5-2018

Parents' Experiences, Perceptions, and Responses to Bullying in an Urban Public Elementary School

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Document Type
Dissertation

Degree Name
Doctor of Education (EdD)

Department
Executive Leadership

First Supervisor
Jeannine Dingus-Eason

Second Supervisor
Ruth Harris

Subject Categories
Education

Parents' Experiences, Perceptions, and Responses to Bullying in an Urban Public

Elementary School

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by

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Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education
St. John Fisher College

May 2018

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to several people in my life, without whom this would not have happened...*trust me.*   I would like to begin by thanking my Heavenly Father for allowing me an opportunity to conquer this dissertation journey.

To my Beloved Father… even though you were not on this earth while I was going through this journey the "determination" and "commitment" you taught me has carried me each day of my life. To my Beloved Mother... you have taught me that I will success as long as I put my mind to it. You were right! Thank you for sticking by me very closely on this journey.

To my husband... thank you for giving me the opportunity to fulfill my dream. Your support helped make this possible. To my sons "the fellas" thank you for joining me in the library even when you did not want to go. Your encouraging words inspired me, "Mom, you can make it to the finish line" (Ethan) "Mom, here is the "key" that will open the doors" (Stanford). *Stanford, thank you for putting a key in my face when you saw me crying or discouraged.*

To my family Aunt Barbara, Aunt Shirley, Mama Nita, Deborah (sister), Eugenia (sister), Diana (cousin), Delores (mother-in-law), Danette (sister-in-law), Enjoli (niece), and Chanel (niece) I cannot thank you enough for your support and love. To "the ladies" (Rose, Tarchia, Sherry, Melissa, Wanda, Selina, Lisa, Sharon, Cheryl, Anna, Angelina, Carla, Shirley, Erika, Mary Karol, and Terria) who stood by me in the storm. Thank you

for your daily encouragement, continuous prayers, and unconditional love! "*It is finished!*"

To my former colleague (Frank): From the beginning you would not let me say, "NO" anytime during this journey. My commitment to not saying, "NO" kept me going. I truly want to thank you for believing in me. I am also grateful for the support of the staff at the Center for Dispute Settlement.

Dr. Arthur Walton (my advisor), thank you for taking me under your wings to build the confidence I needed to complete this journey. Your patience and understanding was a motivator, you changed my life and I am so grateful. Dr. Jeannine Dingus-Eason thank you for hanging in there with me even when I tried to run away, you came after me. Thank you for getting me to the finish line. Dr. Ruth Harris, thank you for all your support and encouraging words.

Finally… a message to all those who feel the public school system has cheated them out of a decent education. I want you to remember... Do not let that circumstance stop you from fulfilling your dreams. Education is a powerful tool to attain and you deserve it.

> "Commit your works to the Lord, And your thoughts will be established."
> -Proverbs 16:3 NKJV

Biographical Sketch

Leslie B. Smith is currently the Director of Employment Skills Training and Youth Services. Throughout her 10 years with field of mediation for youth and adults, she served as the Director of Community Mediation at the Center for Dispute Settlement. Mrs. Smith attended State University of College at Brockport and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science in 1987. She attended Nazareth College and graduated with a Master of Science in Education in 1996. She holds a certification in Management Studies from the Simmons College in 1998. She came to St. John Fisher College in the summer of 2010 and began doctoral studies in the Ed. D. Program in Executive Leadership. Mrs. Smith pursued her research in Parents' Experiences, Perceptions, and Responses to Bullying under the direction of dissertation chair Dr. Jeannine Dingus-Eason, committee member Dr. Ruth Harris, and advisor Dr. Arthur Walton.

Abstract

Parents' ability to interpret and respond to acts of bullying is a complex issue (Sawyer, Mishna, Pepler, and Weiner, 2011). The current research recommendations stress the need for research to include parents and their responses to bullying. This study examined factors that influenced parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying. The sample size consisted of 940 parents with children that attended an elementary school in an urban public school. A triadic reciprocal determinism model was recognized as a proper framework for this study and served to examine the continuous reciprocal interaction between behavior, cognitive, and environment influences (Bandura, 1989). The quantitative methodology was comprised of descriptive, correlation, between groups (MANOVA), and regression analyses. Quantitative results indicated that parents who were not victimized during their K-12 school years were less concerned about their child being bullied at school. Parents who were victimized during their K-12 school years perceived bullying at school were strongly concerned and acknowledged bullying as a problem. However, parents indicated that when they are highly concerned about bullying they gave both passive and proactive advice to their children. In regards to response, parents are advising their children on how to proactively respond to bullying. On average, parents were likely to advise their children to fight back. Furthermore, parents reported themselves to be likely engaged in positive adult coping strategies as a means of intervening when bullying occurs and/or preventing bullying in general.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Within the realm of education, what constitutes a violent act, or other factors relating to bullying, has been interpreted differently by school staff, students, and parents, leading to variations and inconsistencies in the data reported on bullying related to crimes in public schools. Scholars including Graham and Juvonen (2002), Hand and Sanchez (2000), and Hong (2009) have pointed to a lack of consensus regarding a standard definition for school bullying, causing school administrators, faculty, staff, and parents to interpret and respond to bullying with whatever wisdom they can glean from their own limited experiences, as well as social and cultural biases. For example, Cunningham and Henggeler (2001) stated that teachers' resources on bullying, comes from the media, popular books, and newsletters. These sources included an array of strategies for addressing bullying, with little or no empirical support. Consequently, the lack of empirical sources left teachers inadequately prepared to address bullying. As a result, they would interpret and respond to bullying based on their own experiences and social and cultural biases.

As it relates to parents, Sawyer, Mishna, Pepler, and Wiener (2011) stated that the ability of parents to interpret and respond to acts of bullying is a complex issue. The complexities may include parents': misunderstanding of how bullying is defined, lack of awareness about their child's involvement in bullying, failure to disclose their child's bullying experiences, mixed reactions to their child's victimization, and limited knowledge about strategies and best practices for responding to bullying (Sawyer et al.,

2011). Although Sawyer et al. (2011) purported that parents' ability to interpret and respond to bullying is complex, the perceptions of parents are crucial and must not be ignored so that the gaps and/or misconceptions in the body of research may be bridged and better understood.

The research has largely ignored how parents' interpretations of bullying might limit their responses to acts of bullying and adversely impact their children (Sawyer et al., 2011). Inadequate or inappropriate parental responses to bullying could lead to adverse consequences and problematic behaviors, such as: low academic achievement, anti-social skills, and psychological challenges among school-aged children, who are often unable to defend themselves (Boulton, Trueman, & Murray, 2008; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Roland, 2002). In recognition of the vulnerability of America's students, and the obvious need to protect them, this study explored parents' experiences and perceptions when negotiating notions of bullying and victimization with their children.

The national data from the Indicators of Crime and Safety (Robers, Zhang & Truman, 2012) indicated that 828,000 youth between the ages of 12-18 reported non-fatal crimes at school. That figure is comprised of 358,000 victims of theft and 470,000 victims of violence. In the same year, 32 of every 1,000 students were victims of non-fatal crimes in schools, with 26 of every 1,000 students being victims of non-fatal crimes away from school (Robers, et al., 2012). Based on this report, 25% of urban schools reported 20 or more violent incidents, which was 2% higher than the percent and number of violent incidents reported for suburban and rural schools. DeVoe and Bauer (2011) suggested that the interpretation of data from the National Center for Education Statistics may leave some important questions unanswered and may be too open to interpretation,

as the reports on violent incidents originate from a variety of independent sources (e.g.,

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), School Crime Supplement to the NCVS,

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey and The School & Staffing Survey) and may be based

on different criteria (DeVoe & Bauer, 2011).

Bullying Policies

Reports of non-fatal crimes, such as bullying, represent a public policy problem.

During the last ten years, required reporting of bullying related crimes in public schools

by state and federal agencies has led to a dramatic increase in anti-bullying policies and

awareness campaigns in school districts and communities across the nation (Edmondson

& Zeman, 2011). For example, the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001)

mandated all public schools to report violent incidents and nonfatal crimes that occurred

on and around school grounds (DeVoe & Bauer 2011). Furthermore, under NCLB, states

were expected to provide students who attend persistently dangerous schools, or who are

victims of violent crimes at school, the option to transfer to a safe school (Gooden &

Harrington, 2005). In order for students to transfer to a safe school, a comprehensive

policy was sorely needed. Therefore, 3 years later the Unsafe School Choice Option

policy was amended to the NCLB because the term, "persistently dangerous school" and

"transfer to a safe school" needed clarification.

The Unsafe School Choice Option Policy (U.S. Department of Education, 2004)

was developed and included as part of NCLB in order to permit students who attended a

persistently dangerous school to transfer to a safe public or charter school. The USCO

policy was also designed to help states define and interpret the phenomenon of

persistently dangerous schools. The problems relating to variations in definitions and

interpretations of persistently dangerous schools, and subsequent inconsistencies in reporting may be exacerbated by the federal government's non-rigorous approach that does not require data disaggregation specific to the race and gender of students involved in violent incidents (Gooden & Harrington, 2005). Additionally, although the USCO policy was established, data relating to the number of students who transferred to a safe school was also not tracked by the federal government (Gooden & Harrington, 2005).

State education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) were expected to utilize law enforcement data on firearm possession, fighting, and/or gang activity on school grounds when identifying which schools should be characterized as persistently dangerous (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The combination of ineffective federal policies and vehement public outcry for immediate action to curtail any instances of bullying placed significant pressure on SEAs and LEAs. In response to these pressures, state policymakers, and school officials have advanced certain policies, procedures, and initiatives meant to address and curtail bullying in schools.

However, given the inconsistencies in defining, interpreting, and reporting data relating to acts of bullying; these leaders may be operating from a flawed perspective when they craft anti-bullying initiatives under the assumption that certain bullying behaviors are perceived and experienced in the same way across diverse racial/ethnic groups (Phelps, Meara, Davis, & Patton, 1991). Research conducted by Phelps, Meara, and Davis (1991) also suggested that race/ethnicity may play a role in how children and their parents perceive the term "bullying" and how they conceptualize "victimization" experiences. Based on the research by Griffin and Gross (2004) and Phelps, et al. (1991), school districts may have reexamined their policies and procedures in the context

of the perceptions of bullying that may be found among different racial and ethnic groups due to inconsistent definitions of bullying and methods used to measure bullying behaviors. If policy makers and school officials are to successfully address bullying in public schools, they must investigate and understand the relationship between perceived acts of bullying and how they are interpreted by adults with children in public schools.

Bullying and Race/Ethnicity

Currently, and unfortunately, little research has been conducted to identify and investigate the racial and ethnic implications of bullying and how different racial groups perceive the issue (Hanish & Guerra, 2000; Gallaher, Rohrbach, & Unger, 2004; Mouttapa, Valente, Qin, Way, & Rana, 2008; Seals & Young, 2003). The early salient research noted that bullying is a pervasive problem in schools. Before more researchers could contribute to the illumination of this difficult problem, the few studies on bullying painted a complex picture. For instance, one large-scale survey of approximately 15,686 U.S. youth (e.g., public and private schools in sixth to 10th grade) reported that bullying occurred more frequently through sixth to eighth grade. Hispanics were bullied marginally more than Whites or African Americans and the researchers noted that there is no significant differences in the frequency of bullying among youth from the urban, suburban, and rural areas (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, & Scheidt, 2001). Hanish and Guerra's (2000) longitudinal study of 1956 children from 14 different public urban elementary schools showed the risk of being victimized by peers varied by ethnicity and the school context, such as ethnically integrated schools. In regards to ethnicity, the authors asserted that Hispanic children from first to fourth grade were victimized marginally lower than African American or White children. However, as it

relates to the school context White children were victimized more than African American children.

This perspective of examining the ethnic demographics of bullying in different social communities further supports the conclusion that bullying cannot fully be understood outside of the larger societal social structure. To fully understand bullying in the United States, one must understand that bullying is an out product of American culture. Bullying as a concept does not stand in isolation from other key social issues with which America has had a long struggle. These issues include, power, oppression, belonging, isolation, and inclusion/exclusion, wealth, poverty, and access/scarcity of resources. These are larger social issues that are influenced by a variety of factors that are uniquely shaped by American history related to certain racial groups' access to power, privilege, and social, and economic resources. Many of these factors are informing and still prevalent in the social and political environments in which urban schools operate.

In more recent years, a new method of bullying has materialized. It is called "cyberbullying" and it has compounded an already problematic situation in schools (Wang, Iannotti & Nansel, 2009). An interesting corollary to the earlier researchers' shared understanding of bullying, Wang et al., (2009) posited that adolescents from affluent families were more involved in cyberbullying than any other group, because they have greater accessibility to computer and cell phones. African American adolescents were involved in physical, verbal, and cyberbullying and less likely to be involved in verbal and relational victimization. Hispanic adolescents were more engaged in physical bullying and less engaged in cyberbullying and victimization. Adolescents who classified themselves as "other" were targeted through cyberbullying more than Whites (Wang et

al., 2009).   As a result, then, these studies have shown that the relationship between race/ethnicity and bullying can be as diverse, tenuous, and complicated as the classroom, school, or community within which these acts occur (Juvonen, Mishna, & Graham, 2003). To simplify, the categorization and types of bullying may be reflected differently among different ethnic groups. Studies on bullying have relied mostly on self-reports (Nansel et al., 2001). Therefore, the determination of who is bullied or victimized is, apparently, based on the perceptions of those outside of a particular racial/ethnic group. When racial/ethnic groups are studied, researchers should consider examining factors characteristic of culturally diverse, urban communities that may contribute to high instances of bullying in urban school environments.

Urban Communities

Researchers have examined the prevalence of bullying and aggressive behavior in impoverished neighborhoods, finding that children of lower socioeconomic status experienced higher rates of bullying problems, when compared to upper or middle-class populations (Cunningham & Henggeler, 2001; Huaqing Qi & Kaiser, 2003; Talbott, Celinska, Simpson, & Coe, 2002). In the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989), children living in inner city communities were faced with considerable obstacles, such as: high dropout rate, increased criminal activity, pregnancies, alcohol, and/or drugs, and violence. In addition to these debilitating disadvantages, inner city families must also languish under limited access to social services, recreational opportunities, health care, as well as exposure to poverty, and violence (Melton & Oberlander, 1988). This research endeavored in urban settings and drawn conclusions about the beliefs and values of the people that live in these communities employing a deficit theory. Greene (2013)

purported that "deficit theories are often applied to low-income minority parents whose children are more often than not the subject of concern in media portrayals of the achievement gap and in policy statements such as NCLB" (p. 10).

Exploring other social and ecological factors possibly contributed to bullying and aggressive behaviors among urban youth. Green, Conley, and Barnett (2005) stated that children of lower socioeconomic status experienced bullying problems at a higher rate due to the social and ecological factors such as crime, violence, and poverty in many urban environments. The social and ecological factors urban families face contributed to their distrust of community and school institutions (Lareau, 1991; Ogbu, 1995). In turn, the distrust of community and school institutions may cause urban families to exclude such institutions when choosing to resolve their own conflicts. In the midst of the unique social and ecological challenges that existed exclusively within urban communities, Furstenberg (1993) noted that urban families are resilient, especially so when faced with stressful conditions.

Some of the social challenges that may have contributed to these stressful conditions are related to the history of discrimination that exists within the United States. According to Anderson (1999), African American parents resolved conflicts on their own because of a mistrust of what they deem to be "White authority," an institution unto itself that carries with it many years of discrimination. Therefore, neither the parents nor their children turn to adults at school (Marsh & Cornell, 2001). Marsh and Cornell (2001) asserted that minority students do not view the school staff as supportive sources for help when they encounter problems at school, preferring rather to handle conflicts themselves and often leading to disciplinary actions, such as suspension. As a result, disciplinary

actions possibly lead to a furthering of this sense of mistrust and disengagement

experienced by urban African American parents and their children (Gregory, Skiba, &

Noguera, 2010). Belgrave et al. (2009) and Boxer et al. (2008) purported that children

from low-income communities, who also mistrust authority, may have learned bullying

as a self-protective mechanism meant to protect against potential harm and potentially

resulted in greater engagement in the learned behavior. Researchers should continue

their work so that it may be better understood whether bullying behaviors among children

correlate to parenting characteristics.

Parenting Characteristics

Parent behaviors and involvement may shape children's abilities to socialize with

other adults and peers in both positive and negative ways. Baldry and Farrington (2000)

asserted that authoritative parents who condone aggressive behaviors increase the

likelihood of a child becoming aggressive toward others. Additionally, other researchers

indicated that parents who are restrictive, show harsh discipline, and low levels of

parental warmth, are minimally involved, and poor parental monitoring may also be

linked to childhood aggression (Bowers, Smith, & Binney, 1994; Flouri & Buchanan,

200; Olweus, 1993; Spriggs, Iannotti, Nansel & Haynie, 2007; Steven, De Bourdeaudhuji

& Van Oost, 2002). In further support of such a correlation, Spriggs et al. (2007) posited

that aggressive children are raised by parents who, as children themselves, lacked

parental supervision and involvement, and whom experienced parental disharmony.

Therefore, children seen to exhibit aggressive behaviors were considered potential bullies

due to lack of parental supervision. Aforementioned researchers are steeped in the deficit

perspective about children raised in urban settings. The researchers possibly assumed

that children who are not raised in traditional homes (as defined by White middle class standards) are lacking supervision. In addition, researchers may have assumed that urban children have anti-social behaviors and aggressive tendencies that make them predisposed to bullying behaviors. These are the same types of theories that fuel studies and programs examining the "schools to prison pipeline" and student discipline policies in urban schools (Archer, 2009). These educational policies promote suspension and criminalize behavior among children in urban settings, while that same behavior is portrayed as childhood infractions in White, suburban school environments (Archer, 2009).   Based on this finding researchers seems to draw their conclusions through an unbiased lens. As previously stated researchers proposed that students' family circumstances predicted behavioral responses.

Bully behaviors range in aggressiveness from passivity to overt aggression. Adolescent aggressive attitudes may possibly have roots in coercive parenting (Schwartz, Proctor & Chien, 2001), with the coercive parents potentially using aggressive techniques, such as: threatening language, anger, or controlling behaviors, which often inspire aggressive tendencies (Unnever & Cornell, 2004). Furthermore, parents' characteristics, based on the aforementioned research, are influencing the behaviors of children and affecting how they respond to bullying. Therefore, parenting characteristics must be included in the investigation when seeking to understand how children internalize bullying when developing anti-bullying curriculum.

Anti-bullying Curriculums

Prevention and intervention programs have been developed for schools to address bullying in schools. The rate at which students are bullying and exhibiting aggressive behaviors has increased, causing many schools to implement prevention and intervention programs or other policies to address the school's problems (Cunningham & Henggler, 2001; Orpinas, Home, & Staniszweki, 2003). Prevention and intervention programs were classified as targeted or universal programs designed to assess "at-risk" youth who have bullied or committed violent acts (Orpinas et al., 2003). These targeted programs were designed to address "at-risk" youth behaviors, such as: substance abuse, poor academics, performance, behavioral /emotional problems, and bullying (Orpinas et al., 2003). Universal programs were designed to train school officials to prevent, or at least reduce, violence in schools. In addition, universal programs modified school environments (Orpinas et al., 2003). Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Espelage & Swearer, 2008) is one of the anti-bullying curriculums that is commonly used in schools as a targeted or universal program to foster pro-social behavior, reduce aggression, and minimize peer harassment (Hong, 2009).

According to Espelage and Swearer (2008), school personnel and parents are given little guidance in implementing school violence prevention programs, due mostly to lack of resources. Furthermore, Hong (2009) noted that conflict resolution skills are seldom understood or employed in low-income urban areas in instances of violence, leading children toward continued disruptive school behavior, maybe even bullying. As a result of the minimal efforts at anti-bullying prevention and intervention programs; students, school personnel, and parents, seemed to experience a disconnect, or a rift,

which criticized the safety of the school grounds while degrading the confidence in the school system. These issues of safety and confidence are vital for student learning and absolutely essential to the reduction of bullying behaviors in schools. Despite the bullying prevention programs provided to the parents, a minimal amount of research to date has evaluated parental reaction to such recommendations.

Restorative justice, another intervention practice that has been integrated in schools has emerged as a means of addressing bullying and the outcomes of bullying situations (McCluskey, Lloyd, Kane, Riddell, Stead & Weedon, 2004). Research in the field of restorative justice has focused on interventions that try to repair the harm by including offenders, victims, and the community using three components: (a) forgiveness, (b) reconciliation, and (c) shame management (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2006). Between bullies and their victims, forgiveness is an action that showed benevolent feelings or attitudes toward the offender, as a person. The victim responded positively toward the offender for the wrongdoing that was committed (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2006). Additionally, reconciliation is an expression of love, compassion, and care that is shown to the offender by the victim. The victim reaffirms and restores the relationship toward the offender hoping that the wrongdoing does not repeat itself (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2006). Shame management, in the restorative justice field, means that offenders who are not ashamed of their harming acts are most likely to re-engage in causing harm (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2006).

Restorative justice practice is used across urban and suburban school settings, placing offenders face to face with their victims, in anticipation of creating a feeling of remorse and a corresponding reduction in bullying (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2006).

According to Farrington and Ttofi (2011), an effective anti-bullying program includes factors, such as: parents, teachers, classroom disciplinary methods, implementation of a whole school anti-bullying policy, and the use of instructional video. All of these elements could possibly reduce the rate of bullying and victimization in schools (Farrington & Ttofi, 2011).

Over the last decade there has been an increase in anti-bullying programming in education. There exists a growing demand for bullying prevention and intervention programming (Felix & Furlong, 2008) because there is limited research with regard to bullying prevention and intervention efforts in the United States schools (Sherer & Nickerson, 2010). Twemlow and Sacco (2008) stated that one program will not fit every school because each institution represents individual cases with different social, economic, and education needs. The research team also argued that these factors should determine the kind of program needed to address specific issues. Because of the lack of research and others' limited perceptions of bullying unrelated to that of urban parents, this new approach posed a challenge as programs were being designed and developed to address the issue of bullying in urban schools (Swearer, Espelage, Vaillanacourt, & Hymel, 2010).

Adding to the field of research, Hong (2009) stated that the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program failed to consider the socioeconomic situation of parents in impoverished communities, particularly African American and Hispanic parents. With the majority of studies on bullying and aggression, in regards to urban low socioeconomic neighborhoods, being conducted by teachers instead of parents, studies are unnecessarily limited and inaccurate (Hong, 2009). This proposal does not examine

prevention and intervention programming in schools. Instead, this proposal focused on urban parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying.

Problem Statement

During the last decade, the frequency at which instances of bullying have been experienced, witnessed, and reported by students at all grade levels, has seen a dramatic rise. For example, in their research, Juvonen, Mishna, and Graham (2003) and Nansel et al. (2001) indicated that approximately 30% of elementary students have experienced or witnessed bullying. In addition, the School Survey on Crime and Safety (SCCS, 2006, 2007, and 2008) reported that 25% of middle and high school students have frequently experienced, or witnessed, bullying among their peers on a daily, or weekly, basis.

According to Brown and Bzostek's (2003) study, children and early adolescents exhibited more aggression skills and developed more serious behaviors than middle school students. As a result, the aggressive behaviors impacted elementary students' social and academic development. All too often, middle and high school student misconduct eventually escalates into more serious forms of aggression and violence (Brown et al., 2003; Fitzpatrick, 1999). Researchers must expand their net and include children from elementary schools in their studies because bullying behaviors are increasing and salient national studies are sorely lacking. Most of the studies in elementary schools related to bullying have been conducted from local and state studies (Glew, Fan, Katon, Rivara, & Kernic, 2005). However, and undergirding the previous appeal for expanded research on bullying, the majority of national studies on bullying have been conducted exclusively for middle and high schools students (Nansel et al., 2001).

In schools, the four different types of bullying are commonly identified as the following: physical, verbal, relational, and cyberbullying (Limber, 2004). Data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2010) indicates that verbal aggression ranked among the highest forms of bullying reported. Unfortunately, verbal aggression often goes unnoticed or is not addressed. School administrators, teachers, and parents define and interpret bullying behaviors differently and those responses may also be perceived differently by their children (NCES, 2010).

Some of these forms of bullying go unaddressed by school staff and parents because their past experiences and subsequent interpretations of what constitutes bullying may be different than the current definitions of bullying. If school staff or parents fail to address certain forms of bullying, for whatever reason, children involved in the act of bullying may assume that bullying is a permissible or acceptable form of behavior. Based on research conducted by Craig, Pepler, and Atlas (2000), and Sharp, Thompson, and Arora (2000), bullying is a major problem because it often manifests itself in adverse psychological, social, and educational consequences, for a child, any time bullying is overlooked or minimized by adults. If bullying is minimized by adults, children can suffer an insufficient development of pro-social skills. For example, Hong (2009) asserted it is crucial for schools to address bullying and peer-victimization problems in order to foster pro-social attitude for healthy development.

In order for policy makers, school officials, and parents to address problems related to bullying in public schools, they must understand the relationship between perceived acts and interpretation of bullying based on experiences and differences among a diverse urban population. The proposed study investigated this problem by examining

the experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying by parents who have children attending an elementary school in an urban public school district in New York State.

Theoretical Rationale

   Social cognitive theory. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) has been applied in many cases in order to better understand aggressive behavior, such as bullying (Bandura, 1986). SCT posited that individual cognition is inextricably linked to individuals' behaviors (Bandura, 1986). Bandura expanded the work of development theories to include concepts from cognitive theories, such as social cognitive theory, which emphasized that people's perception of reality and how people regulated their behavior is based on the way they think, reason, and remember situations (Pajares, 2006). In other words, an individual's perception and interpretation is determined on how one would respond to a situation.

   Triadic reciprocal determinism model. The expansion of the work developed by Bandura's social cognitive theory favored a triadic reciprocal determinism model because the model has been used to understand human behavior. Furthermore, the triadic reciprocal determinism model showed the continuous reciprocal interaction between the behavior, cognitive, and environmental influences (Bandura, 1989). The term reciprocal determinism means that the environment can alter the behavior of an individual and the individual behavior can alter the environment, while the environment can also influence the individual, who influences the environment. This concept posits that behavior is determined by the individual, through their cognitive processes, environment, and external social stimuli (Bandura, 1989).

The development of Bandura's (1989) triadic reciprocal determinism model demonstrated how different subsystems, such as an individual's behavior and environment can influence each other. Three segments comprise the triadic reciprocal determinism model. The first of which, the reciprocal causation between individuals and behavior, reflects the interaction between thought, affect, and action. Roughly 40 years ago, researchers discerned that what individuals think, believe, and feel affects how they respond (Bandura, 1986; Bower, 1975; Neisser, 1976). For example, parental perceptions of a schools' efforts to manage and prevent bullying, affected the way in which parents responded to their child's victimization (Olweus, 1993). Sheldon and Epstein (2002) purported that parents who perceived their child's school as one that was not handling bullying effectively, often assumed that the school would be ineffective in addressing the victimization and, as a result, they withdrew from contacting the school. Conversely, Deplanty, Coulter-Kern, and Duchane (2007) noted that parents responded positively when they perceived the school climate to be positive, open, and encouraging. Additionally, they were more likely to contact the school when their child was victimized.

Second, the reciprocal causation between environment and individual established a connection to the interactive relation between personal characteristics and environmental influences. Bandura (1989) stated that human social influences are based upon individual expectations, beliefs, emotions, and cognitive competencies. These factors transfer information and activate emotional reactions through modeling, instruction, and social persuasion. Individuals evoke different reactions from their social environment based on their physical characteristics, such as: age, size, race, sex, and

physical attractiveness (Lerner, 1982). Similarly, people activate different social reactions

depending on their socially conferred roles and status (Bandura, 1989). For example,

aggressive children, such as bullies, are known to elicit different responses from their

peers than the non-aggressive children (Bandura, 1989).

Third, the reciprocal causation between behavior and environment segment

represents the relationship between behavior and environment events. In simpler terms,

the environmental condition of an individual influences their behavior, and in return, the

behavior of an individual influences the environment. Some aspects of the physical and

social environment possibly infringed on an individual when their mobility is restricted

(Bandura, 1989). For example, parents generally perceived a school to be safe unless

there was a reported concern of safety, lack of belongingness, or reports of bullying

(Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Duong, 2011). When parents perceived a school to be unsafe,

it negatively impacted the school environment (Bandura, 2001). When parents perceived

a school environment as unsafe, parents were more likely to refrain from talking to

school administrators about their child's victimization. Instead, the parents talked to their

child about the victimization because parents believed the school to be ineffective and

inefficient in handling bullying behaviors (Waasdorp et al., 2011). Unfortunately, the

lack of communication between parents and school administrators negatively impacted

the school environment (Waasdorp et al., 2011).

For purposes of this study, the triadic reciprocal determinism model provided the

theoretical framework for identifying the experiences and perceptions of urban parents in

the context of their interpretation and responses to bullying. The existing research has

not examined parents' perception of bullying and its influence on their response in urban

school environments. Therefore, Bandura's (1986) triadic reciprocal determinism model was an appropriate framework for conducting this research to identify and examine factors that influenced parental experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying in an urban school environment.

Research Questions

Bandura's triadic reciprocal determinism model has been used by researchers (Bandura, 2001; Kunda, 1999) to examine perceptions on behaviors. The proposed study applied Bandura's model to examine parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying in an urban setting. This study sought to examine parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying in an urban public elementary school district in New York State.

The following research questions have been developed to guide the researcher's examination of bullying within the context of the problem statement, purpose, and theoretical framework.

1. Do parents' experiences with bullying, parents' perceptions of bullying, and parents' concerns about bullying predict parents' likelihood of giving their children passive advice, proactive advice, or advice to fight back when their child is bullied?

2. Does the type of advice parents give to their children change based on the type of bullying (physical, verbal, relational, or cyber) the child has experienced?

3. Do parents' experiences with bullying, parents' perceptions of bullying, parents' concerns about bullying, child's history of being bullied, and child's history of bullying others predict parents' coping responses?

The proposed study has potential significance because it could inform professional practice and add to the body of knowledge on the topic of bullying in schools. The study could also help close a gap in the research literature on bullying in urban schools by examining urban parents and their experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying in an urban public elementary school.

Chapter Summary

Bullying behaviors in American schools have been on the rise for the last decade. In response, the federal government has introduced legislation, regulations, and policies to address escalating problems relating to bullying in schools. Additionally, the federal government has asked state and local education agencies to develop policies, procedures, and programs aimed at curtailing, and ending, bullying in schools (Gooden & Harrington, 2005). Although federal legislation and policies have been introduced to address the increase in bullying and related consequences, inconsistent definitions, and interpretations impede a thorough understanding of acts of bullying. These inconsistencies lead school administrators, teachers, and parents to use only their personal experiences when interpreting bullying behaviors (Phelps et al., 1991). The differences in experiences and perceptions between school officials and parents inspire conflicting interpretations and responses to bullying in school and at home. If policy makers, school officials, and parents are to address problems related to bullying, they must understand how the experiences and perceptions of urban parents may influence their responses to bullying. The proposed study examined the experiences, perceptions, and responses of urban parents to bullying in an urban public elementary school in New York State.

The next chapter, Review of the Literature, discusses the historical context of bullying and the varying forms and types of bullying. Chapter 2 also discusses the research and theoretical contexts used to address the proposed study's purpose, problem statement, and research questions. Chapter 3 describes the research design and methodology used in this study. Chapter 4 presents results from the "Parent Personal Experiences, Views, and Reactions Regarding Bullying Behavior" survey. Chapter 5 discusses the implications of the findings for practice and recommendations for future research.

Definitions of Terms

Bullying -   A type of aggression in which (a) the behavior is deliberate and harmful, (b) the behavior is repeated over time, and (c) there is an imbalance of power involving the more powerful attacking the less powerful (Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus et al., 1999).

Elementary School –   The New York State Education Department (NYSED) defines an elementary school as a school containing at least one grade lower than sixth and no grade higher than ninth, except those classified as middle schools (http://www.oms.nysed.gov/sedref/documents/GradeOrganization Descriptions.pdf).

Ethnicity -   Based on common ancestry, cultural heritage, and nations of origin. For example, African Americans, Asian Americans, Irish Americans, Native Americans, etc. that describes cultural characteristics (Schafer et al., 2015).

Perceptions –   Bandura (1994) defines perceptions as perceived self-efficacy

based on people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce effects.

Race / Ethnicity -   According to the U.S. Department of Education standard

classification race/ethnicity describe groups to which individuals

belong, identify with, or belong in the eyes of the community. The

designations are used to categorize U.S. citizens, resident aliens,

and other eligible non-citizens. Individuals are asked to first

designate ethnicity as:

Hispanic or Latino or Not Hispanic or Latino - A person of Cuban,

Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other

Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

Second, individuals are asked to indicate one or more races that

apply among the following:

American Indian or Alaska Native - A person having origins in any

of the original peoples of North and South America (including

Central America) who maintains cultural identification through

tribal affiliation or community attachment.

Asian - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of

the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian Subcontinent, including,

for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia,

Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Black or African American - A person having origins in any of the

black racial groups of Africa.

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

White - A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

Urban -   Urban fringe of a mid-size city: Any incorporated place, census designated place, or non-place territory within a core based statistical area (CBSA) or consolidated statistical area (CSA) of a mid-size city and defined as urban by the census bureau (NYSED / P-12 / accountability / title VI, part B - rural education achievement program (REAP) / common core of data locale code).

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

At a time when nearly one-third of American students are involved in bullying, victimization or bullying-victimization during the school year (Nansel et al., 2001), many adults are unaware of the frequency of bullying incidents that occurs in schools or whether their child is in any way involved in bullying (Limber, 2004). The research suggests that adults may be unaware of these factors because it is difficult to distinguish bullying behaviors from other forms of social interactions, such as: rough-and-tumble, play, or playful teasing (Craig & Pepler, 1997; Hazler, 1998). The research also suggests that, historically, many parents, teachers, and the wider community view children's negative interpersonal behaviors, such as rough play and squabbling as a developmental stage. The hope being that, as the children get older, they will discontinue the negative interpersonal behaviors (Humphrey & Crisp, 2008). Limber (2004) indicated that while certain adults may recognize the occurrence of bullying in schools, they see it as a rite of passage, a positive learning experience for children, and feel it is a normal part of growing up.

However, little research has focused on how parents' interpretation of bullying might impede their ability to respond to acts of bullying that could adversely impact their children (Sawyer et al., 2011). The lack of adequate, or appropriate, parental response to bullying could lead to adverse consequences and problematic behaviors among school-

aged children, such as: low academic achievement, antisocial skills, and psychological challenges (Boulton, Trueman, & Murray, 2008; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Roland, 2002). Based on the salient research, and in recognition of the potential adverse consequences of bullying and subsequent problematic behaviors among school aged children, the research on bullying must be expanded in order to consider the impact of parents' interpretation and responses to bullying.

Similarly recognizing the need for insight into the parental element of this issue, a study conducted by Sawyer et al. (2011) suggested that it is also important to consider parents' perspectives when conducting research on bullying in order to increase understanding of the factors that affect parents' ability to recognize and respond to acts of bullying among school-aged children. The authors acknowledged the complexities relating to the myriad factors that may affect parents' ability to recognize and respond to acts of bullying. Expounding on what they recognize as impediments to better understanding of bullying, the researchers advised that the difficulties may include, but are not limited to the following: misunderstanding of how bullying is defined, lack of awareness about their child's involvement in bullying, failure to disclose their child's bullying experiences, mixed reactions to their child's victimization, and limited knowledge about strategies and best practices to respond to bullying (Sawyer et al., 2011).

Sawyer et al. (2011) identified several factors that may affect parents' ability to recognize and respond appropriately to acts of bullying. First, some parents were uncertain about what comprises, or defines, bullying. Second, many parents were unaware that their children may have been victims of bullying. Third, some children did

not disclose their bullying experiences because they were fearful of losing friends or thought it would get worse. Fourth, parents could not protect their child from further victimization because they did not know it was happening. Sawyer et al. (2011) also suggested that, when parents are aware of bullying occurrences, they should work with school officials on strategies that will protect their children and reduced the chances of victimization in the future.

The remainder of this chapter provides the research context for this study, which is based on reviews of the research literature that are consistent with this study's purpose, problem statement, and research questions. These reviews included discussions of the relevant research literature, with a focus on the following themes: the historical context of bullying, the various forms and types of bullying, parents' experiences, perceptions and responses to bullying.

Historical Context of Bullying

Heinemann (1973) was one of the first to write on the phenomenon of bullying and coined the term *mobbing* as a "deviant individual or group that suddenly or subsides suddenly attacks someone." Years later, Olweus (1978, 1993) also used the term, but slightly adjusted the meaning of the term, defining mobbing as a "systematic one-on-one attack by a stronger child against a weaker child." As of the late 90s, Olweus adopted the term, "bullying" and ceased from using "mobbing" when he learned, from his research, that bullying was a very old phenomenon that existed as a result of perceived injustice between students and adults (Olweus, 1978). In addition to Olweus changing the term from "mobbing" to "bullying," his research helped him focus on creating a more specific meaning for the term "bullying." Olweus (1978, 1993) indicated that bullying can be

identified by the following characteristics: (a) it is aggressive behavior or intentional

harm doing, (b) which is carried out repeatedly and overtime, and (c) an interpersonal

relationship characterized by an imbalance of power (p.10, 11). Numerous definitions for

bullying could be found in the research literature. However, one of the most commonly

used definitions of bullying, among educators, policy makers, and social science

researchers, is as follows: an individual or a group of individuals, who repeatedly attacks,

humiliates, deliberately causes harm, and/or attacks a powerless person (Nansel et al.,

2001; Olweus, 1999; Salmivalli, 2010).

Forms and Types of Bullying

The research literature identified different types of bullying, including but not

limited to: physical, verbal, relational, and cyber. The research (Olweus & Limber, 2007;

Rivers & Smith, 1994) suggested that physical bullying is a commonly identified, and

easily observed, form of bullying among school-aged children. Physical bullying

includes the following acts: hitting, pushing, kicking, punching, biting, pinching,

restraining, "de-pantsing," (pulling someone's pants down) destroying property, and

stealing (Crick, Groteperter, & Bigbee, 2002; Coloroso, 2003; Olweus, 1993). Verbal

bullying is the most frequently reported form of bullying in schools. However, verbal

bullying, such as: name calling, abusive language, humiliation, and mockery (Bauman &

Del Rio, 2006; Coloroso, 2003; Olweus, 1993), often goes unaddressed or unnoticed by

adults (NCES, 2009). Relational bullying, generally defined as excluding someone from

a group by deliberately ignoring or isolating them and using inappropriate gestures

toward them, is among the more nuanced and difficult to detect by parents, teachers, or

other students (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Crick, Ostrov, & Werner, 2006; Woods &

Wolke, 2003; Olweus 1993). Lastly, cyberbullying occurs when someone communicates

aggression to another student through electronic devices like cell phones and computers.

Threats, rumors, forwarding private discussions, and posting negative information have

become common methods of taunting others through the use of electronic devices (Crick

et al, 2002; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006).

Research Context: Experiences, Perceptions, and Responses Relating to Bullying

   Adults' experiences related to bullying. During the last decade, several

researchers have examined adult recollections of their childhood bullying experiences

(Cooper, 2011; Crozier & Skliopidou, 2002; Eslea & Reed, 2001; Schafer et al., 2004;

Terrean-Miller, 2006). Eslea and Reed (2001) conducted two distinct such studies. Both

studies examined the distribution of adult memories of bullying at different ages while

assessing the accuracy of those memories on bullying. The first study used the Bullying

in Schools Questionnaire (Eslea & Reed, 2001) to examine distribution of bullying

memories at different ages and assessed the accuracy of those memories by using the

distribution of "yes,", "no," and "no clear memory" responses to the bullying item. The

second study used the Childhood Memories Questionnaire (Eslea & Reed, 2001) to

examine the distribution of bullying memories at different ages and assessed the accuracy

of those memories. Both studies used a series of Chi-squared tests to assess the accuracy

of adults' memories on bullying and how those memories impacted them during their

adulthood.

   The sample for this study consisted of 205 undergraduate students, comprised of

105 males and 100 females. Approximately 60% of the respondents were categorized as

younger students, students from ages 18 to 21 years, and 40% of the respondents were categorized as mature students, students from ages 22 to 42 years (Eslea & Reed, 2001).

Findings from the first study suggested that 73% of all respondents were bullied while in school. The responses from the study were ordered by age and the results indicated a normal distribution of scores with a peak at 13 years old. Additionally, the results indicated an identical distribution for both males and females. No significant differences between the younger and mature undergraduate students were observed with regard to the distribution of memories of bullying. Seventy-three percent of all respondents recalled experiencing either long continuous periods of victimization, or some bullying each year for a continuous number of years (Eslea & Reed, 2001).

Eslea and Reed (2001) also conducted a follow-up study that both examined the aforementioned distribution of bullying memories and analyzed the accuracy of those memories. Going a step further, Eslea and Reed (2001) compared the distribution of bullying memories to presents, teachers, holidays, illnesses, and best friends. The follow-up study was conducted because the items on the questionnaire in the first study did not allow the researchers to distinguish between the meaning of "definitely was not bullied" and "cannot remember at all." In order to address this issue, the researchers used the Childhood Memories Questionnaire developed by Eslea and Reed (2001) in the follow-up study. The items in the Childhood Memories Questionnaire provided a clearer delineation between adults' perceptions of bullying during their childhood and their actual experiences regarding bullying (Eslea & Reed, 2001).

The sample in the follow-up study included a total of 200 undergraduate students, including 91 males and 109 females. Fifty percent of the undergraduate students were

categorized as younger students, students from ages 18 to 21 years, and 50% were categorized as mature students, students from ages 22 to 55 years (Eslea & Reed, 2001).

Findings from the follow-up study indicated that 58% of both younger and mature undergraduate students reported that they were seldom bullied in school. The responses from the study were analyzed by age and the results indicated that, while the distribution range was normal, the age distribution was slightly erratic because the distribution decreased between ages 9 and 12 years old. Furthermore, the researchers indicated that differences in the shapes of the memory function curves caused uncertainties regarding accuracy of memories (Eslea & Reed, 2001).

The results from the follow-up study indicated that the distribution of bullying memories and the accuracy of those memories for presents, teachers, holidays, illnesses, and best friends had different memory curve shapes for each item. The "teacher" and "best friend" item had a few "no" responses and the other "yes" responses that created an identical image of the "no clear" memory curve. The findings indicated that the "presents" and "holiday" item had slightly more "no" responses, which were shown evenly throughout the respondents' childhood. The findings indicated that "illness" and "bullying" showed flatter memory curves and had a larger number of "no" responses (Eslea & Reed, 2001).

The results from the study, based on Chi-squared tests, indicated that the proportion of "no clear memory" responses, by respondents in the age groups 18 to 21 or 22 to 55, suggests that they may have forgotten about their teachers. Based on the study's results, "teachers" are more often remembered by younger groups between the ages of 7 to 8 and 12 to 18 years. Based on the study's results, "presents" were often

forgotten by respondents at the age of 11 or between the ages of 14 to 18 years. For "holidays," the results indicated that the younger group, between ages 15 to 18 years, remembered holidays significantly more than the age group 22 to 55 years. The results from the study for "illness" indicated that the age group 9 and 10 years remembered when they were ill. The results from the study for best friends showed that the 17 and 18 year age group remembered their childhood friends (Eslea & Reed, 2001).

Similarly, Schafer et al. (2004) examined adult recollections of their childhood bullying experiences by analyzing correlations between such experiences and the participants' reactions to certain life situations as adults. The researchers used the Retrospective Bullying Questionnaire (River, 2001) in order to collect the data for this study. Specifically, Schafer, et al. (2004) correlated and assessed data relating to the long-term impact of victimization experiences that adults encountered in primary and secondary schools. In addition, this study assessed how the participants' childhood bullying experiences affected them during adulthood. Eight hundred and eighty-four adults completed the questionnaire, which differentiated three victim types: those victimized only in primary school ($N = 96$); those victimized only in secondary school ($N = 81$); and stable victims victimized in both ($N = 70$). Each participant was asked to recall whether they experienced being bullied a few days, weeks, or longer in primary, or secondary school. In this study, over half of the victims recalled being bullied for weeks, months, or even longer. Forty-three percent of the primary-school victims reported their victimization experiences in primary school and 68% of the secondary-school victims reported being victimized in secondary school. Forty-six percent of the stable victims reported being victimized in primary school, while 55% of the stable victims reported

being victimized in secondary school. Fourteen percent of the victims were unable to recall being victimized in primary or secondary school (Schafer et al., 2004).

The findings from this study also suggested that bullying experiences in primary and/or secondary school negatively affected adults' perception of themselves and of others, irrespective of gender, profession, or cultural differences. In addition, the study suggests that adults who were bullied were uncomfortable establishing close relationships and had difficulty trusting other adults (Schafer et al., 2004).

Terrean-Miller (2006) conducted a study that examined the history of maternal caregivers' victimization during their childhood. In this study, maternal caregivers are females who self-identify as biological mothers, or primary caregivers, of a middle school student. The study used the Bullying Experiences Questionnaire (Terrean-Miller, 2006) to determine if maternal caregivers were more likely to be a bully, victim, bully/victim, or bystander during their K-12 educational years. The questionnaire also included a series of items aimed at discerning the type of bullying experience and level of distress experienced by maternal caregivers during their K – 12 educational years. The questionnaire also asked maternal caregivers to discuss how they intervened when they learned their child was victimized as a result of a bullying experience. The questionnaire for this study also included an open-ended question that provided the maternal caregivers with an opportunity to provide additional comments relating to their experiences with school bullying (Terrean-Miller, 2006).

The sample in this study consisted, primarily, of Caucasian females. The ethnic breakdown of the maternal caregivers participating in this study included 106 Caucasian /White, 1 African American/Black, and 1 Hispanic/Latino. The age of the participants

ranged from 28 to 62 years, with 80% of maternal caregivers in this study being married, 13% divorced, and 4% self-identified as single. Three percent of the participants indicated that they were married, but currently separated. Finally, 1% of the participants were married, but widowed (Terrean-Miller, 2006).

The study also identified the educational level of the maternal caregivers. Thirty percent of the participants attained a high school degree. The participants were comprised of 31% with a 2 year college or technical degree, 30% having graduated a 4 year college or university, and the remaining 16% having attained graduate, law, or medical school degrees (Terrean-Miller, 2006).

Terrean-Miller's (2006) study investigated if the maternal caregivers were likely to intervene based on the following factors: when the victim is distressed, if the victim is the caregivers' child, and if those caregivers' who had childhood experiences with bullying, were impacted in their choice of intervention. The results indicated that the caregivers' childhood history in regards to bullying was not a significant predictor of intervention in any forms of bullying. Surprisingly, it was found that cyberbullying was a significant predictor of maternal intervention. According to Terrean- Miller (2006) cyberbullying can be perceived by caregivers' as physical bullying which this may be seen as serious and may offer visible evidence. However, the findings showed that maternal caregivers' revealed that when they perceived their child is distressed or harmed is when they are more likely to intervene (Terrean-Miller, 2006).

This study provided an opportunity for respondents to self-identify as a bully, victim, bully/victim, or bystander, unlike many other studies that have been conducted on this subject. It is important to note that definitions of what it meant to be a bully, victim,

or neither were not provided for participants, so their self-identification was based on their own perceptions of the defining characteristics of each respective role. Thus, the accuracy of these self-reports is unknown as it is only as valid as the similarity of the individuals' definitions in relation to research definitions of the roles of bully, victim, bully/victim, and bystander. Additionally, there is always the possibility of purposeful inaccurate reporting for personal reasons (e.g., not endorsing bully status due to feeling guilty, not endorsing victim status due to embarrassment, shame or self-pride) (Terrean-Miller, 2006).

An unanticipated finding arose in the study: caregiver's responses highlighted that when they perceived bullying behavior to be immoral or inappropriate is when they would intervene (Terrean-Miller, 2006). Social values, norms, and inclusion were ideals that helped to shape caregivers beliefs and actions related to bullying situations. This response was surprising when responding to the individual vignettes no one noted immoral or inappropriateness of bullying behaviors (Terrean-Miller, 2006). The finding showed that maternal caregivers had a strong desire to teach children behaviors that were rule-abiding and socially appropriate and acceptable as well as to stop behaviors that contrast these notions (Terrean-Miller, 2006).

Further underscoring the extent of bullying as a problem, this study indicated that 90% of all respondents had experienced verbal bullying at some point during their K-12 educational years. Fifty percent of the respondents reported that they were bullied during their K-12 educational years and recalled telling a parent about their bullying experience. The researcher was surprised that they told their parents and this was an unexpected finding in this study (Terrean-Miller, 2006). Eighty-five percent of the respondents

reported that their parents did not intervene to learn more about the bullying incident. The qualitative findings indicated that the respondents reported their bullying experiences were most distressful in middle school years, specifically between the sixth and eighth grades (Terrean-Miller, 2006).

Similar to Terrean-Miller's study (2006), Cooper (2011) explored parents' childhood bullying experiences during their K-12 educational years using the revised Bullying and Relationship Scale (BRS) that was originally developed by Jantzer, Hoover, and Narloch (2006). Unlike the original BRS, the revised BRS did not include items relating to friendship/romantic relationships. Additionally, the subscales were condensed such that parents were asked to respond solely to their bullying experiences from kindergarten to twelfth grade (Cooper, 2011). Conversely, the original BRS was designed to evaluate bullying experiences and friendship/romantic relationships from childhood through college. Furthermore, the revised BRS required the respondents to indicate whether they believed their childhood bullying experiences were hurtful. Along with the revised BRS, Cooper (2011) used the Retrospective Bullying Questionnaire (RBQ) (Schafer et al., 2004), which focused on bullying and victimization.

This study's sample included 260 parents, which consisted of 90% females and 10% males. The participants' ages ranged from 41 to 50 years. The ethnic breakdown of the participants included Whites, 94.3%; African Americans, 3.8%; Hispanics or Latinos, 1.9%; American Indians or Alaska Natives, 0.4;% ; Asians, 0.8% ; and Others, 1.2%. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents indicated that they were married. The vast majority, 91%, of the respondents identified themselves as being the biological parent of a middle school student. Similarly, 98% of the respondents indicated that they had

children, and 82% of the respondents indicated that they had more than 1 child (Cooper, 2011).

The results from the RBQ questionnaire indicated that 90% of all respondents were able to recall being involved in bullying either as a bully, victim, or both during their childhood. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that they were victimized during their childhood. Thirty-five percent of the respondents were not involved in bullying, but witnessed bullying and/or victimization during their childhood.

A small portion, only 3%, of the respondents did not indicate whether they were bullied or bullied others during their childhood. Analysis of the study's findings focused on the points in time that parents experienced some form of bullying, with the following results: 24% of respondents reported being physically bullied during their childhood, 57% reported being verbally bullied during their childhood, 51% reported being isolated (relational bullying) during their childhood, 45% reported being bullied in middle/junior high school, 25% reported being bullied in elementary school, 24% reported being bullied in high school, and 37% reported rumors were spread about them while they were in school during middle/junior high school (Cooper, 2011).

The findings from this study also exposed the extent to which respondents felt their bullying experiences were hurtful. Twenty-three percent, virtually 1in 4, of the respondents strongly agreed that their childhood bullying experiences were hurtful. Twenty-one percent of the respondents agreed, less strongly, that their past childhood bullying experiences were hurtful. Finally, 8% of the respondents only slightly agreed, 3% slightly disagreed and three percent of the respondents disagreed, firmly, that their past childhood bullying experiences were hurtful. A clear minority, only 6% of the

respondents strongly disagreed that their past childhood bullying experiences were hurtful. Additionally, 37% of the respondents reported that they were not hurt because they did not encounter bullying during their childhood. In compiling and analyzing the study's data, the researcher posited that most parents had been hurt by bullying experiences, influencing their perceptions of bullying (Cooper, 2011).

Crozier and Skliopidou (2002) conducted a questionnaire with 236 adults who were nurses, teachers, postgraduate students or undergraduate students. The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 70 years and 50% of the sample was aged between 21 and 26 years old. The self-report questionnaire asked the respondents whether or not they could recall the types of names they were called during their childhood. In addition, the respondents indicated if the names they were able to recall were hurtful or unpleasant.

The researchers found that a significant amount of respondents in this study indicated that the names they were called during their childhood were hurtful. The respondents stated that the name-calling by their peers caused them to be angry, embarrassed, ashamed, or unhappy. A majority of the respondents indicated that their bullying experience (name-calling) affected their enjoyment of school. The other respondents indicated that their verbal bullying experience affected their academic performance or attendance (Crozier et al., 2002). Although, the name-calling had lasted for several years in most cases, the tendency was for the degree of hurt to reduce significantly over time. The consensus seemed to be that there had been no long-term effect, either on their personality, attitudes or their experience of school (Crozier et al., 2002).

Whereas, the respondents that indicated that they were "extremely" or "very" hurt by name-calling during their childhood had greater effects. The name-calling had a greater impact on their academic performance, attendance, friendships, activities, and enjoyment of school. The respondents reported that they notified a teacher or parent about their experience rather than ignore it. However, the respondents recalled their school was unresponsive when they informed a teacher about their bullying experience (Crozier et al., 2002).

Parents' Perceptions Related to Bullying

Several studies (Humphrey & Crisp, 2008; Mishna, Pepler, & Weiner, 2006; Sawyer et al., 2011; and Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Doug, 2011) have examined the parental perceptions of school bullying and their subsequent responses when confronted with it. Mishna, Pepler, and Weiner (2006) conducted two distinct studies that isolated fourth and fifth grade classes in order to examine the perceptions of the victimized children. The initial, quantitative, study employed the Safe School Questionnaire (Pepler, Connolly, & Craig, 1993; adapted by Olweus, 1989) in order to assess the frequency of school bullying via the following 2 response items: (a) how often have you been bullied in the current term, and (b) how often have you been bullied in the last five days (Mishna et al., 2006).

The first sample in the quantitative study included 157 students, comprised of 63 boys and 94 girls who participated in the Safe School Questionnaire. The participants in this study were drawn from 4 public schools in a large Canadian urban center. Two schools were categorized as low income and featured a high percentage of single parent families living in subsidized housing. Furthermore, the 2 schools had experienced a

recent uptick in its percentage of immigrant families. The remaining 2 schools were categorized as moderate to low income with a high percentage of single parent families living in single detached homes. In addition, both categories of schools had low to moderate numbers of recent immigrant families.

Findings from the Safe School Questionnaire indicated that 51% of the respondents reported that they were not bullied during the school year, 29% of the respondents reported that they were bullied once a week during the school year, and 6% of the respondents reported they were bullied several times a week during the school year (Mishna et al., 2006). In response to how often the respondents were bullied during the last 5 days, 63% of the respondents reported that they were not bullied during the last 5 days of school. Nineteen percent of the respondents reported that they were bullied once during the last 5 days of school. Six percent of the respondents reported that they were bullied twice during the last 5 days of school. Eight percent of the respondents reported that they were bullied 3 or 4 times during the last 5 days of school. Four percent of the respondents reported that they were bullied more than 4 times during the last 5 days of school (Mishna et al., 2006).

In the second study, Mishna, Pepler, and Weiner (2006), conducted a semi-structured interview in order to obtain and investigate the myriad perspectives and experiences of children, parents, teachers, and school administrators on the subject of bullying. First, the students (children) were asked to define bullying. Delving deeper, the researchers asked the children how they perceived bullying, how they coped if and when they were bullied, and in whom, if anyone, did they confide about their bullying experience. Then, the adults (parents, teachers and school administrators) were asked to

define bullying and answer the following questions: (a) were you aware of your child's victimization, (b) did the child tell you about their victimization, (c) what was your reaction when you learned of your child's victimization, (d) how did you respond to your child, and (e) how did you perceive the school's support.

The second sample in the qualitative study included semi-structured interviews with the following participants: 18 children, 20 parents, 12 teachers, 2 vice principals and 4 principals (Mishna et al., 2006). Similar to the preceding sample, this second study also featured participants from 4 public schools in a large Canadian urban center. Two schools were categorized as low income with a high percentage of single parent families living in subsidized housing. In addition, the 2 schools had a high percentage of recent immigrant families. The remaining 2 schools were categorized as moderate to low income with a high percentage of single parent families living in single detached homes. In addition, both categories from the 2 schools had low to moderate numbers of recent immigrant families.

Findings from the semi-structured interview indicated that the respondents defined bullying as an imbalance of power that exists between 2 individuals. For example, 1 person exerts their power towards another person. Mishna et al. (2006) also found that 18 of the respondents were not aware of their child or student being victimized by someone. Many of the respondents were surprised to learn that children were being bullied. The findings indicated that the respondents used a hierarchical approach to categorize bullying behaviors. For example, many respondents considered verbal bullying less serious than physical bullying. One respondent shared that she had advised her daughter to ignore any bullying that was not physical bullying.

Mishna et al. (2006) also examined adults' personal experiences with bullying in this study. Respondents reported being bullied as children and a few respondents reported that they bullied others. Findings from the semi-structured interview also indicated that the respondents were either physically or verbally bullied by their peers. Many of the respondents who reported being bullied at school described their subsequent feelings as sad, ashamed, afraid, and as if they had no recourse. Some respondents did not consider bullying behaviors as a serious problem. Other respondents indicated that their bullying experiences had increased their awareness to the covert nature of bullying. A few respondents admitted to bullying their peers during their childhood. Two respondents reported having shared their victimization experiences in hopes of empowering and inspiring hope in their students (Mishna et al., 2006). One respondent, who had initially reported she had never been bullied, went on to contradict her prior denial when she shared the following:

> I might have had the feeling that I was bullied, picked on, or excluded from certain groups, but I would never care about it or I would deal with it. I never felt victimized because of these attitudes. The key is not to feel victimized. (Mishna et al., 2006, p. 267).

Among the obstacles to complete accuracy and uniformity of participant responses, the researchers found variations in participant characterizations of bullying. Additionally, they found that the definitions provided in the study did not always match participants' bullying experiences. Finally, the researchers recognized that participants could assess similar incidents differently (Mishna et al., 2006).

In a study similar to the aforementioned Canadian studies, Humphrey and Crisp (2008) conducted a semi-structured interview in Australia that examined parental responses to learning that their child was exposed to bullying while in kindergarten. The 20 to 30 minutes, semi-structured interview was conducted with parents of children who had experienced bullying while in their Victorian kindergarten class between the 2000 and 2005 school years. The researchers used a form of sampling known as snowball sampling in order to recruit participants for this study. Snowball sampling is generally defined as an informal method of recruiting participants that are hard to reach, isolated, or suspicious of outsiders (Royse, Thyer, Padgett, & Logan, 2001). For example, the study's first author recruited potential parents from a local kindergarten parent committee. In addition, he contacted staff of a number of local kindergarten classrooms for assistance. The staff, then, extended an invitation to those parents whose children were bullied while in kindergarten. The participant sample for this study consisted of 3 mothers and 1father. The age of the participants ranged from 32 to 36, with children ages 4 and 5. Three of the participants were married and 1 participant reported that he was a single parent (Humphrey et al., 2008).

The findings from this study indicated that the 4 respondents noted their children were afraid to attend school and their self-esteem was low due to the verbal abuse (i.e. teasing, name-calling) or rejection experienced in school. The respondents reported that school officials did not intervene when they learned kindergarteners were victimized in the school. The respondents also reported that school officials claimed that they were unaware of the bullying events that occurred among kindergarteners. The respondents indicated that the term, *"bullying" or "bully"* was less likely to be used by school

officials when they confronted about the children's experiences with such negative behavior in their schools. Instead, the respondents reported that school officials used terms like "*inappropriate*" or "*unacceptable behavior*" to describe bullying behaviors.

This study found that parents and school officials were unable to agree on what constitutes bullying. These differences of opinion led the participants to believe that school officials were downplaying the seriousness of bullying, and were not interested in providing school intervention in order to address such future situations (Humphrey et al., 2008). Additionally, some parents reported that they felt angry, powerless, and guilty as a result of being unable to protect their children from bullying experiences. All respondents reported that the bullying experiences have caused them a high level of stress and anxiety. One such parent recalled feeling stress and anxiety after learning that she had placed her son in an environment that included the distress and potential of harm of bullying. Findings from the Humphrey et al.'s (2008) study concluded that, due to the inaction of school officials, parents lost confidence in their ability to protect their child from bullying and in the school officials' ability to understand, address, and curtail bullying behaviors in schools.

Waasdorp, Bradshaw, and Doug (2011) also conducted a study that examined parents' perceptions of their children's schools based on incidents of bullying. The researchers administered an online survey to the parents of victimized students from 93 different schools. The sample for this study consisted of 1,495 parents from a Maryland school district who had reported that their child was victimized in elementary, middle, and/or high school. A subset of the sample, 773 parents, was identified as eligible to participate in the study because they reported, on the survey, that their child had been

bullied within the last month. The eligible parents were identified from 93 different schools, which was comprised of 63 elementary schools, 18 middle schools, and 12 high schools within the Maryland school district. The social makeup of the schools were as follows: 45% of the schools were in urban communities, 44% of the schools were in suburban communities, and 11% of the schools were in rural communities (Waasdorp et al., 2011).

Waasdorp et al.'s (2011) study analyzed the data from the parent-survey (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995) in order to assess parental perceptions of schools. The parent-survey consisted of 9 response items: (a) my child feels like he/she belongs, (b) my child is safe, (c) the school has an orderly environment, (d) teachers care about my child, (e) bullying is a problem at my child's school, (f) adults prevent or stop bullying, (g) misbehaving students get away with it, (h) parents are welcome at the school, and (i) parents are comfortable talking with school staff at the school (Waasdorp et al., 2011).

This quantitative study's findings suggested that the respondents of victimized children were less concerned about their child's safety when they perceived the school as providing a safe and supportive environment for their child. Waasdorp et al. (2011) found that the respondents were less likely to talk to their child about victimization when they perceived their child's school to be effective at handling bullying situations. Findings from this study also indicated that some respondents believed that their child's school was ineffective and inefficient in their handling of bullying events, citing a perceived lack of support and concern about their child's safety. Following this trend, the respondents reported that they were more likely to discuss bullying and victimization with their children when the school was seen as ineffective and/or inefficient in curbing bullying

behaviors. This study also indicated that, when the respondents perceived their child's victimization to be serious, such as overt verbal threats or physical bullying, they were more likely to contact the school officials regarding the victimization (Waasdorp et al., 2011).

Waasdorp et al. (2011) also discovered differences in what parents believed school officials and teachers should do to prevent bullying in school, and that these differences revolved, primarily, around the age of the child. While the findings indicated that parents of younger children were more likely to be satisfied with the school's climate and bullying prevention efforts, parents of older children were, conversely, less likely to be satisfied with the school's same methods.

Sawyer et al. (2011) conducted a semi-structured interview that examined parents' perceptions of victimized children, including their own children's experiences with bullying. The students in this study included fourteen fourth and fifth grades classes from 4 different Canadian urban public schools. The sample for this study included 2 fathers, 14 mothers, and 2 mother-father dyads who indicated that their children had been bullied by peers. The ethnic breakdown of the parents in this study is as follows: 11 Caucasians, 6 Asians, 1 Latin American, 1 Jewish, and 1 unknown (Sawyer et al., 2011).

The participants in this study came from 4 public schools in a large Canadian urban center. Two schools were categorized as low income with a high percentage of single parent families living in subsidized housing. Additionally, the 2 schools were experiencing a high percentage of recent immigrant families, at the time of their inclusion in the study. The remaining 2 schools were categorized as moderate to low income with a high percentage of single parent families living in single detached homes. Finally, both

categories of schools had low to moderate numbers of recent immigrant families (Sawyer et al., 2011).

The findings in this study indicated that 9 mothers reported their daughters were victimized while in school. Furthermore, 5 mothers, 2 fathers, and 2 mother-father dyads reported their sons were victimized while in school. The researchers found that 80% of the respondents were aware of their child's victimization, with these respondents acknowledging the seriousness of bullying and the negative repercussions on their children. The respondents indicated that their bullied children exhibited signs of anxiety and/or depression, contributing to absenteeism from school. Moreover, this study's respondents indicated that they were uncertain as to how to discuss their child's bullying experiences with school officials (Sawyer et al., 2011). Findings from this study also indicated that the parents who were unaware of their child's victimization responded in one of 2 ways: (a) parents were surprised to learn their child was bullied because they had many friends and, and (b) some parents felt their child withheld their bullying experience because they feared it would get worse or they would lose a friend. Sawyer et al. (2011) interpreted these results, finding that the respondents experienced difficulty associating bullying with their child's friend. Of the parents that were unaware of their children's victimization, prior to the study, many minimized the possible effects of bullying, reporting that they perceived bullying to be common among children. These parents also indicated that bullying was a "normal part of growing" or "something kids do." In summary, this study's findings indicate that, if bullying is not addressed by adults, such instances may continue to go unnoticed and could possibly cause further injury for children (Sawyer, et al., 2011).

Parents' Responses Related to Bullying

Cooper 's (2011) and Cooper and Nickerson's (2013) study examined how parents cope (respond) with bullying behaviors as they relate to their children. To examine this question, the researcher used the revised Retrospective Bullying Questionnaire (RBQ), as developed by Schafer et al., (2004). In addition, Cooper (2011) and Cooper and Nickerson (2013) examined parental reactions to school bullying behaviors through Scherer and Nickerson's (2010) modified Current Bullying Prevention /Intervention Activities scale.

The RBQ was revised for this study because the original RBQ scale only allowed the respondents to check one or more coping methods. More appropriate for this researcher's purposes, the revised RBQ allowed the respondents to rate each coping method using a 4-point Likert scale: (1) Never, (2) Sometimes, (3) Often, and (4) Always. The revised RBQ assisted the researcher with determining what coping methods parents used, and how often they used them, when attempting to help their children address bullying behaviors (Cooper, 2011; Cooper & Nickerson, 2013).

The modified Current Bullying Prevention/Intervention Activities scale was used, in the study, to examine how parents responded when they learned their child was victimized in school. The original Current Bullying Prevention / Intervention Activities scale contains 43 prevention and intervention techniques. The modified version of this scale contains 11 prevention and intervention techniques. The 11 techniques identified, for this study, focused only on actions that parents took toward bullying. Parents were asked to provide the frequency with which they employed each strategy in order to help their children cope with bullying by using a 4-point Likert scale (1=Never, 4=Always).

This study also included an open-ended response area for parents to describe the coping strategies they used when they learned their child was victimized (Cooper, 2011; Cooper & Nickerson, 2013).

The sample for this study included 260 parents, 90% females and 10% males. The participants' ages ranged from 41 to 50 years. The ethnic breakdown of the participants included Whites, 94.3%; African Americans, 3.8%; Hispanics or Latinos, 1.9%; American Indians or Alaska Natives, 0.4;% ; Asians, 0.8% ; and Others, 1.2%. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents identified themselves as married. Ninety-one percent of the respondents identified themselves as being the biological parent of a middle school student. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents indicated that they had children. Eighty-two percent of the respondents indicated that they had more than 1 child (Cooper, 2011; Cooper & Nickerson, 2013).

The researchers analyzed data from both of the aforementioned instruments when investigating and developing their findings. In addition, the researchers developed reliability subscales to determine which items were rated consistently across participants. A positive finding, the study indicated 98% of the respondents were able to seek out assistance from family and/or parents when their child was bullied. Ninety-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they sought out assistance from teachers when their child was bullied. Eighty-six percent of the respondents admitted that they tried to avoid dealing with the bullying situation their child experienced in school. Findings from this study also indicated that 73.1% of the respondents reported that they would never tell their child to handle their bullying situation alone. Sixty-six percent of the respondents

reported that they would never tell their child to make fun of a bullying situation (Cooper, 2011; Cooper & Nickerson, 2013).

The respondents in the study were also asked whether or not they told their child to fight back when bullied by their peers. In response to this question, 44% of the respondents reported that they would not tell their child to fight back. Whereas, 42% of the respondents reported that they would, indeed, tell their child to fight back. The participants were also asked what strategies they would use to address bullying behavior. The participants' volunteered responses were comprised of the following percentages: 90% reported that they would talk with their child about bullying, 79% advised they would offer their child recommendations on how to cope with situations involving bullying, 74% stated that they developed ways to separate the bully and victim. Additionally, 34% reported that they would contact the other parent following a bullying incident. Overall, findings in this study indicated that the respondents often instructed their child to seek out help from an adult when they were bullied. In summary, the findings indicated that most of the respondents did not want their child to retaliate when bullied (Cooper, 2011; Cooper & Nickerson, 2013).

Brown, Aalsma, and Ott (2012) conducted a semi-structured interview that examined how middle school parents reported their child's bullying experiences to school officials using an interpretive phenomenological approach. The interpretive phenomenological approach is used when researchers want to understand participants' experiences, question the narrative, explore possibilities, and allow the phenomena to emerge (Diekelmann & Ironside, 2005; Patton, 2002).

The sample for this study consisted of 11 white parents who identified themselves as having a child in middle school. Five of the parents resided in a rural community, 6 of the parents resided in a suburban community, and 1 of the parents resided in an urban community. Each child, in this study, attended a different school district in Indianapolis, Indiana (Brown, Aalsma, & Ott, 2012).

For the purposes of this study, middle school parents who reported to a school official that their children were bullied, participated in a semi-structured interview that consisted of 3 stages: (1) discovery of behavioral changes in their children, (2) those who reported the bullying incident to a school official, and (3) examination of the aftermath of what transpired after the parents reported to school officials (Brown, Aalsma, & Ott, 2012).

Findings from this study indicated that during the discovery stage, parents advised their children on how to deal with bullying. At the discovery stage, the respondents advised their children to "ignore the situation," "to walk away," "encourage the person," or "compliment the person." These respondents reported that they felt they had failed when giving advice to their children about how to resolve bullying. The respondents who were aware of their children's victimization in elementary school saw a re-emergence from the same bullies in middle school (Brown, Aalsma, & Ott, 2012).

The second stage, known as the reporting stage, indicated that the respondents reported that they were uncertain of how to report their children's victimization. Furthermore, the respondents stated that a school secretary advised them to speak to a counselor or student service representative in order to report a bullying victimization incident. Ten out of this study's 11 respondents were informed by their children's school

official that their hands were tied. The findings also indicated that the respondents'

respective school officials were unwilling to call the bully's parents regarding their

bullying behavior (Brown, Aalsma, & Ott, 2012).

From within the findings of the aftermath stage of this study, one respondent

reported that, after 2 1/2 years, their child's victimization caused the respondent to feel,

to also feel victimized and helpless, because support from the school was not provided to

them or their child. Four respondents reported that their children received counseling

because of the bullying they experienced in school. Another respondent in this study

reported that they made trips to the hospital because their child experienced problems

with their "nerves." All of the respondents reported that school officials did not

adequately respond to bullying, causing a degree of trauma for their children.

The results of this study also indicated that, when school officials do not respond

sufficiently, parents often transferred their children to other schools in order to provide

greater safety, positive educational experiences, and social development for their

children. The overarching findings in this study indicated that all but one of the

respondents believed their children's victimization would continue after reporting

bullying incidents to the school officials (Brown, Aalsma, & Ott, 2012).

Theoretical Contexts

A limited number of studies have examined individuals' past experiences,

perceptions, and responses to bullying (Hanish & Guerra, 2000; Mishna, Pepler, &

Wiener, 2006; Smith & Ananiadou, 2003). A qualitative study conducted by Mishna,

Pepler, and Weiner (2006) examined how children, parents, teachers, and school

administrators' perceived acts of bullying. Mishna, Pepler, and Weiner (2006)

discovered that children, parents, teachers, and school administrators who have

experienced physical or verbal bullying, or social exclusion, perceived the behavior to be

serious and harmful. Other researchers purported that bullying, such as verbal and social

exclusion was perceived by children, parents, teachers, and school administrators as less

serious and not harmful (Hanish & Guerra, 2000; Smith & Ananiadou, 2003; Smith,

Daunic, Miller, & Robinson, 2002). Studies conducted by Craig, Pepler, and Atlas

(2000), Hanish and Guerra (2000), and Mishna, Pepler, and Weiner (2006) suggested

that children, parents, teachers, and school administrators who have not witnessed

bullying behaviors did not perceive verbal or social exclusion as bullying or thought it

was not necessary to intervene. Although it was generally disregarded, parents, teachers,

and educators were still uncertain as to how they should perceive the issue of bullying.

In an effort to address this gap in the research, this study examined parents' experiences,

perceptions, and responses to bullying, drawing upon Bandura's triadic reciprocal

determinism model which is based on social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). The

theoretical context that informs this proposal is comprised of Bandura's (1989) Social

Cognitive Theory: Triadic Determination Model.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory: Triadic Determination Model

Bandura's (1986) model expands upon the concepts from social cognitive theory,

which asserts that individual perceptions of reality and how individuals regulate their

behavior are based on the way they think, reason, and remember situations (Pajares,

2006). Bandura's model expanded on this theory by adding causal factors, which he calls

the triadic reciprocal determinism model. The triadic reciprocal determinism model

interacts with and influences, the individual's behavior and environment (Bandura,

1989). In Bandura's model, the term reciprocal determinism refers to a mutual action between causal factors (Bandura, 1986). The idea of determinism signifies the production of effects by events, contradicting the doctrinal interpretation, in which actions are completely determined by a prior sequence of causes, irrespective of the individual (Bandura, 1978, p. 345).

The development of Bandura's (1989) triadic reciprocal determinism model demonstrated how the people's behaviors and environments, act as different subsystems and influence one another. The dynamic between people and behavior reflects the interaction between thought, affect, and action. What people think, believe, and feel, affects how they respond (Bandura, 1986; Bower, 1975; Neisser, 1976). For example, an individual's perceptions of a school's efforts to manage and prevent bullying affect how parents respond to their child's victimization (Olweus, 1993). Sheldon and Epstein (2002) purported that parents who perceive their child's school as not handling bullying effectively may assume that the school would also be ineffective in addressing the victimization. As a result, parents are less likely to contact these schools in situations of bullying. Conversely, Deplanty, Coulter-Kern, and Duchane (2007) noted that parents were more likely to contact the school regarding bullying, if the school climate is perceived as positive, open, and encouraging.

Readily applied to the perspective of the components of bullying in schools, the environment and people segment of reciprocal causation relates to the interaction between personal characteristics and environmental influences. Investigating the phenomenon of bullying in schools, it is easy to recognize that human expectations, beliefs, emotional bents and cognitive competencies are developed and modified by

social influences. The messages that these influences offer, convey information and activate emotional reactions through modeling, instruction, and social persuasion (Bandura, 1989, p. 3). Predictably, people evoke different reactions from their social environment, based on physical characteristics, such as: age, size, race, sex, and physical attractiveness (Lerner, 1982). Similarly, people evince different social reactions, depending on their socially conferred roles and status. For example, children who have a reputation as tough aggressors, such as bullies, will elicit different reactions from their peers than those reputed to be unassertive (Bandura, 1989, p. 3).

The behavior and environment segment of reciprocal causation in the triadic system states that an individual's behavior is influenced by the environment and vice versa. In simpler terms, it means that a person's environment can alter their behavior, and, inversely, the behavior of an individual can alter their environment. Some aspects of the physical and social environment can possibly infringe on an individual when their mobility is restricted (Bandura, 1989). Accordingly, parents will perceive a school as safe unless or until a parent becomes concerned for their child's safety, or if their child begins to display a lack of belonging or discloses instances of bullying (Waasdorp et al., 2011). When parents' perceptions of safety become a concern, parents are more likely to talk to their child about their victimization instead of contacting school officials. Once parent confidence in the school is eroded, may feel that the school will be ineffective and inefficient in handling the incident (Waasdorp et al., 2011). Parents' perceptions of the school environment influenced the way that parents responded to bullying (Bandura, 2001). Bandura's (1986) triadic reciprocal determinism model has been used in other

studies (Cooper & Nickerson, 2013; Sawyer et al., 2011) in order to examine parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying.

Chapter Summary

Recent trends demonstrate escalating violence and bullying in schools, which can lead to deadly results (Hong, Cho & Lee, 2010; O'Toole, 2000; Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005; Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2002). Based on the emergent trends of the time, ongoing research was still sorely needed in order to inform the body of knowledge and professional practice on the topic of bullying. In addition, parents, school practitioners, and students must also get engaged in the issue in order to adequately address issues related to escalating violence and bullying in schools. For example, more research was needed to better understand if, when, and in what ways, parents' experiences and perceptions influenced their responses to bullying situations involving their children. These unanswered questions, once answered, will inform an improved understanding of these variables, resulting in better policies, procedures, and interventions designed to end the cycle of bullying and violence in schools. Furthermore, additional research is needed to better understand the varied relationships between the perceptions and interpretations of bullying among parents. This information will get policy makers, school officials, and parents on the "same page" and allow for more effective collaboration on issues related to bullying in public schools.

This chapter, Review of the Literature, was designed to promote an understanding of the historical context of bullying, parental responses to the various forms and types of bullying, and the research and theoretical contexts; all of which will be used to address this study's purpose while examining the study's research questions.

Presented in 4 sections, this chapter's first section, Historical Context of Bullying, placed the study in context by providing a historical overview of bullying. The second section, Forms and Types of Bullying, defined bullying in research. The third section, Research Context, provided summaries of the research on parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying. Finally, the fourth section, Theoretical Framework, provided summaries of the research on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory: Triadic Reciprocal Determination Model.

The next chapter, Research Design and Methodology, will describe the overall research design and methodology that was used by the researcher in examining parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying. Additionally, this chapter will provide the context for the research, identify the study participants, and describe the data collection instrument. Finally, this next chapter will discuss the data collection procedures, statistical analysis techniques and process for reporting results.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

This study examined parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying in an urban public elementary school in New York State. According to Limber (2004), school staff and parents interpret acts of bullying differently based on their varied experiences and backgrounds. If policy makers, school officials, and parents are to effectively address problems related to bullying in urban public schools, there must be an improved understanding of the perceived acts of bullying and their various interpretations, with respect to different cultural norms and experiences among urban parents (Spriggs et al., 2007).

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology used to answer the research questions for this study. This chapter also provides an overview of the research context, and describes participant criteria. In addition, this chapter describes the survey instrument used and discusses the data collection and analysis processes.

Research Questions

The following research questions address the purpose of this study:

1. Do parents' experiences with bullying, parents' perceptions of bullying, and parents' concerns about bullying predict parents' likelihood of giving their children passive advice, proactive advice, or advice to fight back when their child is bullied?

2. Does the type of advice parents give to their children change based on the type of bullying (physical, verbal, relational, or cyber) the child has experienced?

3. Do parents' experiences with bullying, parents' perceptions of bullying, parents' concerns about bullying, child's history of being bullied, and child's history of bullying others predict parents' coping responses?

A quantitative survey research design was used to address these research questions. A survey was administered to parents so that additional information on parents' race and ethnicity, experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying could be considered in the study.

A hierarchical regression analysis, with its group of predictor variables that, as a set, can predict a particular outcome, availed itself as the best option for use in this particular study. Accordingly, the hierarchical regression explored 5 predictors: (a) parent and child demographics, (b) parent and child history of bullying, (c) parent concerns about bullying, (d) parents' likelihood of intervening when their child experiences bullying; and, (e) is that relationship the same or different for physical, verbal, relational, and cyber. The results were considered by the researcher in order to predict parental responses to bullying. In addition, the study determined which variables are more important than others in predicting parents' responses.

Demographics

The cross-sectional survey was distributed through students' homework folders and sent home to 940 parents in an urban public elementary school district in New York State. A total of 122 surveys were submitted and completed. Fourteen surveys were submitted twice and eliminated from this study. Therefore, the results consisted of 108

completed surveys, for an overall response rate ($N = 108$) of 11%. While somewhat low, this response rate was within the expected range seen in broad sampling via mail or the Internet (Fowler, 2014).

Parental demographic characteristics, such as: gender, age, race/ethnicity, marital status, and number of children; were found to be relevant to the study and, as such, were included in the survey. In addition, parents reported whether or not they experienced bullying during their childhood. As shown in Table 3.1, the vast majority (91%) of parents who responded to the survey were female and, given the disproportionate representation of female respondents, the survey findings are best interpreted as representing mothers and female caregivers. The majority of respondents (76%) were 40 years of age or younger. The overrepresentation of younger parents and caregivers was to be expected since the sample originated from an elementary school where more of the parents are younger than they would be in a middle or high school setting. Of the sample, the majority of the participants were Hispanic (43%) and African American (40%), which is consistent with the student demographics in which 37% of students identified as Hispanic and 58% identified as African American. A relatively large percent (44%) of parents reported as single and/or never married, whereas almost one-third (31%) reported being married. Slightly more than half (51%) of respondents reported having either two or three children.

When asked, only 16% of parents said they never witnessed or experienced bullying as a child which, when compared with the 43% who said they saw bullying and 24% who said they were bullied by others, brought the extent and degree of the bullying problem into sharper focus.

Table 3.1

Demographics - Number of Respondents (N=108)

Variable	Totals
Gender	
Female	91%
Male	9%
Age Range	
21-30	36%
31-40	40%
41-50	18%
51-60	4%
Over 60	1%
Unknown	1%
Ethnicity/Race of Respondents	
Hispanic or Latino	43%
African American	40%
White	10%
Multi-racial	6%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Asian	1%
Marital Status of Respondents	
Single, never married	44%
Married	31%
Separated	12%
Divorced	9%
Widowed	4%
Parents' Bullying Experience as a Child	
Saw it sometimes	43%
Bullied by Others	24%
Never saw	16%
Bully/Victim	16%
Bullied Others	2%

Research Context

The research for this study was conducted in an inner city elementary school within a large urban school district in Western New York State. The host research site, within the district, included 1,074 students (557 males; 517 females) in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. The participating school's racial/ethnic student demographics were 58% Black/African Americans; 37% Hispanics/Latinos; 4% Whites; and 1% Other. The distribution of students by elementary grade level were 11% in pre-kindergarten; 14.8% in kindergarten; 14.1% in first grade; 14.8% in second grade; 12.8% in third grade; 10.7% in fourth grade; 11.64% in fifth grade; and, 10.3% in sixth grade. The majority, 90% of students, were considered economically disadvantaged based upon the number of students who qualified for free lunch. Eighteen percent of students had a disability and 12% of students were identified as having limited English proficient. Rounding out the relevant student categories identified in the study, 81% of the students were eligible for free lunch and 4% were eligible for reduced lunch. This particular school was, ultimately, selected as the participant source because its characteristics were most consistent with the focus of this study.

Research Sample

The research participants were parents who had 1 or more children attending the elementary school identified for purposes of this study. Children attending the identified school did not participate in the study. The identified school was also being considered because of its alignment with the researcher's background in teaching conflict resolution to students attending urban public schools and a career interest in working with urban parents. The urban school was identified because the parents' population size was large

and the school principal found the research topic relevant in learning about parents'
perspective of bullying.

Based on data from the school's office (2015-2016), the potential population for
the study was approximately 940 parents. Based on a potential population of 940 parents,
the researcher provided a survey to each household. Using the hierarchical regression (5
predictor variables) the researcher estimated a $10 - 30\%$ response rate which indicated
between (N=94) and (N=242) responses. The final sample size was determined by the
number of actual surveys completed and returned.

Informed Consent and Confidentiality

Participation in this research study was voluntary and participants were asked to
provide informed consent prior to completing the survey. By selecting an option
confirming informed consent prior to beginning the demographic questionnaire, the
participants indicated that they had read the information provided and consented to taking
part in the research. A complete review of the form is presented in Appendix A.

Participation in this research study was partially anonymous and confidential.
While the anonymous survey did not request contact information, it did, however, record
race and ethnicity. Apart from an email address and phone number to be provided only if
the participants wanted to receive an abstract of the completed study and/or participate in
the raffle drawing, the survey did not ask for any identifying information. No personally
identifiable information was shared outside of the study. Accordingly, in the event of any
publication or presentation of this study and/or its related research results, the security
and privacy of the study's participants will be protected. Additionally, any information
provided through the survey remained confidential.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

The researcher used a survey instrument (see Appendix B) that was consistent with the purpose and addressed the research questions in this study. The instrument was developed by Cooper and Nickerson (2013) and was designed to capture parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses related to bullying behavior. The survey instrument was entitled, "Parent Personal Experiences, Views, and Reactions Regarding Bullying Behavior" (Cooper & Nickerson, 2013). The survey was originally developed to examine adults' recollections of past experiences and reactions to bullying behavior. Observing propriety and decorum, the researcher obtained approval from the authors of the survey to use the instrument for purposes of this study. However, the researcher did not include the open-ended questions (i.e., question 43 and question 55) from the original survey because only quantitative data was collected for this study.

The survey instrument has not, as yet, been tested for any form of reliability or validity. The original authors stated that some of the questions on the survey were modeled after other measures, some of which have undergone psychometric testing and have established reliability and validity for those aspects, specifically. The design of the survey, and the items contained therein, provided a systematic framework for collecting the information required to address this study's research questions.

To facilitate completion of the survey and analysis of the data, the survey was divided into four sections. Part I of the survey, known as "Demographic Information", included items related to the respondents' racial/ethnic background, gender, age, marital status, and number of children attending the selected school. Part II of the survey, defined as "Personal Experience", included items related to the respondents' personal

experiences with bullying. Part III of the survey, "Views about Bullying", included items related to the respondents' perceptions of what constitutes bullying. Part IV of the survey, "Bullying and Your Child", included items related to the respondents' answers to bullying incidents involving their children.

Data Analysis

A cross-sectional design was used to gather quantitative survey data. The data was a "cross section" of respondents chosen to represent a particular target population and was used to collect data in a short period of time (Singleton & Straits, 2005). Cross-sectional surveys are limited by the amount and accuracy of information that individual respondents can capably report, regarding the groups and milieus to which they belong (Singleton & Stratis, 2005, p. 228).

Survey research consisted of a systematic questionnaire that asks prescribed questions. Once the questions were answered, the responses were numerically coded and analyzed (Singleton & Stratis, 2005). In this study, the unit of analysis was individuals, specifically, parents/guardians of children at an elementary school. The surveys were used to investigate relationships between two or more variables and to explain the variables in cause-and-effect terms (Singleton & Stratis, 2005).

Surveys are used extensively by researchers for descriptive and explanatory purposes. Surveys are effective when providing social descriptions because they have detailed and precise information about heterogeneous populations. Survey questions are used to gather information on past behavior, attitudes, belief, and values, and/or sensitive questions (Singleton & Stratis, 2005). Cooper and Nickerson's (2013) survey asked the participants about their backgrounds (i.e. gender, age, race/ethnic, marital status) and

their bullying experiences, perceptions of bullying, and their responses to bullying when they learned that their child had been bullied. Therefore, the quantitative, cross-sectional survey served as an appropriate methodology for this study.

Conversely, there were disadvantages to using a survey instrument for explanatory research. The criteria for inferring cause-and-effect relationships cannot always be easily established in surveys (Singleton & Stratis, 2005). Surveys are often a matter of interpretation, as the variables are measured at a single point in time. In addition, surveys are highly standardized, making it difficult to make any modifications after studies have begun. Lastly, when using surveys, respondents have the tendency to provide socially desirable answers when asked sensitive questions (Singleton & Stratis, 2005). These disadvantages were offset by analyzing the data for correlational relationships, thereby acknowledging the limitations on inferring cause-and-effect relationships. Parents were asked to reflect on their experiences from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Therefore, although the data was collected during a specific period of time, the responses reflected a broader time period. Because this was not a longitudinal study, no modifications to the instrument were needed after the study had begun. Finally, the use of specific, behaviorally-based questions minimized the social desirability effect.

Data Collection Process and Procedures

During the first week of data collection, the researcher provided a brief notice to the parents/guardians of the child's primary household in order to inform them that a survey would be forthcoming (second week). The brief notice was distributed through student homework folders and teachers were asked to place it in folders following normal

class procedures. The teachers' instructions (Appendix C) were provided with a cover memo in their mailboxes.

Seven days later (second week), following the same homework folder distribution process, the following information was sent home with students: informed consent, invitation to participate (Appendix D), and the survey with a self-addressed envelope to return to the school's main office. Seven days later (3rd week), teachers placed a reminder note (Appendix E) in students' homework folders.

Seven days later (4th week), teachers sent the same reminder note again through homework folders, using the same procedure as above. As the surveys were returned to, and arrived at the school's main office, school staff placed the surveys in a locked and secured file. Teachers were instructed not to open the envelopes. Seven days later (5th week), the researcher collected all returned surveys from the locked and secured file in the main office of the school, marking the end of the data collection process.

The only identifying information, such as full name and telephone number obtained from the participants during the study were collected for a raffle that the researcher offered as a thank-you for participating. All identifying information was separated from the surveys for the raffle drawing. After all surveys were collected, the raffle drawing took place and the winners were notified via telephone. Participants were also given the opportunity to provide their full name and email address if they were interested in receiving a summary report of the study's findings. That information, too, was also separated from the data.

Participation in the proposed research study was voluntary. All participants were 18 years of age, or older, at the time of their participation and were asked to provide

informed consent prior to completing the survey. Participants were asked to confirm their informed consent by checking a box provided at the beginning of the survey.

In order to protect participant confidentiality, the researcher maintained all information in a locked and secured file to be accessed only by the researcher. Because the optional identifying information was separated from the survey prior to data entry, the survey responses, themselves, were anonymous. Finally, the researcher agreed to destroy the amassed data at the end of a 2 year period, to ensure that the confidentiality of the participants is maintained.

Chapter Summary

This chapter summarized the research design and methodology used to answer the research questions for this study while providing an overview of the research context and defining the study's participants, population, and sample. In addition, this chapter described the chosen survey instrument and discussed the data collection and analysis procedures. The research procedures and analyses of the quantitative data are explained in detail in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5 the study concludes with a discussion of the findings, implications, and recommendations for parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying in an urban elementary school.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

      The purpose of this cross-sectional, survey study was to examine the experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying by parents who have children attending an elementary school in an urban public school district in New York State. This chapter is organized based on the primary research questions posed in Chapter 1 and the results from the survey. This chapter reports parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying in an urban elementary school.

Research Questions

  The following research questions address the purpose of this study:

1. Do parents' experiences with bullying, parents' perceptions of bullying, and parents' concerns about bullying predict parents' likelihood of giving their children passive advice, proactive advice, or advice to fight back when their child is bullied?

2. Does the type of advice parents give to their children change based on the type of bullying (physical, verbal, relational, or cyber) the child has experienced?

3. Do parents' experiences with bullying, parents' perceptions of bullying, parents' concerns about bullying, child's history of being bullied, and child's history of bullying others predict parents' coping responses?

Study Findings

  Sample characteristics. The researcher gathered and investigated results from a wide variety of salient and credible data mining tools. Among the most revelatory and useful of these potential methods were descriptive, correlational, between groups (MANOVA), and regression analyses. For example, descriptive statistics were helpful in that they allowed for the calculation and description of the sample demographics, while also summarizing key variables. Furthermore, correlations were calculated to determine the relationship between the intended predictor variables and the intended outcome variables within the regressions. Because parental variables, alone, did not reliably predict parents' likelihood of providing proactive, passive, or fight back advice to their children, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) examined what relationship, if any, existed between children's experiences of four types of bullying and parents' likelihood of giving each type of advice. Finally, because the intended predictor variables were determined to be significantly correlated with parents' coping responses, a multiple linear regression was run in order to test those relationships. As a contingency in the event of the scaled variables correlating to only 1 outcome variable (passive advice), the researcher planned to conduct a hierarchical regression analysis. However, since no such correlation was established, the secondary analysis was not warranted.

  Descriptive and correlational statistics for main variables. The scaled variables that were of primary interest were parent experiences with bullying, parent perceptions of bullying, parent concerns about bullying, likelihood of giving their child advice about how to handle bullying with passive responses, likelihood of giving their child advice about how to handle bullying with proactive responses, likelihood of

advising their child to fight back, and coping responses of parents. The descriptive statistics for these variables are found in Table 4.1.

The descriptive statistics indicated that most variables elicited a wide range of scores, supporting that parents gave responses along the full spectrum (low end, middle, and high end) of each scale. The relatively low mathematical means for parent experiences ($M = 1.5$, $SD = 0.6$) and parent concerns ($M = 1.9$, $SD = 1.0$) indicated that, on average, parents in this sample had little direct experience with being victimized when they were in school and relatively low concern about their own child being potentially involved in physical, verbal, relational, or cyberbullying. In contrast, the responses to questions about parental perceptions on bullying were relatively high ($M=4.7$, $SD = 0.5$). This particular scale was scored such that higher numbers reflected stronger beliefs that bullying is a problem and that action to stop it should be taken when it occurs.

In terms of how parents responded ($N = 108$), the average parent reported being more likely to give their child advice about how to proactively respond to bullying (e.g., get help from friends, a teacher, or family) ($M = 3.0$, $SD = 0.8$) than they would be to advise to passively respond (e.g., avoid the situation, make fun of it, or ignore it) ($M = 1.8$, $SD = 0.6$). On average, parents were moderately likely ($M = 2.2$, $SD = 1.1$) to advise their child to fight back. Parents were also moderately likely to engage in positive adult coping strategies (e.g., obtain resource, attend presentations, contacting other parents, spread information, etc.) in order to intervene and/or prevent bullying ($M = 2.4$, $SD = 0.9$).

In anticipation of the planned analyses, the skew and kurtosis statistics for passive advice, proactive advice, fighting back, and coping responses were calculated and

screened for normality. All of these outcome variables were within acceptable limits for a normal distribution. Therefore, between groups and regression analyses could be conducted using parametric statistical tests.

Overall, parents who responded on the low, middle, or upper ends of each scale, regarding their experiences and concerns about bullying, indicated that they were not directly victimized in school. Accordingly, these parents expressed little concern over their child being involved in actual or potential physical, verbal, relational, or cyberbullying. Conversely, parents who responded on the upper end of the spectrum communicated a stronger belief in bullying as a problem. Furthermore, the upper spectrum respondents asserted that action should be taken to stop all forms of bullying.

Based on the average response, parent participants were more likely to suggest a proactive response to bullying (e.g., get help from friends, a teacher, or family). Recognizing the importance of incorporating deterrence of future bullying into the response to current instances, these parents choose to involve adults or peers instead of advising their child to passively respond (e.g., avoid the situation, make fun of it, or ignore it). On average, parents were moderately likely to advise their child to fight back.

With regard to coping with bullying behaviors, parent participants revealed themselves to be moderately likely to engage in positive adult coping strategies (e.g., obtain resources, attend presentations, contact other parents, spread information, etc.). These methods helped parents to intervene in and/or prevent bullying. In addition, parents were willing to take additional measures to intervene when bullying occurred.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Variable Name	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Potential Range	*M*	*SD*
Parent Experiences	1.00	4.00	1.00 - 4.00	1.5	0.6
Parent Perceptions	3.20	5.80	1.00 - 6.00	4.7	0.5
Parent Concerns	1.00	4.00	1.00 - 4.00	1.9	1.0
Passive Responses	1.00	3.30	1.00 - 4.00	1.8	0.6
Proactive Responses	1.00	4.00	1.00 - 4.00	3.0	0.8
Fight Back Advice	1.00	4.00	1.00 - 4.00	2.2	1.1
Coping Responses	1.00	4.00	1.00 - 4.00	2.4	0.9

Correlational statistics. Bivariate correlations were investigated to see if the potential scaled predictor variables (parents' experiences, parents' perceptions, and parents' concerns) were significantly correlated with the potential scaled outcome variables (passive advice, proactive advice, fight back, and coping responses). However, only one predictor variable (parents' concerns) was significantly correlated with one of the advice variables (passive advice). Accordingly, the planned regression analysis, meant to test whether any parental data could predict the advice those parents would give, was not warranted. Unlike the aforementioned correlations, significant correlations were found between parents' experiences, perceptions, concerns, and the outcome variable of coping responses. Therefore, the planned regression analysis on whether these variables predict coping responses was warranted and is reported below.

Since parents' concerns about bullying were positively correlated with passive advice ($r=.29$, $p<.05$) was unexpected. This analysis was incorporated in the outcome of the researcher's study. This surprise correlation indicates that, as parental concern about bullying increases, so too, does the likelihood that they will give their child advice about

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passive ways to handle bullying. In addition, and equally surprising as the previously

mentioned correlation, the two outcome variables of passive and proactive advice were

positively correlated with one another ($r=.39$, $p<.05$), indicating that, as parents are more

likely to give their child advice about passive ways to handle bullying, they are also more

likely to give advice about proactive ways of handling bullying. The correlation statistics

for these variables are found in Table 4.2.

Additionally, since bivariate correlations were applied in order to evaluate the

potential scaled predictor variables (parents' experiences, parents' perceptions, and

parents' concern), their level of correlation with outcome variables (passive advice,

proactive advice, fight back, and coping responses) was able to be determined. Only one

predictor variable (parents' concerns) was significantly correlated with one of the advice

variables (passive advice), therefore the planned regression analysis to test whether

parents' experience, parents' perceptions, parents' concerns, and parent and child history

predicted the type of advice parents would give was not warranted. In contrast, all the

predictor variables (parents' experiences, parents' perceptions, parents' concerns)

correlated with the outcome variable of coping responses. Therefore, the planned

regression analysis on whether these variables predict coping responses was warranted.

An unexpected finding in this study indicated that parental concern about bullying

was positively correlated with passive advice. This indicated that parents give their child

passive advice on how to handle bullying when their concerns about bullying increases.

Also, surprisingly, the two outcome variables of passive and proactive advice were

positively correlated with one another. The results indicated that parents who are more

likely to give their child passive advice are also more likely to give them proactive advice.

Table 4.2

Correlations

Variable Name	1	2	3	4	5
1 Parent Experiences	-				
2 Parent Perceptions	.017	-			
3 Parent Concerns	.165	-.041	-		
4 Passive Responses	.092	.023	.292*	-	
5 Proactive Responses	.135	.051	.201	.391*	-

Note * p<.05

Between groups analysis for types of advice. Although parental advice was unable to be predicted by the scaled variables and no significant correlation was established with the outcome variables, the researcher's interest persisted regarding potential interconnectivity between a child's history with bullying and the advice parents would give. Because the independent variables were nominal (yes or no, the child had experienced physical, verbal, relational, or cyber bullying) and the dependent variables were scaled (proactive, passive, or fight back advice), the relationships had to be tested using an analysis of variance (ANOVA). Because there were multiple dependent variables that might be correlated with one another, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was deemed appropriate for use in this study. First, this research tool simultaneously searched for potential relationships between the independent and

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dependent variables. Then, the results were broken down by each dependent variable (Meyers et al., 2013).

As shown in Table 4.3, the multivariate test was an effective tool for this research. In this study, this tool was used to test for relationships between the occurrence of physical bullying and parents giving proactive and passive advice was not significant at the multivariate level (F= 3.11, p=.07). However, a significant relationship between the child having been physically bullied and parents offering proactive advice was found at the univariate level (F=6.41, p=.02).

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for this study to test between independent variable (child history) and dependent variable (parents' proactive and passive advice) correlation. Because there were multiple dependent variables that might be correlated with one another, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was preferred. The MANOVA also contrasts the results with those of parents whose children had not experienced that type of bullying.

Table 4.3

Multivariate Tests for Relationship between types of Bullying and Passive and Proactive Advice

Independent Variable		*F*	*p*	partial eta squared	observed power
Physical	Pillai's Trace	3.11	0.07	0.30	0.52
Verbal	Pillai's Trace	0.95	0.05	0.00	0.10
Relational	Pillai's Trace	0.63	0.47	0.04*	0.11

Note *p <.05

As shown in Table 4.4, a relationship was established. The quality of the relationship was such that parents whose children had been physically bullied, reported giving

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proactive advice less often ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 0.66$) than parents whose children had not been physically bullied ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.52$). However, no significant differences were recognized in the advice parents gave and whether or not their children had been verbally bullied ($F = 0.05$, $p = 0.95$) or relationally bullied ($F = 0.47$, $p = 0.63$). With regard to cyberbullying, no parent participants reported their child as a victim of cyberbullying. As such, no test between these subjects was applied.

Results indicated that, while the relationship between physical bullying and giving proactive and passive advice was not significant at the multivariate level, a significant relationship between children having been physically bullied and parents offering proactive advice was perceived at the univariate level. Specifically, parents whose children had been physically bullied reported giving proactive advice less often than parents whose children had not been physically bullied. No significant difference was found in the advice parents gave and whether or not their child had been verbally or relationally bullied. With no reported encounters with cyberbullying, no test between subjects could be run.

Table 4.4

Univariate Tests for Relationship between Types of Bullying and Passive and Proactive Advice

Independent Variable	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Physical			
Passive Responses			
No	13	2.17	0.60
Yes	7	1.82	0.49
Proactive Responses*			
No	13	3.44	0.52
Yes	7	2.76	0.70
Verbal			
Passive Responses			
No	6	1.95	0.43
Yes	15	2.01	0.68
Proactive Responses			
No	6	3.16	0.75
Yes	15	3.26	0.63
Relational			
Passive Responses			
No	12	1.95	0.64
Yes	9	2.05	0.59
Proactive Responses			
No	12	3.33	0.72
Yes	9	3.11	0.55
Cyberbullying			
Passive Responses			
No	21	2.00	0.61
Yes	21	2.00	0.61
Proactive Responses			
No	21	3.23	0.65
Yes	21	3.23	0.65

Note * p<.05

Multiple regression analysis to predict coping responses. A multiple linear

regression was conducted to test whether parents' experiences, parents' perceptions,

parents' concerns, child's history of being bullied, and child's history of bullying others

could predict parental coping responses. Results indicated that these predictor variables,

as a set, do significantly predict parents' coping responses ($F = 4.16$, $p = .00$). Together,

they accounted for 19% of the variance in coping responses. Of the five predictor

variables, two of them significantly contributed to the prediction: parents' perceptions of

bullying ($t = 3.49$, $p = .00$) and parents' level of concern about bullying ($t = 2.06$, $p =$

.04). Of those two, parents' perceptions carried more weight ($beta = 0.38$) than parents'

concerns ($beta = 0.24$).

In order to gain insight and predict parenting practices, the participant variables were

investigated. Two of the five predictor variables significantly contributed to the

prediction. Parents' perceptions of bullying and their level of concern about bullying

exerted the most influence on responses. Accordingly, when parents perceive and/or have

a concern about bullying they are more likely to use coping strategies (e.g., obtain

resource, attend presentations, contacting other parents, spread information, etc.) to

intervene and/or prevent bullying.

Table 4.5

Multiple Regression Analysis for Predicting Parent Responses

Variable	F	Beta	t
Regression	4.2		
Parent Experiences		0.24	1.99
Parent Perceptions		0.38	3.49*
Parent Concerns		0.24	2.06*
Child Bullied		0.18	-1.36
Bullied Others		-0.38	-.031

Note * p<.05

Summary

The results from this study indicated that parents are advising their children on how to proactively respond (e.g., get help from friends, a teacher, or family), to bullying rather than advising them to passively respond (e.g., avoid the situation, make fun of it, or ignore it) to bullying. Also, this study reported that, on average, parents were likely to advise their children to fight back. Furthermore, parents reported themselves to be likely to engage in positive adult coping strategies (e.g., obtain resources, attend presentations, contact other parents, spread information, etc.) as a means of intervening when bullying occurs and/or preventing bullying in general.

In the regression analyses, bivariate correlations were examined to determine whether the potential scaled predicator variables (parents' experiences, parents' perceptions, and parents' concern) were significantly correlated with the potential scaled outcome variables (passive advice, proactive advice, fight back, and coping responses). Findings showed that parents give their child advice about passive ways to handle bullying when their concerns about bullying increase. Also, surprisingly, 2 outcome variables of passive and proactive advice were positively correlated. Parents were more likely to give their child advice about passive and proactive ways of handling bullying.

In addition to the aforementioned analyses, a multivariate test was conducted to determine the relationship between physical bullying and giving proactive/passive advice. The results showed that the outcome variables (e.g., proactive advice and passive advice) were not significant at the multivariate level. Therefore, a univariate level of relationship was explored between the child having been physically bullied and parents offering proactive advice. Results indicated that parents whose children experienced physical

bullying were less likely to give proactive advice. Conversely, parents whose children did

not experience physical bullying were more likely to give proactive advice. In regards to

the other types of bullying (e.g., verbal, and relational) there was no significant difference

in the advice parents gave to their children. In this study, all parents indicated that their

child did not experience cyberbullying. Chapter 5 will discuss the implications of the

findings for practice and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

Chapter 5 provides implications derived from the findings of this research, which were guided by three research questions. The research questions included: a) do parents' experiences, perceptions and concerns about bullying predict parents' likelihood of giving their children advice that is characterized as passive or proactive, or advice to fight back when their child is bullied?, b) does the type of advice parents give to their children change based on the type of bullying the child has experienced? (i.e. physical, verbal, relational, or cyber bullying, and c) how do parents' experiences, perceptions, concerns about bullying and the child's history of being bullied and bullying others, predict which coping responses parents will choose?

These questions are important to enhance a full understanding of bullying in today's society because children are strongly influenced by the values communicated in their home and community environments. Beliefs and perceptions can inform action and there is scant research that has focused on parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses related to bullying (Misha, Pepler & Weiner, 2006; Sawyer et al., 2011; Waasdorp, Bradshaw & Doug, 2011).

Parents are a central component in understanding the socialization of children, particularly in the early stages of development. By exploring parents' experiences, perceptions and responses to bullying, practitioners may gain valuable information that

may lead to breakthroughs and new insights in the area of bullying and bullying prevention in the school community. Additionally, this chapter explores the implications of the study's findings, recommendations for future research efforts on related topics are suggested and lastly, offer limitations of the study.

Implications of Findings

Parents are required by law to protect their children from violence, injury, and abuse (United Nations, 1998). That responsibility to protect is not limited to the home environment, but extends to social environments like school settings. Therefore, there is a need to understand how adult caregivers, (parents) perceive the issue of bullying as it relates to their child, and the ways in which they respond to their child's victimization (Sawyer et al., 2011; Waasdorp, Bradshaw & Duong, 2011). It follows then, that there is a need for additional research on understanding parents' experiences, concerns, perceptions, and responses as it relates to bullying (Cooper & Nickerson, 2013; Duncan, 1999; Sawyer et al., 2011).

The implication woven into each of the chapters focused on how parents' personal experiences with bullying, shaped their perceptions and consequently the types of recommendations they offered their children in responding to bullying incidents. This implication is rooted in Bandura's work applying the Triadic Reciprocal Determinism Model to better understand aggressive behavior, such as bullying (Bandura, 1989).

To better illustrate the connection between this theory and the stated research questions, Chapter 1 of this study referenced the Triadic Reciprocal Determinism Model because the model has been used to understand human behavior. Essentially, the model proposes that behavior is influenced by the environment, the individual and by the

behavior itself. This model can be applied to parents in the bullying scenario. Parents' responses can be influenced by their social environments, prior personal experiences and values and the way they perceive the bullying behavior. Any part of the triangle that has factors that influence it will yield a different result. Bandura's work offers valuable insight into the profound implications of the parent perspective on bullying, particularly in urban school environments.

An examination of bullying among school-aged children (kindergarten to sixth grade) is particularly significant because the school environment is often the first opportunity for socialization for a younger child, among his/her peer group, outside of the home environment. Transitioning and navigating social relationships from the home environment to the larger school social environment can be challenging for both the parent and the child, sometimes in ways neither may be consciously aware. This study surveyed parents in an urban school community, in an effort to add insight and offer new perspectives to current research on parent perceptions and responses related to bullying, which to date, have primarily studied suburban parents.

The responses provided by parents who have not experienced bullying during their childhood in this study demonstrate that there is a lack of empathy for those who encountered bullying. These parents were unable to relate to bullying because there was no reference point of the impact and/or long term effects on someone when they were victimized. Additionally, it is important to note that growing up in today's times of social media, reality TV, and an increasingly complex social world, it may be inferred that bullying today looks different than the bullying of previous generations. Therefore, these parents may not have understood bullying experiences that may be occurring with

children and their peers at school. Without further probing into social situations that children today are navigating and the complexity of dynamics among the peer groups of today's youth, parents may not be aware that their child is engaged in or impacted by bullying behaviors.

According to Sawyer et al. (2011), parents are surprised to learn that their child was bullied because they had lots of friends and did not consider their child vulnerable to being bullied. Bullying was associated with social isolation, a child with a lot of friends could not be bullied, or that was what some parents assumed. If bullying is happening at school, whose job is it to deal with it, the parents or the school leaders? The parents within this study, may have assumed that if their child was victimized by their peers, an adult at school would effectively address the problem. There is the assumption that school administrators and staff will handle their child's social and emotional care at school and parents will be responsible for safeguarding their child at home.

Conversely, parents who were able to recall their bullying experiences were able to empathize with the victims of bullying, and believed that bullying should not go unnoticed by adults. Parents believed actions should be taken to stop bullying among students. Additionally, parents want bullying incidents to be addressed by school staff and they want to be informed of the disciplinary actions that will follow bullying incidents. Parents want school officials to document instances of bullying and compile reports that accurately reflect the occurrence of bullying behavior in the school community and inform them of the school safety plans (Brown et al., 2012).

The responses provided by parents in this study demonstrate that bullying amongst children needs to be recognized and addressed by an adult at the elementary

school. However, according to Marsh & Cornell (2001), minority parents and children prefer to resolve their conflict themselves because they do not have confidence in school staff to help when they encounter problems at school. This perception of diminished confidence is a commonly held belief among marginalized groups. Where there are issues of power imbalance, majority and minority groups, the assumption of a mutually agreed partnership may be standing on a weak foundation. The home school partnership in urban settings may be based on a flawed assumption—that there is a partnership that is based on mutual trust and respect.

This point illustrates the importance of trust and respect within the relationship dynamic of parents and school leaders as partners in addressing social concerns for today's youth. This is particularly important for school communities servicing families of minority or marginalized groups. The implication for schools is that there is need to understand that minority or marginalized groups may perceive a lack of trust among school officials in regards to them addressing any types of bullying behaviors that occur on the school grounds. Educators need to understand the importance of building a trusting relationship with parents in order to establish successful policies.

According to Greene (2013), parents need to know that educators are listening and value their voices. This is an essential component in any effort to build parent-family-school partnerships (p. 33). Educators working in urban settings can learn from Greene (2013) that building an effective and trusting relationship is based on educator's commitment to engage parents should service the interests of children and their families, not only schools. Whether parents will actively partner with schools to educate their children depends on whether a school is willing to acknowledge, respect, and respond to

their families' needs and differences reflected in cultural backgrounds of their student communities.

The research supports the notion offered by the parents of this study. Prior research asserts that children who perceive an incident as bullying and the adult does not, may create some challenges to the child due to the adult lack of response. The child may be reluctant to disclose future bullying incidents because the adult was not responsive (Mishna et al., 2004). Inadequate or inappropriate parental responses to bullying could lead to adverse consequences and problematic behaviors, such as: low academic achievement, anti-social skills, and psychological challenges among school-aged children, who are often unable to defend for themselves (Boulton et al., 2008; Hawker & Boulter, 2000; Roland, 2002).

Often, parents are advising their children on how to deal with bullying, in spite of their preference of wanting their child to consult an adult, parents believed they did not have a genuine trusting relationship with an adult at school that had their child's interest at heart. When faced with this power dynamic, the parent's instinct of fight or flight kicks in and when faced with this type of conflict, parents tended to teach their child how to defend themselves, in ways that reflect how the parents themselves, personally handle conflict.

According to Sawyer et al. (2011), many parents who suggested retaliation as a strategy to respond to being bullied, explained that they did so from their feelings of exhaustion as nothing else had worked (p. 1800). The study revealed that when telling their children how to defend themselves in bullying situations, parents suggested both proactive responses (e.g., get help from friends, a teacher, or family) and passive

responses (e.g., avoid the situation, make fun of it, or ignore it), focusing on adjustments in behavior by the bullying victim. Some parents believed that these adjustments were an effective deterrence from future bullying behavior. Parents advised their child to engage in passive response (e.g., avoid the situation, make fun of it or ignore it) when faced with bullying behaviors.

Similarly, Brown et al., (2002) found when parents' concerns increased they advised their children to "ignore the situation," "to walk away," "encourage the person," or "compliment the person" hoping that such responses would resolve the problem or that the bullying incident would not repeat itself. These avoidance strategies were a reflection of the feelings of powerlessness that are often associated with victimization. Those types of responses could be detrimental to children because parents fail to give advice to their children about how to resolve bullying (Brown et al., 2002).

This study highlights that avoidance strategies given by parents do not provide children with the necessary skills to help them resolve conflict situations effectively, rather they are encouraged to avoid or deny that these situations exist. According to Kochenderfer-Ladd (2004), parents who told their children to ignore bullying had children who were at higher risk of experiencing reoccurring incidences of being bullied. It is also important to note that parents must understand that it is difficult for victimized children to forget about their experiences, which could possibly lead to a higher risk of internalizing problems (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004).

Unexpectedly, this study revealed that when parents were more concerned about their child experiencing bullying is when they were more likely to advise their child to respond passively rather than proactively. Research supports the notion that parents give

proactive advice in different ways, such as talking to their child, informing an adult, contacting the bully, or contacting the bully's parents (Ladd & Kochenderfer, 2002; Mishna et al., 2006; Sawyer et al., 2011). In regards to proactive responses, another implication of this study is that parents do not want their children to handle bullying alone and/or isolate themselves when victimized by their peers. Parents believe that children should be part of a larger social community of their peers. Bullying affects not only the individual, but has implications for the larger social group as well.

     Another implication of this study suggests that parents whose children were physically bullied were less likely to recommend proactive intervention because they were afraid of a reoccurrence of violence. There were some parents who were uncertain of how to advise their child on how to deal with physical bullying, so they did not say anything. On the other hand, children who had not experienced being physically bullied, received proactive advice from their parents.

     In this study, the parents who perceived and/or were overly concerned about bullying were more likely to use positive coping strategies (e.g., obtain resources, attend presentations, contact other parents, spread information, etc.) to intervene and/or prevent bullying. Parents are willing to offer suggestions to help effectively communicate with school staff when they learn their child has been victimized and/or bullied others. Parents are concerned about bullying and have their own pro-social attitudes related to bullying. According to Cooper and Nickerson (2013) if pro-social attitudes could be fostered, parents may become interested in learning and using more empirically-based strategies (e.g., contact school) to address their child's bullying experience.

According to Espelage and Swearer (2008), school personnel and parents are given little guidance in implementing school violence prevention programs, due mostly to lack of resources. Furthermore, Hong (2009) noted that conflict resolution training taught in urban settings does not address the magnitude of violence in young people's lives. These conflict resolution skills are seldom employed in low-income urban areas when violent situations occur. As a result in urban educational settings, there are minimal efforts at anti-bullying prevention and intervention programs; students, school personnel, and parents, seem to experience a disconnect about the purpose and scope of anti-bullying initiatives. The lack of a cohesive anti-violence plan jeopardized the safety of the school grounds and degraded the parents' confidence in the school system. These issues of safety and confidence are vital for student learning and absolutely essential to the reduction of bullying behaviors in schools. Despite the bullying prevention programs provided to the parents, a minimal amount of research to date has evaluated parental reaction to such recommendations.

Recommendations

This study will provide recommendations, aimed at helping educators and parents find more effective ways in understanding parents' perspectives of bullying. The hope is that these insights will help to positively inform practical strategies that can be impactful in anti-bullying initiatives and improve the partnership between educators and the community in addressing bullying in schools. The first recommendation proposed by this researcher that a collaborative relationship between educators and parents must be at the cornerstone of effective school policies, particularly in urban school environments. This can be supported by the work of Epstein (1995) the architect of traditional forms of

parent involvement in schools. Epstein's model, derived from White middle class values

that parent involvement includes attending meetings, membership in Parent Teacher

Organization, chaperoning field trips and participation in fundraisers. This model focuses

primarily on the obligations that families have to teachers, not the obligations that schools

have to families, or the ethical responsibility that teachers and parents might have to one

another.

In urban school environments there is complexity that impacts the relationship

between school and the home environment of students. This relationship is impacted by

issues of race, class, and power that are reflected in the larger society. These issues shape

the home-school partnership in ways that are not present in white suburban educational

environments (Greene, 2013).

Educators' perceptions about the role of parents in schools can be directly

influenced by educator assumptions and conclusions about parents. In urban school

environments it is common for educators to offer a deficit perspective model when

talking about parent participation. Teachers and administrators may possibly assume that

their students, have parents who do not prioritize education, have unstable and

unstructured home environments, lack responsible supervision and that parents of their

students do not think about preparing their children for healthy and productive futures.

The second recommendation to educators is that they should refrain from making

assumptions or drawing conclusions about parents shared perceptions or experiences with

bullying. The accuracy of these assumptions could negatively impact educational policies

related to bullying. In order to have an accurate perspective about bullying, educators

and parents should acknowledge that there are parents that have not experienced bullying

during their childhood nor have any reference point from which to explore this topic. Schools should understand that parents in this category must, first be educated about the topic of bullying.

A third recommendation is that schools should establish a shared definition for bullying among members of the school community. Parents, teachers, students and administration should receive information and training that characterizes bullying behavior, provides clear definitions, and outlines the effects of bullying on both the individual and the overall school community. This will help to minimize the likelihood of misinterpretation of bullying mentioned in Sawyer et al.'s (2011) research.

A fourth recommendation is that schools should establish an outreach and education plan related to bullying. The plan could help parents gain an understanding of the schools' policy in relation to bullying behavior among students, and outline the expectations and protocol related to how school staff will address bullying when it occurs on the school grounds.

Pro-social attitudes. A fifth recommendation would be to educate the school-wide community in pro-social concepts to foster a healthy and supportive school community. Parents should be offered suggestions to help them effectively communicate with school staff when they learn their child has been victimized and/or bullied others. Parents are concerned about bullying and have their own pro-social attitudes related to bullying. If pro-social attitudes could be fostered, parents may become interested in learning and using more empirically-based strategies (e.g., contact school) to address their child's bullying experience (Cooper & Nickerson, 2013). Schools need to understand that parents start an examination of bullying from a different reference point

than educators, researchers, and practitioners in the human services field. Education and training to parent groups should be tailored to understand and reflect the factors that may impact parents' perspectives about bullying (e.g., culture, personal experiences with conflict, and experiences of parents being members of marginalized groups). As part of the outreach and awareness components of the anti-bullying initiative, school leadership should consider providing training materials (e.g., surveys, curriculum, pamphlets) for students and parents because the definitions and interpretations of bullying could possibly vary across cultures.

Future research. Future research could examine circumstances that will influence the types of advice parents offer in relation to the type of bullying. In this study, there was a positive correlation between parents providing proactive and passive responses, therefore research is needed to provide guidance in helping schools and parents know that they may be providing contradictory advice on how to handle bullying. For example, on one hand a child is told to ignore the situation while also being told to inform adults about their bullying experience. Research efforts need to inform school and parents of the types of mixed messages that may be communicated to children about conflict, power relationships, and individual and group behavior. Additionally, research can explore developing parental education programs that will help schools and parents understand the difference between passive and proactive responses, and how those responses will inform the individual's perspectives about conflict and power relationships in the future.   Research can assist schools and parents in critically thinking about effective proactive and passive responses to bullying, both in short term situations and long term as children grow into young adults.

Future research should include a translated or bilingual version of the survey, which may have had a positive impact on the response rate. There were a substantial amount of non-English speaking parents whose children attended the elementary school. With an increase in the response rate researchers could gain an understanding of the cultural differences of parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying, particularly with younger children, in grades pre-kindergarten to sixth grade. Another recommendation is that it important to learn as much about the demographics of the participants, prior to conducting the survey. This information can help inform the survey design, and methodological approach to future studies, particularly with diverse populations.

Future research should include plans of how schools can create an environment where parents and children sense a level of trust and respect when children encounter bullying at their school. Lastly, future research should consider intentional recruitment for fathers and male caregivers to gain an understanding of bullying from their perspectives.

Limitations

There were several limitations in this current study. First, it was difficult to know the accuracy of the response rate because the researcher was unable to verify how many parents were given the survey information from their child. The surveys were sent home in their children's backpacks, which made it difficult for the researcher to maximize the success rate of parent receipt of the survey. Additionally, the accuracy of the response rate was difficult because approximately 1% of the surveys were either returned blank or

duplicated. The overall response rate was somewhat low due to the sample being predominately Hispanics, and English was not the first language of the responders.

A second limitation of the study was the limited input from fathers about the topic of bullying. The majority of current research studies on bullying have been conducted on females, resulting in a limited population scope. According to research on bullying by Holt, Kaufman-Kantor and Finkelhor (2009) and Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Duys, Larson and Sarvela (2002), females are more responsive to completing surveys regarding bullying than males. Therefore, it is not uncommon to receive survey responses from a majority of females (Holt, Kaufman-Kantor & Finkelhor, 2009; Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Duys, Larson & Sarvela, 2002).   Future research should conduct intentional recruitment for male responders and explore alternative data collection methods to maximize participation of caregivers of both genders.

A third limitation is that the current study used a quantitative methodological approach to explore parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying in an urban public elementary school. However, the researcher did not include 2 open-ended questions from the Parents' Experiences, Perceptions, and Responses to Bullying Behavior survey and focused only on collecting quantitative data. Therefore, the researcher was not able to expand on the survey results to gain additional meaning on how parents advised their children to respond to bullying. Future studies should include a method for collecting qualitative data on this topic to provide clearer insight into parents' views and situations that will inform their choices.

Fourth, parents being unaware of their child being physically, verbally, and/or relationally victimized or have not experienced being bullied in this study made it

difficult to know the accuracy because most parents either skipped the questions or responded to only one type of bullying. Therefore, when parents failed to answer some questions the researcher concluded that parents either refused to answer the questions, their child never experienced bullying or parents were unaware of their child's bullying experiences at school. Lack of parents' awareness of bullying among children is common (Sawyer et al., 2011). Parents may be unaware of their child's bullying experiences because their child has many friends at school, and/or parents are not informed by their child or the school officials have not informed parents that their child was being victimized (Sawyer et al., 2011). Whereas, students who were chronically victimized, had parents who were more of aware of their child's experience with bullying (Matsunaga, 2009). Future research studies need to explore the types of relationships children have with their peers and understand how parents define bullying and what they consider are characteristics of a healthy relationship.

Fifth, the study's findings indicated that parents reported having obtained bullying resources from their school that assisted them with coping with bullying. With further investigation the researcher could not verify what information was provided or how parents obtained this information. Research shows that schools located in poor communities and inner cities have limited anti-bullying intervention resources. When there are such resources, the anti-bullying intervention resources are ineffective because the resources do not address the stressful situations in poor communities and inner cities (Hong, 2009). Another barrier, inner cities schools are faced with school staff and parents who are given little guidance and resources to effectively implement school prevention programs (Espelage & Swearer, 2008).

Sixth, the limitation is that the study was conducted only in 1 urban elementary public school and the findings do not fully represent the urban elementary public school district. The 7th recommendation is related to the limitation of conducting a purely quantitative study. Future research should offer both a quantitative and qualitative study to capture parents' narratives. In this quantitative study parents voluntarily added hypothetical situations and comments (e.g., what I think I would do) responses in this study, rather than responses derived from actual experiences. The hypothetical responses were possibly provided in this study because parents did not encounter any bullying experiences as a child.

Conclusion

This study revealed that there is a need for additional research on bullying in urban school settings to augment the current research conducted primarily in suburban environments. Parent experiences, perceptions, and responses can be nuanced by cultural, socioeconomic, and gender characteristics of caregivers. Definitions and interpretations of bullying may be different among different groups. Policy makers and curriculum developers should include input from diverse parent communities when formulating their anti-bullying initiatives to ensure their long term effectiveness. Additionally, the study's findings also offer considerations for practical application with clinical providers and researchers who are studying the impact and cause of bullying behavior. There are several practitioners in the anti-bullying community, including social workers, psychologists, clinicians, and law enforcement officials that could benefit from the study's findings to enhance their work practices.

With increased instances of teen suicide, violence, and the prevalence of social media, it has become imperative that educators, policy makers, and practitioners bring awareness to all types of bullying that could exist in schools, in order to reduce bullying among school age children, and help them develop into future leaders that are socially and emotionally healthy.

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Appendix A

Survey Informed Consent

PARENTS' CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are being asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Leslie B. Smith, doctoral candidate at the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education at St. John Fisher College. You were selected because you are a parent/guardian with one or more children attending an elementary school in an urban school district. Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the current study is to examine the experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying by parents who have children attending an elementary school in an urban public school district.

PROCEDURES

The *survey instrument, Parent Personal Experiences, Views, and Reactions Regarding Bullying Behavior* was developed by Dr. Leigh Worral (also known as Dr. Leigh Cooper) and Dr. Amanda Nickerson. Leslie B. Smith, doctoral candidate at St. John Fisher College has received permission to use the survey instrument. The survey instrument will take about 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked questions of a demographic nature such as your gender, age, race/ethnic background, marital status and number of children. You will also be asked questions about your personal experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying.

COSTS AND BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:

There is no cost for participating in this study, nor will you be compensated in any way for participating. Benefits of participating include contributing to knowledge and understanding about parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying. Research to date has not yet included information from parents who have children attending an elementary school in an urban district.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:

The survey instrument and data analysis procedures being used in this study have been carefully developed to minimize risks and discomfort. However, participants in this survey may be asked about sensitive information related to personal experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying. The study poses no risk to participants and you may decline to answer particular questions, you also may withdraw your participation from the study at any time.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS AND DATA:

All survey responses are confidential. The confidentiality of the participants will be protected by the researcher. All identifying information will be secured in a locked and secured file that can only be accessed by the researcher. In addition, the researcher will use a numerical coding system for each participant and their related survey information to insure confidentiality. The numerical coding system will be available only to the researcher and used solely for purposes of data collection and analysis. The numerical coding system will have an identification number on the top each survey in order for the researcher to know who responded to the survey. In addition, this will assist the researcher in identifying the participants interested in participating in the raffle drawing and/or interested in receiving a summary report.

The names will be separated from the data list and the data will be destroyed after all the information has been entered.

PARTICIPATION, WITHDRAWAL, AND RIGHTS

You can choose whether or not to participate in this study, and you may withdraw your consent at any time without consequences of any kind. You are not waiving any legal rights because of your participation in this research study.

IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCH INVESTIGATOR

If you have any questions or concerns about the research please feel free to contact:

Leslie B. Smith
Ed.D. Candidate, St. John Fisher College
Email: lbs06017@sjfc.edu

Parents' Experiences, Perceptions, and Responses to Bullying
Thank you for completing in this survey!
You are eligible to win one of two $50.00 Visa gift card.
Only if you have completed the survey.

If you are interested in entering a raffle to win one of two $50.00 Visa Gift Card please check box:
⬜ Yes ⬜No
Please provide your first and last name:_____ telephone number:_____

If you win, you will be contacted by the researcher, Leslie B. Smith, via telephone number to discuss how to redeem your gift card.
If you are interested in receiving a summary report please check box: Yes ⬜ No ⬜
Please provide your first and last name:_____ email address:_____
If you are interested in receiving a summary report the researcher, Leslie B. Smith will send the report via email to you.

Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated. If you have questions or concerns regarding this research please contact Leslie B. Smith at lbs06017@sjfc.edu.

Again, thank you for participating in this survey!

Appendix B

Parents' Experiences, Perceptions, and Responses to Bullying Behavior Survey

<u>Parents' Consent to Participate in Research</u>

You are being asked to participate in a research study being conducted by Leslie B. Smith, doctoral candidate at the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education at St. John Fisher College. You were selected because you are a parent/guardian with one or more children attending an elementary school in an urban school district. The research method use for this study will consist of four part survey that should take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary.

<u>Purpose of the Study</u>

The purpose of this study is to examine parents/guardians and their experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying in an urban public elementary school in New York State.

All participants must be 18 years or older and will be asked to provide informed consent prior to completing the survey. Participants with more than one child at the elementary school will be asked to complete the survey on their oldest child's bullying experiences to avoid duplication.

○ **Informed consent:**   Agree to participate in this study

Part I: Demographic Information							
Instructions: Please answer each question by marking the box or writing in the space provided.							
What is your gender?	o Male	o Female					
How old are you?	o Under 20	o 21 – 30	o 31 – 40	o 41 – 50	o 51 - 60	o Over 60	
What is your race/ethnic background? (Mark all that apply)	o White	o Black or African	o Hispanic or Latino	o American Indian or Alaska Native	o Asian	o Native Hawaiian or Alaska native	o Other (please specify)
What is your current marital status?	o Single, never married	o Married	o Separated	o Divorced	o Widowed		
How many children do you have?	o 1	o 2	o 3	o 4	o 5 or more		
Part II: Personal Experience							
The following questions are about bullying. We say a student is being bullied when another student or group of students intentionally and repeatedly treat(s) the student in the following ways and it is difficult for the student being bullied to defend him/himself: (a) hit, kick, threaten, or lock inside a room; (b) steal or destroy property; (c) tease him/her repeatedly in a nasty way or send him/her nasty notes or electronic messages; (d) do not talk to or let him/her join activities; and (e) spread rumors about him/her. It is not bullying when two students of about the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel. Bullying can occur at any location, including (but not limited) at school, at home, on the bus, at social events, and through electronic communication forums.							
Please think back to your (K-12) school years. You may have seen some bullying at school, and you may have been involved in some way. Select one (1) choice which best describes your experiences at school:	o I was not involved at all, and I never saw it happen.	o I was not involved at all, but I saw it happen sometimes.	o I would sometimes join in bullying others.	o I would sometimes get bullied by others.	o At various times, I was both a bully and a victim.		

At any point during my (K-12) school years… (Select one (1) choice for each item that best describes your experience):						
I was physically hit and/or kicked, poked, shoved, etc. by other students at least once per week.	○ Never	○ Sometimes	○ Often	○ Always		
I was verbally teased or ridiculed at least once per week in a way that was hurtful.	○ Never	○ Sometimes	○ Often	○ Always		
Other students interfered with my friendships and/or left me out of things such as conversations, games, parties, or other social activities at least once per week.	○ Never	○ Sometimes	○ Often	○ Always		
Other students spread rumors about me at least once per week.	○ Never	○ Sometimes	○ Often	○ Always		
Other students used electronic means (e.g., the internet, cell phones) to interfere with my friendships and/or left me out of things like chatrooms, emails, websites, or other social activities at least once per week	○ Never	○ Sometimes	○ Often	○ Always		
The hitting, kicking, and/or ignoring I received at least once per week was hurtful to me.	○ Strongly Disagree	○ Disagree	○ Slightly Disagree	○ Slightly Agree	○ Agree	○ Did not agree to items 7 – 11
Please review items 7-12. For items marked "slightly agree", "agree", and/or "strongly agree," when did the majority of these acts occur?	○ Elementary School	○ Middle School/Junior High	○ High School	○ Consistently throughout school (K-12)	○ Did not agree to items 7 – 12	
Part III: Perceptions (Views) about Bullying						
There is little you can do to prevent bullying.	○ Strongly Disagree	○ Disagree	○ Slightly Disagree	○ Slightly Agree	○ Agree	
Bullying is a fact of life and helps prepare kids for the real world.	○ Strongly Disagree	○ Disagree	○ Slightly Disagree	○ Slightly Agree	○ Agree	

Students who are bullied or teased often deserve it.	○ Strongly Disagree	○ Disagree	○ Slightly Disagree	○ Slightly Agree	○ Agree		
Adults should stay out of student conflicts and let them work things out on their own	○ Strongly Disagree	○ Disagree	○ Slightly Disagree	○ Slightly Agree	○ Agree		
Students should be able to stand up for themselves.	○ Strongly Disagree	○ Disagree	○ Slightly Disagree	○ Slightly Agree	○ Agree		
Students should be able to stand up for themselves.	○ Strongly Disagree	○ Disagree	○ Slightly Disagree	○ Slightly Agree	○ Agree		
I have spent time talking with my child about bullying.	○ Strongly Disagree	○ Disagree	○ Slightly Disagree	○ Slightly Agree	○ Agree		
My child would tell me if he or she was being bullied.	○ Strongly Disagree	○ Disagree	○ Slightly Disagree	○ Slightly Agree	○ Agree		
When a student is punched or kicked, he or she should not hit back.	○ Strongly Disagree	○ Disagree	○ Slightly Disagree	○ Slightly Agree	○ Agree		
There will always be bullying in school; it's just human nature.	○ Strongly Disagree	○ Disagree	○ Slightly Disagree	○ Slightly Agree	○ Agree		
Part IV: Bullying and Your Child							
Please respond to the following questions about your child who is currently in elementary school. If you have more than one child in elementary school, please respond keeping only oldest child in mind.							
What is your child's gender?	○ Male	○ Female					
What is your relationship to this child?	○ Biological mother ○ Biological father ○ Adoptive mother ○ Adoptive father ○ Stepmother ○ Stepfather ○ Grandparent ○ Guardian/caregiver ○ Other (please specify)						

The following questions are about bullying. We say a student is being bullied when another student or group of students intentionally and repeatedly treat(s) the student in the following ways and it is difficult for the student being bullied to defend him/himself: (a) hit, kick, threaten, or lock inside a room; (b) steal or destroy property; (c) tease him/her repeatedly in a nasty way or send him/her nasty notes or electronic messages; (d) do not talk to or let him/her join activities; and (e) spread rumors about him/her. It is not bullying when two students of about the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel. Bullying can occur at any location, including (but not limited) at school, at home, on the bus, at social events, and through electronic communication forums.	
By this definition, my son/daughter has been bullied in the past month.	o No (Please skip to Question 28) o Yes
If you responded "yes" to question 26, please read the following definitions. Check all that define the type(s) of bullying that your child has experienced.	o Physical bullying (involves repeatedly hitting, kicking, or shoving someone weaker on purpose). o Verbal bullying (involves repeatedly teasing, putting down, or insulting someone on purpose). o Relational bullying (involves getting others to repeatedly ignore or leave someone out on purpose). O Cyberbullying (involves using electronic means (e.g., cell phone, email, internet chat, etc.) to repeatedly tease, harass, or socially isolate someone on purpose.
By this definition, my son/daughter has bullied others in the past month.	o No (Please skip to Question 30) o Yes
If you responded "yes" to question 28, please read the following definitions. Check all that defines the type(s) of bullying that your child has used to bully others.	o Physical bullying (involves repeatedly hitting, kicking, or shoving someone weaker on purpose). o Verbal bullying (involves repeatedly teasing, putting down, or insulting someone on purpose). o Relational bullying (involves getting others to repeatedly ignore or leave someone out on purpose). o Cyberbullying (involves using electronic means (e.g., cell phone, email, internet chat, etc.) to repeatedly tease, harass, or socially isolate someone on purpose.
Regarding the following items, please see questions 27 or 29 (above) for definitions	
Select one (1) choice to indicate your level of concern regarding your child's	o Not Concerned o Slightly Concerned

actual or potential involvement with physical bullying.	o Concerned o Strongly Concerned
Select one (1) choice to indicate your level of concern regarding your child's actual or potential involvement with verbal bullying.	o Not Concerned o Slightly Concerned o Concerned o Strongly Concerned
Select one (1) choice to indicate your level of concern regarding your child's actual or potential involvement with relational bullying.	o Not Concerned o Slightly Concerned o Concerned o Strongly Concerned
Select one (1) choice to indicate your level of concern regarding your child's actual or potential involvement with cyber bullying.	o Not Concerned o Slightly Concerned o Concerned o Strongly Concerned
Please review items 30 -33. For the items marked "slightly concerned", "concerned", and/or "strongly concerned", which concerns you most?	o My child as a bully o My child as a victim o My child as a bully and victim o Bullying in general, but not regarding my child
Please select one (1) response to indicate how frequently you have told your child to cope with actual or potential bullying situations in the following ways.	
Try to make fun of it	o Never o Sometimes o Often O Always
Try to avoid the situation	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always
Try to ignore it	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always
Fight back	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always
Get help from friends	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always
Get help from a teacher	o Never

	o Sometimes o Often o Always
Get help from family/parents	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always
Try to handle it alone	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always
If you have told your child to cope with bullying in another way not listed above, please explain.	QUESTION REMOVED FROM SURVEY
Please select one (1) response to indicate how frequently you have coped with actual or potential bullying situations in the following ways.	
Developed ways to avoid contact between the child who bullies and the victim of bullying.	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always
Obtained anti-bullying resources (e.g., books, information from the internet)	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always
Attended anti-bullying presentation seminar	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always
Talked with your child following a bullying incident	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always
Following a bullying incident involving your child, talked with the other party involved (bully and/or victim)	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always
Contacted and/or met with the parents of a bully or victim following a bullying incident	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always
Contacted and/or met with school staff following a bullying incident	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always

Enforced disciplinary consequences if your child engaged in bullying	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always
Offered suggestions for coping if your child has been victimized by bullies	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always
Spread information to others about bullying (e.g., discussed at PTA or neighborhood meetings)	o Never o Sometimes o Often o Always
If you have tried other strategies after a bullying situation that is not listed above, explain.	QUESTION REMOVED FROM SURVEY

Parents' Experiences, Perceptions, and Responses to Bullying
Thank you for completing in this survey!
You are eligible to win one of two $50.00 Visa gift card.
(Note: You are eligible to win only if you have completed the survey).

If you are interested in entering a raffle to win one of two $50.00 Visa Gift Card please check box: ☐Yes ☐No
Please provide your first and last name:_____ telephone number:_____
If you win, your will be contacted by the researcher, Leslie B. Smith, via telephone number to discuss how to redeem your gift card.
If you are interested in receiving a summary report please check box: ☐Yes ☐ No
Please provide your first and last name:_____ email address:_____
If you are interested in receiving a summary report the researcher, Leslie B. Smith will send the report via email to you.
Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated. If you have questions or concerns regarding this research please contact Leslie B. Smith at lbs06017@sjfc.edu.   **Again, thank you for participating in this survey!**

Appendix C

January 17, 2017

Dear Teachers:

My name is Leslie B. Smith and I am doctorate student in the Executive Leadership Program at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York. I am currently working on my dissertation proposal and I need your support.

The title of my study is "Parents' Experiences, Perceptions, and Responses to Bullying in an Urban Public Elementary School." The purpose of this study is to examine parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses as it relates to bullying in the school environment.

At the beginning of the survey process I will provide to you a brief notice for all parents. I will ask you to insert the brief notice in the students' homework folders. The second week I will provide to you a survey informed consent, invitation to participate document, and survey with a self-address envelope. I will ask you to insert the survey informed consent, invitation to participate document and survey in the students' homework folders. Lastly, during the third and fourth week I will ask you to insert the reminder note in the students' homework folders.

Parents will be asked to read the information and have their child return the consent form to the main school office. **Note: Parents with more than one child at the elementary school will be asked to complete the survey on their oldest child's bullying experiences.**

The survey will consist of 52-questions, which should take participants 15 to 20 minutes to complete. The survey period will last for 4 weeks. All returned surveys should be sent to the main office and placed in a secure box.

All respondents will have the option to provide their name, telephone number or email address for the raffle drawing and to receive a summary report. The data collected from the survey will be printed and kept in a secure box once it is collected and analyzed.

Your support would be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, you can contact me at 943-9815-c; or via email at lbs06017@sjfc.edu. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Leslie B. Smith

Leslie B. Smith, Research Investigator

Appendix D

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I invite you to participate in a research study conducted by doctoral candidate Leslie B. Smith, a student in the Executive Leadership Program in the School of Education at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York. The study's focus is on examining parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying.

The purpose of the current study is to examine the experiences, perceptions, and responses to bullying by parents who have children attending an elementary school in an urban public school district. As a parent/guardian of the John James Audubon School #33, you have been identified as a potential participant for this study. The research method use for this study will consist of one, four-part survey that should take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

The study poses no risk to participants and you may decline to answer particular questions, you may also withdraw your participation from the study at any time. All survey responses are confidential and anonymous. When the results of the study are reported, participants will not be identified by name or any other information that could be used to infer identity.

All participants must be 18 years or older and will be asked to provide informed consent prior to completing the survey. Participants will be asked to confirm their informed consent to participate in the study by checking a box that will be provided at beginning of the survey.

Next week, the survey will be inserted in your child's homework folder. Please complete and have your child return the survey to the main school office. A self-addressed return envelope is enclosed.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the survey or the study, you are encouraged to contact researcher, Leslie B. Smith at lbs06017@sjfc.edu.

Thank you for your time and support in advance.

Appendix E

Reminder Note

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I invited you to participate in a research study titled, "Parents' Experiences, Perceptions, and Responses to Bullying in an Urban Public Elementary School." The purpose of this study is to examine parents' experiences, perceptions, and responses as it relates to bullying in the school environment. The survey consists of one, four-part survey that should take approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

If you have taken the survey please disregard this message.

If you have not taken the survey please do so.

When you complete the survey you are eligible to win one of two $50.00 Visa gift card. Your support will be greatly appreciated.

Leslie B. Smith
Doctoral Candidate at St. John Fisher College