in their schools, it would have been very interesting to explore the progression in reports of cyberbullying in other longitudinal studies and compare them to the study done by Hazler and his colleagues had been a longitudinal study as well.

The participants were asked to indicate the number of bullying incidents that occurred in their school within the past year. Seven participants reported no incidents, 9 reported 1 to 5 incidents, 4 reported 6 to 10, and 10 participants reported more than 10 incidents of bullying within the past year. There were however, 14 remaining participants that did not provide a response to the question. Their lack of reporting may not indicate no incidents of bullying or displays of any bullying behaviors in their schools. The researcher concluded that the 14 participants who did not respond to this question may not have thought that the response items provided (i.e., none, 1-5, 6-10, etc.) allowed them to sufficiently answer the question. These 14 participants possibly thought as Olweus (1993), who indicated that bullying is the repeated exposure of the victim to negative or aggressive behavior that is systematic and intentionally harms the victim. The repeated exposure to the behavior implied that the bullying is ongoing, and the 14 participants who did not respond to the question, probably thought they could not provide any specific number as an indicator of behavior that is ongoing. The researcher could have asked this question differently, possibly by asking the participants to indicate the number of reports of bullying they had received within the last year, instead of the number the number of bullying incidents that occurred within the last year at their school.

With regard to the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy in their school or district, 21 of the 44 participants reported that they found their policy to be somewhat effective. This response raised a few questions for the researcher, given that only 10 participants reported being involved in administering anti-bullying programs or curriculum. Given that bullying trends are on the rise, and students are finding new ways in which to bully other students, participants might be concerned that the policies are not a strong enough deterrent. These participants might not have noticed a significant decrease in bullying activity despite the policy being in place. As

27 of 44 of the participants in this study indicated that bullying is or continues to be a problem in their schools, the policies might need to be revisited. The participants' responses might result from their inability to enforce the policies effectively, due to a lack of knowledge and skill in how to address bullying behavior.

Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as an individual's belief in his or her ability to produce at designated levels of performance in specific situations. In the case of Bauman, Rigby & Hoppa (2008), their study on self-efficacy focused on the level of confidence that educators and administrators have in conferring with parents of bullies and their victims. Bauman, Rigby, & Hoppa (2008) reported that administrators and educators often fail to effectively communicate bullying issues to the parents of the parties involved in the incident, until they understand their role and feel they have the appropriate skills. They also noted that the self-efficacy of teachers and administrators could increase through development of bullying policies and procedures focusing on communicating with the parents of bullies, the victims, and bystanders (Bauman et al, 2008).

The participants were asked to indicate who was involved in bullying prevention programs in their schools and 16 reported that students are involved, 17 reported that teachers are involved, 4 said parents, 14 reported principals/assistant principals, and 15 participants indicated that others were involved. This response indicated that principals are adhering to the concept of effective communication described by Bauman, Rigby, & Hoppa (2008), as well as the concept of involving all stakeholders in bullying prevention (Young, Hardy, Hamilton, Biernesser, & Niebergall, 2009). School administrators are responsible for implementing and enforcing effective school policies to manage bullying. If administrators are able to combat bullying in

their schools effectively, policies on bullying and the enforcement of these policies, must be fair in the eyes of all stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, counselors) (Young et al., 2009).

Effective communication and the involvement of all stakeholders in policy administration could provide multi-leveled reinforcement of desired behavior, and further aid in reforming attitudes that contributed to the aggressive behavior (Young et al., 2009). Vreeman and Carroll (2007) noted that a key component regarding the effectiveness of bullying prevention policy is the interpretation and acceptance of the policy by teachers, administrators, parents, and students. The views of teachers and administrators on bullying and school violence can affect the school climate and subsequent safety of students, their collective efforts are critical to the success of bullying initiatives (Astor, Meyer, & Behre, 1999; Astor, Meyer, & Pitner, 1999; Benbenishty & Astor, 2005; Marachi et al., 2007).

Limitations

Throughout the course of this study, researcher noted several limitations that altered the final results:

- Sample size – 270 participants solicited across three counties in the state of Michigan. Sample was limited to principals/assistant principals or persons responsible for administering discipline, did not include teachers.
- Rigid response options – some participants chose not to provide answers to certain questions, possibly because the response options did not suit them. More open-ended questions regarding bullying behavior will allow the participants to articulate their own well-thought responses, and avoid zero rankings for response totals.

- Survey distribution period – The survey was distributed during the period of the school year when principals/assistant principals were preparing to administer state required examinations. This pre-occupation may have hindered the willingness or availability for some of the targeted population to participate.
- Lack of participation from principals in urban school settings. The 44 participants who responded were all from suburban school districts.

Recommendations

The sample size for this study was comprised of principals and assistant principals (270) throughout Oakland, Macomb, and Wayne counties. However, there were only 44 complete responses collected. In the future, this study could possibly be expanded to include participants from both junior high and high schools throughout the entire state of Michigan, rather than a few selected counties. The low number of responses received for the study, is a reliable indicator that a bigger sample size is warranted. In addition to a larger sample size, perhaps a different design for this subject matter could be used. This non-experimental study focused on the perceptions of bullying from the high school principal/assistant principal perspective. Researcher suggests that a longitudinal study be conducted to see if the perceptions change over a period of time. The new research design could also include perceptions from the teachers' perspective.

The researcher also suggests that in future studies where the sample will include school faculty and staff, that the surveys be distributed during an off-peak period of the school year, when the staff is not pre-occupied with priorities such as state required testing or end of the school year wrap up. The surveys for this study on principals' perceptions were distributed closer to the end of the school year and may have skewed the number of responses because the principals were occupied with higher priorities. As previously stated in the limitations section, there was a lack of participation by principals from urban school districts. Principals from the urban schools may have been reluctant to participate due to social stigmas and stereotypes that already exist with regard to negative occurrences in urban schools. Perhaps in a future study, the lack of participation could be avoided if the researcher (s) conducted a case study, in which a level of trust and comfort could be established through a series of personal interviews. This may allow room for participants to open up and provide input that would be beneficial to the study.

The struggle to combat bullying behavior effectively in schools is ongoing. The biggest challenge that high school principals/assistant principals face in combatting bullying is that by the time students reach high school, the bully/victim relationship has been in existence for years. There has been research to suggest bullying and victimization that occurs among students at eight years of age is predictive of bullying and victimization at the 16 years of age (Sourander, Helstela, Helenius, & Pia, 2000). A combination of factors contributed to this prediction. First, the bully/victim relationship is reciprocal; one dynamic constantly reinforces the other (Marsh et al., 2004). Secondly, many children do not wish to involve adults when they have been bullied because they fear further retaliation from the bully, and they are not confident that anything can be done to help (Langdon & Preble, 2008). For these reasons, school systems have a responsibility to create and maintain a school climate in which students feel safe enough to report being victimized by a bully (McNamee & Mercurio, 2008).

The results of this study provided a wealth of information with regard to bullying perceptions and bullying behavior, as well as what is needed if school systems hope to reduce bullying behavior on school grounds substantially. During a scenario-based study (Hazler et al., 2001), teachers tended to categorize physical abuse as bullying more often than verbal or emotional abuse, even when the scenario did not fit the definition of bullying. The study concluded that those teachers who participated in the study were not prepared to deal with bullying behavior (Hazler et al., 2001). Research by Dedousis-Wallace and Shute (2009) revealed that 86% of educators surveyed in their study, had not received anti-bullying training either in undergraduate pre-service training or in graduate programs. In addition, 42% of the educators worked in schools without an anti-bullying policy. These findings support the need for

policies on bullying prevention to include training and professional development with regard to bullying intervention (Dedousis-Wallace & Shute, 2009).

The researcher strongly believes that continued training and professional development for school staff may change the perceptions of bullying behavior and anti-bullying policies and also help school officials create an atmosphere that may serve as a strong deterrent against a potential bully's attempts to expel aggressive behavior on any chosen target.

APPENDIX A
RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET

Research Information Sheet
ATTITUDES OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS WITH
REGARD TO BULLYING IN THEIR SCHOOLS

Principal Investigator (PI): Cornelius Lewis
College of Education, Curriculum and Instruction
586-285-5775

Purpose:

You are being asked to be in a research study of perceptions of school administrators regarding bullying in your schools because you are listed as the principal of your school in the Michigan School Directory. This study is being conducted online at Wayne State University.

Study Procedures:

If you take part in the study, you will be asked to complete an online survey regarding your perceptions of bullying in general and the incidences of bullying in your schools. The online survey should take 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

Benefits

As a participant in this research study, there may be no direct benefit for you; however, information from this study may benefit other educators in the future.

Risks

There are no known risks at this time to participation in this study.

Costs

There will be no costs to you for participation in this research study.

Compensation

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality:

All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept without any identifiers.

Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal:

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with Wayne State University or its affiliates

Questions:

If you have any questions about this study now or in the future, you may contact Cornelius Lewis at the following phone number 586-285-5775. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board can be contacted at (313) 577-1628. If you are unable to contact the research staff, or if you want to talk to someone other than the research staff, you may also call (313) 577-1628 to ask questions or voice concerns or complaints.

Participation:

By completing the questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in this study.

The data that you provide may be collected and used by Qualtrics as per its privacy agreement.

APPENDIX B**BULLYING SURVEY**

Indicate if you agree to participate in the study

Yes

No

Please answer the following questions as they apply to you. There are no right or wrong answers, and all responses will be confidential.

What is your position?

Principal

Assistant Principal

Other _____

How long have you been in your current position

Less than 1 year

1 to 5 years

6 to 10 years

11 to 15 years

More than 15 years

What type of school is your school?

Traditional public high school

Charter high school

Alternative high school

Other _____

How many students are currently enrolled in your school?

1 to 500 students

501 to 750 students

751 to 1,000 students

1,001 to 1,500 students

1,501 to 2,000 students

More than 2,000 students

How would you describe the geographic location of your school?

Mostly urban

Suburban

Exurban (beyond the suburbs, but not rural)

Rural

What is your age?

Under 30 years

30 to 40 years

41 to 50 years

51 to 60 years

Over 60 years

What is your gender?

Male

Female

What is your highest level of completed education?

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Education Specialist

Doctorate

Other _____

How long have you worked in education? _____ years

How many years as a principal? _____ years

How many years as a teacher _____ years

How many principals are working in your school? _____

How many teachers are working in your school? _____

Is bullying a problem in your school?

Yes

No

If yes, what types of bullying are occurring in your school? (Check all that apply)

Physical aggression

Verbal aggression

Hazing

Cyberbullying

Other _____

How many incidents of bullying would you estimate you have had in your school within the last year? _____

Does your school have policies about bullying?

Yes

No

If your school district has a policy on bullying, how effective is it in controlling bullying at your school?

- Very ineffective
- Ineffective
- Somewhat ineffective
- Neither effective nor ineffective
- Somewhat effective
- Effective
- Very effective

Does your school have a bullying prevention program or bullying curriculum?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please describe the bullying prevention program or curriculum.

Who is involved in the bullying prevention program? (Check all that apply)

- Students
- Teachers
- Parents
- Principals
- Other _____

Who is involved in administering the program(s) or curriculum in your school? (Check all that apply)

- Students
- Classroom teachers
- Principal
- Related service professionals (e.g., psychologist, guidance counselors, social workers)
- Nonprofessional support staff (e.g., bus drivers, cafeteria staff)
- Parents
- Personnel from Community Service Agencies (including police)
- Professional consultants
- Proprietary curriculum consultants
- Nonprofit organizations (e.g., anti-defamation league)
- Community volunteers
- Other _____

Who are the primary recipients of your anti-bullying program? (Check all that apply)

- Individual students
- Groups of students
- Individual classes
- Individual grade levels
- Whole school
- Classroom teachers
- Principals
- Related services professionals (e.g., psychologist, guidance counselors, social workers)
- Non-professional support staff (e.g., bus drivers, cafeteria staff)
- Parents or guardians
- Families
- Members of surrounding community
- Other _____

Using a scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding bullying perceptions. Choose your response to indicate the degree to which you perceived the following statements about bullying perceptions.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Bullying is a serious problem in the U. S. schools					
Bullying is a problem in my current school					
Bullying is best ignored by adults unless verbal and psychological intimidation cross the line into physical assault					
Bullying affects only a small number of students					
Bullying is under-reported by teachers					
Most bullying occurs in unsupervised locations					
Teachers do not notice bullying as much as students do					

Using a scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding types of conduct categorized as bullying. Choose your response to indicate the degree to which you perceived the following characteristics apply to types of conduct categorized as bullying.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Students who socially isolate/exclude other students to prevent them from becoming friends with members of the group is a form of bullying					
Students teasing other students is a form of bullying					
Students who intimidate other students is a form of bullying					
Students who steal property from other students is a form of bullying					
Students who use physical actions to inflict bodily harm upon other students is a form of bullying					
Students who use cell phones, internet, and other forms of electronic communication to intimidate students is a form of bullying					

Using a scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding gender differences in student bullying. Choose your response to indicate the degree to which you perceived the following characteristics apply to male and female students in your school.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Male participants use name calling more than females.					
Females make threatening statements to their peers more than males.					
Males verbally make fun of their victims more than females.					
Females taunt other students more than males.					
Males like to control others more than females.					
Females spread rumors about people more than males.					
Males socially exclude their peers more than females.					
Females use the silent treatment on their peers more than males.					

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Males gossip about their peers more than females.					
Females kick other students more than males.					
Males hit/shove their peers more than females.					
Males bullying females is normal behavior.					
Males use cell phones to make fun of their victims more than females.					
Females use the internet to spread rumors about people more than males.					
Males use text messaging to socially exclude their peers more than females.					
Females post digital pictures on web sites to socially exclude their peers more than males.					

Using a scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding social characteristics of student bullying. Choose your response to indicate the degree to which you perceived the following characteristics apply to students who are bullied and students who bully other students.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Students who are bullied:					
Have a high level of insecurity					
Experience a lot of loneliness					
Are unhappy					
Are shy					
Lack social skills					
Lack friends					
Often do not tell adults if they are being bullied because they believe nothing will happen					
Are often passive					
Have low self-esteem					
Have characteristics that make them appear different (e.g., being overweight, having freckles, red hair, or wearing thick glasses)					

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Students who bully other students:

Are physically more powerful than their victims

Pick on individuals who have little or no social status in school

Pick on children because of a need for power over individuals

Have below average levels of self-esteem

Demonstrate aggressive behavior because of their frustrations with school

What types of conduct do you consider to be bullying behavior? (Check all that apply)

Extortion

Intellectual intimidation

Intimidation

Physical aggression

Racial and ethnic harassment

Relational aggression

Sexual harassment

Social alienation(e.g., exclusion, shunning, snubbing)

Teasing

Threatening gestures

Verbal taunts (e.g., name calling, put-downs)

Verbal threats

Other _____

What interventions are used in your school to address verified acts of bullying behavior? (Check all that apply)

Community service

Conference with bully

Counseling

Detention

Expulsion

Increased supervision and monitoring of the student(s)

In-school suspension

Out-of-school suspension

Peer mediation

Restorative justice (providing a remedy for the wrong done)

Warning

Other _____

What interventions are used in your school for working with targeted students? (Check all that apply)

Counseling

Increased supervision and monitoring of the student

Encouragement of the student to seek help when targeted

Mediation/conflict resolution with an adult mediator

Peer mediation

Other _____

How would you rate your school in terms of being physically safe and providing a healthy learning environment for all students and adults? (Check one response)

Excellent

Very good

Good

Fair

Poor

How would you rate your school in terms of being emotionally/socially safe and providing a health learning environment for all students and adults? (Check one response)

Excellent

Very good

Good

Fair

Poor

How would you rate your school in terms of being intellectually safe and providing a healthy learning environment for all students and adults? (Check one response)

Excellent

Very good

Good

Fair

Poor

APPENDIX C

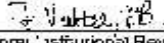
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD



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CONCURRENCE OF EXEMPTION

To: Cornelius Lewis
 Teacher Education
 Public Safety Bldg

From: Dr. Deborah Ellis 
 Chairperson, Behavioral Institutional Review Board (B3)

Date: February 17, 2015

RE: IRB #: 11421583X

Protocol Title: Attitudes and Perceptions of High School Principals with Regard to Bullying in Their Schools

Sponsor:

Protocol #: 591013719

The above-referenced protocol has been reviewed and found to qualify for Exemption according to paragraph #2 of the Department of Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46.101(b)).

- Revised Social/Behavioral Education Exempt: protocol Summary Form (received in the IRB Office 2/16/2015)
- Protocol (received in the IRB Office 2/16/2015)
- Research Information Sheet
- Recruitment Email/Letter
- Data Collection Tool: Survey

This proposal has not been evaluated for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human subjects in relation to the potential benefits.

- * Exempt protocols do not require annual review by the IRB.
- * All changes or amendments to the above-referenced protocol require review and approval by the IRB **BEFORE** implementation.
- * Adverse Reactions/Unexpected Events (AR/UE) must be reported on the appropriate form within the timeframe specified in the IRB Administration Office Policy (<http://irb.wayne.edu/policies-human-research.php>).

NOTE: Forms should be downloaded from the IRB Administration Office website <http://irb.wayne.edu> at each use.

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ABSTRACT**ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS WITH REGARD TO BULLYING IN THEIR SCHOOLS**

by

CORNELIUS JAMES LEWIS**December 2015**

Advisor: Dr. Sharon Elliott
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This study examined attitudes and perceptions of high school principals/assistant principals with regard to bullying in their schools. Bullying is a pervasive, unacceptable form of aggression that has negative consequences, both for the bully and the victim. School principals are charged with the responsibility of creating a safe environment for students, by effectively combatting any aggressive behavior that could harm a student. The extent to which principals are able to combat bullying, may depend largely on their attitudes and perceptions of bullying behavior in their schools. This purpose of the study was to compare the attitudes of high school principals with regard to bullying in their schools, and the effectiveness of intervention policies for bullying among students.

A survey was used to measure six subscales associated with bullying. A total of 270 surveys were distributed to high school principals/assistant principals throughout Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne counties. Forty-four participants completed the survey, for a response rate of 16.3%. Pearson product moment correlations were used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the five subscales that measured bullying, and types of

policies related to bullying. The results of the study indicated that the principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of school policies on bullying was not correlated with the six subscales used to measure perceptions of bullying. Also, a lack in variability of responses with regard to geographic location rendered it impossible to conduct an analysis of perceptions based on geographic location. The mean scores on the six subscales that measured perceptions of bullying did not differ between principals and assistant principals who worked in large or small schools. There was no statistical significance of how principals in large or small schools perceive bullying. Additional research is needed to determine how principals/assistant principals can manage bullying behaviors in their schools.

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