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Bullying: Causes, Climate, Concerns, Culture

Dianne R. Stam

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2007
8/11

BULLYING: CAUSES, CLIMATE, CONCERNS, CULTURE

by

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Bachelors, Health Care Management, Park University, 2001

An Independent Study

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Masters, Public Administration

Grand Forks, North Dakota
May
2007



This independent study, submitted by Dianne R. Stam in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters, Public Administration, from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

Robert W. Kiviat

Advisor
5/3/07

Date

the
Department
Degree

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Signature Shannon R. Stam
Date May 3, 2007

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In sincere appreciation, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Robert Kweit, for his assistance, guidance, and considerable patience through this long journey. Although I am certain he wishes I had not waited until his upcoming retirement to complete this project, his unwavering patience and support, without question, have helped me in achieving my goal of graduating with a Masters degree in Public Administration.

I would also like to thank Dr. Jean Chen for assisting with the statistical component of this study after the surveys were completed. She has been the quiet, driving, humble force behind many University of North Dakota (UND) students, including myself. I consider myself fortunate to have been considered one of her friends and wish her the very best in future endeavors as she moves beyond UND.

A special thank you to Dr. Cheryl E. Saunders, my mentor, who encouraged my pursuit of a Masters degree and made it possible for me to do so. She embraces every opportunity for professional development of her staff. The day I walked through the door of University Learning Center was the day my life forever changed.

To Scott Gavett, an enthusiastic computer guru, who patiently worked through many computer issues, a big thank you.

A deep, heartfelt thank you to family and friends for their undying encouragement and support with a special thanks to another wonderful mentor

and friend, Hilary Kaisershot, who taught me that age is relative and a person is never too old to learn and make changes in life.

To Grandma T. (Grandma Tyrrell) from up above who was a firm believer in education for women and became a life-longer learner after being allowed to finish only up to the 8th grade. I appreciate all her encouragement and support.

And last, but not least, I would like to acknowledge my children who lived through bullying after moving to rural North Dakota. I would like to express my deepest regret for all the pain they suffered and pray there is a new day of enlightenment so future generations, my grandchildren, will never experience what their mothers did.

To Robert Stam, Jennifer Stam-Stangl, Rebecca Durham, and Sarah Stam
and Abigail Durham, Madeline Stangl, and Myles Durham

Bullying is a social problem experienced in all walks of life—in the schools,
at work, and even in the workplace. It is defined as an attempt by a
more powerful person (bully) to harm a weaker person (victim)—presumably in the
presence of an audience—in a manner that can be either physical or
psychological—and over a long period of time.

The acceptance of bullying as a rite of passage or survival of the fittest
has been linked with issues of depression, violence, and even suicide. The
amount of literature written on this subject or of law is indicative of its
importance.

Many programs to have an impact on the problem, across schools and
work places have implemented programs to address the issue. However,
bullying and its related issues continue to exist and, without a culture change,
these programs are limited at best.

The purpose of this study is to show the number of students who were
affected by bullying, either as the bully, the bullied, or the bystander, and whether
or not their schools had programs to address this issue.

This study focused on bullying in grades 4-12. Bullying, harassment, and
other forms of aversive behavior, including drugs, violence, and other
misconduct, appear to be on the rise in public school systems across the United

ABSTRACT

Bullying is a social problem experienced in all walks of life—in the schools, in one's personal life, and even in the workplace. It is defined as an attempt by a stronger person (bully) to harm a weaker person (victim)—presumably in the absence of provocation—in a manner that can be either physical or psychological—and over a long period of time.

The acceptance of bullying as a rite of passage or survival of the fittest has coincided with issues of depression, violence, and even suicide. The amount of literature written on this subject as of late is indicative of its importance.

Many profess to have an answer to the problem; some schools and work places have implemented programs to address this issue. However, bullying and its related issues continue to exist and, without a culture change, these programs are limited at best.

The purpose of this study is to show the number of students who were affected by bullying, either as the bully, the bullied, or the bystander, and whether or not their schools had programs to address this issue.

This study focused on bullying in grades K-12. Bullying, harassment, and other forms of deviant behavior, including drugs, weapons, and other misconduct, appear to be on the rise in public school systems across the United

States, with no state being exempt from the problems, not even in the upper mid-western states. Since the majority of school-age children's waking hours are spent in school and in transit to and from school where most bullying occurs, it is therefore logical that this would be the best place to address the issue and implement anti-bullying and counseling programs.

From researching literature, the Internet, and visiting with upper midwestern state school officials, it appears there is neither a uniform state system or *mandatory* guidelines in place. Schools cannot do this alone; there is a need for guidance at the state levels. Possibly states may need to collaborate with the federal government for its funding and expertise. With strong administrative support at the state and local levels, certified, harassment-prevention trained counselors, and funding, this can be accomplished.

The purpose of this study was to gather data from respondents in a mid-sized, mid-western, four-year college regarding the perceptions/reflections of their past experiences with bullying in grades K-12. Data was gathered from a survey developed by the researcher. It was through this data that the following issues were addressed:

- The extent of bullying, even in schools where respondents self-reported anti-bullying programs to be in place
- The definition of bullying
- That the once accepted cultural belief of bullying as a rite of passage of growing up is no longer acceptable
- There is an underreporting of bullying by students and administrators

- The reality of the amount of bullying actually taking place and the figures educators believe to be true are not one in the same
- Adults, to a large part, are responsible for part of the bullying problem by their lack of action or ineffectiveness when action is taken
- That when referring to the implementation of anti-bullying programs/policies in schools, *suggested* and *recommended* need to be replaced with *mandatory* and *required*.
- Schools need more guidance from the top state level than what they are receiving now with the states' "it's up to you how you want to handle it" approach
- If the states are not up to the task at hand, the federal government is sure to become involved
- There are financial costs to the schools from bullying.
- When schools do focus on bullying, it oftentimes is the physically violent-type bullying rather than all aspects of bullying
- Schools need to be more pro-active to encourage and ensure a safe, healthy school environment
- The term, "professional development," used so often in school criteria for educators and other classifications of schools employees usually has "none required" written after it. With the exception of school counselors, neither educators nor school staff were expected to receive training for anti-bullying.

- The bully, bullied, and bystander all have their issues and all are in need of counseling.

In order for children to learn at their potential, they must have confidence that the adults at their school will ensure a safe environment. In order for schools to accomplish this, they must have guidance from above, either at a state or federal level, and cooperation from parents and members of the community. It will take all school personnel, not just the educators; the parents; the communities; the states; and possibly even the federal government working together as a team to help eradicate the age-old problem of bullying. Once people are working together, the cultural norm will begin to shift from acceptance of bullying, to understanding why bullying is a problem, and hopefully to non-acceptance of bullying in all its forms.

Education, K-12
today, but in recent years, bullying has
of literature written on this subject of late is indicative of
accounts, bullying appears to be on the rise across the United States.
of bullying has been the accepted cultural norm in this country—a rite of passage
must experience on their way to adulthood, the recent outbreaks of school violence

across the United States has given this a new perspective and some people are
beginning to question this old belief.

Bullying, harassment, and other forms of deviant behavior have always existed in
our schools; however, it was not until recently that bullying has escalated into school
violence such as that seen at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado; Ricori High
School in Cold Spring, Minnesota; at Red Lake High School in Red Lake, Minnesota;

and at Wisconsin. The commonality in many cases of school violence is that the
weapons were merely a means to the end, not the cause.

Oftentimes the violent actions by students were not isolated events, rather, they
were responses created by long-time, repetitive experiences with rejection, isolation,
and physical abuse—bullying (Moore, 2002). Violence is becoming so common place
that both students and teachers may be the victims. One in every six teachers

becomes a victim of school violence (Carney, Hazler, & Higgins, 1999).
Bullying is a problem found around the world; however more research on this
issue has been done in Scandinavian countries, Great Britain, and Japan, than here

the United States, where it has taken death tolls in the schools to bring the issue of bullying to the forefront. In Norway, 10 percent of students report having been bullied (Olweus, 1989); Germany reports 13 percent of surveyed students reported being bullied with 6 percent stating that it happened more than once a week (Carney, 1997); Japan reports approximately 22 percent of elementary students, 13 percent of middle school students, and 6 percent of high school students report being bullied (Hiruta, 1996); while Great Britain (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Stephenson & Smith, 1989) and Canada (Charach, Pepler, & Ziegler, 1995; Ziegler & Rosenstein-Manner, 1991) report a victimization rate of approximately 20 percent. The small amount of research that has been done in the United States indicates a much higher rate of bullying, as does this study.

One possible reason for the lack of empirical research on bullying here could be because there is no one, clear-cut definition for bullying and studies that have been done have focused only on the more aggressive, physical bullying (Harachi, Catalano, and Hawkins, 1999). People have varying views on when teasing stops and bullying begins (Carney, 1997). However, many people seem to agree with one concept of bullying, that being the repeated physical and psychological intimidation of others (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993).

Because of this repeated bullying, the victims learn early on to fear playgrounds, hallways, lunchrooms, and restrooms (Smith & Sharp, 1994); typically places where adults would normally be witness to such bullying. They learn to cope through avoidance, which also deprives them of social experiences vital to their development (Ross, 1996). They may suffer from anxiety, post-traumatic stress, low self-esteem and

depression or react completely opposite with anger, disruptive behavior, and aggressive outbursts (Flannery & Singer, 1999).

Researchers have found that, on average, physical bullying increases through the elementary years, peaks in the middle school/junior high years, and declines during the high school years; however, verbal abuse remains constant. Surprisingly, school size and setting (urban, suburban, rural) do not appear to be predictors of the occurrence of bullying (Banks, 1997), but those identified as younger or weaker appear more at risk to be bullied (Hazler, Hoover, and Oliver, 1991). Some of our youth feel K-12 is not the place for education and social interaction, but rather is a daily, dog-eat-dog, survival of the fittest.

Of special concern is when race or gender are the reasons for bullying because not only does the victim feel personally attacked, but that it is also because of their race or gender (Ross, 1996). In a 1993 study by the American Association of University Women (AAUW), 1,632 students in grades 8 through 11, from 79 public schools in the United States were surveyed. It was found that 81 percent of students reported some experience with sexual harassment in school, with one in three girls and one in five boys having experienced it frequently. While most of the sexual harassment was perpetrated by peers, one in four girls and one in ten boys experienced this at the hands of adult school personnel (AAUW, 1993).

Some researchers believe that once the student graduates, bullying is but a distant memory, but Flannery and Singer (1999) have found that the impact of the bullying experience may have a long-term effect on the person's mental health, academic achievement, socialization, and adaptation. It is the gift that keeps on giving.

The child bully becomes the adult bully who can not get along with co-workers, who is verbally and/or physically abusive to his spouse and children, and one who may eventually find himself in trouble with the law. He has gone from being unable to interact with his peers as a child, to being unable to interact with his peers as an adult. These unfortunate childhood experiences have brought him to his current social ineptness. The bullying situation may be perpetuated in future generations as his bullied children grow up dysfunctional, and so on. Just like a flu epidemic, where once there was one victim, now there are many, and the number of victims will rise until the epidemic is over.

While the emphasis has been focused on the bullies and their victims, bystanders/observers are also a part of the bullying cycle and may suffer as well. The emotional baggage of their not helping stop the bullying of another child may follow them into adulthood. As Carney (1997) has pointed out, bystanders are not just limited to students alone, but also include teachers, counselors, administrators, social workers, parents, the community—basically anyone who knows about the abuse and does nothing about it.

The bully, the bullied, and the bystander are all negatively affected by these conditions and the resulting emotional issues are often carried over into their adult years, affecting both their personal and professional lives and the lives of those who come into contact with them. Whether they were considered the bully, the bullied, or the bystander as children, once they become adults, they may take on a new role in the unholy triangle and, with it, a whole new set of problems. Then the once problem child becomes the difficult employee. Human Resources (HR) now plays a significant role at

many businesses in trying to help maintain a safe, organized environment which is healthy and conducive to carrying out organizational activities.

The established pattern of the bully, the bullied (victim), and the bystander (witness), may not remain constant as one may change his/her position in this hierarchy at any time. The bystander who breaks from the long-term bullying may now become the bully, as was the case in the Columbine massacre, among others. When a person is backed into a corner and is overcome with the feeling of helplessness and hopelessness, the end result may be suicide or violence to end the suffering. In fact, Olweus (1994) states that victimization may be an important causal factor in adolescent suicidal behavior. But that information is not always shared with the public, possibly because of the shame and devastation associated with suicide or because parents and school officials were unaware of the situation. In either case, they may not have chosen to actively pursue an investigation into the suicide.

Because the majority of school-age children's waking hours are either spent in school or in transit to and from school, where most bullying takes place, it is therefore logical and vital that policies be implemented to safeguard children during this period of their lives. The purpose of education is to provide a safe, organized, clean environment, which is healthy and conducive to learning and in which all students feel they have a voice and thus are encouraged to learn. All students have the ability to learn, but that learning is placed at serious risk when faced with bullying.

It is important from moral, emotional, physical, legal, and financial standpoints to begin an educational program at a very young age to assist children in dealing with their feelings and conflicts in a positive, non-violent way. It is impossible to ignore this

problem anymore; bullying is not a rite of passage that children should have to endure as part of the process of their growing up years, rather, it is aggression, plain and simple. A change in cultural beliefs, from the young to the old, and strong, consistent leadership will be necessary to effectively implement any anti-bullying policies/programs. And changes will not come about by polices/programs in and of themselves, because they are only as good as the people who enforce them.

Statement of the Problem

Bullying exists and will not go away on its own simply because we choose to ignore the problem. What schools are doing about it is very important. Some have implemented policies, but in some instances they are only *recommended*, not mandated policies and there may be no central policy statewide, as will be discussed further in this study. For those schools who do have written policies, if not enforced, they are worth little more than the paper they are written on. It definitely takes someone at the helm to show strong leadership and consistency when dealing with this issue, just as it does with anything. If states neglect their responsibility of enacting legislation and setting policies into place, then it should not be long before the Federal government steps in to do so.

Significance of the Study

Adults are a large part of the bullying issue and, when you are not a part of the solution, you may be a part of the problem. The extent to which bullying continues today in locations where adults are present indicates how their action allows this to continue. Either they truly are unaware of the problem or they know the problem exists,

- ...ous definitions of bullying and not all of the
- ...nd Hazler (1992) define bullying as an attempt by a strongly
- ... victim—presumably in the absence of provocation—in a manner that
- ...hysical or psychological and is longitudinal in nature. Bullying is a form
- ...n in which one or several persons physically or psychologically harass a
- ... a long period of time (Hoover and Oliver, 1992). Hoover and Olsen (2001)
- ...at bullying was physical, psychological, or both, with the intention of injuring a
- ...n(s).

For the purpose of this research, the term bullying will incorporate all the definitions to include, but not be limited by, a perceived stronger person taking advantage of a perceived weaker person using physical and/or emotional abuse, harassment, exclusion, teasing, cyberbullying, or a combination of any of the aforementioned.

Bullying terminology is defined as follows:

Bully: a perceived stronger person taking advantage of a perceived weaker person using physical and/or emotional abuse, harassment, exclusion, teasing, cyberbullying, or a combination of any of the aforementioned.

Bullied: the bullied person is a victim, the person on the receiving end of the bully's abuse.

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Bullied: the bullied person is a victim, the person on the receiving end of the
bully's abuse.

cyberbullying, or a com

Bystander: someone who is awa
between the bully and the bullied. Many times this person
possibly retaliation.

Culture: the beliefs and customs of a group of people.

K-12: grades kindergarten through 12th.

Norm: the norm; what is considered to be normal.

Survey: the survey refers to the questionnaire completed by student
respondents in a large lecture class of a mid-size, mid-western, four-year college.

Stress Symptoms of Victims (the bullied)

The victims of bullying may experience physical and emotional illnesses such as
headaches, stomachaches, and nightmares. They fear leaving their parents, become
withdrawn, experience anxiety, and fear going to school, as their perception of school is
that of an unsafe place. While the students' number one priority should be to do the
very best they can in school, this becomes impossible while dealing with the emotional
and sometimes physical bullying. Their right to a safe learning environment is violated.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to gather data from respondents in a mid-sized,
midwestern, four-year university regarding the perceptions/reflections of their past
experiences with bullying in grades K-12. Data was gathered from a survey developed
by the researcher to answer the following: the extent of bullying in the five upper mid-
western states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin in

...sent; and possible inconsistencies
... versus school/state reporting.

Limitations and Strengths

This study was based upon the perceptions/reflections of past experiences with
... in grades K-12 by respondents from a mid-sized, mid-western, four-year college
... room. Of an anticipated population of 200, 112 showed on the day the quantitative
... survey instrument was distributed, so while possibly better results would have been
... provided from a larger data set, there was 100 percent participation on the part of the
... 112 who were present. Some causal attributes of the study indicated additional
... relationships not directly asked about in the survey.

By surveying a group of college students, the researcher was able to gather data
... from respondents who had attended schools in rural, suburban, and urban
... environments, thus providing a broader base of K-12 experiences and, therefore, a
... better interpretation of data. Preference for data from upper mid-western states, the
... *neighborhood in which we live*, was easily obtained from this sample population.

Respondents were asked 14 questions with several sub-parts. The survey was
... designed with brevity in mind in concern for respondents reaching a degree of apathy,
... not completing the survey in its entirety, or forgetting the instructions and definition of
... bullying sometime during a long survey; however that in itself produced some



the fact that
aged them to hurry with it in order
ever, the overall limiter came from the fact that the study
her than qualitative. Qualitative research methods are important in order to
otal picture, extract the entire story, to fully understand a person's perspective,
e, while it is easier to place student profiles into neat categories, not all people fit
ne specific category, as this research will further prove. With a qualitative study,
ng with each respondent would have resulted in a richness of data, through a
rrative style, that can not be fully attained with a quantitative study.

A review of literature, providing an understanding of the bullying culture—the
bully, the bullied, and the bystander is discussed in Chapter II.

LITERATURE

The concept of the idea for this research a few years ago, literature in the United States was very limited; however, in the last few years, a prolific amount of literature has arisen, due in part to extreme cases of school violence such as that at Columbine High School and subsequent schools across the United States since then. This literature is often confused with research.

Researchers report a higher rate of bullying today, especially in the United States. Berthold and Hoover (2002) found 35 percent of students had reported being bullied. Numbers from researchers and reports never match exactly; variation in rates may be due to differences in measurement and the fact that there is no one concise definition for bullying. The report card for the United States is not good as bullying is higher here than in other countries, but other countries had anti-bullying/harassment policies in place long before the United States ever thought of doing so.

The literature provides a better understanding of the bullying culture or the bullying triad, which includes the bully, the bullied (victim), and the bystander (witness). The causes and characteristics of each are discussed as well as the means for improving the situation for all three categories of players. Failure on the part of adults to take action is discussed. Special attention is given to the five upper mid-west states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. As noted in Chapter I, bullying refers to continued physical and/or emotional abuse, harassment, exclusion,

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

At the concept of the idea for this research a few years ago, literature on bullying in the United States was very limited; however, in the last few years, a prolific amount of literature has arisen, due in part to extreme cases of school violence such as that at Columbine High School and subsequent schools across the United States since then. Along with this new literature come self-professed experts in the field, but opinion is not to be confused with research.

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cyber-bullying, or a combination of any of the aforementioned, with the intention of injuring the victim physically and/or emotionally and is usually not provoked.

Overview

After the Columbine High School violence, the United States Secret Service conducted research on school violence and found that those students who attacked others had been bullied themselves in ways that would be equal to assault or harassment in the workplace (Lee, 2003). Adults have a supervisor or a Human Resource administrator in which to turn for assistance in these matters, but as a nation, at least until most recently, we have expected our children to be able to successfully handle these situations and emerge from these situations emotionally and physically unscathed.

Without an adult acting as an advocate on his/her behalf, a child's only recourse of escaping harassment may be in avoidance of those areas of school that the bullying takes place or by pretending to be sick and skipping school altogether. Some may enter therapy, join in with the wrong crowd, turn to drugs, or commit suicide. Sometimes the bullied victims switch gears and become bullies themselves, such as what happened with the two students at Columbine High School; they came to school that day with plans to end their long torment by killing their tormentors and those they felt responsible for allowing the bullying to continue. For others, their depression becomes so great that they contemplate suicide, believing that this permanent solution is their only way out of an unbearable situation.

The media may be credited with playing to the old beliefs that bullying is a playful and harmless pastime. As such, a bullying scene would be written into TV scripts for

humor—the audience would laugh at the nerdy child being picked on because viewers were led to believe that the child actually deserved to be teased because he/she was not one of the cool kids. In reality, however, the victim keeps quiet about the attack, or the non-supportive bystander walks away so as not to incur any retaliation from the bully.

It was found that students in grades 7-12 (Oliver, Oaks, and Hoover, 1994) believed bullied students were at least partly to blame for their own victimization. They “asked for it” some bullies would state. Some children are more likely to be victimized if they have any of the following characteristics: low self-esteem, insecurity, lack of social skills, are unable to pick up on social cues, cry or become easily distraught, or are unable to defend or stand up for themselves (Safechild.org, 2006), but all children can fall victim to bullying without any of the above characteristics.

The United States Department of Education shows that 77 percent of middle school and high school students in small Midwestern towns have been bullied and, when other children are witness to it, they rarely come to the aid of their classmate. Some students are relieved that they are not the target, while some seem to enjoy the suffering of others (Garbarino and Delara, 2002). Women’s Educational Media shows 66 percent of youth are verbally teased at least once a month and one-third are physically bullied at least once a month (Education is Politics, 2004). Research by the Department of Education, in conjunction with the United States Secret Service, indicated bullying played a major part in school shootings and that one in four children who were bullies in K-12 grew up to have criminal records by the age of 30 (Education is Politics, 2004).

According to a Threat Assessment Perspective by the Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG), the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Academy, there is no profile of the school shooter or checklist of danger signs pointing to the next adolescent who will bring lethal violence to school. Those signs do not exist and when media try to publicize such lists, they may unfairly label many nonviolent students as potentially dangerous. And, in their haste to report the news, the media often relies on sources that have incomplete or inaccurate information (The School Shooter, 1999).

However, as we have seen, those who resort to violence have oftentimes been bullied repeatedly over a long period of time. This is one profile on the checklist of danger signs for which school officials and parents should be aware. But if school officials are doing their jobs, they will notice, ask questions, and act on bullying issues promptly, thus eliminating long-term bullying.

As previously stated, when adults are faced with similar aggressive behavior at their work sites, it is usually reported to and taken care of by supervisors and/or Human Resource Departments. It is not considered the cultural norm nor do the adults involved usually attempt to deal with the problems on their own. Our children, who are even less experienced than us, and look to adults for providing a safe, nurturing environment, should expect no less. Bullying is not the cultural norm and it is not a character building experience; let it be called for what it is—aggression.

In Jacqueline Moore's 2002 research, she discovered that fewer victims than expected and more observers (bystanders) than expected had indicated that teachers stopped the bullying; so while the observers felt something had been done, the victims

of bullying felt the attempts were inadequate. Less than one third of the participants stated teachers had stopped the bullying. Moore found that 50 percent of participants did nothing when they observed bullying, possibly because of concern for their own safety or at the very least, not being liked, should they befriend or protect a bullied child. She also found that males were bullied mostly by males, while females were bullied by both genders and depression was higher among females; findings which are consistent with current research. Moore discovered victimization for peer abuse and depression overlapped, that while the bullying process could lead to depression, sometimes a depressed child might appear to be an easy target for a bully (Moore, 2002).

The three roles children may play—bully, bullied, bystander, can evolve and reverse. Craig and Pepler (2000) found that 30 percent of bystanders joined in the bullying, 23 watched, and only 12 percent intervened. A large number of the bystanders morphed into bullies.

The Bully

Ronald Hoover (2005) stated exposure to family conflict and violence, either as a victim or as a witness of inter-parental violence, increased the risk of peer-aggression behaviors, which become developmentally incorporated into the child's personality. They are less attentive to social cues and the emotional expressions of others, thus are more inclined to employ aggressive solutions to interpersonal problems.

If parents themselves are experiencing spousal or parent-child conflict and violence, they may be less aware of their children's emotional needs and may lack the necessary skills for intervening on their behalf (Hoover, R. L., 2005). Families who lack warmth, are unable/unwilling to nurture their children, and instead use physical violence

and neglect their children's needs, are at risk for producing aggressive children (Olweus, 1978). Thus a bully is born.

Typically, bullies come from a family situation where parents may lack warmth, involvement in their children's lives, and good disciplinary skills (Junger-Tas, 1999). If the child does not perceive love and caring on the part of his parents or care-givers, he will be unable to show compassion towards others and is more likely to be aggressive and hostile toward others (Olweus, 1993). It is common sense for most that children need nurturing and without it, lose a part of that which is thought to be human.

Bullies are confident and feel in control over their environments (Hazler, et al, 1997); they presume others have hostile intentions toward them (Dodge & Coie, 1987) so they feel the victim "asked for it." Their thinking is immature so they lack the ability to receive, discuss, and collaborate as others in their age group (Fried & Fried, 1996). However, they may gain social status as bullies tend to have as many friends as non-bullies (Boulton, 1995; Espelage & Holt 2001).

Research done by Farrington in 1993 indicated that the most important predictors of bullying were low attainment of the basics—physical neglect by the age of 8, convicted parents by the age of 10, low school grades by the age of 11, and low/no interest in a boys' activities (sports, choir, etc) at the age of 12. Bullies are popular, they gain prestige with bullying and are often rewarded with things they force their victims to provide them. They may be protected by their victims (for fear of being abused more if they tell), peers, their parents, and teachers (Olweus, 1993).

Direct physical bullying occurs more often among males (Bjorkqvist, et al., 1992; Jantzer et al., 2006; Olweus, 1997; Rigby, 1998), while relational aggression (exclusion,

manipulation of friendships, gossiping) most often occurs among females (Olweus, 1997; Sharp, 1995). Boys are more likely to employ direct bullying—pushing, hitting. Girls are more likely to engage in indirect bullying—gossiping, exclusion, because it creates excitement, a feeling of belonging to a group, is an attention getter, provides protection, and it serves as revenge for past bullying experiences they may have incurred (Kaster, 2004).

Bullies suffer into adulthood as their aggressiveness causes them to become involved in more serious criminal acts (Eron, Huesmann, Dubow, Romanoff, and Yarmel, 1987); Olweus, 1991).

The Bullied (victim)

There are two types of victims—passive and aggressive. Passive victims respond to being bullied by crying or withdrawing from others (Olweus, 1994; Schwarz, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1997) and may lose the support of their peers because of their responses (Hoover & Hazler, 1991). Aggressive victims are those children with emotional and behavioral problems (Pope & Bierman, 1999) who may exhibit impulsivity, hyperactivity, depression, or anxiety, thus increasing their chances to be bullied (Pellegrini, 1998).

Victims tend to give in to bullies for fear if they do not, the bullying will escalate. Getting what they want reinforces the bully's behavior and encourages continued bullying of this victim and others.

It is important to note that victims, of both genders, may decide upon a permanent solution to a temporary problem and take their own lives as a result of prolonged victimization. More often suicide results when indirect bullying, such as

ing (Van der Wall, de Wit, and Hirasing, 2003). This illustrates the

forms of bullying into consideration when setting intervention policies into place, not just

physical violence, which schools are more inclined to do.

Sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me is an

American Folk Aphorism. This usually comes with directions by parent or teacher to

chant back to the bully as a lame form of defense, but children know that what other

children think and say about them really does matter, even more than broken bones,

because "words can hurt forever" (Garbarino & Delara, 2002).

Olweus, the godfather of bullying research through the decades, suggested that

victimization was not related to adverse social problems later in life, that once victims

left school, they would no longer experience negative symptoms, but other researchers

are finding just the opposite to be true (Hugh-Jones and Smith, 1999; Jantzer et al.,

2006; Olweus, 1993-3; Schafer et al., 2004).

Victimization is related to many maladaptive variables later in life (Gilmartin,

1987; Hugh-Jones and Smith, 1999; Jantzer, et al., 2006; Olweus, 1993; Schafer et al,

2004). This includes psychosocial and psychosexual problems (Gilmartin, 1987;

Hazler, 1996-1; Olweus, 1994). It is important for school counselors, health providers,

parents, educators, legislators, college counselors, and Human Resources departments

to understand this concept. Bullying victimization during elementary, junior high, high

school, and college is related to less successful social and personal-emotional

adjustments to college; however, this can be moderated by helping a student develop a

The Bystander (witness, observer)

Bystanders are those who choose not to get involved and ignore the abuse of others. While some may not care about their fellow human beings, many times that is not the case; they are deeply affected, but don't know what to do, so feel helpless. As a result, they may experience some of the same things the victim does—nightmares, guilt, and fear they may become the next victim (Elliot, 1993). Even watching one instance of bullying may be enough to cause the feelings of helplessness mentioned above and affect their ability to learn. Bystanders are not limited to students alone, but include educators, parents, community—basically anyone who is a witness to bullying and does nothing to help prevent it.

Carney (1997) had an interesting concept of why it is that we do not feel compelled to intervene for others—American individualism. This culture promotes the ability of working things out for oneself without help from others.

Bystander behavior has always existed alongside aggression. In the Holocaust, soldiers and community members stood by and watched the Jews being brutally bullied and exterminated (Kushner, 2002). If bystanders had acted, the outcome may have been different, but their lack of action further reinforced the idea that they approved of the mistreatment of the Jewish people. Good people can be responsible for bad things happening due to their lack of action (Barnett, 1999).

In 1999, Salmivalli categorized the various roles of bystanders as:

Assistants—children who provide positive feedback to the bully by gathering around and laughing/yelling words of encouragement.

Defenders—children who side with the victim

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his own life (Madak, 1997). This is supporting data for the need of research into the “complexity of interactions” of peer abuse—for the bully, the victim *and* the bystander (Carney, 1997).

It is important to understand the whole peer network of bullying, especially that of the role of the bystander, because bystanders play an important part in the event of a bullying situation. Kaster (2004) stated that understanding bullying from the bystander’s experience and perspective (why they do not intervene) would offer an opportunity for developing effective interventions to decrease aggressive behavior in schools.

Adults – Part of the Solution or Part of the Problem

It is important to note the role of adults in the bullying cycle. Hoover, Oliver, and Hazler (1992) found that 66.4 percent of students felt school personnel responded “poorly” to bullying, 28 percent felt school personnel responded “adequately,” and only 5.6 percent believed personnel responded “well.” In Kaster’s (2004) study, students were asked to identify which school staff member knew the most about bullying and they responded with the following: verbal bullying—teachers (52.3 percent); ignoring/excluding—teachers (51.5 percent); physical bullying—janitors (34.9 percent) and teachers (29.3 percent); and those most likely to help in a bullying situation—teachers and headmasters (40.0 percent).

In terms of gender, boys felt that janitors would be most likely to help in a bullying situation while girls reported counselors would be more likely to help (Kaster, 2004). This highlights the importance/need for *all* school staff, not just educators, to be included in training for anti-bullying/harassment training programs. Adult witnesses involve everyone and those who should act upon the bullying incident immediately are

those who are currently present, which may be a kitchen staff worker, bus driver, or custodian. There may not be time to run for reinforcements (educators), so having learned the necessary skills for intervening would be to everyone's advantage.

When teachers are a part of this bullying culture, the bullying issue becomes even more complex because they are the ones in authority who children look to and expect guidance and assistance. In the National Educational Service Community Circle Gathering (1999), the discussion centered on special guests John Hoover and Carole Milner and their article, "Rituals of Humiliation and Exclusion." One contributor, a Karin G. Smith, commented:

I believe that one reason for the persistence of bullying in schools is that there is not only bonding benefits for the children, but the esprit de corps that may result from the class in general from bullying a child(ren) may give the teacher a sense of pride that her class feels so close to one another (National Educational Service Community Circle Gathering, 1999).

To this, John Hoover responded, "I think you are really on to something. Often students (in interviews) say that teachers 'subtly' encourage bullying. But it is like the framing of a humor exchange—all the unwritten rules are extremely complex and we don't know how they work yet."

Carole Milner responded with, "Unfortunately, the more aggressive/abusive behaviors we, children and adults see, the less we are disturbed by it and the more we are willing to accept" (National Educational Service Community Circle Gathering, 1999).

School climate and children's attitudes toward aggression are related. When aggression is allowed to go unchecked in the schools, aggression will flourish. If you are not a part of the solution, are you a part of the problem?

Moving on to College

Jantzer (2006) researched the relationship between bullying victimization in grades K-12 and adjustment and coping skills of those victims once in college. While there are an increasing number of students who continue on to college after high school graduation, there is very little research on how well former victims cope once they have moved on (Chappell, et al, 2004).

As with the onset of puberty, college is another major time of transition in a person's life. Major life transitions may awaken old feelings of helplessness and stress (Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering, 1989).

Jantzer's findings followed other researchers' in that men reported more physical and verbal victimization than women and that victimization reports were highest in elementary and junior high, lower in high school, and lowest in college (Jantzer, 2006). The smaller number of incidents in college may be due to the fact that bullies are oftentimes academic underachievers, therefore, would not typically be expected to go on to college after high school graduation. Possibly once the hormonal mood swings of puberty and old relationships are removed, the new educational setting of college and onset of adulthood starts everyone out on the same footing.

In the Workforce

It is possible that K-12 culture represents a microcosm of the world in which we live today. At this University, for example, the amount of Human Resource and Conflict

Resolution workshops has been increasing in the last three years to include mandatory as well as voluntary classes. These offerings may be found under the Continuing Education U2 (or University within the University) Department. U2 and Conflict Resolution offer those classes which are requested; they, themselves do not set the agenda.

Some topics covered include: harassment training, termination process, progressive discipline, legal issues for supervisors, diversity in the workplace, prescription drug abuse, your rights as an employee, depression in the workplace, signs & symptoms of stress & job burnout, achieving your personal balance, improving relationships, effective communication skills, styles & skills of effective leadership/management, employees privacy and the law, supervising the emerging workforce, suicidal behavior in the community and workplace, working with the difficult employee, and more.

From this a person would assume some employee bullying/harassment issues exist, but this organization is by no means the exception to the rule, just one that is trying to do something about it. What we learn as children carries over into our adult lives. We need to compare the similarities and differences between the phenomena of bullying in schools versus harassment at work to increase our understanding of this problem and come up with possible solutions, such as intervention programs.

Intervention Programs

The most promising of intervention programs are those that are comprehensive and multifaceted, are started in the primary grades, and continue throughout the school

years. The programs include anger management; social perspective taking; decision making and social problem solving; peer negotiation and conflict management; social resistance skills; active listening and effective communication; and discussion of prejudice, sexism, racism, and male-female relationships (Dusenbury, Falco, Lake, Brannigan, and Bosworth, 1997).

Teachers believe the most effective violence intervention is the presence of teachers who are willing to intervene and schools with a clear and consistent policy on violence (Astor, Meyer, and Behre, 1999). It has been suggested that modification of bullies' behavior by having them mentor victimized children and offering them martial arts classes to channel them away from aggression (Twemlow, Sacco, and Williams, 1996); using Solution Focused Therapy to address bullying behavior (Banks, 1999); teaching assertiveness skills and ways to develop higher self-esteem for victims (Roberts and Coursol, 1996) and focusing on the use of peer support with training of students on how to intervene (Cowie, 1998) should be included in such intervention programs. In this way, all students—the bully, the bullied, and the bystanders, are involved in a combined effort to decrease the bullying (Kaster, 2004). Being included in a *team* effort, working for the good of the team, will help to make everyone take ownership of the problem.

In order to know how to prevent bullying, it must first be understood, especially from the angle of the students who describe themselves as both the victim and the bully. Studying the problem and seeking out peer institutions that have had success rates with intervention programs they have implemented would be one avenue to take

because in doing so, efforts, resources, and time may be combined—items for which schools are always in short supply.

Anti-bullying/harassment Measures

As of this writing, after the Columbine High School shooting spree, seventeen states initiated anti-bullying laws and five years later, sixteen more were considering doing the same. It is not certain whether statutes are effective, but this has become an increasingly popular way to try to stop bullying because schools don't want to take the initiative (National Conference of State Legislatures-Education is Politics, 2004).

In 2002, the state of Connecticut *required* their school handbooks to include an anti-bullying policy and *mandated* school record keeping of such incidents, which are then made available to the public upon request (National Conference of State Legislatures- Education is Politics, 2004). According to Women's Educational Media, 66 percent of youth are teased at least once a month and one-third are bullied at least once a month (Education is Politics, 2004).

There is an option, under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, for students to transfer to other schools, but there are many problems with this, such as transportation logistics. Also, this does not address the bullying issue for the rest of the students remaining behind at the old school. In Chicago, Illinois, for example, 19,000 students asked for transfers to other schools for various reasons (bullying, better schools, closer to home), but only 1,100 received them. A seemingly great idea (NCLB) in Washington, D.C. can fall decidedly short when trying to implement it elsewhere (Education is Politics, 2004).

The question on the minds of many today is, why has it come to this and what can be done to prevent it? Whether it is because the incidents are more violent or because the media are more likely to report them, one thing is for certain, there is concern for the personal safety of our children in the schools.

David Grossman, a retired Army lieutenant colonel, was a speaker at the Alerus Center on May 7, 2003. His visit was sponsored by the Family Advocacy Office at the Grand Forks Air Force Base through a Department of Defense grant and a variety of local helping agencies (Lee, 2003). He co-authored the book, "Teaching Our Kids to Kill: A Call to Action Against TV, Movie and Video Game Violence," which addresses this issue. He has coined the term, "killology," to mean the study of what makes people kill and he blames the increasing childhood violence on the entertainment media, including video games, television and movies. Obviously area residents felt the issue of bullying/harassment and violence was enough of a danger in our area that it was important to bring in a speaker regarding this issue.

Deviant behavior such as bullying harassment, exclusion, and physical violence needs to be addressed for the societal illness it is. When an epidemic occurs, researchers look for a cure by isolating the cause and developing a cure, and, in doing so, develop a vaccine to save lives. A similar process is needed to eradicate this plague on society, in order to save the emotional and physical well being of our children and in the process, help ensure they will grow up to be well-adjusted adults.

Other countries, especially Scandinavian countries, have viewed this as a problem for several decades now, but the United States just started playing catch up in the 1990s. In 1982, Daniel Olweus was commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of

Education to conduct research on bully-victim problems. There were 80,000 participants (students) and this Scandinavian study led to similar research in the United States (Olweus, 1987).

Another concern should be what happens to these classroom bullies when they become adults. Today, one of the leading authorities on this issue, James Garbarino, Ph.D., a noted researcher, author, keynote speaker, is called upon as an expert witness at trials dealing with this subject matter. He states deviant behavior is bad for both the victim and perpetrator and that it may very well continue into adulthood, thus causing even greater problems in society. It appears the time for redirection is when bullies are young, because adulthood may be too late for rehabilitation. When they become the coworker who makes everyone's life miserable, the abusive spouse and/or parent, or the person who does jail time; they become a social and economic liability to society (Garbarino and Bedard, 2001).

The relationship of the family environment to children's involvement in bully-victim problems at school was reported in the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* (December 2002). This social research investigated the differences between families of victims, bullies, bully/victims, and non-involved children in terms of family functioning, child-rearing practices, and problem solving strategies in hypothetical conflict situations and the perceptual differences between the children and their parents on those dimensions. A literature review from previous studies of children's perceptions of family dimensions was drawn upon to add to the perceptions of parents.

Berthold (1996) found that social environmental factors such as peers, the school, and the home environment all play a significant role in peer aggression and

victimization at school. There was a difference, almost completely across the board, between the children's perception of family life to the parents' perception of family life. It is interesting to note that the parents reported less conflict and more cohesion, expressiveness, organization, control, and social orientation than did their own children (the bullies, the bullied, and the bystanders all included). The researchers did state that the large perceptual differences between the children and their parents could alternatively be explained by the children's developmental state (age) (Berthold, 1996).

The results of the study were important in that they showed what seeds are needed to be planted in order to grow a bully. It comes down to adults making a difference—parents and teachers. Children and future generations need to be provided with caring, nurturing, low stress, safe, and happy environments, both in their homes and in their schools. The researcher suggested organizing general information sessions about bullying/victim problems at schools in order to involve parents. Then specific parental training sessions, under close cooperation with mental health centers, could be done in order to promote the desired, healthy outcomes among bullies and their victims.

Children learn from their families, friends, and society what the accepted norms are. The title of Hillary Clinton's book, It Takes a Village, would seem to be appropriate here. It will take children, parents, teachers, principals, policymakers, law enforcement officials, health professionals, youth advocates, and the community at large working together to help solve this problem. There must be a consensus in order for change to take place. In addition, leadership must be strong and fair. If the ranking officer of the

school, the principal, is viewed as weak and indecisive, faculty, staff, students, and parents will follow suit.

When a school decides to implement a policy on bullying, the principal will need to portray a strong front to students because some of the students will try to test that new policy right away. The students need to know the principal is honorable and will apply the rules fairly to all students and that there will be consequences for their actions. Teachers need to believe they can come to the principal with disciplinary problems and will receive backing from their administration. Staff needs to know that the principal is rock solid on the issue and will not cave in, that infractions are dealt with quickly, fairly, and with consistency. Victims should feel they are able to report incidents without fear of reprisals by the bullies or the administration. The parents of the bullies need to know their children will be held accountable for their actions and the parents of the victims need to feel confident that these issues will be resolved. The principal becomes more than an administrator; he becomes a symbol for justice.

In addition to children being bullied and harassed, sometimes the opposite is true and teachers are harassed by students. From 1997 to 2001, there were 1.3 million crimes against teachers, according to a survey published by the National Center for Education Statistics. Fear of lawsuits, may result in some assaults or threats not being reported to police. Seventy-seven percent of principals and 61 percent of teachers avoid taking action because of possible resulting litigation, a Harris Interactive poll found. There is also concern among teachers that the law does not give enough protection against lawsuits or funding for legal defense (Education is Politics, 2004).

Additional Legislation

In January of 2003, the Honorable Alcee L. Hastings of Florida, in the House of Representatives, introduced the Teacher Victims' Family Assistance Act of 2003 to provide death benefits to spouses and children of educators killed by school violence. In part, this was due to a study on school-associated violent death by the National School Safety Center, in which it was found that 33 teachers, school administrators, school employees, or volunteers were victims between the years of 1992-2001 (<http://frwebgate1.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/waisgate.cgi>, 2005). This legislation, while very important, assists with financial help *after* violence has occurred, but does not contribute to the prevention.

Suggested Solutions

Research from the U.S. Department of Education, in conjunction with the U.S. Secret Service showed that bullying played a major part in school shooting and one in four children who were bullies in school grew up having a criminal record by age 30 (Education is Politics, 2004).

While there are various ways to assist bullies and their victims, the first step in any improvement program is to first admit there is a problem. From classes, life experiences, and such, it is understood that no one size fits all. A self-study by each school district within the states seems evident. Public schools typically undergo an accreditation process approximately every seven years, so this same process could be employed for self-assessment. However, as it is nearly impossible for any organization to be completely objective, once assessments have been reviewed, they should be

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

Chapter III discusses the development of the instrument, description of the instrument, description of data collection, description of the sample, the survey instrument, and factors for this study.

Development of the Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a survey developed by the researcher and administered to a 200 level psychology class at a midwestern university of approximately 12,900 students. This class was randomly selected among large, lecture- sized classes. Of the possible 200 enrollees, on the day of the survey distribution, 112 were in attendance. But of those 112, the response rate was 100 percent, so sample size was at 112. The participants were informed that the survey was voluntary, results would remain anonymous and confidential, and that only the researcher, researcher's advisor, and people who make sure researchers abide by the rules (the IRB) would have access to the (anonymous) data. This was predominately a quantitative study with exception of the final question requesting additional comments, which provided a qualitative component.

Description of the Instrument

The researcher's survey instrument consisted of 14 questions with sub-parts. It was designed in this manner to avoid the apathy that sometimes develops after filling out numerous long surveys. The following areas were addressed: college level, gender,

age, K-12 school population, location (state) of school, whether bullying was experienced, what grade bullying took place, who the bully was, what was their part in the bullying, location/time of the bullying, whether the school had an anti-bullying program, whether they felt it was successful, if their plans for entering either the fields of Psychology or Counseling were because of their experiences with bullying, and the final area allowed for additional comments. The question about entering the fields of Psychology or Counseling was asked to determine whether there was a possible correlation between personal experience, or that of a friend or relative, with bullying which may have led them to pursue these fields of interest. This last part that asked for additional comments allowed for a qualitative piece to the study (See Appendix for the survey).

Description of Data Collection

The data set for the researcher's study was collected in the Fall of 2006. The instrument was distributed toward the end of the class period after the instructions were read. No names were to be placed on the surveys, and none were, thus making them totally anonymous. Students were asked to place their completed (or uncompleted) surveys face down on a table at the front of the class before exiting. Every potential respondent in attendance completed the survey; therefore, response was at 100 percent.

Description of the Sample

The study examined 112 college students, 76 female (67.9%) and 35 males (31.3%) and 1 non-response (.9%) from a large lecture class who voluntarily participated in surveys administered in the Fall of 2006. The majority of the college

students, 70 (62.5%) were in their sophomore year; the remaining consisted of 7 (6.3%) freshmen, 20 (17.9%) juniors, 14 (12.5%) seniors, and 1 (.9) other. The modal age bracket was 18-20 for a total of 82 (73.2%), which is what would be expected for the traditional college student in his/her sophomore year at college. The remaining consisted of the following age brackets: 24 (21.4) at ages 21-23; 4 (3.6%) at ages 24-28; and 2 (1.8%) at other. (See Appendix)

Factors for this Study

Some of the bullying experiences from grades K-12 that respondents self-reported were somewhat consistent with the findings of research data published in recent years, while some were not. The 12 factors included in this study were:

- Demographics—(current) school level in college, gender, age
- Location (state) and size of school(s)
- Extent of bullying in the five upper mid-western states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin
- If bullying was experienced, what category did the respondent self-report being classified—the bully, the bullied (victim), the bystander (witness, observer)
- Whether anti-bullying policies were in place and students were made aware of same
- Occurrence of bullying in schools with anti-bullying policies
- Whether bullying took place in an area with an adult (not the bully) was present
- Was any bullying attributed to a teacher
- Did respondent feel the school's anti-bullying program was effective
- Possible inconsistency between what students report happening and what schools/states report happening
- Whether respondent was so affected by the bullying experience, he/she was motivated into entering Psychology or Counseling fields
- Comments – qualitative component in the study

Factors within Domains

Factors were observed within the context of four major domains—demographics, school location and size, bullying experience, and school policies. The demographic domain included gender to discover whether experiences of males and females with

bullying varied. It was important to determine location of the schools in the five upper mid-western states. School location and size were key in discovering whether there was any possible correlation between them and the extent to which bullying takes place. Experience with bullying was the main focal point of the research, so it was important to note the extent to which respondents had experienced it and compare the results with that of the national averages. It was interesting to note whether the rates of bullying were lower for those schools which had anti-bullying/harassment policies in place.

Factor I: Demographics

Current Level in College
Gender
Current Age

Factor II: Location and Size

School Population Size in K-12
Location of Schools (States)

Factor III: Bullying Experience

Did Respondent Experience Bullying
Grade(s) Bullying took Place
Who was the Bully
What Category in the Bullying Triangle did they Consider Themselves
Location of the Bullying
Respondent entering Psychology/Counseling Fields as a Result of Bullying Experience

Factor IV: School Anti-Bullying Programs

Did School(s) have a program
Where they successful

Summary

Information for this study was collected from implementation of the researcher's survey instrument during the Fall of 2006. There were 112 volunteers who completed the survey anonymously. A detailed description of the data analyses and results from this study may be found in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to assess the prevalence of bullying in grades K-12, with special focus on five upper Midwestern states—North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin—*the environment in which we live*; whether the states had anti-bullying/harassment policies in place; and if the students felt those policies were effective. To accomplish this, data was gathered from respondents in a mid-sized, mid-western, four-year College in Grand Forks, North Dakota, regarding the perceptions/reflections of their past experiences with bullying in grades K-12 through the use of a survey developed by the researcher. The data collected helped answer the following:

- Demographics—(current) school level in college, gender, age
- Location (state) and size of school(s)
- Extent of bullying in the five upper mid-western states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin
- If bullying was experienced, what category did the respondent self-report being classified—the bully, the bullied (victim), the bystander (witness, observer)
- Whether anti-bullying policies were in place and students were made aware of same
- Occurrence of bullying in schools with anti-bullying policies
- Whether bullying took place in an area with an adult (not the bully) was present Was any bullying attributed to a teacher
- Did respondent feel the school's anti-bullying program was effective
- Possible inconsistency between what students report happening and what schools/states report happening
- Whether respondent was so affected by the bullying experience, he/she was motivated into entering Psychology or Counseling fields
- Comments – qualitative piece of the study

Demographics

Table 1 presents a demographic profile of the sample. The majority of respondents, 70 (62.5%) were in their sophomore year at college, which is to be expected of those

students enrolled in a 200-level college course. The largest age group was in the 18-20 years area, a response of 73.2%, so most students fell under a "traditional student" classification. The importance of these factors was to relate the timeline of student experiences with their respective state policies at the time they were enrolled in K-12 grades. Gender was asked to determine differences in bullying experiences, if any, between males and females.

Table 1. Frequencies and Percentages for Demographics

No.	Item	Responses	N	%
1.	School level in College	Freshman	7	6.3
		Sophomore	70	62.5
		Junior	20	17.9
		Senior	14	12.5
		Other	1	.9
2.	Gender	Male	35	31.3
		Female	76	67.9
		Unanswered	1	.9
3.	Age	18-20	82	73.2
		21-23	24	21.4
		24-28	4	3.6
		Other	2	1.8

School Location and Population

Almost all respondents had attended K-12 in one or more of the five upper midwestern states of North Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, South Dakota, and Wisconsin, which produced a good sample population. Table 2, indicates the majority of 57 (50.9%) of the respondents had attended school in North Dakota; 39 (34.8%) had attended school in Minnesota; 2 (1.8%) had attended schools in Montana; 4 (3.6%) had attended school in South Dakota; 1 (.9%) had attended schools in Wisconsin; 6 (5.4%) and 1 (.9%) had attended school in another state or country, respectively, than the five

states mentioned above. One (.9%) attended school in both North Dakota and Minnesota and 1 (.9%) had attended school in North Dakota and another state.

School size (population) is also cited in Table 2. On average, the school population was over 1,000—38 (33.9%) claimed this. The second largest school size reported was 27 (24.1%) in the much smaller 100-300 category. This was followed by 19 (17.0%) for 301-500 and 14 (12.5%) for 501-800. The remaining schools had population sizes of 7.1% and less.

The information on state measures below correlates with the timeline of the respondents' school years. It is important to note that for those states that have anti-bullying measures on the record, they are usually *recommended and suggested*, not mandated, regulated, or reviewed at the state level and definitely not uniform in nature.

State Measures

North Dakota

Local school districts in North Dakota are struggling with bullying and violence issues and could benefit from state guidelines. On January 7, 2003, the Fifty-eighth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota voted on House Bill Number 1237 to amend and reenact sections 15.1-19-09 Students—Suspension and Expulsion—Rules and 15.1-19-10 Possession of a Weapons—Policy—Expulsion from School, of the North Dakota Century Code (North Dakota State Legislative Assembly, 2003). While this is decidedly very important legislation, it does not address the other less violence aspects of bullying that, if perpetuated over a period of time, may lead to violence and/or suicide.

During the 2003 session of the North Dakota State Legislative Assembly, Linda Christenson requested the North Dakota Education Committee to replace language that

There is no *mandated* anti-bullying policy in the state of North Dakota because North Dakota is very adamant that schools do their own thing, so rather, they *recommend*. When asked, the North Dakota School Board Association in Bismarck will provide schools with a sample anti-bullying/harassment policy form. If schools accept money from the federally funded program, "Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities," then there will be some *mandated* federal forms to fill out, i.e., on suspensions, weapons, etc. For those schools who *feel they do not have a safety problem*, the schools instead may opt to accept funding under the REAP (Rural Educational Achievement Program (REAP). Instead of using the funding for safety and crime prevention, they can use it for academic programs, computers, etc. instead, which many of the smaller rural schools choose to do (Drinda Olson, 2007).

Minnesota

While it was *not* true in the past, during the time these respondents were attending K-12 classes, there is now a Minnesota State Statute 121A.0695 that addresses hazing, intimidation, and bullying and sanction, the responsibilities of the School Board, and an annual review of same. Now Minnesota *requires* all school districts to have a policy in place. The Minnesota School Board Association, in collaboration with the Department of Education, prepared a model program. A sample is available to other school districts to follow or they are encouraged to draw up their own. There is no oversight in the piece of legislation that *mandates* a copy of the school district policy be sent in for review by the state. Additional information on this can be accessed at www.education.state.mn.us (Riestenberg, 2007).

Ms. Riestenberg also stated that many schools elect to enroll in Safe Schools, a federally subsidized program that provides federal dollars for alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and violence protection. In these incidences, the State is then responsible for ensuring the schools are in compliance. This program includes a school handbook which addresses the policy regarding student conduct (Riestenberg, 2007). When the federal government is involved, *compliance and mandatory* are not considered bad words. Ms. Reistenberg also stated that some school districts take part in administering the federal Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) every three years to children, in grades 6, 9, and 12. She has been informed that, for the first time, the new federal surveys will include some very specific questions regarding bullying, to include a census of the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of students (Riestenberg, 2007).

Montana

In Helena, Montana in 2005, Senator Sam Kitzenberg, Republican-Glasgow, submitted Senate Bill 198 (SB198), which would have required school districts to adopt anti-bullying policies, but it died on the House floor. Kitzenberg, a former teacher, *hoped* that in spite of this defeat, school districts would take the initiative on their own to create anti-bullying policies. Another senator, Elsie Arntzen, Republican-Billings, also a teacher, agreed there should be a bill requiring school districts to adopt an anti-bullying policy, but did not believe in SG198 because she felt the anti-bullying bill should *require* involvement from parents, school employees, school boards, and state school officials. She also believed that such a policy would not be enforceable unless bullying tendencies were well defined. Another senator, Don Roberts, Republican-Billings, an oral surgeon, stated there should be a policy because of all the facial injuries he had

treated due to children being beat up by bullies. However, he, too, believed that anti-bullying policies should be left up to the local authorities (Moy, 2005).

The Montana School Boards Association recommends that school districts define bullying, acknowledge that minorities are susceptible to bullies, encourage students to report bullying, and administrators to investigate reports of bullying. The Association and the American Civil Liberties Union believe what the Board has now done may help protect school districts from *lawsuits* because of bullying. A retired teacher from Helena, Barbara Rush, believes an anti-bullying policy is *not needed* because schools have had rules dealing with class bullying, which includes pushing, shoving, and obnoxious behavior and that no teacher or administrator would ever let students hurt each other (Advocate, 2006). This raises the question of how long has she been retired and out of the loop as to what is happening in schools across the country.

Montana recently passed legislation on anti-bullying and harassment rules called Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM). All school districts must have some sort of policy in place, but it does not *mandate* a specific policy (Will, 2007).

South Dakota

Standards 1, 2, and 4 of the South Dakota Health Education Standards of 2000 *recommend* students in grades K-12 be taught interrelationships between mental, emotional, social, and physical health on the impact to the body and their ability to communicate. It is *recommended* that grades 9-12 learn how to investigate personal and family situations, such as mental illness, that might require health services. The state *does not require* that students receive instruction on violence prevention education to prevent bullying/harassment and fighting/gangs. For academic educators, physical

educators, school nurses, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, food service personnel, and athletic coaches, there is no specified professional development. There is also no student-to-professional ratio requirement for counselors, school psychologists, or school social workers, so it may be more difficult for students to have the personal one-on-one time with said professionals. The Health Promoting Environment guideline of the 2000 Standards, "Safe and Secure Learning Environment (Prevention), Administrative Rule 24:08:03:01 *requires* educators to "make a *reasonable effort* to maintain discipline and order in the classroom and the school system to protect the students from conditions harmful to learning, physical and emotional well-being, health, and safety." There is no state policy for bullying/harassment, fighting/gangs, hazing, reporting incidents of violence, or collaboration with law enforcement (State-Level School Health Policies, 2005).

Deb Barnet, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, stated there was no new legislation or any *mandate* from the state at this time regarding an anti-bullying/harassment policy. She also stated that while South Dakota State Statute 13-32-1 addresses principals, school administrators, and superintendents on disciplinary authorization and State Statute 13-33-6.1 requires schools to offer character development education for students regarding self-respect for minorities, the statutes "are not explicit, are not on point, and dance around the issues." Ms. Barnett also stated that for their school counselors, it is optional whether they are accredited, but there is a type of in-school accreditation available. Further information may be found on their website at: <http://doe.sd.gov> (Barnett, 2007).

It is important to note there that in Ms. Barnett's own words, "the current South Dakota Statutes regarding the bullying/harassment issue, are lacking."

Wisconsin

During the time period respondents attended K-12 schools, there was no anti-bullying/harassment legislation on the books. During the last session in the Wisconsin State Legislature, just before school was out for the summer of 2006, state senator Neil Kedzie introduced such a bill, but the vote was deadlocked in the assembly and Representative Debbie Towns, Chairperson, who had the power to advance it, chose not to do so. She expressed concerns that this proposed legislature took away local control and Wisconsin is big on local control (Fernan, 2007).

Then in December of the same year, there were two high profile acts of school violence within two weeks of one another. One of the incidents took place at the Weston School District, a K-12 school building, in Cazenovia, a town just west of Madison, Wisconsin. A high school student shot and killed the principal. The perpetrator had suffered years of bullying. Two weeks later, at Green Bay East High School, a student became aware of a plan for school violence and informed authorities. This foiled plan was intended to be a facsimile of the Columbine violence. This incident may have affected Representative Debbie Towns' bid for reelection to the Assembly Education Chair. When the Legislature reconvened in January, the original author of the bill on anti-bullying/harassment, Senator Neil Kedzie, reintroduced the bill. There is confidence that it, or some version of it, will pass this time around, quite probably precipitated by the two September incidents (Fernan, 2007).

Last year, on their own, the Wisconsin State Department of Education developed an anti-bullying/harassment model which covers the areas of definitions, prohibition, reporting/complaint procedures, and public reporting. There are two models available, one for elementary school grades 3-5 and one for middle school grades 6-8. The modules were based on the University of Wisconsin's "Sticks and Stones." The effects these modules of curriculum have had on the schools will be evaluated next fall. Fernan stated there has been considerable out-of-state interest in their modules, so they have made them available for sale (Fernan, 2007).

School districts are allowed to adopt this policy or develop their own as long as the same criteria are covered, but they do not have to report their policy guidelines to the state; rather, they just need to have one in place so should parents decide to sue the school, the school would be covered. The department also provides resources, programs, materials, and establishes a Bullying Awareness Day each year. A rather substantial anti-bullying curriculum has been developed and copies of this curriculum are placed in every library and Intermediate State Agency in Wisconsin. Their www.dpi.wi.gov website has a link to the policy guidelines (Fernan, 2007).

There are twelve Intermediate Education Facility Coops across the state whose responsibility it is to do a professional development training of educators. Typically this day-long training takes place during the Spring and Summer months. It is completely *voluntary, not mandated* training, and is specifically targeted towards the educators, not support staff, because the anti-bullying/harassment piece is a curriculum that is taught by educators. It is important to note that the professional development piece is not required by educators who have to teach the courses, or by guidance counselors, and is

not offered to support staff. The cost is \$100 to the individual; the school does not pay for it. There are general workshops available for support staff (Fernan, 2007).

Table 2. Frequencies and Percentages for School Location and Population

No.	Item	Responses	n	%
1.	School Location	North Dakota	57	50.9
		Minnesota	39	34.8
		Montana	2	1.8
		South Dakota	4	3.6
		Wisconsin	1	.9
		Another State	6	5.4
		North Dakota & MN	1	.9
		ND & Another State	1	.9
No.	Item	Responses	N	%
2.	School Population	Less than 100	4	3.6
		100-300	27	24.1
		301-500	19	17.0
		501-800	14	12.5
		801-1000	38	33.9
		Unknown	2	1.8

Bullying frequencies and percentages are addressed in Table 3. From a sample population size of 112, a full 69 respondents (61.6%) stated they had experienced bullying as a child. Only 43 (38.4%) stated they had not. The possible responses to the question, "Did you experience bullying as a child," were condensed in such a way that the data needed to be drawn out as it is below to accommodate the possible grade combinations of school districts.

For this group of respondents, a greater frequency of bullying took place in the elementary grades—62 (55.4%), followed by a reduction of almost half—33 (29.5%) in the junior high grades. Again a drop was noted in the frequency in bullying in high school—18 (16.1%).

Table 3. Frequencies and Percentages of the Bullying Experience

No.	Item	Responses	n	%
1.	Bullying Experienced	Yes	69	61.6
		No	43	38.4
2.	Grade-Bullying	Grades K-6	40	35.7
		Grades 7-8	11	9.8
		Grades 9-12	5	4.5
		None	33	29.5
No.	Item	Responses	N	%
2.	Grade-Bullying	-Continued-		
		Grades K-6 & 7-8	10	8.9
		Grades K-6 & 9-12	1	.9
No.	Item	Responses	N	%
2.	Grade-Bullying	-Continued-		
		All Schools	11	9.8
		Grades 7-8 & 9-12	1	.9
3.	Bullying-Different Levels	Elementary School	62	55.4
		Junior High	33	29.5
		High School	18	16.1

How many students had been bullies, bullied (victims), or bystanders is shown in Table 4. It should be noted that some students expressed experience with more than one category. In most instances, the bully was in the same grade—62 (55.4%) followed by that of an older student—29 (25.9%). Teacher bullies stood at 4 (3.6%) with 3 from the state of North Dakota and one from the state of Minnesota. While this percentage is low, it is still alarming given that a teacher is in a position of authority.

In the "I considered myself" to be category—29 (25.9%) reported having been the victims (bullied). The bystander category was the second highest with 19 (17.0%). These categories were followed by the combination bullied (victim) and bystander

category with 14 (12.5%). Only 5 (4.5%) of the respondents reported having been bullied themselves. The disparity between the numbers of victims versus the number of self-reported bullies raises the question whether bullies, on average, go on to college after graduation. Previous research has shown they are typically academic underachievers. Another possibility could be that bullies don't always see themselves as others do.

Table 4. Frequencies and Percentages of the Bullies, Bullied, and Bystanders

No.	Item	Responses	n	%
1.	The bully was	An older student	29	25.9
		In the same grade	62	55.4
		A teacher	4	3.6
		Parent/Guardian	1	.9
		Another person	6	5.4
2.	I considered myself	The bully	5	4.5
		The bullied (victim)	28	25.0
		The bystander	19	17.0
No.	Item	Responses	N	%
2.	I considered myself	-Continued-		
		None of the above	20	17.9
		Don't know	5	4.5
		Did not answer	6	5.4
		Both the bully & the bullied	5	5.4
		Bully, bullied, & bystander	8	7.1
		Bully & bystander	2	1.8
		Bullied (victim) & bystander	14	12.5

The location of bullying, as noted in Table 5 below, indicates that most of the bullying took place during school hours—45 (40.2%), followed by the before/during/after school category—17 (15.2%). The category of during school and after school ranked third—10 (8.9). A possibility for this lower number may be due to after school programs and sports, but that was not addressed in the survey. Other

bullying categories came in relatively low at 4.5% and below. It appears most bullying takes place during the time and location an adult would be present and that leads one to question why bullying would even take place under those circumstances.

Table 5. Frequencies and Percentages of Location/time of Bullying.

MNo.	Item	Responses	n	%
11.	Time it took place	During school	45	40.2
		After school	5	4.5
		At home	1	.9
		Another place	4	3.6
		Did not answer	22	19.6
		Before and during school	5	4.5
		Before and after school	1	.9
		Before, during, & after sch	17	15.2
		Before/during/after & home	1	.9
		During school & after school	10	8.9
		After school and at home	1	.9

In reviewing Table 6, it is interesting to note that over 70 percent of the respondents either indicated their schools did not have an anti-bullying program—60 (53.6%) or were unaware whether one existed—20 (17.9%). If students are unaware of the existence of such a program, then one has to question whether the program is even working. Only one-fourth of all respondents—32 (28.6%) stated their schools had an anti-bullying program in place and an even lower number—14 (12.5%) thought these programs were successful.

Thirty-nine (17.9%) stated that their schools' anti-bullying programs were not successful. The information from state measures (what the states are doing) and the results of the research indicate, when left to local control, the local school districts are not getting the job done. Therefore, it is time for the states to step in with stronger

language than *recommended, suggested, and not required* (as in the case for professional development of school employees), and initiate statewide, regulated uniform policies and procedures.

Table 6. Frequencies and percentages of anti-bullying programs in the school.

No.	Item	Responses	n	%
1.	School had a policy	Yes	32	28.6
		No	60	53.6
		Don't know/did not answer	20	17.9
2.	It was successful	Yes	14	12.5
		No	39	34.8
		Did not answer	59	52.7

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Chapter V provides an overall summary and recommendations from the results of this study. The information may be useful to administrators, educators, healthcare workers, and parents interested in reducing bullying/harassment in their schools.

Bullying is a crime on society. The amount of bullying indicated in this study should provide insight to those harboring a false sense of security that we are living in the "safe" upper midwestern states where "these kinds of things" don't happen.

The demographic profile of the sample population consisted of respondents (62.5%) in their sophomore year at college and 73.2 percent in the 18-20 years of age range, which would be expected of the traditional college student. Therefore, the researched information on state measures would be consistent with the school policies in force when respondents were attending grades K-12.

Well over half (approximately 62%) reported having experienced bullying. Among these 69 students who experienced bullying, 35 were from North Dakota, 28 from Minnesota, none from Montana, 3 from South Dakota, 1 from Wisconsin, 4 from other states, and none from another country (two respondents attended school in more than one locale). There were 19 males and 50 females who had experienced bullying.

Equally alarming was that 6 percent of females reported bullying by a teacher—three of the teacher bullies were from the State of North Dakota and one was from the State of Minnesota. What remains unclear to the researcher is how 40.2 percent of the bullying took place during school hours when educators and other adults would have

been present. Some are multiple responses, but 22 respondents stated bullying occurred before school, 64 stated it happened during school, 29 reported it happened after school, and 2 reported it happening at home.

Among the 32 respondents who reported their schools had an anti-bullying program, 15 were located in North Dakota, 14 in Minnesota, 1 in Wisconsin, and 2 in another state. The rates for bullying are higher in South Dakota (3 out of 4), the state with least amount of guidance in the area of anti-bullying.

There was a higher rate of victims (bullied), at 25.9 percent, than there were bullies or bystanders. Seventeen percent reported being bystanders to bullying. Only 4.5 percent of the respondents reported having been bullies themselves. The low number of self-reported bullies at 4.5 percent leads one to question the disparity between that and the 25.9 percent who indicated they were the victims of bullies. Previous research would indicate that oftentimes bullies are academic underachievers, so possibly they did not move on to college after graduation. Another possibility could be that bullies don't always recognize themselves as being bullies, so they did not indicate so on the survey.

Respondents followed the pattern of previous research in that the majority of bullying took place in the elementary and junior high grades with a noticeable drop in frequency during the high school grades. This would indicate the need for anti-bullying/harassment programs and training to be implemented at the elementary grade levels.

Almost without exception, all respondents had attended K-12 in one or more of the upper Midwestern states of North Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. This is the sample population that the researcher was seeking as this is "the

neighborhood in which we live” and we should be especially concerned with what happens here. In our communities, this amount of crime would warrant additional police surveillance. We have a moral and legal obligation to do better by our children.

Clearly, even those in the education community feel that policy alone will not be very effective. During an enlightened discussion with Ms. Riestenberg from the Minnesota Department of Education in 2007, she expressed her belief that early intervention is necessary to stop the bullying/harassment behavior, and that relying on punishment alone—falling back on school suspension to work, will not deter this type of behavior or fix things. Ms. Riestenberg stated that school policy is only as good as those who enforce it (Riestenberg, 2007).

We need to ensure those in power to enforce it do their job. Compliance is more easily achieved when those in charge of carrying it out actually believe in what they are doing. And this comes back to good leadership, without which it is difficult, if not impossible, to effectively implement change.

Our schools have a long road ahead of them before they receive an “A” on their report cards for promoting and providing safe school climate.

Recommendations

There should be anti-bullying/harassment policies at the state level with one *mandated* and uniform program that all local entities are *required* to follow. There needs to be a clearly established definition of bullying. School districts should be allowed to add to (not delete from) the state policy only if their amended policy first meets with state approval. By accomplishing this at the state level, there is less likelihood of compromised ethics as has been my experience with small rural schools.

There can be no "different rules for different folks" when the rules come from above. And this, in turn, will foster ethical leadership.

The State of Wisconsin has a working plan in place that others are interested in following. By sharing resources (ideas, experiences, what works) with others, states and their schools can save both time and money, commodities that are always in short supply.

School districts could start with making *professional development* a requirement. All school personnel should receive anti-bullying/harassment training and, in addition, a remedial workshop just prior to the start of school in the Fall of every year. The cost of this professional development should be incurred by the schools, the state, or the federal government, not by the individual unless he or she would be receiving continuing education units (CUs), which would count toward their requirements.

Schools should include anti-bullying/harassment policies in their student code of conduct and the consequences for breaking these policies should be addressed. There needs to be anti-bullying programs for students which teach them what to do when faced by a bully or when they witness others being bullied. These programs would include the teaching of social skills and non-violent resolution means to solve their conflicts.

Anonymous reporting should be implemented to help eliminate the fear of reprisal, thus encouraging more students to report bullying incidents and/or possible plans they hear of involving bullying or school violence. This will help create a more reality-based reporting of incidents and depict the true health of the school climate/culture.

It is important for bullies, victims, *and* bystanders to receive counseling, as has been shown by research that all three types suffer emotionally. Schools must work with parents and the community in "setting the tone" for a new anti-bullying/harassment culture for it to be accepted and flourish.

Students learn best in a safe, organized, clean environment that promotes learning. Guidelines for expectations and consequences for not meeting those expectations regarding academics, classroom conduct, and equitable treatment of other students, should be clearly stated, understood, and carried out fairly and consistently.

An educator should be interested in the welfare of all students. The curriculum should contribute to students' intellectual, emotional, and social well-being with elements of diversity included to encourage and foster understanding and inclusion of all students.

Before and after school programs would be a good preventative measure at the elementary grade levels. Exercise, one-on-one contact with their teachers, crafts, and homework sessions could be included. It would eliminate the vulnerability of children walking to and from school each day.

Hoping, recommending, and suggesting that schools find their own way and take the initiative to establish an effective anti-bullying/harassment policy has not effected positive change; therefore, it must be mandated at the state level and periodically assessed. While *autonomy and local control* is big in all five of these upper midwestern states, that point will become moot should the federal government determine states are not acting as quickly or effectively as they should. This would lead to the federal government *mandating* their own uniform policy.

The No Child Left Behind Act states all children should be in a safe learning environment, but there is the need for a policy with more clout, and establishing one purely for the sake of avoiding lawsuits is missing the point. It needs to be done for the sake of our children and the adults they will become.

Schools need leadership and direction on dealing with bullying issues, just as every one of us needs guidance and direction in new endeavors. When administrators, educators, and school staff, who have not been properly trained, are expected to *go it alone*, such a system is doomed before it even begins.

What can be done at the college and university levels is making an anti-bullying/harassment class mandatory, at least for those entering the fields of education, counseling, and psychology. This gets new people "on board" before they ever set foot in a school setting.

Recommendations for Future Research

The original plan was to conduct a qualitative study of bullying, but the researcher deferred to a quantitative format because of the belief in the academic community that quantitative is more objective, so a quantitative study with a rigid survey instrument took place. In reflection, this was an error in judgment. While placing every one and every experience into rigid categories to make research easier to conduct, not everything fits into specific parameters because life is messy. You can not make the subjective be objective and when you try, you lose the richness of it.

Interviewing respondents and taking a narrative of their account with bullying would have made for better research. A section for comments was included in the survey instrument to add a qualitative piece to the instrument. It was anticipated that

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Appendix - Survey Instrument - 2006