

Fall 12-18-2015

A Retrospective View of Bullying

Janie M. Stewart

University of Maine, jane_stewart@umit.maine.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/etd>



Part of the [Student Counseling and Personnel Services Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Stewart, Janie M., "A Retrospective View of Bullying" (2015). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 2399.
<http://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/etd/2399>

This Open-Access Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine.

A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW OF BULLYING

By

Janie M Stewart

B.A. Memorial University, 1993

M. Ed. University of Maine, 2008

M. Ed. Acadia University, 2010

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(in Education)

The Graduate School

University of Maine

December 2015

Advisory Committee:

Sid Mitchell, Associated Professor of Education, Advisor
Sandra Caron, Professor of Family Relations
John Maddaus, Associate Professor of Education
Annette Nelligan, Lecture in Counselor Education
William Dee Nichols, Professor, Literacy Education

DISSERTATION ACCEPTANCE STATEMENT

On behalf of the Graduate Committee for Janie M. Stewart, I affirm that this manuscript is the final and accepted dissertation. Signatures of all committee members are on file with the Graduate School at the University of Maine, 42 Stodder Hall, Orono, Maine.

Dr. Sidney Mitchell, Associated Professor of Education

Date

LIBRARY RIGHTS STATEMENT

In presenting this dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of Maine, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for "fair use" copying of this dissertation for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Librarian. It is understood that any copying or publication of this dissertation for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature:

Date:

A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW OF BULLYING

By Janie M. Stewart

Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Sidney Mitchell

An Abstract of the Dissertation Presented
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
(in Education)
December 2015

Bullying in schools is one of the most prevalent challenges for teachers, administrators, and counselors all over the world (Esbensen & Carson, 2009; Merrell, Gueldner, Ross & Isava, 2008). The increase in bullying is evident by the growing interest in the behaviour, as well as intervention and prevention programs (Esbensen & Carson, 2009). This study examines the retrospective view of 10 university students who were identified as bullies during junior high years. Ten in-depth interviews were conducted, and analyzed. Themes were identified including: 1) no common “bullying” definition, and media contribution to this, 2) the behavior was seen as serving a purpose, 3) all participants harboured sad memories and regrets for their behaviours, and finally 4) participants identified gaps in the system that may help mitigate the problem. Gaps identified by participants included: education on bullying, the absence of a clear definition, and potential consequences for all persons involved. Ensuring the involvement of all stakeholders will be beneficial. Recommendations from this study include education on bullying and professional development for staff especially school counselors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members: Dr. Sandy Caron, for her expertise in Qualitative studies, her confidence in this research, and her expedient responses to my on going questions; Dr John Maddaus for his profound scholarly insight and advisability, especially on the 'Interview protocol'; to Dr. William Nichols for the intellectual input and suggestions that contributed to this research; and Dr. Annette Nelligan for years of support and inspiration through this long arduous journey. There were many days, when my strength and determination rested on a dialogue with you. I would like to thank my advisor and committee chair, Dr. Sidney Mitchell for sharing his profound expertise and experience not only on this topic, but also the process of research itself. Your hours of continuous guidance, support, encouragement, and endless supply of positivity, made the whole journey feel effortless at times. Your enthusiasm, professionalism, and unyielding mentorship for my research leaves me with the thankfulness of having a superb mentor.

Finally, I would be remiss, if I did not extend my acknowledgements and deepest gratitude to my family. To my parents, Cyril Stewart and Margaret Duke, for their continuous encouragement and belief in me. To watch my parents endure so much and yet always remaining steadfast, honest, proud, and fearless parents, have provided me with the strength, tenacity and endurance to forge forward. To my husband Alan, who never wavered in continuous love, support, and belief in me. You have motivated me in all facets of life. Thank you to my two beautiful children, Jennifer and Rachel, who provided their support and love in so many ways, including patience and understanding for my absences. This journey could not have been successful without you all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Summary	6
Significance of the Present Study.....	7
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	8
Bullying defined.....	8
Prevalence of bullying.....	8
Types of bullying	11
Gender	13
Why students bully.....	14
Social position.	14
Beliefs & attitudes.	15
Heredity.	16
Emotion regulation.	17
Family and school relations.....	17
Effects of Bullying	19
Mental health.	20
Dropping out.....	22
Antisocial acts.....	23
Violence.....	23
Theoretical Framework	24

CHAPTER 3 METHODS	29
Pilot Study	31
Participants	32
Sampling Technique.....	34
Survey.....	34
Interview.....	34
Procedure.....	35
Confidentiality.....	39
Reliability.....	39
Scoring instructions.....	40
Interview Analysis.....	40
Validity.....	41
Reflexivity.....	42
Triangulation.....	42
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS	43
The Retrospective Definition of “Bullying”	45
Media Influence.....	50
Purpose of Bullying.....	52
Meaningful Insight and Reflections	55
Memory of targets.....	55
Regrets.....	56
Reflections of self.....	58
Elements Missing from the Intervention/Preventative Perspective	60
Clear definition of bullying.....	60
Consequences of bullying.....	60

The power of social media.....	61
Involvement of Stakeholders.....	62
Summary of Findings	64
Response to Research Questions.....	66
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION.....	68
Interpretation of Findings.....	70
Chronosystem.	71
Macrosystem.....	72
Exosystem.....	73
Mesosystem.	74
Microsystem.	74
The Individual.....	76
Limitations	77
Strengths.....	78
Implications for Schools and Counseling Context.....	79
Implications for School.	79
Implications in School Counseling.....	82
Future Research.....	86
REFERENCES	88
APPENDIX A: VISUAL MODEL FOR MIXED-METHODS	97
APPENDIX B: ILLINOIS BEHAVIOUR SCALE.....	98
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	99
APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICPANTS.....	101
APPENDIX E: CORRESPONDENCE WITH AUTHOR OF IBS SURVEY.....	103
APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT FOR SURVEY	104

APPENDIX G: SCRIPT	105
APPENDIX H: SCRIPT FOR THE INVITE TO INTERVIEW	107
BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR.....	108

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Bully Scale Scores.....	44
Table 4.2: Gender Scores.....	44
Table A.1: Sequential Explanatory Design Procedures.....	97

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems Model.....	26
Figure 5.1: School Counselor Assessment Tool Using EST.....	83

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is considered a subtype of aggression, where an individual or individuals attack physically, embarrass, humiliate, spread rumours about, and/or exclude persons who are considered in some way less powerful (Craig & Rosu, 2014; Spriggs, Iannotti, Nansel, Haynie, 2007). Although the majority of studies have been done in the context of school settings, research has also found the prevalence of bullying in the work place and in institutions such as jails (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). Bullying is considered a serious risk for the psychosocial, emotional, and academic well-being of all involved (Craig, Peters & Konarski, 1998; Sudermann, Jaffe & Schieck, 1996).

Canadian and American researchers have accumulated data since the early 1990s to assess the prevalence of bullying in Canadian and American schools (Haltigan & Vaillancourt, 2014; Harwood & Copfer, 2015; Powell & Ladd, 2010; Schumann, Craig & Rosu, 2014, Spriggs, Iannotti, Nansel, Haynie, 2007). These studies generally concluded that Canadian and American students, like students in other countries, experience bullying in school at rates and frequencies that should not be ignored (Craig, Peters & Konarski, 1998; Sudermann, Jaffe & Schieck, 1996). For more than 20 years, the World Health Organization (WHO) has conducted research on the health of young people, with international researchers from over 30 countries. A study conducted by the World Health Organization (2001-2002) that surveyed the healthy behaviours' of school-aged children in 35 countries, ranked Canada as 9th highest for bullying out of the 35 countries and the U.S. as marginally worse, at approximately 10th (Craig & Harel, 2004). This may suggest

that United States and Canada's bullying interventions have not been as successful as in other countries.

Bullying in schools is currently one of the most prevalent challenges for teachers, administrators, and counselors worldwide (Esbensen & Carson, 2009; Merrell, Gueldner, Ross & Isava, 2008; Pintado, 2007). Research indicates that rates of bullying and victimization in Canadian K-12 public schools are presently minimally at 15% (Merrill et al., 2008; Nickerson & Slater, 2009); however, other studies have reported much higher. In the United States, Pintado (2007), did a study of 3,178 Florida students, grades six to eight, and showed 34% of students reported being involved in moderate to high incidents of bullying as either the perpetrator or the victim. Moderate and high in this study was a measure of the frequency and type of aggression. For example, high levels meant one was bullied by teasing and threatening more than 10 times in the past 30 days. Moderate levels meant one was teased and/or threatened between 1 and 9 times (Pintado, 2007).

A growing body of research indicates that the consequences of bullying present serious threats to the children involved, including interference with healthy development and student academic goals (Esbensen et al., 2009; Merrell et al., 2008; Pintado, 2007; Nickerson & Slater, 2009). The increase in bullying is evident by the growing interest in the behavior, as well as a growing need for intervention and prevention programs (Esbensen et al., 2009).

Despite the sobering statistics on the rates of bullying and the time, money, and efforts put in to implement anti-bullying programs, negative effects of bullying are still prominent including: truancy, depression, and suicides (Hawker, & Boulton, 2000; Rivers, Poteat, Noret & Ashurst, 2009). The Minister of Education in Canada announced

the development of a Task Force in April 2011, in response to the heightened concern about the increase in bullying and cyber bullying among Nova Scotia's students and the tragic consequences that potentially follow. More specifically, there were several high profile suicides, which appeared to be connected to bullying and cyber bullying. Cyber bullying is a form of bullying that utilises technology such as e-mails, texts, and Facebook. It is used mainly to ruin reputations and relationships, with techniques such as gossips, lies, and put downs, to mention of few (Aronson, 2004).

The Task Force was chaired by Professor Wayne MacKay from the School of Law at Dalhousie University. Four other members of the Task Force were: Rola Abi Hanna, from the Department of Education; legislative Assembly member, Mat Whynott; a parent representative Wendy MacGregor; and a student representative, Breanna Fitzgerald. The Task Force was also supported by a 20 person working group composed of representatives of stakeholders from local hospitals, police, community services, and justice department. MacKay (2012) disclosed facts such as: there are 252,000 cases of bullying per month reported in Canadian schools, however, 70% of the staff who responded to a survey, reported that most of this bullying initiates off school property, therefore it is difficult to enforce consequences. Less than 50% of the staff recognized they had a responsibility to deal with bullying while another 12% felt they did not have the resources to deal with it. In an online survey, 75% of respondents indicated they believe bullying is a problem in Nova Scotia, and 60% of Nova Scotia students indicate that they have been bullied. Evident from the research gathered by this task force, the scale of bullying among youth is significant in Nova Scotia, and requires immediate attention (MacKay, 2012).

The United States is not without their tragedies as a result of bullying (Aronson, 2004). On April 20, 1999 in Littleton, Colorado, a Columbine high school became well known as Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, 18 years and 17 years respectively, took the lives of 12 students and one teacher. They managed to wound 23 more before taking their own lives (Aronson, 2004). Another well publicized US shooting occurred on April 17th, 2007 at Virginia Tech University, where the shooter killed 33 students and then himself (Aronson, 2004). Many studies show that school shooters were often bullied with teasing, ridiculing, and ostracizing (Aronson, 2004; Leary, Kowalski, Smith & Phillips, 2003). In fact, Leary et al., (2003) did an analysis of 15 school shootings where students were seriously injured or killed. The results of this research suggest that 13 of these shooters had experienced bullying during school years. Aronson (2004) revealed the social chain of command that exist within the school environment, and the degree of teasing that existed with put downs and exclusion; especially for persons who were considered different.

Youth violence has always been a concern in the United States, however, bullying was rarely a consideration until after year 2000, thus very little data before this point. Bosworth, Espelage & Simon (1999) suggest that most research done to this point was international research; however, they were sceptical as to whether or not the findings could replicate to US students. The results with this study showed 79% of 558 middle school students bullied someone at least once over the last 30 days. Nansel, et al., (2001), looked at the prevalence of bullying among youth and whether or not there is an association with psychosocial adjustment, problem behavior such as smoking, alcohol consumption, truancy, social and emotional wellbeing, depression, contentment with

school as well as parental influences. The results of this study showed that 30% of individuals reported being either the bully or the victim (Nansel et al., 2001). These results allude to the prominent prevalence of bullying currently in schools in the United States as well.

While there is a plethora of research about the victims of school bullying (Merrell et al., 2008; Nickerson & Slater, 2009; Pintado, 2007), there exists a paucity of research related to the perpetrator of bullying behavior. The majority of studies to date have concentrated on bullying behaviors from the victim's perspective with very little voice given to the perpetrators (Jenkins, Zapf, Winefield & Sarris, 2012). Research from the perspective of the victim may not provide a balanced account of the bullying phenomena. Persons who have the lived experiences of being bullies are considered information-rich and can provide insight on past behavior (Seidman, 2006). By collecting information from bullies or past bullies, researchers may begin to identify patterns and/or weaknesses in systems. In this study, ten university students between ages 18 to 20 were investigated in Halifax, Nova Scotia. They have been identified as a former school-bully based on scores from a bullying survey, in order to understand retrospective accounts of their behavior.

The present study investigated the perceptions of former bullies and their views on possible gaps in their environments that supported bullying. Gaps identified by participants included: education on bullying including consequences and effects of bullying, the absence of a clear definition, and a lack of involvement of all stakeholders. The results of this current research has the potential to inform counselors and counselor

education, by arming them with essential information, techniques, and strategies necessary to support administrators and teachers in schools in combating this problem.

The researcher felt it is important to place the former bully within a theoretical framework such that it will provide understanding of the behavior, assist in a more thorough understanding of the behavior, and the possible causes and/or supports that may exist within the environment that allows the behavior to continue. While other theories, such as social learning theories, may provide theoretical frameworks that enlighten us on bullying, Bronfennbrenner's (1993, 2005) Ecological Systems Theory (EST), provides the framework that moves from the individual to all context of that individual's life. The EST places the student at the center of four social surroundings. The theory posits that the student is in the center of these systems, which includes peers, family, school environment, community, and culture. This theory states that all systems influence directly or indirectly, the student's development (Bronfennbrenner, 1993, 2005).

Summary

A mix-methods design was chosen for the current study. There is an abundance of research on bullying from the victims perspective, however, very little from the bullies perspective. The potential for discovering patterns and a deeper understanding of bullying behavior may be possible with information from the primary source. The current research begins with a review of the literature on bullying behaviors. The methodology chapter follows and concludes with an analysis of results and a discussion of limitations, strengths, implications for schools, and future research.

Significance of the Present Study

The goal of this research is to gather information from bullies and former bullies so that teachers, administrators, and counselors can be informed and use this information to help recognize, address, and put in place strategies that will have success in mitigating bullying in the school context. More effective and efficient strategies can be developed if we have a better understanding of the behavior and what exists in the perpetrator's environment that allows the behavior to continue. This information needs to come from the primary source for in-depth understanding, a person who engaged in bullying. This information can be used to create new strategies that will increase the safety of the learning environment. The research questions that guided this study is: what do university students who have been identified as former bullies, recognize as contributing factors to the behaviour of bullying? A sub question is: do males verses females perceive bullying differently and if so, what is that difference?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bullying defined

Theorists and researchers have posited various definitions of bullying with commonalities across many. However, there are three relatively consistent variables among these definitions coupled with diversity of manifestation, (a) intentionality, (b) repetition, and (c) imbalance of power (Olweus, 1993; Schoen & Schoen, 2010). Bullying has a purposed intent to embarrass, harm and/or offend the victim, involves repeated acts of aggression toward the victim or group, an imbalance of status or power perceived or realized, and the type of aggression can change from direct to indirect (Schoen & Schoen, 2010). Perpetrators of bullying demonstrate direct and indirect behavior that include verbal and physical abuse as well as intimidation, exclusionary behavior or initiating rumours, often through texting or e-mails (Pintado, 2007; Schoen & Schoen, 2010). In summary, the operational definition of bullying, for the purpose of this study, consists of a series of repeated, intentional, cruel incidents between individuals that is physical, social, or verbal.

Prevalence of bullying

Bullying has been cited as a worldwide phenomenon (Hoover, Oliver & Hazler, 1992; Nickerson & Slater, 2009; Olweus, 1993, Rigby & Slee, 1999). These countries include, but are not limited to: Australia, Norway, Netherlands, Turkey, and England to mention a few (Olweus, 1993; Fekkes, Pijper & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Alikasifoglu, 2004; Haltigan, & Vaillancourt, 2014). Hoover, Oliver and Hazler (1992), reported that over 15% of their subjects were significantly distressed by bullying in the social,

emotional, academic, and familial domain. The participants of this study measured their impact on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (not a problem) to 4 (severe problem) with the 2.5 midpoint used to define the severe response. Another 22% of the participants in this study reported difficulties with schoolwork and success due to this harsh treatment from peers. Slee and Rigby (1993) measured the extent and nature of bullying among South Australian primary children and found 10% of the boys and 6% of girls reported bullying. This difference may be accounted for by the age groups; Hoover et al., (1992) used participants from junior-level students while Slee and Rigby (1993) used primary-level students.

Nansel et al., (2001) collected data from 15,686 children, grades six through ten in the United States, and found that 13% of the children had been a bully, 10.6% had been victimized, and 6.3% had been both bullies and victims. Craig and Pepler (2003) found in a Canadian sample of 7000 children, from grades six through ten, 9% self-reported as bullies and 18% self-reported as both bullies and victims. They also suggest the frequency of bullying tended to occur twice or more a week for most victims.

Although these rates may be considered significantly high, this behavior is not specific to North American culture, as several cross-cultural studies have suggested that bullying is common on an international scale. Fekkes, Pijper, and Verloove-Vanhorick (2005) found that of the 2766 children from Netherlands, between the ages of 9 and 11, 4% of children were bullies and 9% were victims. Likewise, of 4153 Turkish students, in grades 9 and 11 surveyed, 19% were found to be bullies and 30% were found to be victims (Alikasifoglu, et al., 2004).

Noteworthy to mention are the results of several studies that show bullying at a higher frequency during middle and junior high schools years (Nansel et al., 2001; Pepler, Craig, Connolly & Jiang, 2008; Schoen & Schoen, 2010). A longitudinal study followed the students for eight years to the end of high school and noted a reduction with the transition of high school (Pepler et al., 2008). The participants who experienced consistently high levels of bullying in this study were also identified as the group with the highest risk factors within the parental & peer relationship. This group may account for the lower levels of bullying that typically exist in high schools. Nansel et al., (2001), although based on a measure of a self-report of 15,686 children in middle schools across US, not only showed a decreases in bullying in high school, but also showed an association with perpetrators with poorer psychosocial health with those who continue to bully. Psychosocial health measurements in this study included measuring problem behaviors such as smoking, alcohol consumption or truancy, social and emotional wellbeing such as peer supports, depression, contentment with school as well as parental influences. These findings are consistent with Bosworth et al., (1999). The evidence put forth in these studies may suggest the importance of interventions in the junior or middle school age group.

The discrepancies that exist in many of these studies are worthy of mention. Some of the discrepancies may be accounted for by the fact that there is still significant disparity on a definition of bullying (Kowalski and Limber, 2007; Olweus, 1993; Powell & Ladd, 2010). If bullying is to be measured, it needs to have a clear definition. The propensity of students, teachers, parents and administrators to over identify and under identify bullying incidents as a result of a poor definition, is high as their perceptions

often differ. Waasdorp, Pas, O'Brennan, & Bradshaw (2011) showed the existence of different perceptions of school climate and bullying held among students, school staff, and parents. This study involved 11,674 students, 960 parents, and 1027 staff at 44 schools. They examined the association between student, parent, and staff perceptions of safety, belonging and bullying. The results in this study show significant discrepancies of perceptions of safety, belonging and bullying, between the adults and the students. More specifically, this study showed that the discrepancy between students and staff was greater in middle schools than in elementary schools and a significant discrepancy in parents perceptions of safety when compared to that of students and staff. There was also a higher prevalence of indirect bullying in the higher grades when compared to elementary. Indirect bullying is aggression that is less overt, such as gossiping and the exclusion of others. This particular difference was related to the discrepancies between staff and students and their perceptions of what constitutes indirect bullying. Recommendations from this research include more involvement of parents and better communications between school and parents and that emphasis be put on discussion and education around indirect bullying, especially in the middle and high schools (Waasdorp et al., 2011).

Types of bullying

Researchers now recognize multiple types of bullying (Olweus, 1993; Veenstra et al., 2005). Physical refers to assaults on the person such as hitting, kicking or pushing. Verbal bullying is making statements directly to the victim that may include insults, threats, abusive language, calling of names and humiliation. Those two categories are considered direct or overt forms of bullying. Relation and cyber bullying are classified as

indirect or covert. Relational or social bullying are attempts to destroy a person's reputation with gossip or rumors, attempts to destroy others relationships with manipulation, in an effort to change how a person might feel or behave towards another. The use of exclusion or deliberate ignoring the victim, as techniques to send messages to others is prevalent with this type of bullying (Veenstra et al., 2005).

Cyber bullying is the newest phenomenon and takes form with electronics. It has the potential to include most of the verbal and relational forms of bullying, and executing them via e-mails, texting, Facebook, tweets, and most other forms of social media. It is often considered more lethal than other forms of bullying due to its potential to be anonymous, instantaneous, and reaching large portions of a population (Broll & Huey, 2015; Kowalski & Limber, 2007). While estimates vary, according to a 2010 meta-synthesis of studies from several countries, between 20% and 40% of young people report being cyber bullied (Tokunaga, 2010). While there has been an increase in response to cyber bully such as legislative amendments in many provinces in Canada and 47 States in the United States updated or proposed updates to this form of bullying, many argue that they are merely symbolic at this stage, arguing that tickets are rarely issued and laws rarely enforced (Broll & Huey, 2015). However, it is not clear on the actual perspective of the gatekeepers of these laws, the police. Broll & Huey (2015) reported that Canadian police see this as extra burden on an already taxed system and compare it to high priced babysitting. This perspective does not support anti bullying initiatives.

The pervasiveness of bullying has reportedly been realized on many dimensions and all academic levels (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2006; Schoen & Schoen, 2010) with verbal bullying demonstrated as a pervasive phenomenon

in elementary, cyber at middle and high school with incidents of physical bullying seen at greater proportions in middle school (AACA, 2006; Schoen & Schoen, 2010). According to Kowalski & Limber, (2007), cyber or electronic bullying now represents a problem of significant magnitude, for children as young as 11 years.

Gender

Researchers have noted gender differences as well in how bullying transpires and who enacts the offense. For example, it has been reported that girls have the tendency to bully both girls and boys, whereas boys primarily bully boys (Veenstra et al., 2005). On the other hand, boys tend to be the recipients of more physical assault and aggression, while girls are primarily the victims of non-physical aggression (Olweus, 1993; Rigby & See, 1999). Overall, boys have been identified as the deliverer and object of bullying at a higher frequency than girls (Pintado, 2007; Rigby & Slee, 1999; Veenstra et al., 2005).

Pepler et al., (2008) did a 7-year longitudinal study of 871 students; ages ranging from 10 to 14, where the group consist of 74% Canadian Europeans and the remaining 26% were from diverse backgrounds. Pepler et al., (2008) had findings of gender differences as well. They reported that 53% of their female participants were in the lower levels of bullying when compared to the males. Pepler et al., (2008) showed boys at the rate of 16% in the higher end of the bullying spectrum, engaging in persistent incidence of bullying, versus the girls, who were only at 4%. Although there is a large discrepancy between genders within this study, it is not clear that relational bullying, a form of bullying believed to be performed mostly by females, was accounted for. Relational bullying is a form of aggression that is directed at another person's relationship, with the intent to harm it. This aggression includes behaviors such as gossiping and ostracizing of

others. This is also a form of bullying that is easily undetected because of its covert nature (Craig, Henderson & Murphy, 2008; Dulmas et al., 2006).

Why students bully

Social position. There are recent studies done on why students bully, however, no consensus on any one significant reason. The relationship between good social skills and peer acceptance is well known, and can have an effect on student's healthy social adjustment (Schwartz & Proctor, 2000). However, this does not mean that an antisocial skill automatically equates to peer rejection. Sentse, Scholte, Salmivalli & Voeten, (2007) had findings that supported the opposite. The study utilized 2,578 students with a mean age of 13.4 years. The study revealed a positive relationship with increase peer acceptance and bullying behaviors in a classroom, however, the classroom norm was a variable. For example, adolescents who bully were more apt to be accepted, when there were high levels of bullying in the class. However, you were more likely to be rejected in a class setting if there were low levels of bullying (Sentse et al., 2007).

A number of studies report that students bully others to improve their social status, or a means of achieving dominance (Espelage & Holt, 2001; Burns, Maycock, Cross & Brown, 2008). Burns et al., (2008) did a qualitative study with 1,257 six graders, and found that the power and influence of peer group was a significant factor. If fact, having good peer support, made it less likely that the bully would feel bad about bullying. Pintado, (2007) states there is often pressure to belong. Students within this study claimed that pressure to bully was often necessary in order to maintain status within the peer group (Pintado, 2007). Another reason to bully is to increase status, especially when there is transition in a social structure such as transition from elementary to middle

school. However, bullying tends to taper off, once dominance is established (Pintado, 2007). The significance of peer groups has been well documented, as they are considered a critical part of the developing child's ecological micro systems (Rodkin, Farmer, Pearl, and Van Acker, 2006; Swearer & Doll, 2001).

Beliefs & attitudes. The bully's side or opinion of bullying is evident in the answers they give to the questions regarding their feelings and their reactions to the bullying of other fellow students (Aronson, 2004). Consistent are reports that state persons who engage in bullying, sustain the belief that it is okay to bully, by not only encouraging the behavior but also allowing bullying (Dulmas, Sowers & Theriot, 2006), and justifying their own behaviors (Aronson, 2004). In other words, bullies believe that they have good reason to bully; they also believe others have good reasons to bully. This not only justifies the behavior, but also promotes bullying by supporting other bullies. Espelage, Holt, and Henkel (2003) examined the relationship of bullying behaviors of bullies and social networks. In their sample of 422 middle school students, surveys were taken at multiple times throughout the academic year. Findings showed that both males and females created social networks with students who bullied at similar frequencies. Additionally, students who socialized with students who bullied others, increased in the amount of self-reported bullying over the school year. This suggests that students who perceive bullying positively may gravitate toward one another.

There is also support that teachers have different beliefs and attitudes towards bullying. Asimopoulos, Bibou-Nakou, Hatzipemou, Soumaki, & Tsiantis, (2014) showed that overall teachers knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about bullying was a wide spread problem in Greek primary schools, in all forms, and therefore not properly addressed. In

this particular study, the teachers only perceived bullying as an incident of physical aggression and the data showed there was a systematic approach only if there was a physical act. All other acts of bullying were underestimated or ignored. Dulmas et al., (2006) reported that of 192 participants, 40% to 50% reported teachers did nothing or very little to combat bullying. Similar findings in a research conducted by Craig, Henderson & Murphy (2008), were also noted. In this study, 116 Canadian high school teachers identified bullying as a form of aggression and excluded all forms of social bullying. Boulton (1997) had similar findings, with 138 teachers of all grades in the UK. A point of interest in this study was the high percentage of teachers (87%) who believed they were not capable of dealing with bullying situations and felt they needed more training.

Heredity. Dulmas et al., (2006) reports that 27% of 192 participants reported they had no emotions towards the person being bullied and perhaps the victims even deserved it. Thornton, Frick, Crapanzano and Terranova (2013), had similar findings, stating that students with high incidence of bullying, also scored high in levels of callous and unemotional (C-U) personality traits. Findings in this study also show high levels of conduct disorder traits and reactive aggression for students with callous and unemotional personality traits (Thornton et al., 2013). This particular study tested whether or not callous and unemotional traits accounted for differences in aggression and bullying. These personality traits of callousness and unemotional, are not believed to be the results of prior experiences of being victims or coming from violent backgrounds, rather it is believed they are hereditary (Thornton et al., 2013). The developmental trajectories of callous and unemotional traits are believed to be the influence of genetic factors, and

environmental variables to a lesser extent (Fontaine, Rijdsdijk, McCrory & Viding, 2010). However, callous and unemotional traits do seem malleable when they are influenced by variables in the individual's psychosocial environment (Thornton et al., 2013). Thus it is purported that the more positive influences and factors in an individual's psychosocial environment, the less likely they are to be callous and unemotional.

Emotion regulation. Research also suggests that bullies exhibit proactive behavior as well as reactive responses (Camodeca & Goossens, 2005). The proactive being more of a protective response whereas the reactive is a defensive response. Reactive responses are impulsive or spontaneous while a proactive response necessitates time to think. Thus when a person is reactive, they react to threats or unkind acts in haste and anger and are described as reactionary. When a person is proactive, they take time to react to the situation. Proactive responses choose a course of action, and are not always in response to the actions of others. There is some evidence that show those who act as bullies may have difficulty in the regulation of their emotions, and have a predisposition to acting on impulse. For example, a study conducted by Schwartz & Proctor (2000) revealed that teachers and school personnel rated bully/victims as disorderly and overly active. These same children often show difficulty with anger management, especially control when aggravated by their peers.

Family and school relations. Current theories and research confirm the critical role of parental involvement and the development of bullying (Hong & Espelage, 2012). Other scholars have documented the significance of the parent and adolescent relationships and the parent and teacher relationships and the role these relationships play in terms of risk factors or protective factor (Hong & Espelage, 2012; Swearer, & Doll, 2001).

Recent findings indicate that low parental involvement is considered high risk factors for a child's participation in bullying (Swearer, & Doll, 2001). There is also evidence that parental relationship may have some effect on a child's propensity to bully. Pepler et al., (2008) reveals results that show high parental conflict and low parental trust with students who are involved in high rates of bullying when compared to students with low incidences of bullying. Pepler et al., (2008) did a 7-year longitudinal study of 871 students, ages ranging from 10 to 14, where the group consist of 74% Canadian Europeans and the remaining 26% were from diverse backgrounds. With 466 girls and 405 boys, this study revealed 4 trajectories. Within this group, 9.9% reported high levels of bullying, 13.4% moderate with discontinuance into high school, 35.1% reported a consistent moderate amount throughout school years while 41.6 reported hardly any bullying at all. This study revealed that students who bully had higher risks with individual, peer, and parent relationships.

Spriggs, Iannotti, Nansel, and Haynie (2007) report high levels of bullying with students who had poor relationships with not only family, but also with peers and school involvement. This may suggest the importance of family relations and communication when it comes to prevention and intervention of bullies. This research also suggests and supports the influential roles of not only the family setting, but also the peer and school setting.

Relationships with school may also play a determining role with bullying. When children have a positive bond with their school and their academic achievement, they are less likely to bully (Spriggs et. al., 2007). This study examined the relationship between bullying and family, peer and school relationships. A national representative of 11,033

student from grades six to ten participated in a survey that allowed them to self-report on these specific relationship. A negative association between family communication and bullying behaviors, suggests the importance of ensuring family involvement with schools and bullying prevention efforts. Georgiou and Stavrinides (2013) also showed evidence that parenting styles and bullying are related, however, they were not able to say whether current findings supported the parenting influencing the bullying at school, bullying at school influenced parental conflict or is it bidirectional? It appears that more research may be needed to support one of these models. Cunningham, Ratcliffe, and Vaillancourt (2010) showed the importance of parental influence on bullying, using a focus group of 62 students between the grades 5 and 8. One of the recommendations disclosed by this group was that parents need to improve relationships with their children: “The key to preventing bullying is letting their parents know and telling their parents to give them more attention” (Cunningham et al., pg.328).

Effects of Bullying

Bullying has the potential to damage the social, physical, and emotional well-being of all persons involved (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Rigby & Slee, 1999). The victims are not the only group at risk, bullying also harms the bully as well as the persons who witness it, or the bystanders (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Rigby & Slee, 1999). In fact, all aspects of bullying may create a climate of fear, callousness, and disrespect for everyone involved (Nickerson & Slater, 2009).

Research shows that any involvement with bullying during the adolescence, (approximately 10 to 13 years) can have negative mental, social, emotional, and psychological effects on the persons involved (Hawker et al., 2000; Kim, Catalano,

Haggerty & Abbott, 2011; Rigby & Slee, 1999; Slee & Rigby, 1993). Researchers have also shown a higher risk of substance abuse with the witnessing group as well as victims and perpetrators (Kim, et al., 2011; Rigby & Slee, 1999). Evidence continues to develop that informs how children, who are frequently exposed to bullying behaviors, are at increased risk for emotional, mental, and social problems (Hawker et al., 2000; Rigby & Slee, 1999). Furthermore, these difficulties experienced appear to vary according to the role in the behavior (Penning, Bhagwanjee and Govender, 2010; Rivers, Poteat, Noret and Ashurst, 2009), meaning that the effects experienced by the role of the bystander are not always the same as the ones experienced by the role of the bully. Suffice to say that regardless of your role in bullying behaviors, all participants are at risk of experiencing damage to their social, emotional, psychological, and academic development.

Mental health. Many researchers have reported the correlation between victimization and mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic symptoms (Hawker et al., 2000; Rigby & Slee, 1999; Rivers et al., 2009). Many researchers have also indicated that the same mental illnesses were present with the bullies, with one notable difference: bullies are different in that this group is also known to be more involved with excessive drinking and substance use (Kim et al., 2011; Merrell et al., 2008; Veenstra et al., 2005). These researchers have also indicated a higher crime rate for role of bullies specifically (Kim et al., 2011; Veenstra et al., 2005). The negative consequences of this behavior are not specific to the individuals involved; there is an inherent cost to society at large.

Victimization has been shown to be a chronic stress in one's life; it also interferes with self-esteem and a positive self-concept (Carney, 2008; Siegel, Greca and Harrison,

2009). Carney (2008) examined the relationship between exposure to school bullying and trauma. With 92 sixth-grade adolescents, a School Bullying Survey (SBS) and the Impact of Event Scale (IES) along with a bullying scenario designed by the researcher were administered. Prior to completion of the IES, students read a brief hypothetical bullying scenario and were then told to answer the IES as if they were the victim in the situation. The results of this study showed levels of trauma were rated as 'high' with greater exposure to bullying.

Siegel et al., (2009) examined the bi-directional relationship between victimization and social anxiety. With 228 students between grades ten and twelve, these students self-reported feelings of social anxiety and victimization that were experienced, twice over a three-month period, with in the same school year. The instruments used for both test periods in this study were the *Social anxiety scale for adolescents* and the *Revised peer experiences scale*. Both instruments used a 5-point likert scale. The study showed that students who experience victimization also report levels of social anxiety, and in fact the higher the victimization the higher the levels of anxiety. Interesting also in these findings was that social anxiety is associated with all types of bullying, however, at its highest with relational bullying (Siegel et al., 2009).

Other studies show a disruption in emotional development and a heightened state of fear for students who are victimized (Esbensen & Carson, 2009). O'Brennan et al., (2009) examined the social and emotional development of students who were involved in bullying and showed that these students had poor school perceptions, poor problem solving skills, and relationship skills. This contributes to less engagement in classroom and avoidance of schools. A more recent study by Hammig and Jozkowski (2013)

showed that victims did perform lower in academics than students who were not victimized; however, it was inconclusive as to the direction. It was unclear if the students were victimized because they performed low academically or performed low because of the victimization.

Dropping out. Incidence of bullying is often believed to increase the percentages of dropouts within a school. Cornell, Gregory, Huang, and Fan (2013) showed that the prevalence of bullying was a predictor of dropouts. In fact their study showed that schools with below average incidence of bullying had a 5.7% drop out rate whereas schools with high rates of bullying incidences had 10.2% drop out rate. The participants of this study were all grade nine students from 276 high schools in Virginia. The students were administered three surveys online, one with 7 questions, measuring general victimization, a three question survey examining their personal experience, and then a four item scale measuring school climate. This scale was called 'Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying'. The results showed that incidents of bullying were predictive of cumulative dropouts over the four-year period. With this study, researchers did not account for the suspensions delivered to students who engage in this behavior nor did they account for the distractibility of teachers that come with bullying behaviours. These are factors that may potentially interfere with their ability to teach, and potential predictors of dropout rates.

Rigby and Slee (1999) did a study on two secondary schools with a population of 285 and 877. Each of those schools reported similar results when measuring low levels of self-esteem and low levels of happiness about school found in children involved in bullying in general. The victims reported lower levels of self-esteem, more so than other

groups as opposed to children who were not involved at any level of bullying; this group reported high levels of self-esteem. The bully also reported low levels of happiness and low levels of enthusiasm for school (Merrell et al., 2008; Rigby and Slee, 1999).

Antisocial acts. Besides hurting other people, the bully also damages him/herself.

Studies show that bullies experience long-term effects from their behavior patterns.

Research demonstrates that bullies and bullying victims may demonstrate attitudes accepting of aggression. These groups tend to display more aggressive and impulsive behaviors and endorse retaliatory attitudes towards their peers. (Bradshaw, O'Brennan and Sawyer, 2008; Toblin, Schwartz, Gorman and Abou-ezzeddine, 2005). However, the relation between perpetrating bullying behaviors and criminal thinking has not been well studied. Although bullying is not considered a criminal infraction, it can lead to crimes such as harassment, assault, and in rare instances – murder (i.e. Columbine, Virginia Tech). The deviance generalization hypothesis (Arluke, Levin, Carter, & Frank, 1999) states that if an individual engages in one type of antisocial behavior (e.g. bullying), he or she is more likely to commit other antisocial acts; for example, drug and alcohol abuse, addictive behaviors such as gambling or even crimes such as theft (Veenstra et al., 2005).

Violence. Few empirical studies have directly examined youth's retaliatory reasons and attitudes when involved in bullying. Many researchers have determined that aggressive youth are more likely than those who are nonaggressive to display beliefs and attitudes supporting retaliating in an aggressive manner (Bradshaw, O'Brennan, & Sawyer, 2008).

These attitudes and beliefs supporting violent retaliation, in turn, place children at increased risk for reacting more aggressively in social situations. These results speak specifically to the kind of retaliation from school shootings and suggest a link between

retaliatory violence and prior victimization (Aronson, 2004; Leary, Kowalski, Smith & Phillips, 2003). This may also suggest that youth involved in bullying may respond more aggressively to interpersonal threats than their peers not involved in bullying. Aronson's (2004) research also gives credence to how school violence comes about because of bullying. His research shows that bullying can lead to school violence. Aronson (2004) disclosed evidence that the shooters of Columbine were victims of prior bullying. These findings may support the assertion that being a victim may lead to violence.

Helping students achieve their learning potential is already a challenging task with the variables that we cannot control, variables such as: socio-economic status, differences in learning, and maintaining a student's motivation to learn. This challenge becomes more complex when we try and manage an unnecessary behavior such as bullying. The costs of involvement in bullying then become high to individuals, families, schools, and society as a whole (Nickerson & Slater, 2009; Pepler et al., 2008). Frequent involvement in incidence of bullying may generate lifelong costs because of the involvement in multiple systems, such as mental health services, justice department, reduced education, family, and social services (Nickerson, & Slater, 2009). Learning and disrupting the pattern of this behavior is critical. The prevalence and seriousness of bullying require researchers to examine the factors associated with the initiation and the maintenance of these behaviors. The knowledge gained can be used to provide direction for school policy and used to design effective interventions for this problem.

Theoretical Framework

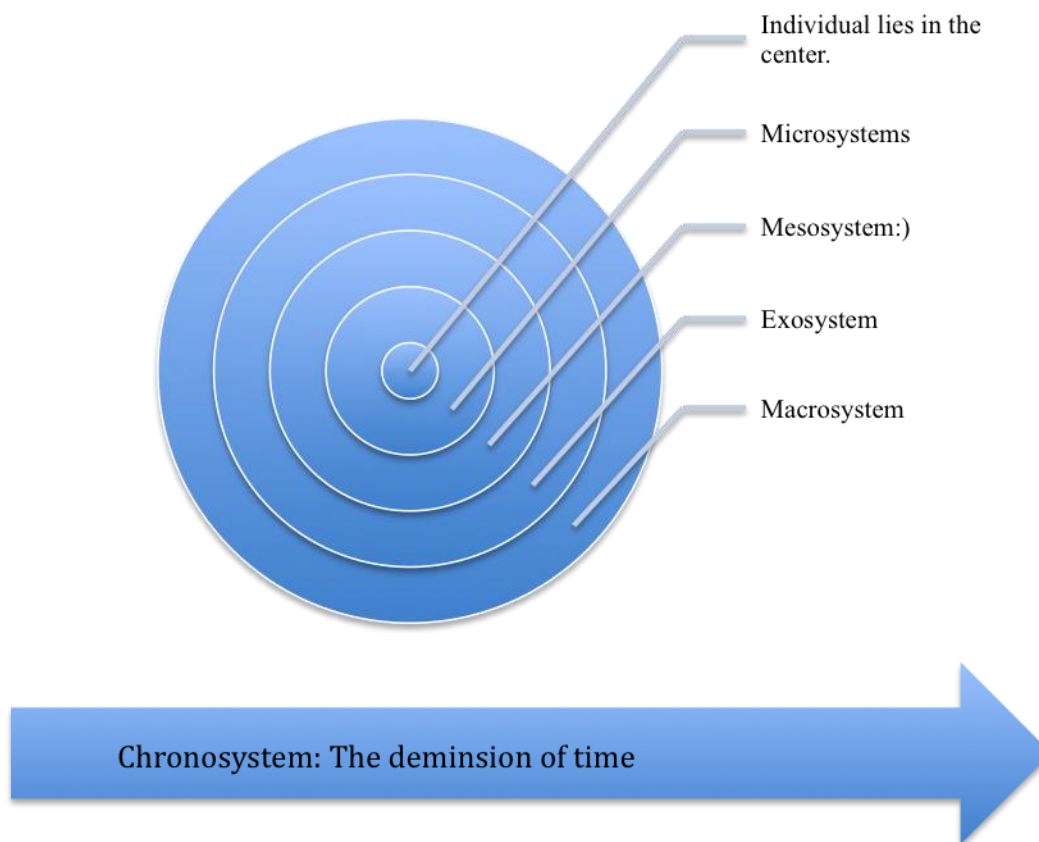
Bullying is believed to be a complex behavior that emerges from the many contexts that exist within a person's life (Swearer & Doll, 2001). These contexts include

the social, school, and family context, coupled with the individual characteristics of the persons involved (Swearer & Doll, 2001; Ungar, 2009). The ecological theory argues that if we are to understand human development, we must consider the whole systems in which the child develops. The system consists of five socially organized subsystems that support child development.

Bronfenbrenner's (1993, 2005) Ecological Systems Theory (EST) states that children are at the center and are impacted by multiple ecological systems. Each system contains variables that permeate throughout all other systems and thus impact the life of the child (see figure 2.1). The chronosystem includes consistency and change of the child's life and its environment over a lifetime. It looks at patterns and transitions over the life of the child. An example of this would be a divorce (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, 2005; Swearer & Doll, 2001). The second most outer circle of the EST is the macrosystem. This system includes our cultural beliefs and the values of our society. Our social values penetrate our entire environment, including the school environment. The exosystem contains indirect factors such as district-level school policies. Exosystems considers the social setting in which the child does not have an active role in the child's immediate context. Mesosystem is the connection between microsystems. The mesosystem refers to the interaction of the two settings in which the children are entrenched, particularly the school and home. An example is the family experiences in relation to school experiences such as the parent who rejects the child may have difficulty with building relationships in school. Bronfenbrenner (1993, 2005) stresses the significance of the environment, as the child perceives it. This system considers the institutions and groups that immediately and directly influence the child's development such as family, friends, school, and

communities. This is what impacts the development and the behavior of the child. There are also influences from beliefs systems as they act upon the behavior of the children, as they interact with events in their lives. Finally, inside all the concentric circles, are the individuals and their characteristics. These characteristics include personal ones such as sensitivity or shyness, physical characteristics such as size, social and emotional characteristics.

Figure 2.1. Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems Model



- Individual characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity
- Microsystems consist of the relations closest to the child: parents, peers, teachers
- Mesosystem: The relationships of the micro systems (bidirectional)

- Exosystem: Child not active however still affects them
- Macrosystem: Cultural environment

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is a functional way to look at this behavior. By using this perspective, this study has not only considered the characteristics of the student, but also the context of that student's life, and within the context of associated environments. Using the ecological perspective to examine bullying will provide a wider lens to scrutinize this complex phenomenon. Bronfenbrenner's (1993, 2005) Ecological Theory puts the student directly in interrelated social systems. The theory states that all systems have direct and indirect influence on the developing student. Bronfenbrenner (1993, 2005) states that the ecology of human development considers the co-existence of the growing person, and the constant evolving variables of the immediate settings where the person resides. This process of development is affected by relationships that exist among these settings, and also the contexts in which the settings are rooted. The ecological perspective suggests that the influences between the person and the environment are mutual and not limited to the immediate environment as there are many, and all interconnected.

Bronfenbrenner (1993, 2005) believes that to understand the influences of the environments on the developing child, one has to not only see and understand it is the existing elements, but also the perceptions of these elements, held by the developing child in that environment. To explore bullying within the context of school, it will be important to have the students' perceptions and perspective of that environment.

While school bullying has been studied comprehensively and in many contexts of life, few studies have explored this phenomenon from the perspective of the former bully within the context of school life for this individual. The purpose of this study is to uncover this perspective, through the lens of Bronfenbrenner (1993, 2005) and use this information to support strategies in the school system, in hopes of creating safe and secure environment for all.

In summary, bullying is associated with a number of mental health disorders for adolescents, and has negative consequences for all involved. Those who bully have higher risk of delinquent behaviours, such as crime, while victims may suffer from disorders such as anxiety and depression (Merrell et al., 2008; Rigby et al., 1999; Swearer & Doll, 2001). All groups run the risk of reduced school engagement, reduced possibilities of academic achievement, and potential drop out. Despite the number of studies over the years, there is a lack of understanding of bullying behaviour from the perspective of the perpetrator. Such a perspective may allow for the creation and implementation of bullying interventions with greater impact.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The guiding research question for this study is: What do university students, who have identified as former bullies, recognize as contributing factors to the pervasive behavior of bullying? More specifically, this study explained the experiences and perceptions of ten students who have identified as former bullies and aligned these aspects with their definition of what being a bully means to them.

The proposed study utilized a mixed methods design to address the research questions. Using a mixed methodology offered the best of both worlds, which includes the predictive strength of quantitative research that is both efficient and defined coupled with the in-depth, contextualized, and natural insights of qualitative research (McMillian, & Schumacher, 2010). The main premise of mixed research is that the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches will provide a more thorough understanding of this research, complementing the other while providing a comprehensive analysis of the research (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Knowledge is constructed on pragmatic grounds in mixed methods research and claim that only the truth will work (Creswell, Plano, Clark, Guttman, & Hanson, 2003). Researchers choose methods that will lead to the answers to the research question (Gall et al., 2007). Pragmatism purports that quantitative and qualitative research are compatible. Therefore numerical and descriptive data collected, either sequentially or jointly, can aid in a more comprehensive understanding of the research. The type of mixed design is sequential explanatory (Appendix A) where qualitative data was used to elaborate upon quantitative findings, in two consecutive

phases. It is the intention of the researcher to use quantitative results to identify typology and to use qualitative data to identify themes (McMillian, & Schumacher, 2010).

The first phase of the mixed methods sequential explanatory was the quantitative phase where data was collected using a survey, the Illinois Behavior Scale (IBS), (Appendix B). The survey consists of 18 questions to discriminate and define certain behaviors that align a person's behavior with that of a bully. This instrument was chosen because it is the design by a researcher, used in several studies and has been proven to be a valid and reliable instrument by the author (Chan & Chui, 2013; Espelage & Holt, 2001). This does increase the reliability of this current study (Creswell, 2003). Hence, the goal of this quantitative phase was to identify students as former bullies based on the scores the participants received on a bullying subscale survey. The results of this survey then allowed for a purposeful selection of participants for the second phase.

The second phase was the qualitative phase and utilized semi-structured interviews to collect data (Appendix C). The current research followed Gall, Gall and Borg's (2007) steps in designing the research questions. First, the purpose of the study was clearly established, identifying the sample population, designed the format of interview, developed the questions, pilot testing the questions and process, and finally interviewing and analyzing the data. Prior to the pilot test, the questionnaire was presented to the research committee, for further input and refining. The process was repeated twice and 8 questions were finalized. This data generated from the questions, was information rich and helped explain the existence and lack of certain factors that allows a person to participate in bullying. The justification for mixed methods is that quantitative data and its results are necessary to identify and provide the participants for

the research based on a typology. The qualitative phase analyzed and explained those behaviors by investigating the participants' points of view, with depth.

Creswell et al., (2003) states that there are three areas of concern that need considerable attention: priority, integration of data, and implementation. Priority is where the emphasis is given in the research, either qualitative or quantitative. Integration will describe where both sets of data come together and implementation process describes the order of how the data and the data analysis are presented. Usually this will be in sequence or in tandem.

The priority in this research was given to the qualitative phase. In this research, it was the qualitative phase that provided the larger part of the data. It was the in depth semi-structured interview questions that helped provide understanding and explanations of survey results. The quantitative phase, albeit smaller, was the start of the sequence and was used to identify the typology used in the second phase. Integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods was at the end of the quantitative phase, when the criterion selection of participants for the semi-structured interviews started. The results from both the quantitative and qualitative phase were also integrated during the discussion phase.

Pilot Study

Prior to phase two, a pilot study was conducted to appraise the questions of the interview to ensure their effectiveness. According to Seidman (2006), all researchers should incorporate a pilot into their proposal. The researcher will learn whether or not the structure of the interview is appropriate for the research they envision. The pilot interview was intended to also increase the researchers awareness of the key aspects of

the study such as establishing access to the participants, making contact, and the interviewing process. The pilot study was also intended to alert the researcher to any strengths and challenges of their techniques that may add or detract from the objective of the research.

The participant was a first year university female student from the local Halifax area. This student was a recommendation from a former colleague. The recommendation was based on this student's frequency of involvement in bullying behavior during her seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. With the permission of this student to receive a phone call from the researcher, the student was contacted by phone and asked if she would be interested in a pilot study. The participant was informed of the nature of the current study and the confidentiality that would be provided to her. The participant agreed to participate and the survey and interview were scheduled four days later in the private office of the researcher.

After completing the pilot project, the researcher reflected on the experience, and more importantly reviewed the data thoroughly, to ensure the questions produce the responses that will suit the objective of the current research and finally make revisions where necessary. As expected, the findings from the questions did elicit appropriate information, and was expected to serve the purpose of this study.

Participants

The participants were students enrolled in a local public university in Halifax, Nova Scotia. They were between 18 and 20 years of age and could be considered representative of the student population across Canada. This local university student body consists of 47% females and 53% males. The student body is made up of 70% of

Canadians (from places other than Halifax), 0.96% permanent residents while almost 27% are international students. This university's population does not differ significantly from the general population, in that, this is not a racially homogeneous population and the socio-economic status varies from low to high as the Canadian Government provides assistance to students who come from low socio-economic status.

Both women and men of differing socio-economic status, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, who have attended public and private schools, were asked to answer a survey which consisted of 18 questions. The survey used for this current study is called the Illinois Behavior Scale (IBS), and puts the participants into one of three categories, depending on their scores for each of the questions (Espelage & Holt, 2001). Each category is assigned specific questions from the survey. The categories are fighter (you mostly engage in physical fights), victim (you are mostly the victim of events) or bully (you are the bully in most incidents). With the permission of the professor, the survey was administered at the university, within the last ten minutes of class. The sample population was a representation of the over culture of the university.

Advantages of participants in this age group were they recalled their school experiences, as well as their thoughts and feelings associated with those experiences (Economou, 2009). They also recalled potential weaknesses in systems that may have had an impact on their behaviors. Another advantage to using this age group was that they were not currently in their respective schools thus removed from the situation by virtue of age. The participants were in university and thus not in the environment where the behavior occurred. During the time of the survey, there was practically no chance of coming face to face with the persons involved in the bullying behaviors, thus it was

expected that the truth was more readily given in the absence of ramifications (Coggeshall and Kingery, 2001). No further information or descriptions of the participants was reported. This decision was made in an effort to protect the identity of each participant.

Sampling Technique

Survey. Convenience sampling was employed for the quantitative portion of this research. This population was chosen for two reasons. First, because of their maturational age, the participants were likely to have memory and the ability to articulate on the behaviors being discussed. Secondly, the participants were far enough removed from the past behaviors and persons involved, that they were more willing to share the information. For surveys and questionnaire, it was recommended at least 100 participants be selected (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007).

Interview. According to Patton (2002), there are several sampling procedures available for qualitative research. With some research, it is in the best interest of the study to select a sampling procedure that allow for the detection of individuals with common experiences (Patton, 2002). One particular sampling strategy that selects participants, who are information rich, due to the fact that they are all special in the same way, is called criterion sampling. I chose this sampling procedure because this is the strategy that will best, directly address and answer the research questions. This study sampled individuals who were information rich, specifically, with the experience of bullying.

Criterion sampling entailed studying all individuals that met some predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 2002). The criterion for this research was individuals who had filled the criteria thus identified as former bullies. It was critical to distinguish,

which participants would be information rich as it was this group that would identify potential weakness in their systems that provided them with the opportunity to bully others. It is with this information that the purpose of this research was realized and the results may now be used to inform programs and systems improvements in schools. The intent of this study is to successfully provide insight of bullying to administrators, counsellors, and teachers so that intervention and/or prevention programs are informed, to help reduce bullying. This was done by examining those events and experiences with the persons who have directly experienced them.

Procedure

I received permission to attend a large class at a local university. Before entry, I provided this local university with proof that University of Maine Institutional Review Board (IRB), has granted permission for the research. The professor of this university then provided an exact time and date for entry. I entered a large class and shared with the students all information relating to the research. With permission from the professor, I commenced with phase one of the research. I explained the research in its entirety and handed out a brief survey. All participants were assured at that time, of complete confidentiality.

The first phase was the Quantitative Phase and its purpose was to identify students as former bullies based on the self-admission of certain past behaviors. The data was collected through a survey that contained core items, tailored to the definition of a bully (see Appendix B). The survey is titled the Illinois Behavior Scale. The scale is an 18 item, self-report measure containing three subscales for measuring the frequency of fighting, peer victimization, and bully behavior (Espelage & Holt, 2001). For the purpose

of identifying former bullies, the bully subscale was used. The bullying subscale utilized items 1, 2, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18. The range for this subscale was the range of 0 – 36. Points were assigned as follows: Never will have 0 points, 1 or 2 incidences will receive 1 point, 3 or 4 incidence will have a 2 point value, 5 or 6 incidence will have a 3 point value, and 7 or more will have a 4 point value. Subscale scores are computed by summing the respective items. The range for the bully subscale is 0 to 36, with higher scores indicative of more bullying. This scale classified students as a former bully, if they scored 1 Standard deviation above the mean of the bully measure (Espelage & Holt 2001). The mean of this score for the current study was 0.795 with a standard deviation of 0.582. A statistical analysis, using SPSS identified 19 participants in this category. At the bottom of this survey, students were asked to provide contact information for the researcher, if they were willing to participate in an interview in the near future. Only those who have both fulfilled the criteria of identifying as a former bully and agreed to a future interview were contacted. Students were given an ‘Inform consent’ form for the survey that was attached to the IBS (see Appendix F). It was reviewed at that time with the students. Consent was implied by those who continued on to so the survey. For the students who agreed to a follow up interview, and qualified, were informed that their name will be converted to an alias name, immediately upon collecting the interview data. The students were informed and assured of confidentiality at all times.

The university class provided the researcher with 102 completed surveys in total, with an age range of 18-20. The participants were considered a fair representation of the overall demographics of this university. No further details or information was reported in order to protect the identity of the participants. SPSS was used to identify only the

participants who fell into the ‘bully’ category. Of the 102 participants, 19 were identified as former bullies. Out of these 19 participants, 17 had provided personal contact information for a future interview. The researcher contacted 14 participants in an effort to achieve 5 female and 5 males and this balance was achieved.

The second phase was the qualitative portion, and utilized a semi-structured interview (see Appendix C). The 10 participants, who agreed to an interview, were contacted by the method of their choice. They were then invited to a private office, which is approximately a two-minute walk from the university. A convenient time and date was offered. The invite to the interview was facilitated by a script (see Appendix H). This phase was based on the notion, as expressed by Merriam (2002), that there are few truths that constitute universal knowledge; rather, there are multiple perspectives about the world. Therefore, by exploring the perceptions and the meaning of the individuals who have had this experience of being a bully, the study was able to go beyond the limits implicit in quantitative research and captured wider and deeper perceptions and understanding. To put it more simply, there were a number of attitudes and, indeed, numbers of experiences, which were based, in unique and probably personal settings. Only a qualitative approach has the potential to include these important and vital, factors. All participants were asked to ascribe certain characteristics, attributes and deficits to the experience of being a bully. Therefore, this interview was designed to gain an understanding of the factors that make a person a bully.

In this type of interview structure, questions were carefully designed to provide adequate coverage for the purpose of the research. Major questions were developed in the form of a general statement, which was followed by a sequence of sub-questions for

further probing. This method attempted to give a voice to each individual and his/her experiences as it was recounted to the researcher. As Seidman (2006) stated, semi-structured interviews not only guide the conversation, it also allows the participants an opportunity to disclose information that is both important to them that may not be reflected in the question itself.

During the semi-structured in-depth interviews, a set of interview questions was used to guide opportunities to explore the experiences, of a person who had been identified as a former bully. The questions asked participants to recall their experiences, describe their perspective at the time of the experience and of their daily schooling experiences. Sensitivity was an issue during the conducting of the interview and this implies discretion. Therefore, the participants were asked if they would consent to an audio recording of the interview, for the purpose of transcription only. Only 7 interviewees agreed to audio recordings, the remaining 3 were hand written. There was flexibility on the length of interviews, however, an hour was offered as a guide.

The data was analyzed for statements, meanings, and descriptions of the phenomena and it was anticipated that this would reveal the context and the structure of the experience. By examining the experiences and the perceptions of these experiences of each participant who identified as a bully, it was possible to examine the relative importance and potential shortfalls that these participants attached to the experience. The questions used in the interview were intended to establish personal causal factors and also, it was anticipated, this information would potentially expose a significant weakness in one or more systems (i.e. family, school). Identification of a weakness can have incredible power as a target for intervention, thus becoming the opportunity for program

and/or system improvements (Patton, 2002). The questions were carefully considered with due regard for the sensitivity of the subject matter and for the fact that responses has the potential to be self-deprecating (for the participants). Therefore, consent and confidentiality was assured and also guaranteed.

Confidentiality. The interviews were conducted in a private office in close proximity to the university. It was believed that the participant would be more comfortable in a private office with comfortable surroundings. The interviewee had a choice of a couch or office desk and chairs. Another advantage to this setting was the distractions were limited.

Confidentiality was reviewed with each participant and they were reminded that withdrawal from the research is his or her right at any point during the research process. All participants were given an alias name and these names were used in the transcripts. The names of all identifying locations, such as schools were also changed. All researcher's notes and surveys of names of participants and corresponding names was kept in separate locked file cabinets in the private and secure office. There was an Informed Consent Form that was explained in its entirety and signed by all participants, who participated in this research (see Appendix D).

Reliability. The author of the instrument established the reliability and validity of the survey. The Illinois Behavior Scale (IBS) has been found to have high levels of internal reliability, with Chronbach's alpha for the subscales as such: Bullying = 0.87, victim score = 0.88 and a Fighting scores = 0.83 (Espelage & Holt, 2001). According to Espelage & Holt (2001), the IBS scale is based on a comprehensive review of the research literature and existing bullying and victimization measures (Bosworth, Espelage & Simon, 1999), and as a result, 21 items measuring bullying, fighting, and victimization

were included in the survey. The items were submitted to principal axis factoring (PAF) analysis to examine the factor structure of these data. Factors were extracted based on values, percentage of variance explained, and examination of screen plots. Items that had factor loadings above .50 and those items that did not have cross-loadings above .30 on any other factor were retained, leaving the scale with 18 items.

Chui & Chan (2013) did a study on the role of social bonds, social control in bullying and victimization in school in China. They used a group of male, where $n=364$ and the age range were 17. The IBS in this study, had findings that yielded a high internal consistency in their sample equal to that of Espelage & Holt (2001). The IBS was high in internal consistency with Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$ (Chan & Chui, 2013). The scale was also supported with acceptable level of construct validity (Chan & Chui, 2013).

Scoring instructions. The Scoring of this instrument is done with point values. Point values are assigned to each response as follows: Never = 0, 1 or 2 times = 1 point, 3 or 4 times = 2 points, 5 or 6 times = 3 points, 7 or more times = 4 points. Subscale scores are computed by summing the respective items.

The criteria for the selection of participants for this phase included being a student in the local universities chosen for this study. Due to the demographics of these universities, there was participation by students representing a range of racial and different ethnic categories including Caucasian. There was a total of 102 surveys were administered.

Interview Analysis

Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Some notes were taken by the researcher in order to assist in the accuracy of the transcription. This was, however,

limited as the focus was on the participants. The transcripts were analyzed using coding. Coding is a way of categorizing and sorting data for the purpose of analysis. It was used to link statements that were connected by common themes; the process was used much like a filing system. The first stage was reading the data several times, a process called trawling. I took notes as I read, recording my thoughts and ideas. From this, I was able to sort the data and develop an initial coding scheme. The process was repeated, to refine the categories, and themes were identified.

The verification process included member checking, triangulation of information provided, and reactivity asking the same questions. The purpose of this study was reviewed prior to each interview with an in-depth discussion of confidentiality and an informed consent obtained (Appendix D).

Validity. Several strategies were employed to enhance validity. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) described 10 strategies and suggest researchers use as many as possible to ensure design validity. This research used several, starting with mechanically recorded data for accuracy. Member checking was practiced at the end of each interview to check with the participants for accuracy. Participant review validated researcher's accuracy of representation of the participant, constantly looking for discrepant data that may be an exception to the pattern. Also, using multimethod strategies permitted the use of the triangulation strategy. Triangulation strategy is where the researcher obtains convergent data using cross validation. Validity was embedded in the questions, as several questions were expected to yield a similar response, thus providing cross checking.

Reflexivity. Reflexivity is a concept that requires the researcher to self- scrutiny throughout the entire process, which will add creditability to a study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This researcher employed several strategies suggested by McMillan and Schumacher such as field log, reflex journal, recording ethical considerations, and critical reflexivity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Recording ethical considerations helped to justify choices in data collection and analysis. This means recording the rationale for all the choices I make. The field log was used to log the constant fieldwork of the study, recording all times, dates, place, and persons involved, and duration of the activity. The reflex journal allowed the researcher to describe feelings about the management of research on this topic. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the use of a reflex journal adds thoroughness to qualitative study, as the researcher record biases, responses, assumptions, expectations, and beliefs about the research process. The field notes provided additional data for the analysis. I took time for reflection and elaboration writing immediately after each interview. This activity assisted in establishing quality control with the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Triangulation. Triangulation involves the use of more than one source of information of a research question, in order to increase validity and enhance confidence of findings (Patton, 2002). This research lends itself well to methodological triangulation, which involved the use of both the qualitative and the quantitative methods of this particular study. In this case, the results of the survey and the responses from some of the interview questions were compared, at a later date, in an effort to look for similar answers. The researcher found similarities from both methods, thus validity potentially increased.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Bullying in schools is currently represented as one of the most prevalent challenges for teachers, administrators, and counsellors all over the world (Esbensen & Carson, 2009; Merrell et.al., 2008), with rates at 15% and higher. Bullying impacts students in the context of education and within multiple settings (Pintado, 2007). It may exist as a one to one experience between the victim and the perpetrator, or it may be more diverse where several people or groups are involved within a specific ecological system.

The goal of this research was to inform teachers, administrators and, counsellors so they may be prepared to recognize, address, and put in place strategies that may work to mitigate bullying in the school context. More effective and efficient strategies can be developed if we have a more profound understanding of the behavior and what exists in the perpetrator's environment which allows the behaviour to continue. This information can only come from the persons who exhibit and practice them.

Using SPSS, a composite score of bullying was derived from the nine items of the IBS that identified the bullies. All participant who scored one standard deviation above the mean, were identified as a bully. For the current research, the score of the IBS were, $M = .795 (.582)$ (See Table 4.1.). Using this data, 19 candidates were identified as bullies based on their scores, however, only 17 of this 19 had provided personal contact information for an interview in the near future. There were 14 calls made in total to achieve a count of ten for interviews. In an effort to keep a balance of 50% male and 50% female, the researcher chose the first five of each gender who agreed to be interviewed.

Table 4.1. Bully Scale Scores (n = 102)

	N	Mean	SD
Question			
Q1	102	.65	.86
Q2	102	1.07	.95
Q8	102	.46	.72
Q9	101	1.02	.93
Q14	102	1.23	.98
Q15	102	.58	.80
Q16	102	.80	.84
Q17	102	.36	.75
Q18	102	.94	.99
Overall Mean	102	.795	.582

There was a significant difference between males and females bullying behavior, $t(100)=-2.150, p=.034$. Males ($M = 0.989, SD = 0.653$) exhibited higher bullying behaviors frequencies than females ($M = 0.719, SD = 0.063$) (See Table 4.2.). These findings are consistent with previous research (Pintado, 2007, Veenstra et al., 2005).

Table 4.2 Gender Scores

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Bullying	F	73	.718	.537	.062
	M	29	.988	.652	.121

These findings support previous research, which suggests that boys deliver bullying at a higher frequency than girls. While previous research has also put boys as the higher recipients and delivery of physical assaults than girls, (Olweus, 1993; Rigby & Slee, 1999), the current research did not support this; however, this was probably due to the fact that the physical aspects of the survey were not included in the bullying scale.

A complete analysis of the data represented by responses of the interviewees is presented. Several themes and related sub-themes were identified within this data and they include:

(a) The retrospective view of “bullying” definition

- Media Influence
- Purpose of Bullying

(b) Meaningful insight and reflections

- Memory of targets
- Regrets
- Reflecting on self

The Retrospective Definition of “Bullying”

The interview questions for this research were designed to capture the retrospective perceptions, views, and actual experiences of bullying including their definition of bullying during this period. A complete understanding of the student’s definition of bullying during junior high school years is necessary here to enhance the understanding of the behaviors. An in-depth analysis of this definition, led to two sub-themes: (a) Media influence and (b) the purpose of bullying.

Participants of this study had similar definitions of bullying, albeit none that coincide with today's definition. Previous research shows that discrepancies exist not only in research (Kowalski & Limber, 2007), but also in schools (Waasdorp, Pas, O'Brennen & Bradshaw, 2011). If bullying behaviors are to be dealt with there needs to be a common definition. This concept resonated with all of the interviews in the current study. A good example of this would be when Cali, the first interviewee, was asked the question: "What was your definition of bullying in junior high?" Cali responded:

"For me, honestly, bullying was being pushed around a lot, like being pushed into lockersyeah, stuff like that. It was more physical stuff like fighting and tripping people up to get a laugh. Like I said, I remember a friend telling me once that I was being bullied by another person, and I remember thinking, 'No I am not, nobody is pushing me around'. Anyway, I think most of us back then thought bullying was really hurting someone's body, in a physical way."

Peggy had very similar ideas about this definition. Her response was:

"I did not even think about it. I never touched another person's body with my hands ever, therefore in my mind I was not a bully, nor was I ever bullied. To me, the bully was the biggest, meanest and the ugliest kid in school and that person was never around us. Not even sure we had this type of person in our school in junior high."

With a probing question: "Where do you suppose that image came from?" Peggy replied:

"Oh my, not even sure. My guess would be TV. The commercials about bullying were always showing kids being physically smacked around. Schools did not really

address bullying back then and if the comment was made, “stop being a bully”, that would be the end of it.”

When asked to elaborate, she replied:

“Well, being called a bully, even for an instance, was no big deal because we knew we weren’t. We would just laugh it off and stop the teasing, or whatever it was we were doing.”

Aus had a broader definition on the behavior that included constant teasing. His reply was:

“Honestly there was no thought ever put into it. Just whenever the opportunity presented itself we captured it. There was never a missed opportunity, if some kids we we're passing in the hallway and he was bend over, well he was going to have his pants pulled down. Nobody ever said ‘why did you do that’. The teasing and taunting of a person, till they stormed out of class, was just another event in a normal day. After we got in trouble if we got caught, we may have thought we took it too far. This was always after-the-fact.”

When asked if he believed that he was being a bully back then, Aus responded:

“Yes but only because everybody told me I was, my friends, parents my friends parents but they were saying the same thing to everyone else. So no one took it very serious. It wasn't okay but it wasn't as if I was the only one. It was just a term put on our behavior.”

When asked to elaborate, Aus further explained:

“We didn't think it was serious because we didn't understand the potential for the damage that could be done. It was purely for the short-term reaction. If we didn't get the reaction we were looking for, we would keep pushing it and pushing it until we did. Isn't this a part of life, was our thoughts.”

Although all participants agreed that there was a physical component to bullying, only a few participants acknowledged the verbal piece. Like Aus, Jenn acknowledged the verbal piece. Jenn's response was:

“Back then, I guess I believed bullying was physically pushing people around, fist fighting and taking people's money. I guess ... I would add that being really mean with name-calling and things like that that would be included also. But really, that rarely happened. Name-calling seems to be more elementary to me. Bullying was not as big an issue back then, or it seemed, so I think we thought less about our behavior in terms of bullying. Most times it just seemed like that's how you got along in junior high. You liked some and not others and the ones you did not like, well you were unkind to them. It had nothing to do with bullying, and more to do with expression of how you feel about a person back then. I guess I just thought that's how we grow up and toughen up.”

All participants who acknowledged the verbal aspect of bullying did not seem to give it the same value as the physical component. These participants would add comments like: ‘expressing ones feelings’ and attributing the behavior to ‘a part of life’. Aus added to this effect, stating:

“I was bullied but not to the extent of others, but I took it. I think I used to think it was just part of school and I was able to deal with it.”

Pat had a very narrow definition of bullying and exclaimed that this was not behavior he engaged in. He explains:

“It was pushing people around and taking peoples money, we did not do that. We did not do that. We were about strength, who was the strongest in body and status. We combine as one when it was school against school despite our feuding. They call me a bully because I punch them and it hurt when I did. They would then run away. That was not a bully to me.”

Zimm did acknowledge that there was bullying in his school, however, he was not sure what the definition would have been back then. When asked to compare his definition back then to now, he replied:

“I had little understanding, probably because it had little to do with me. I did not think I was a bully so there for I did not worry about it.

Today, it is serious event because kids are dying. I am not even sure of the exact definition today, but it is more that just beating on a person.”

Mo was an athlete, thus, she felt that because her behavior only happened on the field as a soccer player, it was not bullying. To Mo, this was a part of sports. When asked to compared her definitions, she states:

“A bully back then was someone who picked on the same person over and over, for no reason. Some of that went on in sports, but it was just a part of the game.”

What do you mean by ‘picked on’?

“Punching, hitting, punching, things like that. Some of this you see in the game or in the lockers but it is expected and you take it.”

“How do you define bullying now?”

“It is more involved. It is more than the hitting today. Trying to hurt with lies and using the internet has become huge.”

Media Influence. The media, which encompasses television, movies, radio, internet, and the social media such as Facebook, e-mail and Instagram, can be a powerful socializing agents for most students (Linder & Werner, 2012; Nee Redden, 2013). Linder & Werner (2012) examined the associations between relationally aggressive television and movie exposure and normative beliefs about relational aggression, and, if parental mediation existed, did it have an impact. The participants, 103 children in grades 3–6, and 97 of the primary care givers, filled out a survey about aggressive media exposure and parental mediation of media. The following year 48 of these children were reassessed. This study showed relationally aggressive media exposure predicted concurrent relational aggression norms. Relational aggressive media exposure predicted greater subsequent approval of relational aggression, however, only with children whose parents engaged in low levels of active mediation. Nee Redden (2013) looked at 47 Disney films that were a minimum of 60 minutes long. Their study suggests that overall, these Disney films had an average of 9.23 instances of relational bullying for every hour of the film. The highest frequency was in the movie *Aladdin*, which had 20 incidents per hour; then *Cinderella*, with 19.17 per hour; and *Pinocchio*, at 18.35 incidents per hour. If we are to believe the media has such influence, then it's not out of the question that the media could have a positive role in educating the public about the risks and consequences of bullying, and thus help shape societal attitudes around it.

The current study showed an incongruent definition of ‘bullying’ and the media’s influence. The media seemed to have a strong impact on the children’s formed definition

and perceptions of bullying. Several of the participants made references to posters and commercials on TV that depict children being knocked down, being pushed into lockers or being beat up, as bullying behavior. Aus feels his beliefs on bullying came from the TV spots and posters. He states:

“Today, social media is a huge impact. Everyone sees it. Back then, the only social media was television and the commercials on bullying were always physical. I think that’s where most students’ back then would have formed their own definition of bullying. It was definitely not from the education system. Even posters were all about the physical piece.”

Cali also shared Aus’s thoughts of awareness back then. Stating:

“We were not aware that verbal and teasing was bullying. Even the commercials back then was like being pushed up against lockers. That didn't happen lots, if ever as I have never been hit or pushed, or have my money stolen from my pocket. There was no clear-cut definition of what bullying was for us. Would've helped if they had made it more clear on what it was, including verbal stuff. Now the commercials have changed and the consequences have changed.”

When Jenn was asked if she thought that she was being a bully back then, she responded:

“No, I did not think I was being a bully back then because of my belief of a bully. I only have one clear recollection of any advertisements on bullying and it was a commercial on television that showed this little boy being pushed up against a locker....now that I think about it, it is so weird to a definition of bullying based on one image.”

Purpose of Bullying. Bullying can come from many sources such as homes, peers, school community, or even parenting styles. Bullying can also serve many purposes such as problem-solving, power status, popularity, or even to make themselves look good. The popular responses in this research indicated that it allowed them to maintain group status when there was a group. Group status is well documented in previous research as a popular reason to bully. Pintado (2007) reports that students often found it necessary to maintain status in group, and at times it even served to increase status. Other popular reasons included increase in popularity, and fear of retaliation if they did not go along as the bystander. Bystanders often do not realize that standing by supports the bully behavior. Burns et al., (2008) showed that the power and influence of peer group was a significant factor in bullying, and being a bystander is a form of influence.

Pat had a clear recollection of on the purpose that bullying served for him. Pat captured many reasons cited in previous literature such as power and status. Pat did add one interesting element; it was defining a relationship. When asked the purpose for him, he states,

“In the group, it was for relationships. I would tease in the group to make a relationship stronger, and it worked. It was not to hurt the person. It also showed ‘we are close’, so we can laugh about it. When one friend teases another friend, and both laugh, you know there is a strong friendship and bond.”

When asked about the motives for their behaviors’ other participants gave these responses. Cali, who admitted to helping harass other students, gave this response:

“Well if your group is making fun of someone, you would go along with them and make fun to, whether you believe it or not, especially if it is the group leader. This

doesn't mean I would be verbalizing the making fun or the teasing of that boy or girl, but I would be going along with them in terms of laughing after they poked the fun. Sometimes I would join in if I did not know the person, or I did not like them. I may not of agreed with that but I still would go with it. I would never butt in and say 'hey there leave him alone'. That would just make me the next target. I think bullies like to bully because it makes them feel powerful.... I remember teasing this girl one time because I really did not like her. She got so upset, that she left the class and went into the bathroom and cried. I remember my friends, laughing at the time and me. It did make me feel a little bit powerful at the time. I think people who do that believe it gives them status and popularity, but really it is not status, it's just everyone is pretending to go along. I bet most students feel like they wish it would stop."

Ana's rationale was straight forward:

"Teasing is what kids did, not all but most. You either teased or be teased. It was really that simple. I was not going to be teased."

Several students cited reasons that stemmed from being bullied themselves at one point in their lives. Taly echoed Cali's response, however, he added that he had been bullied in his last school, which was a public school. He responded:

"Well I guess the best reason I can come up with is because, I could."

Taly went on to elaborate with more reasons, which included being a victim in the previous year. His response was:

"Well I was bullied pretty hard the year before, to the point where I did not want to go to school and I was starting to get depressed. That's how I ended up in private

school. For me, because I was feeling stronger now and seemed to survive it, I somehow thought it was Ok to bully another kid. I thought not a big deal, as he would get over it the way I did.”

Aus believed this contributed to his ability to tease others, but saw it as normal behavior.

He states:

“I got teased for my skin color, but the reaction my friends got from me was just a laugh. I figured that’s partly what protected me, not letting them have the reaction. Some kids were unable to hide the reaction and this got them more teasing. This was the way I looked at it. Everyone got teased.”

Interestingly, the definitions from the males and females did not differ in the interviews, however, the behaviors did. The girls in the study mostly divulged behaviors like gossiping and teasing, while the males were more physical like fighting, giving wedges, tripping, and pushing kids around or into locker. This finding is also consistent with the information on the surveys provided. The female that did both survey and interview revealed the same types of behavior. Questions 4 and 8 of the interview, made reference to behavior of the participant, and the participants was asked to elaborate on the incident. These questions were intended to explore the behavior of the participant, and to triangulate data. This data did show that females engaged in social/relational bullying, while boys were more physical. Significant is that fact that all participants had an agreed definition that was mostly physical in nature for bullying, however, gender difference in behavior was very evident.

The purpose of a student bullying, did not align itself with the definition of bullying. These students mostly did for fun, status, fear of being next or even revenge for

past experiences. For these students in this study, it had nothing to do with the true definition of bullying that included emotional abuse, social exclusion and/or imbalances of power. It was merely serving a purpose at the time. This supports the need for education on this topic.

Meaningful Insight and Reflections

Memory of targets. Although there are many reasons for choosing a target, the most common reason cited in this research was ‘appearance’. Appearance can include clothing, size of the person, or even the activities that the person engaged in. Ana seem to have a clear recollection of her targets. Ana states:

“The targets were easy. I would mostly tease the girls who were overweight or bad dressers. Those were the ones who stuck out, you know.” Ana also said that her targets were always girl and when asked why, she replied; I am not sure now. Perhaps it was a comfort thing, I think may I felt safer teasing the girls. It was easier.”

When asked, who his targets were, Aus alluded to anyone perceived as different in any way from his group. Aus’s version of different included the way the person dressed, the physical size of the person and even different aspects of the body like ears and noses. He included gothic and emo children at that time. Aus states:

“We didn't really understand why these kids were not into what we were into. We were like, “Why is he reading Harry Potter? The clothing was another area for targeting because we dressed to identify ourselves as surfers or rugby players.

Whereas other kids not so much. Larger kids were always an easy target, that's just generic.”

Taly went on to include most of these traits also. When asked who his targets were, Taly responded:

“Hmmm... they were the poorly dressed, the skinny, the fat, and the less popular. You name it. They were the geeky ones or the straight up one. Sad really now that I hear myself. They mostly seem to be at a disadvantage.”

Cali added:

“Your popularity status, family status or even a haircut was enough to make you the target. For instance, if your father was a janitor or a caretaker and others had doctors and bankers, you were a possible target. She went on to say that sadly, you knew it.”

Regrets. Worthy of mention in the study was the declaration of regrets by all interviewees. Significant, is the reflection of their actions as bullies, as there is scant information available on this reflection. All of the interviewees in this study expressed some degree of regrets for how they made others feel.

When Cali was remembering an incident of sending another girl into the bathroom crying, she states:

“I feel sorry for her now and ashamed of my behavior. There is nothing I can do to change that day or how I feel about it now.”

Aus’s response, was similar in feelings of regrets, as he states:

“Whenever I hear of bullying or whenever I see kids in junior high school just walking past them, I can look in the face of that kid and relate to them and it does get in my head a little bit.”

This seems to imply regrets of his previous involvements. He elaborates with the comment:

“It makes me sick that this went on, especially today when now, there are suicides because of bullying.”

Pat’s response was not only about negative regrets, but also the memories that continue to haunt him. Pat’s response was:

“Yes I think about it at times. I think I want to move on. The feelings that come with it is hurt. I was a jerk and I pretty much suck. I am not the only one. But if I put myself back to that person, I feel hurt. It is like passing on the pain. I give it then, and the memory gives it now. That’s what in my mind now.”

Peggy adds:

“Today I feel remorse for all the persons I have hurt and I wished I had not done it.”

Sev recollects with profound sadness and regret. Sev could hardly hold back his emotions as he recalls the sad faces in his repertoire of memories, face turning red and turning away to hide the pain. Sev explains:

“I especially feel terrible now because I have a brother who is in Junior high and he is being picked on. It is a reminder of all the kids that I hurt. The skinny guys face is as clear in my head now as it was on the one day that I made him feel bad. I wonder sometimes if this is my payback?”

Ana had some remorse, however not to the extreme of other participants. When asked if she thinks about these incidents today, she replies:

“Of course I always think about my behaviors when there is an incident that becomes public. I remember some of the kids I tried to hurt. I wish I had not been that way, but that is that and I moved on. I hope they have too.”

Reflections of self. One potential factor may be that low self-esteem, which is a negative evaluative view of one’s self, may influence children to bully. Fanti & Henrich, (2015) investigated the longitudinal association, across a 1-year period, between self-esteem and narcissism with bullying and peer victimization. The sample consisted of 1,416 of which 50.1% were girls with a mean age of 12 years. The results showed low self esteem was associated with increased bullying. In this current study, when the participants were asked to reflect upon that person they were back in their junior high school years, most mentioned either low self confidence, low self esteem, and/or jealousy.

To try to ascertain what each interviewee was feeling or thinking about themselves during this period, each participant was asked what they thought about the person who has the potential to bully, Pat responded:

“Personal issues, family issues, parents separating maybe money. I think they want to pass the pain. I really think they are passing their own pain to others.”

When asked to elaborate, he responded:

“The pain maybe has to do with how the person feels about himself or herself, I think. What is causing the pain can be different for everyone. My pain was fear of not staying on top; I guess that could be about a weakness for me.”

Cali was asked: “Is there anything specific about the person who has the potential to bully”, she responded:

“Whether or not you're going to be bullied or a bully, in junior high depends largely on what you have to bring to the table. If you have lots of confidence in yourself, its unlikely you will be bullied. But the opposite seems to be true for a bully. Looking back I think I had low self-confidence during that time.”

Peggy had recalled how she felt about herself, stating:

“I was a jealous person back then. I was not pretty enough, not rich enough and I was definitely insecure.”

Aus seemed to have great insight into his behavior, he states:

“Knowledge, knowledge and insecurity for sure for me. Whether that was me personally or me as a 14-year-old normal kid I don't know. The education of that is another piece, not knowing the extent of what bullying can do. Identifying the insecurities that you have as a bully could make a difference.”

Ana’s response may indicate lack of self-esteem. Her response to the same question was:

“I think we all had the potential to bully back in junior high. Why did some do it and some not? Well I would say the person who is bullying needs to feel good about it.”

When she was asked, “Did it make you feel good about yourself?” She paused and responded:

“...No, not really.”

Elements Missing from the Intervention/Preventative Perspective

Before effective and efficient strategies can be developed, there needs to be a more profound understanding of the behavior and characteristics of the perpetrator's environment that allows the behavior to continue. Seeking this information, the interviewees, who were identified as former bullies, were asked to and named several potential contributing factors. These included education on a definition, consequences and the effects of bullying for the victim and the bully. Education on the power of social media should be taught, teaching students to be critical thinkers and consider the message. More involvement of all players, including parents, was also a consistent message.

Clear definition of bullying. None of the participants in this study had a clear definition of bullying, however, most, if not all, had a similar definition. As previously stated, research suggest that there are discrepancies in both the literature about bullying (Kowalski & Limber, 2007), as well as in the school systems (Waasdorp, Pas, O'Brennen & Bradshaw, 2011). If there is to be an effective prevention and intervention plan, there has to a common and shared definition.

Consequences of bullying. In most of the interviews in this study the participants discussed the power of knowing how bullying was connected to suicide, depression, and other psychological and emotional pains, including their own. Most interviewees also went on to share the negativity it has added to their own repertoire of memories. When asked what's different today, Peggy replied:

“The damage it does to the victims and the potential long-term effects of it, is scary.

So many kids have killed themselves because of bullying. That is a thought I would

have never believed back in my junior high. If someone told me that, I would never believe it. It is also very sad and embarrassing to know that I picked on a person just because they are weaker. A memory, I will have to live with.”

Sev was asked if he thinks about these incidents today; he responded:

“Oh yea, I do. Every time there is a suicide on TV, I think that could have been ‘the kid’ I bullied. It is pretty scary, to think you could have been responsible for killing someone else.”

When asked to compare feelings now compared to back then; Sev responded:

“Now, I feel like a real ‘Bastard’ for being like that. And every time I have the memories, I get to remember how mean I was and I wonder how many others have the same memory of me? It feels pretty bad to think, that people will have bad memories of you. That’s something you never think about in junior high.”

The power of social media. With apps, websites and many other platforms where people communicate, this is the age of social media. Teenagers are the popular users of most social media. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are just a few of the existing social media platforms that have become a huge part of our culture.

Although historically seen as a means to give users a way to spread hate, the opinion that social media provides an easy way to spread love, support, information, and rethink behaviors is increasing. You can compose a message on a forum and send it out for anyone in the world to see within seconds. Many of the interviewees believed that had this sort of social media been present during their junior high years, this might have altered bullying behavior. When Aus was asked “What’s different today?”, he replied,

“Today, social media is a huge impact. Everyone sees it immediately. I guess this has got to stop some of the bullying today.”

Aus seemed to believe this will curb the behavior. Peggy also shared those sentiments, adding:

“I think kids will start to post things quicker, the way my age group do. Today we are updating activities, our whereabouts and other people’s activities also. I think about what would have happened to me if I had been caught on video, hurting someone and then have it posted. This would not have been good. The problem with bullying was back then, you got away with it. Social media will not allow this today.”

Social media has the potential to remove communication barriers. With social networks we are able to communicate thoughts, feelings, and perceptions on a variety of topics with a large number of people, and raise our voices, reaching a large number of people. With supports and policies put in place to protect users, they can become a positive support and influence on society.

Involvement of Stakeholders

Getting the student’s parents involved in a bullying incident is a key factor. If parents of the bullies and the victims are not aware of what is going on at school, there is less incentive for the bully to stop and the victim to report. (Hong & Espelage, 2012; Swearer, & Doll, 2001). Stopping bullying in school takes teamwork and concentrated effort on everyone’s part. Educators also need to be involved. They need the education and the skills to identify it and deal with it effectively and efficiently (Asimopoulos et al., 2014). Most of the interviewees in this study report lack of, or no involvement of the

above parties, due to the inefficiencies and the ineffectiveness of the intervention when they do get involved. When Peggy was asked about her parent's involvement, she responded:

“They did not tolerate meanness from us kids at home. We were not allowed to be mean, call names or hit each other. We were not perfect, we argued and that but being mean and nasty did not happen much at all. I think maybe these teachings could have included our school behaviors. I know for me, their involvement would have changed my behavior.”

As for the school staff's participation, she added:

“The school staff could have been more vigilant and be more aware of what was going on. But they were not. I remember, a teacher on duty one day and this kid went up to her to complain about another kid hitting him, and she replied ‘stop tattling’. It was like they did not want to get involved for the most part.”

Aus told a story about a kid on his soccer team whom he and others bullied until the Dad got involved, he shared:

“The guy that was on my soccer team and his dad came in to be assistant coach that helped. It did stop. Nobody had the balls to bully another kid in front of their parent. Especially now since he's in authority figure to us, he is our coach. Parents presence in the school, I think could've made the difference.”

However Aus saw the staff as a part of the problem also, stating:

“I think another part of the problem was the point where teachers and staff got involved. Teachers and principals got involved but only when it became a big issue, even then the consequences made the fun worth it.”

However he went on to admit that the interventions of the school staff did not change his or his friend's behaviors:

Lack of effective and efficient intervention by all involved can be seen as inadvertently supporting the behaviors. All parties need to be encouraged to report to designate persons of authority, they need to be educated on the behavior and supported with effective strategies, until resolved.

Summary of Findings

With an analysis of all interviews, three themes were identified: The most important theme was the retrospective view of their definition. All interviewees had a view of similar definitions, albeit none had an accurate definition. The subthemes and theme support each other well. The popular opinion was that their definitions came from the media (TV commercials at that time) and posters which all depicted kids being pushed around, shoved into lockers, and/or the stealing of lunch money. The sub theme of media influence supported this definition. Another interesting sub-theme was the purpose of bullying, as it did not align itself with the definition of bullying. The purpose included personal reasons of status or fun; and never factors that define bullying, imbalance of power, intent to harm or repetitive behaviors. These factors did exist, the interviewees just never considered them. Again, this supports the need for a common and shared definition.

Another finding in this study was memory of targets and why they were chosen. The popular reasons included appearances such as, clothing, physical size, haircut, and family status. This finding is also popular in previous research (Aronson, 2004). The declaration of regrets by all interviewees was significant here. Because there is scant

information available on the reflections of former bullies, the information can be valuable for future education. The common reasons for the regret are twofold: the damage or pain they may have caused to another person, their own memories of this behavior, and the negative feelings attached to these memories. Unique and very interesting to this study is perceptions of the interviewees on the type of person who bullies. Most indicated that insecurities, low confidence, and jealousy were huge factors for the person who bullies others.

From the student's perspective, when asked what was missing in the interventions and preventions, the responses were very clear and consistent. For an intervention and a prevention technique to be effective, first we must know all of the components of the behavior. A clear and consistent definition of bullying did not exist for these participants. One cannot conquer what one does not know. All parties must have the same definition. It was clear that most of the interviews did not know the potential long-term consequences to the victim, or to themselves. This information could be added to the education of the topic, and potentially impact behavior. Knowing the stakeholders, and ensuring they are informed and equipped with the knowledge and techniques to deal with bullying situations, effectively and efficiently. Social media can play an important today. Recognizing the rules have changed and that these systems are monitored more stringently can be useful information. Social media also has the potential to reach millions of people all over the world and has the power to share, educate, and support like-minded people, and it is instantaneous.

Response to Research Questions

What do university students who have been identified as former bullies recognized as contributing factors to the behavior of bully?

Several key elements were recognized as contributing factors to bullying. The first made very obvious by all interviewees, was that there was no clear definition of bullying while in junior high school. All interviewees reported a definition that was not consistent with current definition, all but one interviewee believe that they were not bullies during this period. The tenth interviewee said he believed he was a bully because ‘everyone told him he was’.

Another critical factor that may have potentially mitigating effects on bullying is realization of consequences for the persons being bullied. All interviewees in this study were surprised to hear later that suicide was being linked to students being bullied, and several interviewees expressed grave regrets over this. Thus, it was clear with all interviewees that linking suicides to bullying had significant impact on how they viewed bullying today.

Another research question was whether males and females perceive bullying differently and, if so, what was the difference? There was no evidence in the current study that showed males perceived bullying different from females. All participants in the current study described bullying in much the same way, they included descriptions such as tripping, fighting, stealing lunches, or lunch money. The perceptions of the males and the female on bullying, was remarkably similar, yet the behavior of the genders were different. Most of the females reported engagement in social or relational bully such as rumours and excluding while the males engaged in more physical acts. This could be the

role of specific gender behaviors. This is significant because it speaks to the lack of knowledge and education these students have on bullying. It also supports previous findings that both males and females engaged in bully, however, they use different tactics.

There was also a significant difference between males and females in how frequent they bullied. Using descriptive statistics on the SPSS, there was a gender difference identified in frequencies in event. This study had findings that put males as having a higher frequency of bullying than girls. This also supports previous findings that state males bully at a higher rate than their counter parts. Although males and female frequencies were different, the purpose for bullying was shared by both genders. These purposes include: for fun, status, and fear of retaliation, another finding that was supported by previous research (Rigby and Slee, 1999).

The discussion section will expose the connections among some of the results and the literature review. A re-examination of the Ecological Systems Theory and its effectiveness in the bullying behavior will be discussed and put forward implications for further research for this vital yet harmful topic.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Scholarly articles have illuminated the seriousness of bullying in schools today. It is currently represented as one of the most prevalent challenges for teachers, administrators, and counselors all over the world (Esbensen & Carson, 2009; Merrell, Isava, Gueldner & Ross, 2008; Pintado, 2007). The ramifications of bullying include psychological, physical, and social problems, and should no longer be disregarded (Swearer et al., 2001; Espelage et al., 2001). The goal of this research was to inform all personnel involved within the school context so that they are further prepared to recognize, address, and put in place more effective and efficient strategies using the data from this research. The research question/s that guided this study were: What do university students who have been identified as former bullies, recognize as contributing factors to the behavior of bullying? Sub question/s for this study: Do males and females perceive bullying differently? If so, what is that difference?

The results of the current study provided valuable insight into the behavior of bullying from the perspective of the former bully. They also confirm findings of previous research. While each interviewee had very similar views on what they believed to be the definition of bullying, none of the participants included the social and emotional side of bullying. Also unique to this research finding is how the participants formed their rather narrow definition of bullying. Those who did offer an explanation for their ideas on bullying all suggested it came from TV commercials and posters, where kids were being pushed around and the stealing of lunch money. This may indicate a significant influence

of media on their definitions and ideas around this behavior during their junior high school years.

Although the interviewees all had similar definitions of bullying, males and females behave differently; a finding supported by previous research. In this study, during the interview phase, girls admitted mostly to gossip and spreading rumors, while boys engaged in more physical activities like fighting, tripping, and pushing kids about. Although the behaviors were different, the purpose was shared by both genders and included: for fun, status, and fear of retaliation; another finding that can be supported by previous research (Olweus, 1993; Rigby & Slee, 1999).

Another finding in this study was that one of the reasons that victims were chosen was their appearance. This could be clothing, the physical size or even haircut. This finding is also a popular finding in previous literature, (Aronson, 2004). Unique and very interesting to this study are perceptions of the interviewees on the type of person who bullies. Most indicated that insecurities and jealousy were huge factors for the person who bullies others. Even more interesting was the finding that none of the participants realized the potential long-term damage being done to the victim. It took several suicides by teenage victims for them to realize this. All interviewees expressed regrets over their bullying behavior, as the experiences had had a negative impact on their victims and themselves.

The Ecological Systems Theory was used as the lens for understanding human behavior in the study because trying to identify weakness within the human environments that allows a behavior to persist requires a close examination of the complex interactions of relationships and their environments. The theory postulates that in order to fully

understand human development the entire ecological system in which growth occurs needs to be taken into account (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, 2005). Thus, we learn to understand the parts in relation to the whole. The Ecological Systems Theory is the process of understanding how things influence one another within a whole.

The Ecological Systems Theory places the student within 5 environmental systems with which the student interacts. This ecological perspective is a methodological framework used in the social sciences to observe the relationships between the person and the various levels of the social environment. This research used the ecological perspective as a qualitative research perspective where influential environmental factors are studied as well as the subjects of the research.

This section contains four subsections: the first subsection, the interpretations of findings, will place the results of this research within the framework of the ecological systems theory; the second section discusses the limitations of this research; the third section describes the implications for schools and counselors; and the fourth section gives future research recommendations.

Interpretation of Findings

Bronfenbrenner's (1993, 2005) Ecological Systems Theory is intended to understand the influence of environment on the individual. Ecological systems are depicted using concentric circles with the individual and their characteristics in the center. This center is nested within the next circle, the microsystem, and is comprised of interactions, roles, and relationships where the individual exist. The elements of the microsystem interact with each other in the next outer layer, the mesosystem, such as the interactions, or lack thereof, between schools and families. The following layer, the

exosystem, contains variables that influence the individual but with which the individual does not directly interact, such as institutional policies. The next layer is the macrosystem, where we find cultural systems such as cultural values and beliefs that impact the environments and relationships in which the individual interacts. The final level is the chronosystem that takes into account consistency and change in the history and events of the child's life. An example in this system can be a change in family structure such as divorce.

Ecological systems add meaning and allow researchers to potentially understand why an individual participates in specific behaviors. EST has the potential to support the development of interventions for changes. If research is to have extensive impact on society, it must go beyond the person to a broader ecological understanding of the various layers of environmental factors, such as cultures, policies, and the relationships that influence individual behaviors.

Chronosystem. Bronfenbrenner's, (1993) Ecological Systems Theory states that children are in the center of, and are impacted by, multiple ecological systems. Each system contains variables that impact the life of the child. The chronosystem includes consistency and change in the child's life and its environment over a lifetime. Many studies have documented that changes such as divorce in a child's life have the potential for negative outcomes such as aggressive behaviors (Espelage & Holt, 2001). This information change could serve as a flag for teachers and counsellors when such changes occur in a child's life. However the data from the current study did not provide any support for changes that may have been occurring in one's life during junior high/middle school.

This system speaks to the importance of a good relationship between home and schools. In this current research the significance of involvement of all stakeholders, including the parents, was a common theme. Most participants of the current study disclosed the lack of involvement of parents. The parents were not connected to the school community and activities. Also parents were rarely included in the discussions of bullying by students or staff. Good relationships between schools and homes can make a difference. Previous research has shown that good relationship between homes and schools are critical to creating incentives to reducing if not eliminate bullying (Spriggs et. al., 2007).

Macrosystem. The second most outer circle of EST is the macrosystem, which includes our cultural beliefs and values of our society. This study indicates that bullying is often about social values manifesting themselves in a very basic way within the school environment. In this study, the participants reported picking on persons who seemed different, unpopular, and or weaker in some ways. The participants cited reasons such as: non sports like students, a student who was studious or an academic, the way they dressed, physical size, and even a hair cut. The value we place on certain groups of people seems to provide justification for bullying. The bully will devalue a group whom he or she deems socially vulnerable and sees as an acceptable target. If schools and societal cultural beliefs and values uphold sports, clothing, status, and popularity, kids who are not in this category are going to be victimized because they are not living up to the expectations of others.

This is important for teachers and administrators to know. The question then presents itself as: what are the issues that they need to address to make schools safe? If

one of the issues is that students are being bullied because they are seen as socially vulnerable, perhaps we can change the emphasis to the importance of valuing and respecting everyone. Adults are important participants in this system as they can alter beliefs and values to discourage bullying. The adults here include parents, teachers and administrators, as all can play a role. Parents can teach love, respect, and equality values on the home front; become educated on bullying behaviors and address them. Parents can promote self-respect and confidence in their children to promote positive behaviors. Teachers and administrators can create a climate of respect and equality in the school environment by modeling and teaching. They can also become educated on bullying to challenge the behaviors and the beliefs around it.

Exosystem. The exosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1993) contains indirect factors such as district-level school policies. This study provided significant insight into the issues that exist within this system. The biggest issue here was the absence of a clear and common definition of bullying. All the students had a definition; however none of them had an accurate one. There was also no effective procedure in place that would respond to bullying when it occurred. This accounts for many of the interviewees in this research not getting caught, and when they did, they felt that the consequences were so insignificant that the bullying was worth it. All schools must develop their own policy on bullying, distribute it, and maintain it, while reviewing the progress and success annually. One example of this is the Quebec Bill 56. In 2012, the province of Quebec decided that the Minister of Education needed to form a committee and develop an act to prevent and deal with bullying and school violence. The Bill defines the problem, however, leaves it to the schools to administer a plan of action. This Bill puts the responsibility to create a safe

learning environment on students, school staff, and the governing body of the school.

Schools have to collaborate with staff to adopt an anti-bullying/violence plan to not only prevent it, but also deal with it. Documented explanations must be distributed to all parents, reviewed, and updated annually. An initiative as such, will have a huge impact on bullying. Everyone knows the rules, the protocol and the potential outcomes.

Mesosystem. The mesosystem refers to the interaction of the two settings in which the children are entrenched; particularly the school and home (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, 2005). Several factors were highlighted in this current study that may have a significant impact on bullying. Many of the interviewees of the current research stated that parents were rarely involved, reporting reasons such as, ‘they were afraid it would just make things worse’, or ‘they would not be able to do anything anyway’. Contrary to this belief, research does show that parental involvement does reduce bullying. Ma (2002) showed that a prominent involvement of parents in the sixth grade did in fact reduce the number of occurrences of bullying.

Microsystem. Bronfenbrenner (1993, 2005) stresses the significance of the environment as the child perceives it. This is what will impact the development and behavior. There are also influences from belief systems that act upon the behaviors of the children, as they interact with events in their lives.

Participants of the current study revealed that there were consequences to bullying behaviors, however they were rarely enforced and if they were, it was no big deal. There was also the common complaint that teachers do not address bullying behavior effectively or efficiently, a finding of other research as well (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997; Rigby, 2014; Smith & Shu, 2000). Rigby (2014) found that students who have gone to

teachers for help about being bullied reported only a moderate level of success in reducing the behavior, and that a substantial number of incidences remain unresolved, and that teachers continue to rate indirect bullying as less serious despite the research that shows the effects are as serious if not worse (Dedousis-Wallace, Shute, Varlow, Murrihy & Kidman, 2014). Veenstra, Lindenberg, Huitsing, Sainio, & Salmivalli (2014) also found that when teachers respond to bullying it increased the efficacy of anti-bullying programs. Teachers can also help other students to keep up the norms of an anti bullying classroom. If students feel a lack of support and collaboration when bullying occurs this may impact how often they report. Policies on bullying need to be enforced in a consistent manner; otherwise the school runs the risk of undermining other components of interventions. According to Clarke & Kiselica (1997), if students see any favouritism or inconsistencies, they will not feel comfortable in reporting bullying. There will then be the risk that other school personnel will become inconsistent with enforcements and the bully is reinforced (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997).

Participants of the current study also agree that there would be negative consequences if they did not participate or go along with the bullying within their peer group. This finding was consistent with findings in other studies. Pepler et al., (2008) showed that students within their study claimed that pressure to bully was often necessary to maintain status within the peer group. There were also grave concerns if you tried to stand up for the victim or ask your friend to stop. The consequences would be you being victimized yourself or being ostracized from the group. Smith & Shu (2001), had findings that show students did fear for their position in the peer group. These findings lend support as to why students bully other students.

Furthermore, the trust and the support of school staff, including administrators, were not evident. Most students felt that the staff was not able to help, or students felt that the confidence would not be held and the bullying would get worse. Staff interaction with students and proper training are considered relevant to bullying prevention. Teachers are critical components in fostering a safe and healthy environment for students.

However, teachers need to be able to recognize the behavior, know how to address it, and the students need to have faith and trust in them. The collaboration is important, as all parties need to be involved in the resolution of bullying: parents, staff, and students. All need to be informed and a protocol in place that will lead to a resolution of the behavior.

The Individual. Finally, inside all concentric circles, is the individual and their characteristics. Central to this study was the question to each interviewee: what do you think it is about an individual that allows them to bully another? Most of the participants agree that it is mostly jealousy and insecurity that drives the behavior. Insecurities and jealousy come from the same place, low self-esteem. Previous research does support this finding, that most bullies generally have low self-esteem. Fanti & Henrich (2015) did a longitudinal study over one year with 1400 youths with M age = 12.89. This study showed a strong association between low self-esteem and bullying. If we know the emotions that support bullying, we can address them.

Bosworth et al., (1999) also reported that low confidence was associated with higher levels of bullying. That is, if the students had a low self-confidence in their ability to problem solve in a non-violent or aggressive way, then an alternate approach to produce the same outcome would be necessary. However, a high level of confidence would allow the person to problem solve with dialogue and people skills. These findings

suggest prevention and intervention programs should include assessing the students confidence in their ability to problem solve in a more proactive and pro-social way.

Education, curriculum, and activities that build students' self-esteem can be addressed at schools and at homes. Bringing programs into the school that promote higher self-esteem is one way to do this. An example of this is 'Zones of Regulation'. This program also lends itself easily to the student and the home environment. It teaches the student emotion regulation, impulse control, problem solving skills, and self-control while fostering a higher self-esteem. Programs such as this one promotes self-awareness, knowledge of self-concepts, and promotes positive attitudes. The translation of the development of all these skills result in higher success for the child, coupled with a higher self-esteem.

Limitations

This research examined the perceptions of 10 University students from a popular Canadian University. Although utilizing in-depth interviews in an effort to generate a reliable source of data, it cannot be generalized to the larger population. It is recognized that University students are not a fair representation of the diversity that exists in most schools. University students are not a fair representation of those students who followed a life trajectory that did not lead to a higher education, such as a University education.

Another limitation to this research is the information provided in the interviews. The subjects may have misrepresented information of their true roles and thoughts of their junior high behaviors, in an effort to avoid self- derogating behaviour. Self-derogation may cause fear of how the subject is perceived. Although the researcher made

numerous claims that all responses will remain confidential, disclosing the truth about ones less desirable behaviors may be challenging for some individuals.

In addition, the limitation of this research may also include the reliability of memory recall. The participants of this research were asked to recall events and behaviors of their junior/middle school years. It is well documented that there are many variables that interfere with memory that include time lapse, their perceptions of these events themselves or distortion, actual capacity for memory retention, injury, or even filling in gaps (Brennen, Mevludin, Zotovic & Blix, 2010; Williams & Dritschel, 1988).

Unfortunately, memory recall is not always 100% accurate or complete. Although the participants of this study were chosen based on age and student status, in an effort to mitigate these interferences, there is no way to guarantee the information is based on the accurate memory.

Strengths

The strengths of mixed designs have been well documented in literature (Creswell et. al., 2003; McMillian, & Schumacher, 2010). Mixed designs are considered easy to implement for a researcher due to the sequential nature of the design, making the transition from one stage to another seamless. The sequential explanatory mixed implies collecting and analyzing quantitative and then qualitative data in two consecutive phases in one study. It is also believed to be more functional for further inquiry of quantitative data, especially when you achieved or discover unexpected results from the quantitative phase.

In sum, the literature shows a need for an improvement in the parts of the school system that address bullying. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to this

end. This study produced results which have the potential to provide insight to teachers, counsellors, and the community to help reduce bullying by exploring the situations of bullying from those who have directly experienced being the bully.

There is growing support for the belief that the design of an effective bullying intervention and prevention program should be informed by the students (Camodeca & Goossens, 2005; Cunningham, Cunningham, Ratcliffe & Vaillancourt, 2010). Students know more about bullying than any of the stakeholders. They know the students involved, the conditions under which it occurs, the rationale for the behavior, and perhaps more importantly, a perspective on current prevention and intervention programs. This was a unique opportunity to gain insight from this population. This population potentially has the insight to share what they feel are the shortcomings of current programs and what may be more effective.

Implications for Schools and Counseling Context

Implications for School. Professional development on bullying is critical. A common fallacy in schools relating to bullying behaviors is that teachers will recognize it and know how to deal with it effectively (Ma, 2002). This is a dangerous assumption as it presumes that teachers will recognize the behavior and are skilled to handle it. Teachers are not necessarily trained in conflict resolution or peer conflict. In fact, there are several studies that show even in schools where there are school bullying programs in place that these programs have had no significant impact on this behavior (Ma, 2002; Merrell et al., 2008). There are numerous bully interventions on the market that have deemed themselves non-effective, however, this is partly due to the unobserved and thus ignored needs of the setting such as staff education (Ma, 2002). Appropriate education and

training for the teachers is necessary so that they may identify all forms of bullying and strategies to deal with them.

The education around bullying has to include, not only education for teachers, but also the students. Developing a clear definition of the behavior for the school community is paramount. The definitions of bullying portrayed by the participants of this research indicated there was no clear definition. It is difficult to solve a problem when there is no clear definition of the problem. With a clear definition of bullying students will be able to identify the behavior and seek an appropriate solution to it. Critical to the education on a definition of bullying should include the types of bullying, the potential effects, and the consequences of bullying on all persons involved. Most importantly, the education must include strategies for the students on how to deal with it. The strategies should also include options of personnel to consult, with emphasis on confidentiality.

Professional development and education on Restorative Justice as a response to bullying behaviors could prove invaluable. The Restorative Justice theory is based on Grimsrud & Zehr's (2002) understanding of it as a process that involves all stakeholders in the offense, and thus to jointly identify and speak to all the harm, responsibility, needs and obligations of each stakeholder, in an effort to start healing and to get things as close to right as possible. The professional development and education of this process is intended to change the practice of the teachers, administrators, and counselors while involving the students, and often the caregivers of the student, so that all may gain understanding of the experiences and the different perspectives involved. The purpose of this alternative practice gives everyone a voice, while repairing, rebuilding and

maintaining relationships. This alternative practice is also intended to improve the relationship and interactions with these students.

There is an opportunity for curricular development, which could lend itself to all classrooms. The implementation of a curriculum of social justice could have a huge impact on bullying. Social justice addresses topics that include power, independence, interdependence, inequality, justice, and injustice. Students can see how their choices of behaviors impact not only themselves, but others as well, and the environments in which they exist. Students can gain new perspectives and learn of other perspectives. Teaching students to take these new perspectives and apply them to the issues that surround them in schools, homes, and their community can foster many skills that include problem solving, critical thinking, and conflict resolution. Students will also learn skills that enhance work productivity in a group, while transferring these skills to global issues such as interdependence from a social, economical, and ecological perspective. They can apprehend the complexity of many public issues and multiple points of view on these issues. Students can learn about the power of individuals and groups, and how to make a difference and consider solutions. As a result, students can learn a great deal in the process of working inside and outside of school to promote those solutions and what it takes to accomplish them.

Social responsibility can be taught in a variety of ways, such as through observation of the behavior of teachers, parents, and friends. It can be taught as knowledge with readings and group discussions that show injustice and demand action. Most importantly, it can be taught by schools encouraging community service in some way or through immersion in a class project that can change a person's life.

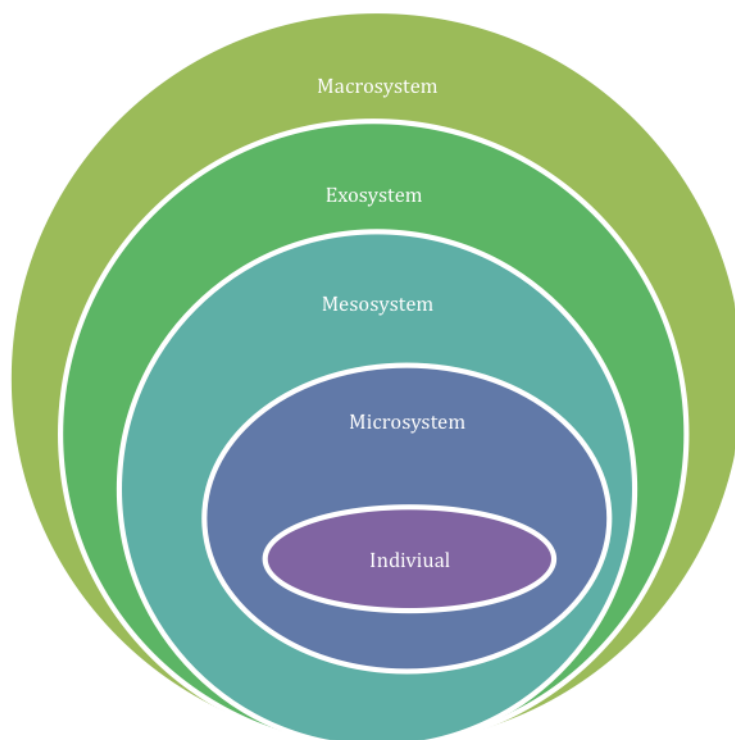
Another critical component and opportunity for curriculum is the teaching of ‘Emotion Regulation.’ With Emotion Regulation curriculum a student will learn to understand how their emotions work, and the skills needed to manage their emotions. With this knowledge and skills, a student will learn to manage their emotions verses being managed by them. This can reduce a student’s vulnerability to negative emotions, and thus increase positive emotional experiences. Emotion regulation is considered to be a significant predictor of student’s social, emotional, and academic success, and is potentially a great tool for combating bullying. Emotion regulation can reduce conflicts and negative behaviors in classrooms and school grounds, thus increased learning can happen in a supportive and safe environment. Emotion regulation can be taught in the classrooms, can be used as a guidance counselor tool, and could even be taught and reinforced by parents.

Implications in School Counseling. Counselor Education can be instrumental to applying the findings of this study. Although considerable advances have been made with bullying, that contribute to our comprehension of the behavior, the nominal impact of interventions and preventions to date cannot be ignored. Historically we have used tools that measure factors that exist in one system or another. The time has come for us to consider an assessment of many or all systems in a child’s life, and thus develop an intervention and/or prevention that can address many and/or all systems necessary. This assessment needs to consider not only the child’s ability to regulate, problem solve, build self-esteem and empathy, but also take into consideration and incorporate key stakeholders and environments. There are no current interventions and/or preventions that incorporate all systems in the child’s life. The development of assessment tools that

considers all systems, including the child, could have the potential to impact bullying. An assessment tool could be as simple as knowing what types of questions to ask, for each relevant system of the students life (see figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 School Counselor Assessment Tool Using EST

Each system can provide a counselor with a potential line of questioning to support a strategy to help the student.



The child lives and interacts in many systems. We need to have a model that allows us to know the child in all context of life:

Individual

What is the age, gender, ethnicity and appearance of student?

How do these characteristics influence interaction with others?

Were there expectations attached to any of these characteristics?

Is the student LGBT?

What characteristics such as mental and emotional resources such as past experiences,

skills, IQ, access to social and material resources? Educational experience and opportunities to date? Characteristics that relate to temperament, motivation or persistence.

Microsystem:

How responsive are the parents?

Student-parent relationship? SES?

What are school connections?

What are the dynamics of family? Is there home violence?

Are they/student involved in an organized group (soccer, scouts)

Mesosystem

Are there influences that affect the student's attitude toward home environment or is it conducive to education?

Neighborhood conditions?

How can I help student improve interactions with persons in his/her microsystem

Exosystem

How will school district policy affect your interaction with student

What is students community outside of school look like

Are teachers involved in /with youth?

Media exposure to violence?

Macrosystems

School cultural norm, which upholds masculinity through male competition and sexual prowess.

Cultural norms and beliefs, and religion

School norms especially in developed countries help perpetuate inequality, alienation, aggression or oppression among student based on race, gender, ethnicity, SES, etc..

How does a students race/ethnicity affect their performance in school or interactions in class

Is there a cultural influence on behaviour? Assessing a culture can be meaningful.

What kind of music does the student listen to

What TV shows are watched

Who are the role models?

How does the student self express (Tattoos, clothing, gangs, etc..)

Chronosystem

What was there major society or community changes that impact student? Were there major life events the child endured?

Loss of a parent?

A Divorce in family?

Low self-esteem may put students at higher risk to bully others. This finding can provide school counselors with important information for the development of future interventions, aimed at reducing bullying behaviors in students. Linking low self-esteem to bullying can provide opportunities for guidance counselors to hone their focus in on the characteristics of the student to ascertain whether or not self-esteem is a factor. It may also be used as a predictor of bullying. If the role of low self-esteem is established for this student, counseling efforts may be aimed at simultaneously increasing the student's self esteem and self-worth while reducing bullying behaviors.

The role of status is also significant from a counseling perspective. A well-trained counselor may find out the purpose of bullying through a clever line of questioning. Once the purpose is established, the guidance counselor can then have a focus for intervention. For example, if 'Status' is established as the motive, the guidance counselor can start engaging the student in conversations about healthy ways to raise status. These could include extracurricular activities such as organized clubs, sports, or other activities intended to enhance or build a students skill sets. These activities cannot only raise a child's status, but also provides a redirection away from bullying.

Future Research

Interestingly, the common theme of regrets that were expressed by all interviewees was notable. All participants expressed regrets and remorse over their behavior of bullying. This indicates a potential empathy level in these young adults at the ages of 18-20, which does not exist in junior/middle school students between ages of approximately 13-15 years of age.

The teen brain starts its pruning process where unused connections are pruned away (Sercombe, 2014). The prefrontal cortex, the decision-making part of the brain, is responsible for the ability to plan and think about the consequences of actions, solve problems, and control impulses. Because the prefrontal cortex is still developing, teenagers may rely on the amygdala to make decisions and solve problems more than adults do. The amygdala is associated with emotions, impulses, aggression, and instinctive behavior (Sercombe, 2014). A longitudinal study could address the potential changes in empathy, and how these changes contribute to acts of bullying over time in some children/teen brains.

Worthy of further investigation is the potential effect of media on the teenager and his/her behavior. Several participants revealed how these days your behavior is restricted by social media, disclosing the fact that the minute you do something, everyone knows. The technical advances of social media make it possible for your bad behavior to be recorded and go viral within minutes. Could social media be a significant part of planning and intervention for the future of bullying in schools?

The current policy and legislations position on the subject of bullying has not gone unnoticed. Due to increased incidents of bullying of Canadian and U.S youths aged

11 to 16, and high-profile suicides of youths due to bullying, many jurisdictions in Canada and U.S are in the progressive stage of developing and enforcing anti-bullying laws. The goal is to make all educational institutes safe. They intend to do this by creating awareness of the consequences of bullying. For example, the Ontario Government introduced Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act, 2011 in the legislature. The Act will amend the Education Act to create bullying awareness week in schools and provide instruction regarding issues of bullying and dealing with situations where bullying occurs. An investigations could thoroughly investigate how these changes to legislation and policy at the levels of the macrosystem and exosystem, are channelled down to the education system and the effects of them.

Finally, examining the effectiveness of alternative interventions in eliminating bullying in the education environments is warranted. Restorative justice is now becoming a very popular theme in many contexts, including the criminal scene. Restorative procedures are believed to have advantageous outcomes because it is believed to change the perceptions and the behaviors' of the offender (Wenzel, Okimoto, Feather & Platow, 2008). In some countries such as Canada and New Zealand, restorative justice is used as an alternative to court (Ministry of Child and Youth Services, 2010; Morris & Maxwell, 1998).

With growing awareness that punishment such as expulsions and suspensions only increases aggression and promotes poor academics, the time is here to try something new. Changing the theme from punitive to restorative and evaluating the effectiveness of this approach could prove to be a worthy cause, as it is intended to change the behaviors of many rather than punish a few.

REFERENCES

- Alikasifoglu, M., Erginoz, E., Ecran, O., Uysal, O., Kaymak, D., & Ilter, O. (2004). Violent behaviour among Turkish high school students and correlates of physical fighting. *European Journal of Public Health*, 14(2), 173-177.
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. (2006). Bullying. *Facts for Families*, 80. Retrieved from http://www.aacap.prg/galleries/FactsForFamilies/80_bullying.pdf
- Arluke, A., Levin, J., Carter, L. & Frank, A. (1999). The relationship of animal abuse to violence and other forms of antisocial behaviour. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 14(9), 963-975.
- Aronson, E. (2004). How the Columbine high school tragedy could have been prevented. *The Journal of Individual Psychology*, 60(4). 355-360.
- Asimopoulos, C.; Bibou-Nakou, I.; Hatzipemou, T.; Soumaki, E. & Tsiantis, J.; (2014). An investigation into students and teachers attitudes and beliefs about bullying in Greek primary schools. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*, 16(1), 42-52.
- Bosworth, K., Espelage, D., & Simon, T. (1999). Factors associated with bullying behaviour among early adolescents. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 19, 341-362.
- Boulton, M., J. (1997). Teachers' views on bullying: Definitions, attitudes and ability to cope. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 67(2), 223-233.
- Bowling, N., & Beehr, T. (2006). Workplace harassment for the victim's perspective: A theoretical model and meta-analysis. *Journal of applied psychology*, 91, 998-1012.
- Bradshaw, C. P. O'Brennan, L. M. & Sawyer, A. L. (2008). Examining variation in attitudes toward aggressive retaliation and perceptions of safety among bullies, victims, and bully/victims. *Professional School Counselling*, 12(1), 10-21.
- Brennen, T., Mevludin, H., Zotović, M., Blix, I. (2010). Trauma exposure in childhood impairs the ability to recall specific autobiographical memories in late adolescence. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 23, 240-247.
- Broll, R. & Huey, L. (2015). Just being mean to someone isn't s police matter. Police perspective on policing cyberbullying. *Journal of School Violence*, 14(2), 155-176.

- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1993). *Ecological models of human development*. In T. Husen & T. N. Postlethwaite (Eds.), *The international encyclopaedia of Education* (2nd ed., pp. 1643-1647). New York, NY: Elsevier Science.
- Bronfenbrenner, U.(2005). *In: Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development*. Bronfenbrenner, Urie (Ed); Publisher: Sage Publications Ltd; 3-15.
- Burns, S., Maycock, B., Cross, D., & Brown, G. (2008). The power of peers; why some students bully others to conform. *Qualitative Health Research*, 18(12). 1704-1716.
- Camodeca, M. & Goossens, F. A. (2005). Children's opinions on effective strategies to cope with bullying: The importance of bullying role and perspective. *Educational Research*, 47(1), 93-105.
- Carney, J. (2008). Perceptions of bullying and associated trauma during adolescence. *Professional School Counseling*, 11, 179–188.
- Cavanagh, T; Vigil, P; Garcia, E; (2014). A story legitimating the voices of Latino/Hispanic students and their parents: Creating a restorative justice response to wrongdoing and conflict in schools. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 47(4), 565-579.
- Chan, H. C., & Chui, W. H. (2013). Social Bonds and School Bullying: A Study of Macanese Male Adolescents on Bullying Perpetration and Peer Victimization. *Child & Youth Care Forum* 42, 6, 599-616.
- Clarke, E.A., & Kiselica, M.S. (1997). A systemic counseling approach to the problem of bullying. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 31, 310 - 315.
- Coggeshall, M. B., & Kingery, P. (2001). Cross-survey analysis of school violence and disorder. *Psychology in the Schools*, 38(2), 107-116.
- Cornell, D., Gregory, A., Huang, F., & Fan, X. (2013). Perceived prevalence of teasing and bullying predicts high school dropout rates. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105, 138- 149.
- Craig, W. M.; Henderson, K.; Murphy, J. G. (2000). Prospective teachers' attitudes toward bullying and victimization. *School Psychology International*, Vol 21(1), 5-21.

- Craig, W. & Harel, Y. (2004). "Bullying, Physical Fighting and Victimization". In Currie et al (Eds.) *Young People's Health in Context: Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) Study, International Report from the 2001/2002 Survey*. World Health Organization, 133-144.
- Craig, W. M. Pepler, D. J. (2003). Identifying and targeting risk for involvement in bullying and victimization. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 48(9), 577-582.
- Craig, W. M., Peters, R. DeV. & Konarski, R. (1998). Bullying and Victimization among Canadian School Children. Applied Research Branch Working Paper Series W-98-28E, Ottawa, Ontario: Human Resources Development Canada.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Gutmann, M. L., & Hanson, W. E. (2003). Advanced mixed methods research designs. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 209–240). Thousand Oaks, Sage, CA.
- Cunningham, C. E., Cunningham, L. J., Ratcliffe, J. & Vaillancourt, T. (2010). A qualitative analysis of the bullying prevention and intervention recommendations of students in grades 5 to 8. *Journal of School Violence*, 9:4, 321-338.
- Dedousis-Wallace, A., Shute, R., Varlow, M., Murrihy, R., Kidman, T. (2014). Predictors of teacher intervention in indirect bullying and outcome of a professional development presentation for teachers. *Educational Psychology*, 34(7), 862-875.
- Dulmus, C. N; Sowers, K. M. & Theriot, M. T. (2006) Prevalence and Bullying Experiences of Victims and Victims Who Become Bullies (Bully-Victims) at Rural Schools, Victims & Offenders: *An International Journal of Evidence-based Research, Policy, and Practice*, 1:1, 15-31.
- Esbensen, F., & Carson, D. C. (2009). Consequences of being bullied: Results from a longitudinal assessment of bullying victimization in a multisite sample of American students. *Youth & Society*, 41, 209–233.
- Economou, A. (2009). Memory score discrepancies by healthy middle aged and older individuals: The contributions of age and education. *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society*, 15, 963-972.
- Espelage, D. L., & Holt, M. (2001). Bullying and victimization during early adolescence: Peer influences and psychosocial correlates. *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 2, 1123-142.

- Espelage, D. L., Holt, M. K., & Henkel, R. R. (2003). Examination of peer-group contextual effects on aggression during early adolescence. *Child Development*, 74, 1, 205-220.
- Fanti, K. A.; Henrich, C. C. (2015). Effects of self-esteem and narcissism on bullying and victimization during early adolescence. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 35(1), 5-29.
- Fekkes, M., Pijpers, F. I. M. & Verloove-Vanhorick, S. P. (2005). Bullying, who does what and where? Involvement of children, teachers and parents in bullying behaviour. *Health Education Research*, 20(1), 81-91
- Fontaine, N., Rijdsdijk, M. G., McCrory, F. V., Eamon, J. P. and Viding, E. (2010). Etiology of different developmental trajectories of callous-unemotional traits. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 49(7), 656-664.
- Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2007). *Educational Research; An introduction*. (8th edition), Allyn and Bacon Publishing, Boston, MA.
- Georgiou, S. & Stavrinides, P. (2013). Parenting at home and bullying at school. *Social Psychology Education*, 16, 165 - 179.
- Grimsrud, T.; & Zehr, H. (2002). Retincking, God, justice and the treatment of offenders. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 35(3-4), 259-285.
- Haltigan, D., & Vaillancourt, T. (2014). Joint trajectories of bullying and peer victimization across elementary and middle school and associations with symptoms of psychopathology. *Developmental Psychology*, 50, 11-25.
- Hammig, B. & Jozkowski, K. (2013). Academic achievement, violent victimization, and bullying among U.S. high school students. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 28(7). 1424-1436.
- Harwood, D.; & Copfer, S. (2015). Your lunch pail is silly. Children's and teachers views on teasing. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 29(1), 26-41.
- Hawker, D. S., & Boulton, M. J. (2000). Twenty years research on peer and psychosocial maladjustment: A meta analytic review of cross-sectional studies. *British Journal of Child Psychology*, 41, 441-455.
- Hong, J. & Espelage, D. (2012). A review of research on bullying and peer victimization in school: An ecological system analysis. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 17(4), 311-322.

- Hoover, J. H. Oliver, R. & Hazler, R. J. (1992). Bullying: Perceptions of adolescent victims in the Midwestern USA. *School Psychology International*, 13(1), 5-16.
- Jenkins, M. F., Zapf, D., Winefield, H., & Sarris, A. (2012). Bullying allegations from the accused bully's perspective. *British Journal of Management*, 23, 489-501.
- Kim, M. J., Catalano, R. F., Haggerty, K. P., & Abbott, R. D. (2011). Bullying at elementary school and problem behaviour in young adulthood: A study of bullying, violence and substance use from age 11 to age 21. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 21, 136-144.
- Kowalski, R. M. & Limber, S. P. (2007). Electronic bullying among middle school students. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41(6), 22-30.
- Leary, Mark R. Kowalski, Robin M. Smith, Laura Phillips, Stephen. (2003). Teasing, rejection, and violence: Case studies of the school shootings. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 29(3), 202-214.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Linder, J. & Werner, N. (2012). Relationally aggressive media exposure and children's normative beliefs: Does parental mediation matter? *Family Relations*, 61(3), 488-500.
- Ma, X. (2002). Bullying in middle school: Individual and school characteristics of victims and offenders. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 13, 1, 63-89.
- MacKay, W. A. (2012). Respectful and responsible relationships: There's no App for that. The report of the Nova Scotia Task Force on Bullying and Cyber bullying. Retrieved from: <http://cyberbullying.novascotia.ca/media/documents/>
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry* (7thed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Merrell, K. W., Guedner, B. A., Ross, S. W., & Isava, D. M. (2008). How effective are school bullying interventions programs? A meta-analysis of intervention research. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 23, 26-42.
- Merriam, S. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ministry of Child and Youth Services. (2010). *What happens outside the formal court process?* Retrieved from: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/youthandthelaw/index.aspx>

- Morris, A., & Maxwell, G. (1998). Restorative justice in New Zealand: Family group conferences as a case study. *Western Criminology Review*, 1, 1–19.
- Nee Redden, C. (2013). The media's influence on female relational aggression and its implications for schools. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 36(4), 2013, 374-393.
- Nickerson, A. B., & Slater, E. D. (2009). School and community violence and victimization as predictors of suicidal behaviour for adolescents. *School Psychology Review*, 38, 218-232.
- Nansel, T. R. Overpeck, M., Pilla, R. S. Ruan, W. J., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviours among US youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 285(16), 2094-2100.
- O'Brennan, L. M., Bradshaw, C. P., Sawyer, A. L. (2009). Examining development differences in the social-emotional problems among frequent bullies, victims, and bully/victims. *Psychology in the Schools*, 46 (2). 100-115.
- Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. (2nd edition). Sage Publications, Inc. Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Penning, S. L., Bhagwanjee, A., & Govender, K. (2010). Bullying boys: The traumatic effects of bullying in male adolescent learners. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Mental Health*, 22, 131-143.
- Pepler, D., Craig, W., Jiang, D., & Connolly, J. (2008). The development trajectories of bullying and associated factors. *International Journal of Child Development*, 79(2), 325-338.
- Pintado, I. (2007). Perceptions of school climate and bullying in middle schools. *The Sciences and Engineering*, 68(1-B), 12-44.
- Powell, M. D. Ladd, D. (2010). Bullying: A review of the literature and implications for family therapists. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 38(3), 189-206.
- Rigby, K. (2014). How teachers address cases of bullying in schools. A comparison of five reactive approaches. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 30(4), 409-419.
- Rigby, K. & Slee, P. (1999). Suicidal ideation among adolescent school children, involvement in bully-victim problems, and perceived social support. *Suicidal and Life-threatening Behaviours*, 29, 119-130.

- Rivers, I., Poteat, V. P., Noret, N., & Ashurst, N. (2009). Observing bullying at school. The mental health implications of witness status. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 24, 211-223.
- Rodkin, P. C., Farmer, T. W., Pearl, R., & Van Acker, R. (2006). They're cool; Social status and peer group supports for aggressive boys and girls. *Social Development*, 15(2), 175-204.
- Schoen, S., & Schoen, A. (2010). Bullying and harassment in the United States. *The Clearing House*, 83, 68-72.
- Schumann, L., Craig, W., & Rosu, A. (2014). Power differentials in bullying: Individuals in a community context. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 29(5), 846-865.
- Schwartz, D. & Proctor, L. J. (2000). Community violence exposure and children's social adjustment in the school peer group: The mediating roles of emotion regulation and social cognition. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 68(4), 670-683.
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*, (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Sentse, M., Scholte, R.; Salmivalli, C.; Voeten, M. (2007). Person-Group dissimilarity in involvement in bullying and its relation with social status. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 35(6), 1009-1019.
- Sercombe, H. (2014). Risk, adaption and the functional teenage brain. *Brain and Cognition*, 89, 61-69.
- Siegel, R. S., La Greca, A. M., & Harrison, H. M. (2009). Peer victimization and social anxiety in Adolescents: Prospective and reciprocal relationships. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 38, 1096-1109.
- Slee, P. T., & Rigby, K. (1993). Australian School children's self-appraisal of interpersonal relations: The bully experience. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, 23, 273-282.
- Smith, P. K., & Shu, S. (2000). What good schools can do about bullying: Findings from a survey in English schools after a decade of research and action. *Childhood*, 7, 2, 193-212.
- Smokowski, P. R., Kopasz, K. H. (2005). Bullying in schools; an overview of types, effects, family characteristics and intervention strategies. *Children & Schools*, 27(2), 101-110.

- Sourander, A., Helstela, L., Helenius, H., & Piha, J. (2000). Persistence of bullying from childhood to adolescence: A longitudinal 8-year follow up study. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 24, 873-88.
- Spears, B., Slee, P., Owens, L., & Johnson, B. (2009). Behind the scenes and screens. Insight into the human dimension of covert and cyber bullying. *Journal of Psychology*, 217, 189- 196.
- Spriggs, A. L. Iannotti, R. J. Nansel, T. R. Haynie, D. L. (2007). Adolescent bullying involvement and perceived family, peer and school relations: Commonalities and differences across race/ethnicity. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41(3), 283-293.
- Sudermann, M., Jaffe, P. & Schieck, E. (1996). *Bullying Information for Parents and Teachers*. Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System. Retrieved from <http://www.lfcc.on.ca/bully.htm>
- Swearer, S. M., & Doll, B. (2001). Bullying in Schools: An ecological framework. *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 2, 7-23.
- Thornton, L., Frick, L., Crapanzano, A., & Terranova, A. (2013). The incremental utility of callous-unemotional traits and conduct problems in predicting aggression and bullying in a community sample of boys and girls. *Psychological Assessment*, 25, 366 – 378.
- Toblin, R. L. Schwartz, D. Gorman, A. H. & Abou-ezzeddine, T. (2005) Social-cognitive and behavioral attributes of aggressive victims of bullying. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 26(3), 329-346.
- Tokunaga, R. S. (2010). Following you home from school: A critical review and synthesis of research on cyberbullying victimization. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26, 277–287.
- Ungar, M. (2009). *We Generation: Raising Socially Responsible Kids*. Toronto, ON: McClelland and Stewart.
- Veenstra, R., Lindenberg, S., Huitsing, G., Sainio, M., & Salmivalli, C. (2014). The role of teachers in bullying: The relation between anti-bullying attitudes, efficacy and efforts to reduce bullying. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 106(4), 1135-1143.
- Veenstra, R., Lindenberg, S., Oldehinkel, A. J., De Winter, A. F., Verhulst, F. C., & Ormel, J. (2005). Bullying and victimization in schools: A comparison of bullies, victims, bully/victims, and uninvolved preadolescents. *Developmental Psychology*, 41, 672-682.

- Waasdorp, T. E., Pas, E. T., O'Brennan, L. M. & E. Bradshaw, C. P. (2011). A multilevel perspective on the climate of bullying: Discrepancies among students, school staff and parents. *Journal of School Violence*, 10(2), 115-132.
- Wenzel, M., Okimoto, T. G., Feather, N. T., & Platow, M. J. (2008). Retributive and restorative justice. *Law and Human Behavior*, 32, 375– 389.
- Williams, J. M. G., & Dritschel, B. H. (1988). Emotional disturbance and the specificity of autobiographical memory. *Cognition and Emotion*, 2, 221–2.
- Wilson, B. J.; Petaja, H.; Yun, J.; King, K.; Berg, J.; Kremmel, L.; Cook, D. (2014). Parental Emotion coaching: Associations with self-regulation in aggressive/rejected strategies. *Child & Family Behaviour Therapy*, 36(2), 81-106.
- World Health Organization, (2002). Young people's health in context.
Retrieved: July, 13, 2013 from:
http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/110231/e82923.pdf

APPENDIX A: VISUAL MODEL FOR MIXED-METHODS

Table A.1 Sequential Explanatory Design Procedures

Phase	Procedure	Product
Quantitative Data Collection	Survey (n=100)	Descriptive Data
Quantitative Data Analysis	Data screening	Typology
Connecting Quantitative and Qualitative Phases	Purposeful selection Review interview questions	n = 10 Interview protocol
Qualitative Data Collection	Semi-structured interview Possible follow-up	Audio recorded data Transcribed data
Qualitative Data Analysis	Coding and theme analysis	Similar/different codes and themes
Integration of the Quantitative and Qualitative Results	Interpretation and explanation of both results	Discussion Implications and Future Research

APPENDIX B: ILLINOIS BEHAVIOUR SCALE

For each question, choose how many times you did this activity or how many times these things happened to you, on a weekly basis, while you were in Middle/junior high school.

During middle/junior high school, I would.....	Never (0 pt.)	1 or 2 times (1 pt.)	3 or 4 times (2 pt.)	5 or 6 times (3 pt.)	7 or > (4 pt.)
1. I upset other students for the fun of it					
2. In a group, I teased other students					
3. I fought students I could easily beat.					
4. Others picked on me					
5. Others made fun of me					
6. Other students called me names.					
7. I got hit and pushed by others					
8. I helped harass other students.					
9. I teased other students.					
10. I got in a physical fight.					
11. I threatened to hit or hurt others.					
12. I got into a physical fight because I was angry.					
13. I hit back when someone hit me first.					
14. I was mean to someone when I was angry.					
15. I spread rumors about other students					
16. I started arguments or conflicts.					
17. I encouraged people to fight.					
18. I excluded other students from my clique of friends.					

Male__ or Female ____ Age _____ What is your ethnicity/nationality?

Did you attend public or private school? _____ What was the population? _____

If selected, would you be willing to participate in an interview in the near future? Is so, please provide a name and contact information. All measures will be taken to ensure confidentiality. If not, thank you for your time.

Name _____

Phone # _____

E-mail address _____

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Tell me about school for you in elementary, middle and then high school?
Describe your community and family? Was family involved in school? What was a favourite grades and why? Tell me about you as a student? Routines and if so, who decided on them? Tell me more about them.
2. Describe your friends and your relationships? Was there teasing within friend group? How did this work? Did you tease/harass outside the group? Describe an incident?
3. How do you choose a target? Who were they? What were some reasons? What were your thoughts on teasing back them? Compare to now?
4. Looking at your survey, you mentioned (i.e.: excluding/spreading rumours about others) ? What was the motive for this? Tell me about a memory of the events and persons involved? What you're your feelings of this behaviour at that time? Did you feel the school community shared or did not share these feelings? Tell me about the target?
5. What were the most common reasons to tease, be mean or harass another student?
6. Have you ever thought about these incidents since leaving school? What is it that comes to mind? Describe your feelings then and compare them to now? If different, why?
7. Is there anything that schools could have done to prevent the tease/taunt of others? Was there anything teachers, peers, or parents could have done? Did your parents get involved? Informed? How did they respond? Support you or not? What do you think they should have done?
8. Reflecting back on (incidents from survey), how do you interpret these incidences now? What was your understanding of bullying back then? How do you

define bullying? Do you believe you were being a bully? Explain. Is there something specific about a person who has the potential to bully another that you can share with me?

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Project: Bullying in Schools

Researcher: Janie M Stewart

I. Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to inform teachers, administrators and counsellors so that they may be prepared to recognize, address, and put in place strategies that may work to mitigate bullying in the school context.

II. Procedures

This research will utilize mixed methods, with a survey and semi-structured interviews. The participants will be selected from a survey that will be administered to students attending a university in Halifax, NS. The survey will allow the students to self-identify as former bullies, and asked for voluntary participation in an interview. All identifying information will not appear on notes, transcripts or the taped interviews. All participants will be thanked for their participation in the research.

III. Risks

The researcher states that there are minimal emotional risks involved in the participation of this study. There will be phone numbers available of counselling services provided to all participants.

IV. Benefits

There are no direct benefits, gifts or promises expected for the participants in this research. It is the belief of the researcher that the real benefits from this research will be gained by the education department, society and most importantly, the students.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be given to all student responses. There will be no distinguishing or identifying information gathered for the research. Notes, transcripts and recordings will be taken; however in the ultimate writings will not use personal names or other distinguishing information. Pseudonym names may be used if necessary.

There is mandatory reporting to the law if we find information that discloses child or elder abuse, harm to oneself or to others. Confidentiality will be limited in this instance.

The person, who will have access to your information, is the researcher. All tapes, notes and transcripts of the interviews will be stored in a locked cabinet of a private office of the researcher. The researcher is the only person with access to this office and cabinet; the materials will be stored for 3 years, and then destroyed with a shredder and deleted from digital storage centers.

VI. Compensation

There is no disclosure of compensation for the participants of this research.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

All participants are free to withdraw from the research at any point in time.

There will be no repercussions or negative consequences for withdrawing from this research.

VIII. Commercialization and Conflict of Interest

There will be no potential conflict of interest on the part of the researcher. There is no possibility of commercialization of the research findings from this study that might influence the judgment of the researcher.

IX. Consent

The study is intended to learn more about the phenomena of bullying, with the hopes of adding to a body of knowledge that will enhance the potential of an intervention program. All potential harms and benefits to the participants have been explained. The prospective research participant has read and understood all the relevant information. The prospective research participant understands that she or he may ask questions in the future and indicates free consent to the research participation by signing the Research Consent Form.

X. Approval of Research

This research has the approval of the Institutional Review Board, as required.

IRB Approval Date Approval Expiration Date

Researcher Participant

APPENDIX E: CORRESPONDENCE WITH AUTHOR OF IBS SURVEY

Stewart, Janie

From: Dorothy Espelage <dlespelage@gmail.com>
Sent: November-19-13 9:54 PM
To: Stewart, Janie
Subject: Re: your Bully Scale

yes

On Tue, Nov 19, 2013 at 11:36 AM, Stewart, Janie <stewartj@hrsbo.ca> wrote:

Hi Dorothy L. Espelage,,

I am a PhD student in Canada and I am looking for a scale to use on 18 to 20 year olds who will fill the scale out to determine whether or not they were bullies back in High or jr. high. (Retopset the)

Will your scale work for this?

Thank you

Janie

--

Dorothy L. Espelage, Ph.D.
 Edward William Gutsell & Jane Marr Gutsell Endowed Professor
 Hardie Professor of Education
 University Scholar
 Past VP, AERA Division E
 Dept. of Educational Psychology
 Child Development Division
 University of Illinois
 220A Education
 1310 S. Sixth Street
 Champaign, IL 61820-6925
 (217) 766-6413
 (217) 244-7620 (Fax)
 email: espelage@illinois.edu
 website: dorothyespelage.com
 publications: www.researchgate.net/profile/Dorothy_Espelage/?ev=hp_r_xprf

APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT FOR SURVEY

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted in the spring of 2014 by the Janie Stewart, PhD student from the University of Maine. The goal of this research is to gain knowledge and understanding of behaviours that may constitute as bullying. Using students' perspective of this behaviours, it is expected that the findings will help inform teachers, administrators and counsellors, such that they will be better prepared to recognize and implement strategies that will help mitigate bullying in the school context.

Participation: If you are between 18 and 20 years of age, and you decide to participate in this study, please complete the survey attached to this form. The survey consists of 18 questions that ask you to reflect on your behaviours' back when you were in middle/Junior high school.

Risks. There is a small possibility of some discomfort in answering some of the questions. If you have negative experiences with this topic, there may be a chance you re-experience some of the negative emotions and memories that are associated with it. It is your right to quit at any time. There is a list of counseling services available to you, if needed.

Benefits. There are no direct benefits, gifts or promises expected for the participants in this research. It is the belief of the researcher that the real benefits from this research will be gained by the education department, society and most importantly, the students.

Compensation: There is no compensation for participation

Confidentiality. No identifying information will be collected from those completing the survey, unless you are willing to be interviewed at a later date. All surveys will be kept at the researcher office in a locked drawer. Confidentiality is guaranteed, as only the researcher will have access to the surveys. All surveys will be shredded upon the completion of research.

Voluntary. All participation is voluntary and all participants have right to stop at any time.

Contact Information. If you have any questions, please contact my office by calling 902-492-8184. You may also email me on FirstClass: jane.stewart@umit.maine.edu. If you have any questions about rights as a research participant, contact Gayle Jones, Assistant to University of Maine's Protection of Human Subjects Review Board, 207-581-1498.

Thank you,
Janie Stewart, PhD student
University of Maine

APPENDIX G: SCRIPT

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. I am currently completing my PhD at the University of Maine and I am doing a research study. My interest lies in the behaviours of junior high students.

I am inviting you to participate in this study because you play an intricate role and could provide some valuable information on certain behaviours. My study proposes to examine your behaviours and your perceptions of your behaviours while you were in junior high school. You must be between the ages of 18 and 20 years of age.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and your decision to participate will have no influence on your success with this class or this university. There may be some slight discomfort in answering some questions however if you feel uncomfortable at any time you can skip this question or stop the survey completely. The benefits of participating in this research is that your information may contribute to this research, such that it may inform educators, counsellors and teachers so that that we may improve upon policies and systems within our schools.

If you choose to participate, your participation will involve completing a survey that will take approximately 10 minutes. You'll be asked to provide information about behaviours that you may have participated in, during junior high. At the end of the survey, it asks you for personal contact information. This contact information is required, only if you agree to do a follow up interview with me. I will only be choosing 10 participants for this interview. Please only provide this contact information if you are willing to consider participating in the follow-up interview. All contact information of participants that is provided and not offered an interview, will be immediately removed for the survey. All information from the survey will be confidential and only used for the purpose of this study. Only I will have access to this information. I will not use any names or universities to identify any student. I will not use any names or personal information for public publication. All data will be stored in a locked area and will be destroyed at a time when the researcher feels it is no longer useful. Data will be kept indefinitely.

If you agree to a follow-up interview and have provided me with your confidential contact information, I will contact you within three days and arrange a meeting place that is mutually convenient. Immediately upon the interview, your name will be removed from the survey, and convert it to a number. All your personal identification and information will be removed from all documents. All interviews will be completely confidential. Thank you again for your time.

APPENDIX H: SCRIPT FOR THE INVITE TO INTERVIEW

Good day _____, this is Janie Stewart, PhD candidate from U of Maine. I was in your class on _____, where you participated in a survey and agreed to a follow up interview.

The purpose of this call is to invite you to this interview. The interview will be held in my private office, near Saint Mary's University, which is approximately a 2-minute walk for you. If you decide to participate in the interview, I will ask a series of questions about your behaviours during Junior high school. The interview will be recorded and is expected to last, not longer than 90 minutes. Please know that all data will be completely confidential and your name or any other identifying information will be remove from all documents upon completion of interview.

Do you still wish to participate in this interview? _____

(If response is positive) What is a good time and date for you? _____

Thank you for your participation, and I look forward to our interview. The location of office is 6138 Regina Terrace, is this satisfactory for you? (If unsatisfactory)... What is your preferred location? _____

(If response is negative) I respect your decision and would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your participation to date, have a good day.

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Janie M. Stewart was born in Placentia Bay, in the province of Newfoundland on February 25, 1964. After moving to Marystown, Newfoundland and attending elementary and secondary schools, she enrolled at the Memorial University of St. John's, Newfoundland. She was awarded a bachelors degree in Economics and Business in 1993.

After a successful career in the business industry, and granted several awards, including 'Practicing Professionalism', and 'Going Above and Beyond', Janie returned to University in 2004 and successfully complete her Bachelors in Education and psychology. In 2007, she was accepted into the masters program at University of Maine in counseling, with emphasis on the clinical route.

Currently, Janie is nationally certified as a psychotherapist and a member of the Canadian Counseling and Psychotherapy Association. Janie is currently employed as a counselor with Halifax regional school board. She has trained colleagues and personnel in various professional skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, problem solving, critical thinking, relation-ship building, and ethics. Janie lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia with her husband, Alan Trenholm and her two daughters, Rachel and Jennifer.

In September 2011, Janie enrolled as a part-time doctoral student at the University of Maine located in Orono, Maine. Jane is a candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education with a concentration in Counselor Education from the University of Maine in December 2015.