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What Kept You From Reporting Bullying in High School?: A Retrospective Mixed-Methods Study of College Freshmen

Kali Fedor

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WHAT KEPT YOU FROM REPORTING BULLYING IN HIGH SCHOOL?: A
RETROSPECTIVE MIXED-METHODS STUDY OF COLLEGE FRESHMEN

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Title: What Kept You From Reporting Bullying in High School?: A Retrospective Mixed-Methods Study of College Freshmen

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This mixed-methods case study examines the self-reported memories of college freshmen related to the factors that impeded their decision of whether to report instance of bullying that occurred while they were in high school. These factors are further explored in the specific areas related to whether the type of bullying, relationship status with the bully, or trust with teachers has an impact on the willingness of participants to report bullying to the school.

This study utilizes both survey and semi-structured interviews as data sources to give a complete picture of the case. Survey data is analyzed through descriptive statistics, frequency tests, chi-square, one-way ANOVA, and t-tests (paired-samples and independent-sample). Interview data is analyzed through coding of information into emergent themes.

Analysis of study data indicates that the top factors impeding a high school student's decision for whether to report bullying or not include, "they only heard about it but never saw it," "it wasn't any of their business," "teasing is a normal part of high school," and "nothing was done when other peers reported similar events." During the analysis of interview data, the themes of safety, morality, school nonaction, fear, and lack of information emerged. The type of bullying, relationship status with the bully, and trust with a teacher were all found to have an impact on whether a participant reported bullying to the school.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

“When no one takes a stand, things get out of hand. Until ‘One’ comes along and shows all [the colors] how to stand up and count! Sometimes it just takes one.” Kathryn Otoshi

Introduction

This study focuses on the self-reported memories of college freshmen relating to the factors that impeded their decision of whether to report instances of bullying that occurred while they were in high school. The researcher considered several important variables for this study. First, although the most common recommendation to help stop bullying is for students to report instances of bullying to an adult (Luxenberg, Limber, & Olweus, 2015; Olweus, 1993), students are still not reporting bullying in school. Second, previous researchers found a disconnect between a teacher’s perception of their ability to effectively respond to a bullying event and the students’ belief that they can trust a teacher to effectively respond (Yoon & Bauman, 2014). This disconnect may affect a student’s decision of whether to report bullying. Furthermore, both the type of bullying (direct, indirect, or cyber) and their relationship status with the bully may affect their choice of whether to report the known bullying. The researcher had to investigate all potential factors that impede reporting within this study because students may have a myriad of reasons for not reporting bullying, based on the situation, environment, and people involved (Creswell, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

In schools across the United States students are encountering varying degrees of teasing, taunting, social scrutiny, isolation, humiliation, and threats that occur through verbal, emotional and physical forms (Juvonen & Graham, 2001; NCES, 2009; Robers, Kemp, & Truman, 2013). Bullying in schools can occur in various forms and is often confused with teasing or harassment.

Being able to identify bullying amidst the many forms may be a compounding factor that affects a student's ability to accurately report it to an adult (Dracic, 2009; PACER, 2010). Another potential compounding factor that can affect a student's decision to file a report is a belief that school personnel cannot be trusted to appropriately intervene and respond to a reported bullying incident (Novick & Isaacs, 2010). To date, the body of bullying research connected to high schools often fails to include student perspectives (deLara, 2008; Garbarino & deLara, 2002; Mishna & Alaggio, 2005; Pepler, Jiang, Craig, & Connolly, 2008). More recently, researchers have made efforts to include the student perspective related to bullying, especially concerning students from diverse backgrounds and students with exceptionalities (Ashburner et al., 2018; Lai & Kao, 2018; Ronksley-Pavia, Grootenboer, & Pendergast, 2019; Wachs, Bilz, Niproschke, & Schubarth, 2019). However, without information from the students who are at the center of the problem, it is difficult for teachers to provide the proper supportive and corrective measures to appropriately intervene, decrease, and stop ongoing bullying from occurring in schools (Poyhonen, Juvonen, & Salmivalli, 2012; Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation study was to elicit the self-reported memories of college freshmen relating to their experience(s) of bullying and the factors that impeded their decision of whether to report the bullying. The insights gained from this study may be of use to researchers, teachers, administrators, and specialists in the problem of bullying in schools. These insights may also assist school administrators when revising school policy related to bullying to promote a positive school climate while ensuring the safety and well-being for all students. Consideration of these factors when revising policies is important because if the current reporting policies and procedures are one of the factors that prevent students from reporting, then it needs to be

addressed and adjusted. Knowing and understanding the factors that impede that students' decisions related to reporting are important for teachers to properly respond to reported bullying events. Therefore, the insights gained from this study may also provide information required to create targeted training for the teachers to improve their capacity to deliver appropriate interventions to address all reported instances of bullying. Adjustments to the school policies by administrators and procedures for teachers and other personnel may result in an increase of reporting rates of bullying to teachers and other school officials.

Research Questions

1. What factors do college freshmen recall as having impeded their willingness to report incidents of bullying in high school?
2. Does the type of bullying have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?
3. Does the student's relationship with the bully have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?
4. Does a lack of trust in teachers and other school personnel have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?

Significance of the Study

Research surrounding the phenomenon of why students are not reporting instances of bullying during school from their perspective is still limited. Within high schools, most bullying incidents occur within unstructured environments where adult supervision is limited (Allen, 2010; Hong & Espelage, 2012; PACER, 2013; Perkins, Perkins, & Craig, 2014). In studies where teachers were present during bullying events and studies where students have reported concerns to an adult, researchers found that the assistance provided by a teacher was viewed as

ineffective (Bierman, 2004; Black, Weinles, & Washington, 2010; Davis & Davis, 2005), made the bullying worse (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007), or caused problems for them with their friends (Farmer, McAuliffe Lines, & Hamm, 2011; Rigby & Barnes, 2002). In some instances, when students did confide in a teacher, the response was to just ignore the bullying. This created the perception that adults were unreliable authority figures (Novick & Isaacs, 2010; Yoon & Bauman, 2014).

Since bullying events are more likely to occur in environments with limited adult oversight, this increases the need to understand the factors that impede students' decisions for whether to report these incidents to teachers and school staff. Understanding these factors may allow the necessary changes to school policy and procedures to improve these reporting rates. To determine the scope and depth of this problem, it was critical for the researcher to move beyond the lack of adult support in unstructured school environments, lack of trust in teachers, and the relationships between students and the bully as potential factors that impede students' decisions for whether to report known bullying events. The researcher utilized a mixed-methods research design in this study to gather the required data to answer the research questions surrounding these potential factors.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundations for this study were Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social ecological Theory and Bandura's (1986) social learning theory. The social ecological theory is comprised of five different systems: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. This theory emphasized the importance of bidirectional interaction between the individual and these five systems on human development over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Researchers identified that most bullying behavior is a result of factors beyond individual

characteristics and includes influences from a multitude of relationships such as parents, siblings, peers, and teachers (Swearer & Hymel, 2015). In relation to education, the social ecological theory addresses how a student's behavior and their responses to social situations are learned during their interactions with people in their microsystem. As the researcher analyzed the data from this study, she specifically examined the relationships between school peers and teachers within the microsystem of school (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Farrington, 1993). Based on the social ecological theory, the factors that impede a student's reporting of bullying instances may be affected by their constant interactions with everyone in their microsystem during the school day (Leadbeater & Sukhawathanakul, 2011).

The social learning theory is based on the influence that environmental stimuli and the actions of others have on a person's behavioral response during social and conflict situations (Bandura, 1986; Hill 2002). Students model their behavior based on observing their peers (Bandura, 1999). When teachers' responses are not punitive in nature for inappropriate behavior exhibited by students, it is inferred by those observing that the behavior is acceptable and socially appropriate (Hektner & Swenson, 2012; Yoon & Bauman, 2014). When discussing bullying and the lack of reporting, another important component of the social learning theory to consider is moral disengagement. This is known as a cognitive process whereby a person is able to not only justify but also rationalize their negative actions. For the purposes of this study, moral disengagement would happen more often when students are under the influence of a peer group (Johansson & Hannula, 2012). This means that the way students process social information within the school environment would have a direct effect on whether they would report instances of bullying to teachers and other school personnel (Aceves, Hinshaw, Mendoza-Benton, & Page-Gould, 2010).

Bullying and the lack of reporting of these events to teachers and other school personnel, presents safety and well-being concerns for students within the school environment. Therefore, the Social Ecological Theory and Social Learning Theory were important when reviewing and discussing the various factors that impede a student's decision of whether to report bullying in the school setting.

Definition of Terms

Below are the pertinent terms and their definitions for this study.

- **Bullying:** Includes elements of aggression with an involvement of unwanted or negative actions highlighting a power imbalance or strength occurring repeated over extended timeframes (Olweus 1978, 1993).
- **Direct Bullying:** The most obvious form of bullying that is confrontational and often includes physical and verbal attacks (Farrington, 1993; Olweus, 1992).
- **Indirect Bullying:** Undermining a student's reputation or social standing through lies and rumors without direct contact (Olweus & Limber, 2007).
- **Bystander:** Peer spectators or observers of a bullying event. Bystanders can be active or passive and provide positive or negative reinforcers for the bully through their presence. (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Olweus, 2007; Salmivalli, 2014).
- **Reporting:** Providing a detailed account of bullying to someone poised to aid in responding to the event (Olweus, 1993, 1999; PACER Center, 2010).
- **Victim:** Someone who repeatedly encounters negative and unwanted actions or verbal attacks over long or continuous periods of time (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2009; Olweus, 1993).

Research Design

This mixed-method research case study utilized participants from one of the fourteen Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Universities. Due to the nature of this study, college freshmen students served as an adequate sample for data collection and analysis. College students were surveyed in this study due to the availability of a large group of individuals who were in their first year of college. Students attending state universities also potentially represent a more economic, culturally, and ethnically diverse population (Franklin, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Furthermore, research related to age and memory capacity demonstrates negative results for people over twenty-six. However, for people under the age of eighteen or between eighteen and twenty-six, age does not affect memory accuracy and recall (Rich & Goodfriend, 2016; Lacy & Stark, 2013, Charness, 1987; Leippe, 1985). Additionally, it was found that “females between eighteen and twenty-six” would make the best eyewitnesses in regard to memory accuracy and recall (Rich & Goodfriend, 2016, p.13). So, freshmen students were an ideal sample to recall memories from high school related to bullying. Additionally, state university students served as a suitable and informative sample for this study because these students were from different geographic areas (rural, urban, and suburban) across the county.

After receipt of IRB approval, the researcher first conducted a face validity to determine whether the created survey measured what it was intended to measure to answer the set research questions. Participants chosen for the face validity were not part of the formal study and none of their provided information were used for data analysis. After completion of the face validity, the researcher contacted course instructors teaching orientation and introduction classes via email for permission to attend their classes and disseminate the survey. The description of the study and

the survey (see Appendix F) was disseminated by the researcher to orientation and introduction course students on the agreed class meeting date arranged directly with the course instructors.

The researcher collected additional student data through the qualitative research method of interviewing using a semi-structured interview protocol and conducted these interviews in-person. The researcher aimed to obtain at least five to fifteen interviews to have ample information for data analysis (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Hagaman & Wuitich, 2017; Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2016; MacQueen et al., 1998; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). The researcher wanted to make sure that the sample size was not too small and therein make it difficult to attain data saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). However, it was important to not have an overly large number of interviews because it would limit her ability for an in-depth analysis of the data (van Rijinsoever, 2017). During the semi-structured interviews, participants discussed reflective memories of known bullying events within their high school, as well as factors that impeded their decision of whether to report the bullying. Through conducting interviews, the researcher was able to go more in-depth related to factors that impeded the participant's decision related to reporting, than solely using the data from the survey. Every participant was issued a pseudonym prior to starting the interview and limited identifying information was collected from the students such as, gender and type of high school they attended(rural, urban, or suburban). All provided information was kept confidential. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and coded.

Limitations of the Study

The intent of this dissertation study was to elicit the self-reported memories of college freshmen relating to their experience(s) of bullying and the factors that impeded their decision of whether to report bullying events. The following limitations exist for this study:

1. Since all high schools in Pennsylvania are not mandated to follow the same anti-bullying program or follow the same bullying policies and procedures, it should be noted that although the students attend the same college, the high schools they attended likely varied. Therefore, the results of the data in the study may be limited by the responding students' high school of attendance even though they all attend the same university.
2. The results of the data in the study may be limited by the responding students' accuracy in memory recall from their high school experiences.

Summary

Several researchers regard bullying as one of, if not the most prevalent type of school violence that is reported (Blosnich & Bossarte, 2011; Brown, Low, Smith, & Haggerty, 2011; Karna et al., 2011; Pearce, Cross, Monks, Waters, & Falconer, 2011; Scholte, Sentse, & Granic, 2010; Swearer & Espelage, 2011). It is critical for school administrators to address and implement interventions and policies related to bullying because it is a continual dilemma and barrier to education for students in schools. Administrators need to ensure that these interventions and policies on bullying not only speak to the seriousness of the problem but also include appropriately weighted consequences for the bullies (Beale & Hall, 2007). For school personnel to act, they must first understand the factors that impede a student's decision of whether to report the bullying.

Chapter two reviews the related literature on bullying. In this review, the researcher includes the theoretical foundation of the study, an overview of bullying, the types of bullying, and the programs and policies to address bullying. The researcher also includes a discussion on

the importance of reporting and why underreporting of bullying is a problem within high schools.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

“Bystanders who do nothing give bullies permission, inadvertently, to go on being bullies. Most are afraid they’ll lose friends or be bullied themselves if they help victims or report bullies, and some feel guilty for years afterward.”

Online Sense, 2017

Bullying in all forms is malicious and damaging to the long-term development of students (Patchin & Hinduja, 2015) and needs to be effectively addressed by the school. However, in order for the school to act, students must report the bullying. Students have admitted to experiencing negative and harmful feelings from being bullied but did not report it to anyone (Mishna & Alaggia, 2005; Mishna, Cook, Gadalla, Dacuik, & Solomon, 2010; Trach, Hymel, Waterhous, & Neale, 2010). Elementary school students are most likely to report bullying over middle and high school students. This may be due to the personal connection they experience with having only one teacher for all subjects compared to middle and high school students that have multiple teachers across the school day and week (Craig, Pepler, & Atlas., 2000; Hymel & Swearer, 2015; Johansson & Hannula, 2012). Recent research has indicated up to sixty-four percent of high school aged students never reported bullying to any school adult (DeLara, 2012; Pepler et al., 2008; Petronsino et al., 2010). To fully understand the problem and improve intervention strategies for students, educators need to know the factors that impede the reporting of these bullying incidents (deLara, 2012). Student recounts of bullying events are central to identifying and understanding these factors. Each incidence of bullying is unique and involves a variety of personal experiences, reactions, and emotions that only the student can explain (DeLara, 2012; Ferrans & Selman, 2014; Olweus, 2013). The intent of this mixed-methods study was to elicit the self-reported memories of college freshmen relating to their experience(s) of

bullying and the factors that impeded their decision of whether to report the bullying. The insights gained from this study will add to the existing literature concerning strategies to encourage high school students to report instances of bullying to an adult in the school.

This chapter begins with an overview of bullying in high schools that includes an analysis of prevalence rates and the types of bullying that take place in schools. The researcher reviewed existing laws and policies aimed at addressing bullying and examined the discussion surrounding the importance of reporting and the problem of underreporting in high schools. The chapter concludes with a review of the theoretical foundations of this study.

Overview and Prevalence of Bullying in High School

Although many researchers have addressed the issue of bullying, it remains a serious problem that students encounter daily in school (Hymel & Swearer, 2015; Klein, 2012; Luxenberg, Limber, & Olweus, 2015). In 2015, 20.2% of school students reported that they were bullied while at school (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015; Musu-Gillette, Zhang, Wang, Zhang, & Oudekerk, 2017). Prevalence rates among various reports on bullying range from as low as 11% (Denny et al., 2015; Dulmus, Sowers, & Theriot, 2006) to as high as over 50% (Nansel et al., 2001; Petrosino, Guckenburger, DeVoe, & Hanson, 2010; Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009) of students who are involved in bullying events as a victim, bystander, or bully. When analyzing the types of bullying experienced by students, an estimated 20% of students were found to have reported physical attacks whereas 53% of students noted involvement in verbal abuse; both of these are forms of direct bullying (Renshaw, Hammons, & Roberson, 2016). Similarly, approximately 51% (Renshaw et al., 2016) of students noted involvement in relational bullying, which included attacks on a student's social standing through exclusion, rumors, and character defamation.

The variance in these prevalence's may result from factors such as variances in assessments used, age level of participants, social contexts and cultures, and type of bullying (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014; Hymel & Swearer, 2015). Although there is evidence that the reporting of bullying decreases as students mature in age (Lawrence, 2007; Polanin, Espelage, & Pignott, 2012; Wang et al., 2009), potential still exists for bullying among high school students to remain a significant but underreported problem (Lawrence, 2007; Polanin et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2009). Based on the available data demonstrating high prevalence rates of bullying, there is an existing need for investigation of the factors that lead to the lack of reporting among high school students (Cunningham, Vaillancourt, Cunningham, Chen, & Ratcliffe, 2011; Hoglund, Hosan, & Leadbeater, 2012; Poyhonen et al., 2012; Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012).

Memory Recall and Accuracy

Similar to concerns within the criminal justice system, school administrators have concerns regarding the accuracy of student accounts when they report bullying events. Research publications about eyewitness statements within court cases has noted that “memories can be distorted, falsified, or misconstrued,” which can affect case outcomes (Loftus, 2011, p. 85). Something else that has received attention is the idea that the type and severity of the crimes committed, along with any associated stereotypes related to the criminal's appearance or voice, can affect an eyewitness's memory recall and accuracy (Osborne & Davies, 2014). Students having difficulty remembering accurate details and events concerning bullying events is something that school are concerned with as well. However, in recent studies, it was noted that students more often reported incidents involving direct bullying that included physical harm over indirect or cyberbullying (Renshaw et al., 2016; Smith, 2011; Yablon, 2010). Additionally, it

was noted that witness accounts from bullying events involving direct bully were far more accurate than those involving indirect and cyberbullying. This directly connects to the idea in the criminal justice system, where witnesses who were involved in crimes with more violence were able to retain and recall more accurate details from these events than witnesses that experienced less violent and traumatic crimes (Lacy & Stark, 2013; Osborne & Davies, 2014). Furthermore, research related to memory capacity and accuracy indicated a negative correlation between age and memory for people over twenty-six. However, for people under the age of eighteen or between eighteen and twenty-six, age does not affect memory accuracy and recall as much (Rich & Goodfriend, 2016; Lacy & Stark, 2013, Charness, 1987; Leippe, 1985). Additionally, it was found that “females between eighteen and twenty-six” would make the best eyewitnesses in regard to memory accuracy and recall (Rich & Goodfriend, 2016, p.13). This is due to the fact the females were found to have more accurate recall than their male counterparts and age was also determined to affect females less negatively than males. When high school students report instances of bullying, especially those witnessing direct bullying or a female, it can be surmised that their memory recall is quite accurate.

Types of Bullying

Across the research surrounding the lack of reporting, there is often a discussion about whether the type of bullying a student encounters affects their decision to tell someone (Bazelon, 2013; Black et al., 2010; Davis & Nixon, 2011; DeLara, 2012; Dracic, 2009; Perkins et al., 2014; Petronsino et al., 2010). When discussing the types of bullying, researchers group them into one of two distinct categories, direct or indirect bullying. Direct and indirect bullying are known to occur in environments where a certain structure or schedule exist, such as schools, and also in environments where more freedom with less adult supervision exists, such as places outside of

school (Craig et al., 2000). Additionally, students in high school settings are more likely to describe events as altercations or arguments and not bullying. Therefore, many incidences of bullying often go unreported (Smith, Polenik, Nakasita, & Jones, 2012; Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Duys, Larson, & Sarvela, 2002).

Direct bullying is considered the easiest form of bullying to identify because it is confrontational and often includes physical and verbal attacks (Farrington, 1993; No Bullying, 2015; Olweus, 1992). Direct bullying is comprised of physical, verbal, and sexual bullying. This form of bullying is also known to be more aggressive because it often involves the striking of another person resulting in direct harm, bruising, and injury of the victim (Olweus, 1991). An example of direct bullying would be when one student shoves another student into their locker every day for no reason other than to intimidate them.

Indirect bullying is comprised of social bullying, also known as relational bullying, and cyberbullying. Indirect bullying occurs when the bully undermines a student's reputation or social standing through lies and rumors without direct contact (Olweus & Limber, 2007). Another component of indirect bullying includes intentional social isolation and manipulation of established relationships with friends (Olweus, 2013). An example of indirect bullying would be when one student spreads derogatory and inappropriate rumors about another student that results in their peers talking about and avoiding interaction with them.

Regardless of the type of bullying that is occurring, students often note legitimate fears of repercussions if they would report the event to a teacher or other adult (Hymel, McClure, Miller, Shumka, & Trach, 2015; Hymel & Swearer, 2015; Oliver & Candappa, 2007; Olweus, 2013). Students involved with direct bullying have a greater likelihood to disclose the incident to a teacher even though students are concerned and fearful of the consequences for reporting

bullying (Aceves et al., 2010; Smith, 2011; Yablon, 2010). Students noted when it comes to relational bullying that they will employ their own strategies to deal with the bullying first. If they don't find resolution or it becomes unbearable and out-of-control, then they may speak to a teacher for help (deLara, 2008; deLara, 2012; Garbarino & DeLara, 2002).

Laws and Policies to Address Bullying

All school districts have set policies and procedures that all teachers, staff, and students must adhere to throughout the school year. In order to take action against these different types of bullying, school districts have started incorporating a separate section related to bullying in their policy manuals. When creating these policies schools need to adhere to both national and state laws and policies.

National

Currently no federal laws exist to address the different types of bullying taking place in schools today. The U.S. Department of Education and U. S. Department of Justice recognize that when bullying overlaps with harassment, is described as severe and continuous, or produces a hostile school environment, that this can be covered under federal civil rights laws (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). Recognizing that states needed some guidance, the Safe Schools Act was written and passed in 2011. This federal anti-bullying bill provided a structure for states to adopt policies, implement anti-bullying programs, monitor progress, and create assessments to measure effectiveness (Jordan & Austin, 2012; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). States have since taken their own steps towards creating laws within their educational codes and policies to guide schools in addressing bullying (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2015). When the U.S. Department of Education reviewed the states' anti-bullying laws and policies, they found that thirty-nine states had both written laws and

policies in their state documents to address bullying. The remaining eleven states only reported having a written law in place (U.S. Department of Education, 2010), which means that even though their educational codes contain verbiage addressing bullying, they are lacking the policies that help guide the school districts in how to address bullying locally.

State

Due to a lack of specific and direct federal laws on bullying, the Pennsylvania School Code was amended in 2008 through House Bill 1067 and now requires school districts to adopt or modify an existing anti-bullying policy (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2015). As a result of this amendment, starting in 2009 the Pennsylvania Department of Education required every school district in the state to adopt an anti-bullying program and create policies to address bullying. Pennsylvania is one of the eleven states to have written laws within their educational code to address bullying (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Additionally, in Pennsylvania, harassment is addressed under Title 18 § 2709 and now contains language surrounding bullying. School districts often rely on this specific area in the law when creating policies on bullying (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 2017). Additionally, in 2011 the Pennsylvania Department of Education Office for Safe Schools developed the PA Bullying Prevention Support Plan. Through implementation of this plan, it is the state's intention to identify the needs of districts and provide recommendations to support reduction of bullying behavior across schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2015). In efforts to increase reporting of any school safety concerns, Pennsylvania Governor Wolf recently established Act 44. This statute enacted use of the Safe2Say Something program by all Pennsylvania school districts (Pennsylvania State Education Association, 2019). According to this act all reports that are filed through this anonymous system must be investigated. This program allows anyone, not just

school officials, to submit a report through the program app, website, or by calling the crisis center number. It is important to note that this new mandate to use the Safe2Say Something program was enacted for the 2018-2019 school year. Therefore, participants in this study did not have access to use this program to report bullying instances.

To determine how the states were addressing bullying the U.S. Department of Education (2011) analyzed the laws and policies across all fifty states. During this analysis, it was found that within selected school district policies in Pennsylvania there was language that conveyed reporting expectations for school staff and administration. These expectations included language such as “immediate, appropriate steps to intervene” during witnessed bullying events (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, p. 67). However, since the reviewed policy only included language surrounding intervention and not specifically reporting, the district only required staff to report the incident if they determined that the problem was not sufficiently resolved (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

This deficiency in uniformity of school district policies results in a wide variance for how Pennsylvania schools require students to report instances of bullying and the actions of the adult receiving the student report. This becomes an issue for students who may move into Pennsylvania from another state or just from a neighboring district who follows a different set of policies and procedures (National School Safety and Security Services, 2017). Another compounding issue is that many schools will start the school year with assemblies where they review these policies, but do not frequently remind or refresh the students and school staff on the set district policies and procedures surrounding the reporting of bullying (Renshaw et al., 2016; Petronsino et al., 2010). Therefore, new students may not be aware of the set process to report bullying. Additionally, newly hired school staff may not receive appropriate training for how to

respond, intervene, and report the bullying, especially if they start at the school after the beginning when the review of school's policies and procedures occurs.

Limitations of the School to Protect Students

The controversy within schools across the nation for how to deal appropriately and legally with all forms of bullying is an ongoing discussion. One of the main concerns that arises in discussions on policy and legal requirements for actions by schools is the fact that schools have limited jurisdiction. This means that they are only able to respond to events that occur within their physical school boundaries (Cross et al., 2011; Magid, 2009; Side & Johnson, 2014). Despite only having limited jurisdiction, many schools are still creating and implementing new anti-bullying policies surrounding all forms of bullying to hold students accountable for their actions that directly impact other peers during the school day (Snakenborg, Van Acker, & Gable, 2011), even if the bullying extends beyond school boundaries. Research around the effectiveness of school anti-bullying policies has shown up to a 2.1% reduction of bullying in the school (Nikolaou, 2017). Although current measures in place within schools to discourage and respond to bullying are demonstrating some positive results, there are still serious concerns about how to add increased and substantial protection by the school for those students who submit reports of bullying and most importantly for the victims (Cornell, 2015).

The Importance of Reporting

Bullying is known for dramatic effects on the development of students from Kindergarten through their senior year of high school and even into adulthood. The effects of bullying frequently lead to emotional, social, and psychological health concerns for the bully and the victim extending far beyond the duration of the event and into adulthood (Blosnich & Bossarte, 2011; Brown et al., 2011; Freis & Gurung, 2013; Lawrence, 2007; Polanin et al., 2012; Ttofi &

Farrington, 2012). For this reason, understanding the reasons that students are not reporting bullying is critical. Reporting provides schools the opportunity for response and intervention to stop the bullying according to the set policies and protocols in the district. Student reporting also provides the school with data for analysis. Through this data analysis the school can make needed adjustments to better ensure the safety and well-being for everyone. Additionally, school administrators can determine whether further interventions or more training measures for students and staff relating to bullying prevention and reporting are needed (Petronisino, Guckenburger, DeVoe, & Hanson, 2010). Aligning policies, practices, interventions, and training opportunities to address factors that inhibit student reporting may result in a positive effect on the reporting rates of bullying to teachers. Beyond this, the more important and critical outcome of reporting bullying is for school personnel to appropriately intervene to protect the well-being of the victim. Student reporting leads to immediate action and protection from further harm of the student(s) involved.

Protocols for Reporting in Prescribed Programs

The protocols for how students will report an instance of bullying to school staff varies from program to program and state to state based on the set policies related to bullying. Some programs utilize direct reporting, while others utilize anonymous reporting procedures to protect the identity of the student reporting the incident. Direct reporting involves students providing in-person reports to a school staff member or submitting the school or program-designed paper report form to locked drop-boxes located in various locations throughout the school (Goldweber, Waasdorp, & Bradshaw, 2013; Hymel & Swearer, 2015). Direct reporting allows for a more immediate intervention by the school staff. However, it may not be as secure and confidential as anonymous reporting methods (Hamburger, Basile, & Vivolo, 2011; Vivolo-Kantor, Martell,

Holland, & Westby, 2014). In addition to confidentiality concerns, there are other drawbacks for students who use direct reporting. First, students cannot complete the report from their home. This means that they must be able to complete the report during the school day. This presents some logistical elements for the student. They need enough time in-between classes, ask a teacher for permission to leave class, or stay after school to file their report (Craig, Pepler, Murphy, & McCuaig-Edge, 2010; Juvonen, Schacter, Sainio, & Salmivalli, 2016). Another drawback is that in-person reporting isn't available around the clock on any day of the week. For many students, they may not be ready to report an instance of bullying immediately after it occurs, especially if they were a bystander. The bystander effect causes the student to enter a mental mindset that someone else will step in or speak up on behalf of the victim. Which means that they are less likely to take immediate action and file a report with the school (Song & Oh, 2017). However, often after being removed from the bystander effect, they would be willing to report if they had access to a reporting method they could access at any time of the day, night, and throughout the week without having to wait until the next school day to speak with someone in-person. The final potential drawback to in-person reporting is that information and data must be manually entered into a separate database. This manual entry of data can result in errors in the provided details of the bullying events, and it is not immediately available for review (Vivolo-Kantor et al., 2014).

Unlike in-person reporting methods, anonymous reporting methods are completed through a variety of online and phone interfaces. This type of reporting allows students to submit details of the bullying through email, bullying hotline phone number, text messaging, and online incident reporting systems. These methods allow for students to complete their reports anonymously to ensure a greater sense of safety from retaliation by the bully (Hymel & Swearer,

2015; Jones, Doces, Swearer, & Collier, 2012). Other benefits include that students can complete reports from anywhere they have access to a phone or computer and that reports can be completed anytime on any day of the week. If a school is utilizing student reporting through text messaging or online incident reporting systems, the data is automatically stored in a secure database, and any related incidents involving the same students will be grouped together (Payne & Elliot, 2011). This function allows the school to implement and track targeted interventions based on all provided information for each bullying incident reported (Holben & Zirkel, 2016; Hymel & Swearer, 2015; Magid, 2009).

Even though anonymous reporting systems have increased measures for confidentiality, there are some disadvantages to using these systems. One disadvantage is that many of these systems have associated costs to the district for use of the system, especially those that include database storage of the reporting information (Craig et al., 2010; Payne & Elliot, 2017). However, some school officials have noted that the efficiency and timeliness of these anonymous systems outweigh the cost concerns, making this a more cost-effective method to utilize in their schools' (Hamburger et al., 2011; Solberg & Olweus, 2003; Solberg, Olweus, & Endresen, 2007). Another disadvantage with anonymous reporting is with increased confidentiality comes the likelihood of an increase in false reports by students. The problem with an increasing number of false reports is that they take time and staff resources to investigate, which causes delays in responding to accurate reports that need attention. Therefore, use of these systems are not ideal for any situations that need immediate intervention for the safety and well-being of students (Side & Johnson, 2014; Yoon & Bauman, 2014).

Anticipated Outcomes of Reporting

School administrators analyze the data from submitted reports of bullying to determine the type, the frequency, and the location of occurrence. This analysis allows schools to review their adopted anti-bullying program and protocols for reporting to create action plan steps to make corrective measures (Holben & Zirkel, 2016). However, the most important anticipated outcome that results from the reporting of bullying instances is immediate intervention to protect students from harm. Additionally, reporting allows school administrators to make necessary adjustments to ensure the safety for everyone. Without continued and accurate reporting from the students, it severely limits the ability of schools to make a positive impact to curb and stop bullying.

The Problem of Underreporting

The current prevalence of bullying has driven today's schools to develop policies to promote awareness of what bullying is and their responses against bullying when it is reported (Musu-Gillette, Zhang, Wang, Zhang & Oudekerk, 2017). Some schools are going a step beyond creating policies and are implementing one of the many anti-bullying programs that are available for use with the required and provided training for staff and students. Some of the most commonly used programs are Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies), PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports), and Second Step (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2013). With these various methods in place to help combat bullying, it is puzzling why students are still not reporting instances of bullying per their school's policies and program procedures.

From the start of a student's school experience, teachers and other school staff model the importance of demonstrating various character traits which include being respectful and

responsible (Allen, 2010). One-way students can demonstrate responsibility is by notifying an adult of safety concerns to themselves or others. Additionally, telling a teacher of potential harm demonstrates respect for the well-being of others (Davis & Davis, 2005). However, when students allow bullying to go unreported they are demonstrating a lack of responsibility and this, in turn, severely limits the school's ability to truly manage and prevent violence in the school (National School Safety and Security Services, 2017). As an example, teachers are often a student's first line of defense from bullies. However, if students are not reporting instances to their teachers, this limits a teacher's ability to intervene and assist the student(s). This also limits the teacher's ability to then report the incident to their principal for further intervention, support, and corrective consequences to the bully.

State educational departments and agencies frequently collect various types of data from schools, especially related to instances of bullying. During studies about perceptions of school leaders on bullying, researchers found that principals and superintendents across the nation were reporting bullying rates that were significantly lower than what was occurring within their schools (Dake, Price, Telljohann, & Funk, 2004; Kennedy, Russom, & Kevorkian, 2012). Having accurate and timely reports of incidents from students is important for teachers and school administration to determine the scope and frequency of continued bullying. It also affords them the opportunity to take the steps necessary to address the problem (Petronisino, Guckenburg, DeVoe, and Hanson, 2010).

Through lack of reporting, schools are not able to act, leading to the perception that students can commit a crime against others with no resulting consequences. This also results in a severe disservice to all the students who have been, and may still be, involved in and affected by bullying. Research shows that students who have been involved in bullying are suffering both

instantaneous and longstanding effects from these experiences. These students are in greater jeopardy to experience academic difficulties, reduced peer socialization, depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, substance abuse, violence, and suicidal tendencies (Center for Disease Control, 2016; DeLara, 2012; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2012; Wu, Luu, & Luh, 2016). With so many detrimental outcomes for all students, it is important that school administrators address the problem of underreporting and act to address the factors that impede a student from reporting bullying.

Relationships With the Bully Affects Likelihood of Reporting

Whether the bully is a friend or an unknown peer, the type of relationship impacts a student's likelihood of to report the event to a teacher. Although there is research to support that peers are a positive factor in reducing bullying (Pepler, Craig, & Perkins, 2011), evidence also exists demonstrating that students do want to intervene for fear of damaged friendships, loss of social status, and retaliation from the bully (Espelage, Green, & Polanin, 2012; Veenstra, Lindenberg, Huitsing, Sainio, & Salmivalli, 2014). As previously noted, the value and impact of friendships on an adolescent's development cannot be understated. These relationships, whether positive or negative, are powerful. When a student has a friend, who is engaged in bullying other students, they often experience a state of moral disengagement. This is characterized by students trying to rationalize other reasons for why it is not their responsibility to report the event. Some of these rationalizations include the following conclusions: the student brought the bullying on themselves or the teachers are the ones responsible for intervening to protect students (Bandura, 1990; Bandura, 2002; Humel & Bonanno, 2014). They are so worried about the loss of their friendship with the bully, as well as other potential impacts to their general social standing among other peers within their social group at school, that they become morally disengaged.

They know that it is wrong to allow the abuse of a peer to continue and go unreported, but the anticipated negative effect on their friendship often outweighs the personal moral consequences, so they will demonstrate loyalty to the bully (Bazelon, 2013; Garandeau & Cillessen, 2006; Volk, Dane, & Marini, 2014).

When a peer has a limited or no connection to the bully, there is a high likelihood that they will report the bullying event to a teacher or staff member (Black et al., 2010; Pepler et al., 2011). Even though there is a greater chance of reporting to occur in this situation, it does not mean that the peer does not go through a decision process. In fact, they often take longer to determine whether reporting the bully is the correct action because they have a greater concern about retaliation from the bully than those who are friends with the bully.

Role of Trust in Adults

Trust is an element that continually comes up within the discussion of students reporting instances of bullying to teachers within their schools. In 2015, it was identified that of the 21% of students who reported they were bullied, 57% indicated that they did not notify a school employee of the incident (Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). There are some students who have indicated a need and interest for increased adult supervision throughout the school building in both structured and unstructured environments (Gower, McMorris, Eisenberg, 2015; Hughes, Middleton, & Marshall, 2009). Although teachers may be physically present, students noted that they were often involved in other activities such as planning, grading, working on their computer, and even conversing with other school staff wherein they were stationary and did not move around the space or actively observe the students (Hektner & Swenson, 2012; Novick & Isaacs, 2010; Oliver & Candappa, 2007). When teachers were actively involved and present to witness bullying, students reported that the assistance teachers provided were ineffective

(Bierman, 2004; Black et al. , 2010; Davis & Davis, 2005; Gower et al., 2015), made the bullying worse (Bradshaw et al., 2007), or caused problems for them with their friends (Farmer et al., 2011; Rigby & Bauman, 2002). Although the most common recommendation is for students to report bullying to a teacher (Luxenberg, Limber, & Olweus, 2015; Olweus, 1993), students who sought out support from their teachers were often told to ignore the bullying (Yoon & Bauman, 2014), leading students to view teachers as unreliable and untrustworthy for help in dealing with bullying (Eliot, Cornell, Gregorty, & Xitao, 2010; Harel-Fisch et al., 2011; Maunder, Harrop, & Tattersall, 2010; Novick & Isaacs, 2010; Siyahhan et al., 2012).

Theoretical Foundation

Bullying is not passive or simplistic in nature. It is aggressive and multifaceted. Bullying is regarded as a complex group and social phenomenon (Hong & Espelage, 2012; Pepler, Craig, Charach, & Ziegler, 1993). A student's decision for whether to report bullying to adults in the school setting can be extremely stressful and difficult (Song & Oh, 2017).

Under social learning theory, Bandura (1977, 1999) stated that the act of learning is the result of a cognitive process involving observation, imitation, or direct instruction within a social context. Additionally, the effects of bullying extend beyond relationships and interactions of those directly involved. It infiltrates relationships with other school peers, their teachers, the school culture, and even at home with their parents and siblings (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Hong & Espelage, 2012).

Within the school environment, students are observing and modeling their behavior related to reporting bullying from these observations and interactions with peers, teachers, and other adults. Therefore, there is an ingrained social element that is present when discussing bullying and the reporting of bullying in schools. In one respect students are modeling behavior

from others based on their observational learning. However, they are also experiencing outward effects on relationships with others. As a result, the researcher used the social learning and social ecological theories to direct this study. These frameworks provided an enhanced understanding when analyzing the data for how observations, interactions, and relationships between peers and school personnel can affect a student's decision for whether to report bullying.

Social Learning Theory

This theory is an important part within the discussion concerning bullying and the lack of reporting by adolescents. Bandura's (1986) social learning theory is based on the influence that environmental stimuli and the actions of others have on a person's behavioral response during conflict situations, such as bullying (Hill 2002). According to this paradigm, students model their behavior based on observing their peers (Bandura, 1999). When teachers' responses to reported bullying events are not immediate and punitive in nature, it is inferred by other students in the school environment that the behavior is acceptable and socially appropriate (Hektner & Swenson, 2012; Yoon & Bauman, 2014). Therefore, students are learning from these environmental social situations, that there is limited or no value to reporting bullying to adults in the school.

The importance and function of friendships as a 'critical social context' (Kupersmidt & Dodge, 2004, pg. 51) for an adolescent's overall development should not be undervalued in any educational arena. This is especially true when discussing the influence these relationships have related to bullying and whether a student will report a known incidence of bullying. Adolescent friendships have more intimacy and closeness than those formed in the elementary grades and as a result, have increased group cohesion and protective factors at play (Gristy, 2012). Having quality relationships during adolescence has been documented as a protective measure from

continued and intense bullying. This is due to the high value and trust present within these friendships. When students perceive the adults in their school as untrustworthy, their friends become the first person they turn to for advice and to help stop bullying (Luxenberg et al., 2015; Moses & Villodas, 2016).

When discussing bullying and the lack of reporting, another important component of the social learning theory to consider is moral disengagement. This is known as a cognitive process whereby a person is able to not only justify but also rationalize their negative actions. For the purposes of this study, moral disengagement would happen more often when students are under the influence of a peer group (Johansson & Hannula, 2012). Bullies are negatively reinforced by the attention of their peers. Bystanders in these situations promote the negative actions of the bully towards the victim through their presence (Hamburger et al., 2011; Denny et al., 2015). Additionally, when a bystander chooses not to report the witnessed bullying, they are operating under moral disengagement because there is this perception that someone else will submit a report (Hektner & Swenson, 2012; Song & Oh, 2017). This means that the way students process social information within the school environment would have a direct effect on whether they would report instances of bullying to teachers and other school personnel (Aceves et al., 2010).

Social Ecological Theory

The social ecological theory is also an important part within the discussion concerning bullying and the lack of reporting by adolescents. Under this theory, Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner highlighted the critical nature of interactions between the individual and a series of social ecological systems on human development over time. The social ecological theory created an important framework in the discussion and research related to bullying and also peer victimization within a student's environmental and social surroundings (National Academy of

Sciences, 2016; Swearer & Hymel, 2015; Swearer, Siebecker, Johnsen-Frerichs, & Wang, 2010; Thornberg, Wanstrom, Hong, & Espelage, 2017).

Dr. Bronfenbrenner's research and work were influential in changing perspective within developmental psychology through highlighting the strong influences that the environment and social situations have on development. The social ecological theory is comprised of five different systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

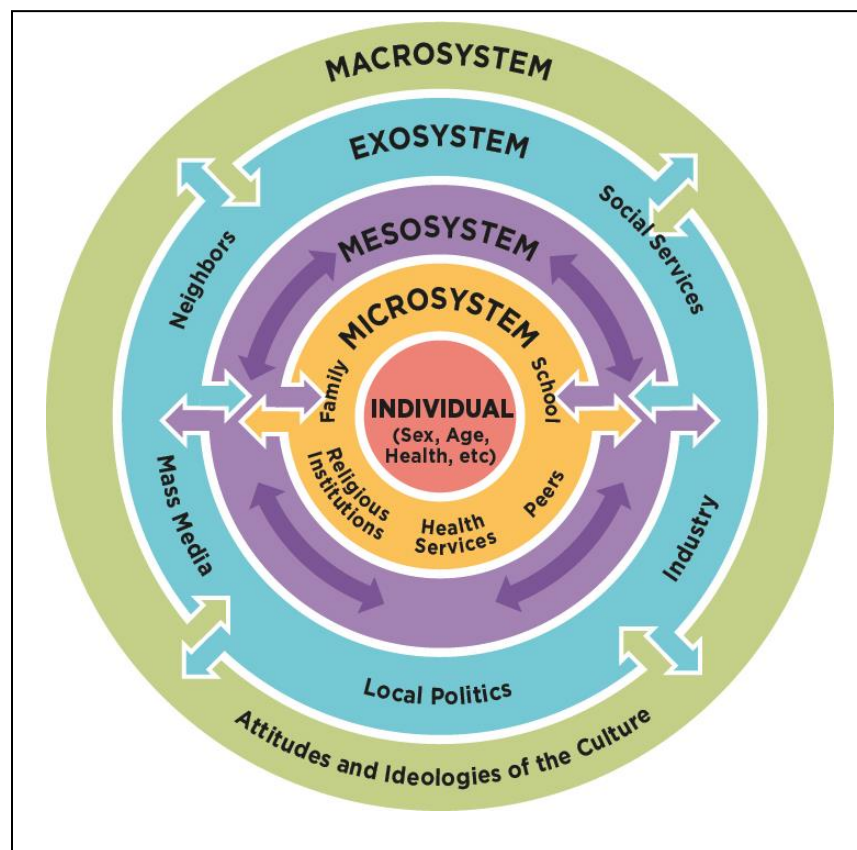


Figure 1. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development. Reprinted with permission from National Academy of Sciences, 2016, p.73.

The microsystem includes a student's immediate environmental and social surroundings such as their family, peers, and school who have the highest degree of influence on them as an individual. The third level is the mesosystem that encapsulates how different components of the

student's microsystem interrelate with each other. An example of this are the school-based exchanges between teachers and parents, relationships between students, their friends, or other peers, and connections students have with their teachers. The exosystem involves links between environments and social situations that are further removed from the individual's immediate surroundings, such as their neighborhood, community resources, local politics, and school districts. An example of how the exosystem influences an individual is when a child's normal home environment is influenced by a change in their parent's work life, such as a promotion with excessive travel or a loss of job position that would impact the parent's level of interaction with the child. The final level is the macrosystem, which examines the influence of the larger cultural context that people live in and the resulting effects on the individual. Socioeconomic status, poverty, and ethnicity are all part of the macrosystem that continue to evolve and change over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

When discussing the limited or lack of reporting related to bullying during school, this directly connects to the microsystem of the social ecological theory. Within the microsystem, school-based interactions among peers, teachers, the school environment, and existing culture are examined. Peer friendships and acceptance, along with popularity, are critical for adolescents (Espelage, 2012). There is also a sense of protection from the scrutiny of other peers who accompany these socially charged relationships (Demaray & Malecki, 2003; Siyahhan, Aricak, Cayirdag-Acar, 2012). Therefore, for a student to take action against another student their decision must first be critically examined for areas of potential impact to their peer relationships, social standing, and protection by teachers and school staff from peer retaliation in the school environment (Espelage, Polanin, & Low, 2014; Hong & Espelage, 2012). Therefore, the

resulting decision for whether a student reports an instance of bullying is influenced and shaped (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) during their environmental and social interactions in school.

Both the social learning and social ecological theories are critical to examine the factors that impede a student's decision of whether to report instances of bullying. When students are in school they are still under the influence of their microsystem. Therefore, students are less likely to report bullying stemming from concerns, such as impacts on their social standing, teacher response to the report, and protection from potential harm (Bandura, 1986 & 1999; Hymel et al., 2015).

Summary

Bullying is a continuous and serious issue which must be addressed by school administrators and teachers to ensure safety and well-being for all students. The consequences of bullying have been documented to have long-lasting health, social, emotional, and physical effects that extend far beyond a student's K-12 education and into adulthood. To mitigate these potential effects, schools must make strides to decrease and stop bullying by intervening earlier in known bullying events. To do this, schools first need to understand the factors that impede a student's decision of whether to report instances of bullying. Then, they can take informed action steps to address these factors to positively influence students to report bullying.

An overview of bullying, related research surrounding the types of bullying, and policies to address bullying were discussed. In addition, a summary of the importance of reporting, the problem with underreporting, and potential factors related to the lack of reporting by students were addressed. In Chapter Three, the researcher describes the methodology and data collection procedure for the research study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”
Dr. Seuss, The Lorax, 1971

Introduction

In this chapter the researcher describes the methodology utilized in this study. In the first portion of the chapter, the researcher explains the mixed-methods research design and the face validity. Next, the researcher provides a description of the participants and the setting. Finally, the researcher reviews the data collection and analysis procedures, which are followed by a discussion of the potential limitations of this study.

The intent of this mixed-methods study was to elicit the self-reported memories of college freshmen relating to their knowledge concerning bullying incidents that occurred during high school and the factors that impeded their decision of whether to report the bullying. To meet this purpose, the researcher reviewed the available data related to limited reporting rates of bullying among high school students. First, bullying can occur in many forms making it difficult for a student to recognize and report the event to an adult in a timely manner (Dracic, 2009; PACER, 2010). Second, the type of relationship the student(s) had with the bully may affect their decision whether to report the event (Espelage et al., 2012; Spriggs, Iannotti, Nansel & Haynie, 2007). Finally, there is the potential lack of trust in teachers in the school to appropriately intervene and respond to a reported bullying incident that may hinder a student from reporting (Novick & Isaacs, 2010). Schools need students to report instances of bullying for intervention(s) to occur. For schools to act, they must first understand the factors that impede students’ decisions of whether to report the bullying.

This research had a focus on freshmen college students who had knowledge concerning bullying incidents that occurred during high school. The researcher collected quantitative and qualitative data during this study. The quantitative data for this study were collected through a paper and pencil survey that was based on current literature, research, and components from three major surveys in the surrounding bullying: Bauman, Rigby, and Hoppa's (2008) the Handling of Bullying Questionnaire, the Bully Survey -Student Version BYS-S (Swearer & Carey, 2003; Swearer, Turner, Givens, & Pollack, 2008), and the Student School Survey (The Colorado Trust, 2007). The researcher received permission to use information from these questionnaires from the authors (see Appendix B - D). The researcher collected qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with participants, who volunteered and were selected, after completion of the in-class survey. Prior to any formal data collection in this study and after receiving IRB approval, the researcher conducted a face validity of the survey. All face validity participants were not students from the selected courses used for the formal data collection in the study. The information gained from the face validity was only used to refine survey questions prior to dissemination in the selected classes for the study. Information and data that was collected from the face validity was not used in the data analysis for this study. The data obtained through the survey responses and semi-structured interviews, from the formal study participants, were used to answer the following research questions:

1. What factors do college freshmen recall as having impeded their willingness to report incidents of bullying in high school?
2. Does the type of bullying have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?

3. Does the student's relationship with the bully have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?
4. Does a lack of trust in teachers and other school personnel have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?

Review of Current Research on Reporting Rates

This study focused on the self-reported memories of college freshmen relating to their knowledge concerning bullying incidents that occurred during high school and the factors that impeded their decision of whether to report bullying during high school. This research is significant because a data trend exists showing a decline in reporting rates during high school. Prevalence rates across various studies on bullying range from as low as 11% (Denny et al., 2015; Dulmus et al., 2006) to as high as over 50% (Nansel et al., 2001; Petrosino et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2009) of students who were part of bullying events as either victim, bystander, or bully. Although research surrounding prevalence rates reveal that bullying is still occurring in schools, researchers have found that as students mature in age and grade level that actual reporting of bullying to the school decreases (Lawrence, 2007; Polanin et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2009). Results from a study conducted by Menard and Grotpter (2011) indicated that reporting rates of bullying decrease from 14% during a student's sixth-grade year to around 2% during their twelfth-grade year. Yet, in 2015, 20.2% of school students noted that they were bullied during school (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). This supports the notion that bullying continues to occur within high schools but is instead going unreported by older students. The researcher used the literature review as a basis for the current study to examine both the targeted factors presented in the research questions and those

additional factors shared by the interview participants that impeded their decision of whether to report bullying during high school.

Face Validity

The researcher conducted a face validity to determine whether the created survey and semi-structured interview questions appropriately measured the required information and data needed to answer the research questions. By conducting a face validity, the researcher was provided the opportunity to edit and revise the survey or interview protocol prior to formal data collection. This is done for inclusion of more relevant lines of questioning prior to use with the formal participants selected for the study (Yin, 2009). Additionally, since the researcher created her own survey for data collection, it was important to establish validity and reliability for accurate data analysis measures (Creswell, 2014). The face validity also provided the researcher the opportunity to practice her pacing to appropriately conduct the interview procedures during formal data collection. After the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board granted permission, the researcher spoke to a selected faculty's night class and asked for volunteers to review and discuss the research questions, survey items, and interview questions for potential changes.

Participants who volunteered for the face validity were not part of the formal study and none of the information or data collected were used in the study. After completion of the face validity, the researcher contacted course instructors teaching orientation and introduction classes via email for permission to attend their classes and disseminate the survey. The description of the study and the survey (see Appendix F) was disseminated by the researcher to orientation and introduction course students on the agreed class meeting dates arranged directly with the course instructor.

Figure 2 shows the semi-structured interview questions that were created for use during the face validity. After completion of the face validity, the researcher reviewed the information for relevance and alignment to both the research questions and created survey. Based on the results of the face validity, the researcher did not have to adjust or eliminate any questions from the survey or semi-structured interview protocol.

Demographic Questions:

1. Please state your pseudo name, age, and gender.
2. Would you classify your high school as small (less than 250 total students), medium (250-500 students), or large (over 500 students)?
3. Would you classify your high school as rural, urban, or suburban?

What factors do college freshmen recall as having impeded their willingness to report incidents of bullying in high school?

4. Were you or any of your friends involved in bullying instances? If so, please explain what happened.
 - a. How did you feel during this event?
 - b. Was this event reported to the school? Why or why not?
5. While in high school, did you ever report any other instances of bullying where you were not directly involved?
 - a. If yes:
 - i. Why did you decide to report the bullying?
 - b. If no:
 - i. Why didn't you report the bullying? Can you elaborate on why you didn't report, what stopped you?
6. During high school, from talking with peers, what are some other factors that may have affected other students' decision for whether or not to report bullying events?
7. Do you believe that high school students should be encouraged to report instances of bullying to the school? Why or why not?
8. Can you tell me your high school's definition of bullying?
9. Can you explain your high school's the bullying policy?
10. Do you think that a student's understanding of their school's definition of bullying, the bullying policy, and how to report bullying events would affect their decision for whether or not to report bullying events? Why or why not?

Does the type of bullying have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?

11. During high school, if you were going to report an instance of bullying, would the type of bullying (physical, verbal, social, or cyber) have an impact on whether or not you submit a report? Can you elaborate?
12. Please describe the bullying instances that you were aware of that took place in your school? Can you elaborate?
13. Did you ever report any of these instances that you knew were occurring in the school? Why or why not?

Does the relationship of with a bully have an impact on the willingness of high school students to intervene in bullying incidents?

14. What do you believe your role as a high school student is when you witness or know about bullying that is occurring?
15. Do you believe your personal relationship, or lack thereof, with the bully affected your decision of whether or not to report the event? Why or why not?

Does a lack of trust in teachers and other school personnel have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?

16. Explain your school's procedures for reporting instances of bullying?
17. Do you believe teachers are effective in responding to reported bullying events? Can you elaborate?
18. If you would confide in a teacher or school staff about something personal, such as bullying:
 - a. Who would you confide in?
 - b. Why would you choose to speak to this person over someone else at the school?
19. How do you think teachers and other personnel should respond when a bullying event is reported? What steps should they take?
20. What else could school teachers and other personnel do to reduce bullying instances?

Conclusion of Study

21. Is there anything additional that you would like to share about what influenced your decision of whether or not to report instances of bullying during high school?

Figure 2. Face validity semi-structured student interview questions.

Research Design

The researcher used a mixed-methods approach to further explore the why behind the numerical data. After a successful face validity, the researcher followed the explanatory sequential mixed-method design for the study. This method provided two sets of data leading to

an in-depth understanding of quantitative results (Creswell, 2014) related to explaining a phenomenon. The explanatory sequential method has two phases. In the first phase, the researcher collected data through the created survey. During this initial phase, the researcher conducted an early analysis of the quantitative data to further refine the set qualitative measures. The second phase was the implementation of the semi-structured interviews. The intent of the explanatory sequential method was for the refined qualitative method and resulting data to provide a deeper explanation of the quantitative results. Since the data obtained through the quantitative portion helped to refine the questions for the semi-structured interviews, this made the incorporation of the face validity crucial to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. Through utilization of a face validity, the researcher ensured that the interview questions were accurately designed to build upon the survey results.

Surveys as a Quantitative Research Approach

The first phase of the explanatory sequential method was contacting university instructors for permission to attend their classes and disseminate a survey. The researcher constructed language for an email that was disseminated to university faculty teaching Orientation and Introduction courses with high rates of enrolled freshmen students (see Appendix E). After instructors granted permission to attend their class(es), the researcher then disseminated the Reporting of Bullying Survey to university students enrolled in the selected classes. The researcher used a survey to collect non-numerical data in a quantitative way. Surveys are designed to collect non-numerical data related to an individual's attitudes, thoughts, or feelings using different types of rating scales (Muijs, 2011). For example, the Reporting of Bullying Survey (2018) that was created for this study requires participants to rate a few survey items as either "I definitely would," "I probably would," "I'm unsure," "I probably would not," or "I

definitely would not.” Each of these statements is then paired with a number (e.g. 5 for “I definitely would,” 1 for “I definitely would not”). This provided the researcher the ability to collect quantifiable data related to the stated research questions.

Survey Description

The participants completed the Reporting of Bullying Survey (2018) in paper and pencil format. The researcher decided to design her own survey to attain answers connected to the research questions. The created survey was based on current literature, research, and components from three major surveys in the field of research surrounding bullying: Bauman, Rigby, and Hoppa’s (2008), the Handling Bullying Questionnaire, the Bully Survey – Student Version BYS-S (Swearer & Carey, 2003; Swearer et al., 2008), and the Student School Survey (The Colorado Trust, 2007). The researcher gained permission to use information from these questionnaires from the authors (see Appendix B-D). Table 1 displays the alignment of the survey items to the set research questions for the study.

Table 1

Research Question Alignment to the Reporting of Bullying Survey

Research Questions	The Reporting of Bullying Survey response items
1. What factors do college freshmen recall as having impeded their willingness to report incidents of bullying in high school?	5, 6, 7, 8, and 9
2. Does the type of bullying have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?	10 and 11
3. Does the student’s relationship with the bully have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?	12, 13, and 14
4. Does a lack of trust in teachers and other school personnel have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?	15, 16, and 17

Interviews as a Qualitative Research Approach

The qualitative research method of interviewing was used during the second phase to gather the participants' reflective accounts of known bullying events during high school. The researcher aimed to acquire at least five to fifteen interviews to have ample information to discern a median during data analysis (Guest et al., 2006; Hagaman & Wutch, 2017). The researcher wanted to make sure that the sample size was not too small and therein make it difficult to attain data saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). However, it was important for the researcher to not have an overly large number of interviews because it would limit her ability for an in-depth analysis of the data (van Rijnsoever, 2017). The researcher investigated and gathered more in-depth data by using semi-structured interviews, than what would be collected from using just a survey. The participants had the opportunity during the interview process to elaborate on their memories concerning bullying during high school. Participants also elaborated on the different factors that impeded their decision(s) of whether to report bullying. Additionally, the data gained through the interview process expanded upon the responses from the survey. Table 2 displays the alignment of the interview items to the set research questions for the study.

Table 2

Research Question Alignment to Semi-Structured Student Interview Questions

Research Questions	Semi-Structured Interview Questions
1. What factors do college freshmen recall as having impeded their willingness to report incidents of bullying in high school?	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 21
2. Does the type of bullying have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?	11, 12, and 13
3. Does the student's relationship with the bully have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?	14 and 15
4. Does a lack of trust in teachers and other school personnel have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?	16, 17, 18, 19, and 20

Semi-Structured Interview Description

Participants had the option of providing their email address if they were interested in participating in a semi-structured interview with the researcher as part of the survey informed consent form. If participants did not wish to participate in an interview, they did not provide their email address in the provided section on the survey informed consent form. This finalized their participation in the study. Participants who provided their email address on the survey informed consent document were contacted by the researcher via email to set up a date and time for the interview. In the event that there was an overwhelming number of participants interested in completing an interview, the researcher randomly selected a maximum of fifteen people to contact for participation in an interview. Prior to starting the interview each participant was required to review and sign a consent form (see Appendix J). All participants were required to provide permission for the interviews to be audio recorded during the consent process,. Participants could opt out of the interview at any time and any collected data was not used within the study results.

The reason for conducting semi-structured interviews was to provide the researcher to ask participants to provide some additional information or details in response to stated questions. This type of interview also allows participants the ability to expand upon their response even if it deviated slightly from the stated question but had related information (Berg & Lune, 2011). The researcher also chose interviews over larger focus groups due to the potential sensitive and personal information that was shared during these sessions. All interviews were anticipated to last no more than thirty minutes. All interviews were later transcribed using exact language for use during data analysis. If at any point in the interview process a participant became upset, they opted out of the study, left, and all information provided to the researcher was destroyed. All

participants, whether they completed the entire interview process or not, were provided with the contact information for their campus counseling center and bullying hot/helpline numbers for additional support if needed. At the end of the interview sessions, the researcher thanked the participants for their time and provided them with either a gift card for the university bookstore or Amazon. Once they exited the room, this ended their participation in the study.

Setting

For this study, the researcher chose one out of the fourteen Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) universities. The decision to use one of the fourteen PASSHE universities was based on convenience sampling of the target population for this study. At the time of the study, the researcher was also serving as a full-time temporary faculty member at the chosen university. Students attending state universities represent a more economically, culturally, and ethnically diverse population (Franklin, 2013; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Additionally, state university students served as a suitable and informative sample for this study because students were from different geographic areas (rural, urban, and suburban) across the state. These location types were useful when analyzing the survey and interview data for frequencies, trends, and themes in the data.

Participants

The sample population for the study was comprised of freshmen students attending one out of the fourteen PASSHE universities in Pennsylvania. Participants for the study were solicited for participation through an in-person appeal by the researcher in those classes where permission was granted by university faculty that responded positively to an email request by the researcher. Prior to any contact with university faculty or students, the researcher received permission to conduct research from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and the selected

PASHHE University site. Since students were not required to provide specific identifying information (such as their name or the name/city of their high school), this provided additional protection their confidentiality during participation in the study.

Face Validity Administration Procedure

Preceding the dissemination of the survey and selection of interview participants the researcher conducted a face validity. For this face validity, the researcher spoke to a selected faculty's night class and asked for volunteers to review and discuss the research questions, survey items, and interview questions for potential changes. Participants who volunteered for the face validity were not part of the formal study and none of the information or data collected during the face validity was used data analysis of this study.

Survey Administration Procedure

The researcher administered the survey in-person, through paper copies of the survey and completed in pencil or pen by participants during selected orientation and introduction university courses. The researcher read the same statement about the study and participation in the study to all classes (see Appendix F). The participant informed consent form was the first page of the disseminated survey packet. Participants reviewed the informed consent form with the researcher prior to completion of the survey. No signatures were collected because the students' consent was implied through their completion of the survey. Participants who decided to self-select for the interview portion of the study provided their name and email address on a separate sheet of paper provided by the researcher. These papers, with participant identifying information, were kept and stored separate from the collected surveys. The researcher placed demographic questions at the beginning of the survey to collect information such as age, gender, geographic location of their high school (rural, urban, or suburban), and size of their high school (small, medium, or large)

that were used in data analysis. During the survey, participants followed the directions provided for how to respond to the given questions. The full survey can be viewed in the Appendix H.

Semi-Structured Interview Administration Procedure

If the survey participants choose to self-select to volunteer for an interview, they returned the provided paper during the survey session with their email address. After all survey sessions were completed, the researcher counted the number of potential participants interested in an interview. Due to an overwhelming response of interested participants for an interview, the researcher placed all participants' papers with their email addresses into a bag. The researcher then randomly selected fifteen participants, in the presence of another person to ensure that the researcher didn't put any papers back into the bag. Once all fifteen papers were pulled, the researcher contacted all interested participants via email (see Appendix I) to inform them of whether they were selected for an interview. The email sent to randomly selected participants included language to set up an interview date, time, and location. All participants were provided the choice of a faculty office or a reserved library study room. All interviews were conducted face-to-face on the university campus in a faculty office with a door that was closed to ensure all shared information was not overheard by other people.

During the interview portion of the study, the researcher reviewed the informed consent document with participants. All interview participants were required to check the "I Understand and Agree" box(es), and to sign and date the form before starting the interview session (See Appendix J). Before starting the interview, the researcher informed participants that they could opt out of the interview at any point and all information would be destroyed. All participants, whether they completed the interview process or not, were provided with the contact information

for their campus counseling center and bullying hot/helpline numbers for additional support if needed.

Next, participants were provided with a pseudonym and limited identifying information was collected such as: their gender, level in school, and geographic location of their high school (rural, urban, or suburban). Participants were provided with a copy of the interview questions for use during the session but were required to leave these questions when they left the interview session.

The interview session began by the researcher reading a summary of the intent of the research and definition of bullying that was used as a reference point during the interview. The researcher then reviewed the interview process, explained approximately how long the interview may last, and allowed the participants to ask any questions regarding the process. The researcher took these steps to help set the tone of the interview and make the participant more comfortable with the researcher. Once the participants seemed at ease, the researcher started the formal interview. If at any point in the interview process a participant became upset, nervous, began to cry, displayed signs of anger, or any other outward signs of distress the researcher reminded the participants that they could opt out of the interview. Before continuing the interview, the researcher asked the participants if they wanted to continue or end the session. The researcher provided all participants with contact information for their campus counseling center as well as other helpline resources to help individuals affected by bullying. At the end the interview, the researcher provided the participants with a gift card for the university bookstore or Amazon, and this ended their participation in the study.

Data Analysis

Following the explanatory sequential method, the researcher analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data separately. Once the analysis for each data set was complete, the researcher interpreted the results through discussion related to the set research questions. Part of this discussion extended outward beyond the actual collected data to include how the qualitative findings explained the findings from the quantitative data collection measures. This third step in data interpretation under the explanatory sequential method connected directly to the researcher's desire to understand the why behind the earlier mentioned decrease in reporting rates from previous research.

When the researcher analyzed the data to answer the posed research questions, she reviewed the data in four distinct categories: 1) student identified factors that impede reporting, 2) the impact the type of bullying had on reporting, 3) the influence of the student's relationship with the bully had on reporting, and 4) the impact the lack of trust in teachers had on reporting.

All data from the survey was analyzed using SPSS software. Within the survey, some questions required participants to use a Likert-rating scale. The scoring for these items was based upon the provided number. Each response item for these questions received a numerical score ranging from one to five, with a "one" being the lowest or least favorable answer choice and a "five" being the highest or most favorable response. Similarly, there were other questions where participants had to respond with a "yes," "maybe," or "no" and a scale of one to three was used for these items. For these questions, "yes" responses were coded with a "three" as the most favorable response and a "no" response was coded as a "one" score. By using the SPSS software, the researcher was able to determine frequencies and construct descriptive statistics to identify a mean score for various survey items. In addition, frequency statistics were used to analyze the

demographic information relating to the participants gender, size of their school based on graduating class (small, medium, or large), and location of their high school (rural, urban, or suburban). Through SPSS, the researcher was able to run additional statistical tests, to analyze the data related to research questions two, three, and four. This was done to determine if results for these questions were statistically significant. For research question two, the researcher conducted a one-way ANOVA. A paired-samples t-test was used to answer research question three and two independent-samples t-tests were run to analyze the data for research question four.

The researcher used Microsoft Word to transcribe the audio recorded interviews. This allowed the researcher to organize the interview transcripts and highlight key words and phrases. Next, the researcher developed categories for coding purposes. After coding by hand, the researcher tabulated the responses by frequency. Further analysis of the interview statements were used to identify emerging themes pertaining to factors that impeded the participants' decision(s) for whether to report bullying. Specifically, the researcher used significant statements, meaning units, and essence descriptions during the qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2013, 2014; Moustakas, 1994).

Limitations

The intent of this study was to elicit the self-reported memories of college freshmen relating to their knowledge concerning bullying incidents that occurred during high school and the factors that impeded their decision of whether to report the bullying. The following limitations existed for this study:

1. The results of the data in the study were limited by the responding students' high school of attendance even though they all attended the same university. This was due

- to the variance in school adopted Anti-bullying programs and set bullying policies and procedures.
2. The results of the data in the study were limited by the responding students' accuracy in memory recall from their high school experiences.

Summary

The central purpose of this study was to elicit the self-reported memories of college freshmen relating to their knowledge concerning bullying incidents that occurred during high school. These memories were then analyzed to identify the factors that impeded their decision of whether to report bullying. This mixed methods research study collected survey and interview data from college students who self-selected to participate during an in-person request within selected orientation and introduction courses in the 2019 spring semester. After all surveys and interviews were complete, the researcher analyzed the survey data through different analysis tests with SPSS and hand coded the interview data for emerging themes to answer the research questions.

This study is significant for schools because it may provide them insight(s) to understand the factors that impede a student's decision of whether to report an incidence of bullying. Today many researchers consider bullying to be one, if not the most prevalent type(s) of school violence being reported (Blosnich & Bossarte, 2011; Brown et al., 2011; Karna et al., 2011; Pearce, Cross, Monks, Waters, & Falconer, 2011; Scholte, Sentse, & Granic, 2010; Swearer & Espelage, 2011). It is critical for school administrators and teachers to address bullying because it is a continual dilemma and barrier to education for students. School administrators must address the seriousness of bullying by developing interventions, refining policies on bullying, and delivering appropriate consequences for bullying (Beale & Hall, 2007). School administrators and teachers

need to educate students concerning healthier and more acceptable ways to deal with bullying as well as other social issues with peers (Mason, 2008). The resulting data from this study may provide school administrators with the information needed to make positive changes.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA AND ANALYSIS

"Information is just bits of data. Knowledge is putting them together. Wisdom is transcending them." Ram Dass

This chapter presents results from the survey and interview responses, along with the resulting themes used for the analysis of the data. The intent of this research was to elicit the self-reported memories of college freshmen relating to their personal experiences of bullying during high school and the factors that impeded their decision of whether to report the bullying. This mixed methods study gathered data from college freshmen students through the completion of survey response items and optional interviews with the researcher during the beginning of the 2019 spring semester.

This chapter contains the results of the explanatory sequential mixed-method design used in this study. The first phase of data collection was participant completion of a twenty-question survey (N = 272). The survey included questions relating to demographics, multiple-choice questions, Likert-scale items, and checklist items. During the second phase, the semi-structured interviews were completed with participants (N = 15), who indicated an interest at the time of survey completion. Due to an overwhelming number of interested survey participants (N = 102), the researcher used random selection, as outlined in the methodology procedure, to select the participants for the interviews. All data were collected from college freshmen currently enrolled in one of the fourteen state universities in Pennsylvania. The following research questions were answered through the collected data:

1. What factors do college freshmen recall as having impeded their willingness to report incidents of bullying in high school?

2. Does the type of bullying have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?
3. Does the student's relationship with the bully have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?
4. Does a lack of trust in teachers and other school personnel have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?

The researcher was able to further explore the reason(s) behind the numerical data by using this mixed-methods approach. After a successful face validity, the researcher followed the explanatory sequential mixed-method design for the study. This method provided two sets of data leading to an in-depth understanding of quantitative results (Creswell, 2014) related to explaining a phenomenon. The researcher analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data separately but presented the findings of the data sets together as they relate to each research question.

Survey

To attain answers aligned with the set research questions, the researcher designed her own survey. The created survey was based on current literature, research, and components from three major surveys in the field of research surrounding bullying: Bauman, Rigby, and Hoppa's (2008), the Handling Bullying Questionnaire, the Bully Survey – Student Version BYS-S (Swearer & Carey, 2003; Swearer et al., 2008), and the Student School Survey (The Colorado Trust, 2007). The researcher gained permission to use information from these questionnaires from the authors (see Appendix B-D).

The survey consisted of twenty questions across five different sections. Section A consisted of multiple-choice items designed to collect demographic information from the

participants related to gender, current year in college (freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior), size of high school (based on graduation class size), and location of high school (rural, urban, or suburban). The four other sections directly aligned to the research questions. Section B asked participants questions relating to reporting bullying during high school. The first question in this section directly asked participants whether they ever reported bullying during high school. If they answered “No” to this question, they were directed to skip to question eight. Those that answered “Yes,” continued to review and respond to additional questions about what and why they reported the incident. Section C asked participants questions connected to the reporting of different types of bullying while section D asked questions pertaining to the relationships with the bully and reporting. The final section, E, asked participants about teachers and reporting. All of these sections (B to E) consisted of multiple-choice questions, Likert-scale items, and checklist items.

Interview

The qualitative research method of interviewing was used during the second phase to gather the participants’ reflective accounts of known bullying events during high school. The researcher conducted fifteen total interviews, five males and ten females, during February 2019 and used random selection when selecting the participants due to an overwhelming response of 102 students that expressed an interest after completion of the survey. The semi-structured interview contained twenty-one total questions directed towards the research questions with an additional section that asked some demographic information to assist in data analysis. The researcher designed the questions to gather more in-depth data than what would be collected from using the survey alone. Prior to the start of the interview sessions, each participant was assigned pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. Participants were given the options of a

university library study room or a faculty office for their interview opportunity with the researcher. Both location options provided privacy and the ability to have a closed door so no one else could hear the participants' responses. All fifteen participants chose a faculty office as the location for their interview. During the interviews, participants could elaborate on their knowledge concerning bullying incidents, as well as the different factors that impeded their decision(s) of whether to report bullying during high school. Each participant's responses were categorized based on similarities to responses from other participants until patterns were identified throughout the established categories. These fifteen interviews allowed the researcher to have ample information for data analysis (Guest et al., 2006; Hagaman & Wuitch, 2017).

Demographic Data of Sample

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of All Participants (N = 272)

Characteristic	N	%
Respondent's Gender		
Male	48	17.6
Female	224	82.4
Current Year in College		
Freshman	206	75.7
Sophomore	43	15.8
Junior	14	5.1
Senior	9	3.3
Size of High School ^a		
Small (less than 250 students)	122	44.9
Medium (250-500 students)	102	37.5
Large (over 500 students)	48	17.6
Location of High School		
Rural	134	49.3
Urban	37	13.6
Suburban	101	37.1

^aSize of high school data is based on the number of students in the graduating class, not total school enrollment.

The sample for the quantitative portion of this study was comprised of students enrolled in seven introductory courses from one of the fourteen Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Universities. The survey was distributed during the beginning of the spring 2019 semester to 272 students across seven different university courses identified to have high rates of freshmen students enrolled (Table 3). All students returned the survey for a 100% return rate. Out of the 272 returned surveys, six were not fully completed and sixty were identified as sophomores, juniors, or seniors at the university. Therefore, only 206 survey responses were used during data analysis of this study.

Demographic Data of Survey Participants

Considering the construct of this study, college freshmen students served as an adequate sample for data collection and analysis. Therefore, a filter was applied to the data set so that only participants who identified themselves as freshmen were included in the data analysis. Once the filter was applied, there were 206 participants used for data analysis (Table 4). All 206 freshmen students completed the 20-question survey.

Table 4

Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants (N = 206)

Characteristic	N	%
Respondent's Gender		
Male	39	18.9
Female	167	81.1
Size of High School ^a		
Small (less than 250 students)	92	44.7
Medium (250-500 students)	83	40.3
Large (over 500 students)	31	15.0
Location of High School		
Rural	106	51.5
Urban	32	15.5
Suburban	68	33.0

^aSize of high school data is based on the number of students in the graduating class, not total school enrollment.

Based on an analysis of the data, the researcher found that out of the 206 survey participants, 81.1% were female (n=167) and 18.9% were male (n=39). Out of the 206 participants surveyed, 44.7% (n=92) classified their high school as small, which denoted a total of less than 250 students in their graduating class. The second highest classification, noted by 40.3% participants (n=83), was medium high schools. This category included high schools which had between 250 to 500 graduating students. Finally, 15% of the participants (n=31) classified their high school as large. This category included high school which had over 500 students in their graduating class. The last demographic question required participants to classify the type of location their high school was located and a majority of the participants, 51.5% (n=106), classified their high school as being located in a rural area. The second highest classification, at 33% (n=68), was a suburban area. Finally, 15.5% of participants (n=32) identified their school as being located in an urban area.

Demographic Data of Interview Participants

Table 5

Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants (N = 15)

Characteristic	N	%
Respondent's Gender		
Male	5	33.33
Female	10	66.67
Current Year in College		
Freshman	15	100
Size of High School ^a		
Small (less than 250 students)	5	33.33
Medium (250-500 students)	7	46.67
Large (over 500 students)	3	20.00
Location of High School		
Rural	8	53.33
Urban	3	20.00
Suburban	4	26.67

^aSize of high school data is based on the number of students in the graduating class, not total school enrollment.

A total of fifteen freshmen students were interviewed (Table 5). There were five male and ten female participants. Five participants identified their high school as small (less than 250 graduating students per class), seven were from medium size high schools (250-500 graduating students per class), and the other three participants attended a large high school (over 500 graduating students per class). When asked about the location of their high schools, eight identified their high school as rural, three said their high school was urban, and five stated that their high school was in a suburban area.

Research Question One

The first research question in this study, “What factors do college freshmen recall as having impeded their willingness to report incidents of bullying in high school,” is much broader in design than the rest of the questions. This was done so participants could recall all of the

factors that impeded their willingness to report bullying to the school. Within the survey, participants were provided several options to select from, as well as the ability to select ‘other’ and type in their response(s). During the interviews, participants could elaborate and explain the various reasons for why they did or did not report bullying to the school.

Prior to participants answering specific questions pertaining to factors that impeded their decision, the first section of the survey contained questions to gather background information. The collected background information was useful in the analysis of data. Participants were asked if they ever reported bullying, the method used to report the event, and the type(s) of bullying that were involved in the reported bullying event.

Quantitative Results

Table 6

Reporting of Bullying During High School (N = 206)

Characteristic	Yes	No	Total
Respondent's Gender			
Male	13	26	39
Female	57	110	167
Total	70	136	206
Size of High School ^a			
Small (less than 250 students)	30	62	92
Medium (250-500 students)	27	56	83
Large (over 500 students)	13	18	31
Total	70	136	206
Location of High School			
Rural	43	63	106
Urban	13	19	32
Suburban	14	54	68
Total	70	136	206

^aSize of high school data is based on the number of students in the graduating class, not total school enrollment.

When participants were asked on the survey if they had ever reported an instance of bullying during high school, 66.02% (n=136) responded “No” and the other 33.98% (n=70) responded “Yes.” When these data were then filtered by the size of the high school, participants who attended small (less than 250 total students) high schools and medium (250-500 students) high schools had similar distributions where 32.6% (n=30) of participants in a small school and 32.5% (n=27) of students in a medium school reported an instance of bullying. However, 41.9% (n=13) of participants who attended a large (over 500 students) high school reported an instance of bullying. Finally, when this data set was filtered by location (rural, urban, or suburban), participants who attended rural and urban high schools had similar distributions where 40.5% (n=43) of rural and 40.6% (n=13) of urban participants reported an instance of bullying. Only 20.5% (n=14) of participants in suburban schools reported bullying to the school (Table 6).

Table 7

Method for Reporting Bullying (N = 70)

Reporting Method	Frequency	%
Spoke to a Teacher	54	77.14
Placed note in “Bully Box”	5	7.14
Other ^a	11	15.72

Note. Two other methods of reporting were provided (called a national hotline and anonymous reporting system: by phone, text, or online), but zero participants chose either of these options.

^a*Students who chose “other” provided responses that included principal, vice-principal, coach, security, or parent.*

Among those that reported being bullied, data indicates that 77.14% of the participants who reported bullying (as indicated on the previous question) did so by directly speaking to a teacher. 15.72% of the participants chose “other” as their reporting method (Table 7).

Participants who chose this category, indicated that they spoke to a Vice-Principal or Principal, a school security guard, coach, or parent as their means of reporting a bullying event. Only 7.14% of the participants utilized the school's "bully box" to report an incident and zero participants utilized an anonymous reporting method (phone, text, or online) provided by the school or even through a national bullying hotline.

Table 8

Types of Bullying Involved in Reported Events

Type of Bullying	Frequency	%
Direct Bullying	47	38.52
Indirect Bullying	45	36.89
Cyberbullying	30	24.59

Note. Participants (n=70) could select all the types of bullying applicable to the event they reported to the school.

Of those participants who submitted reports of bullying to their school, they were asked to classify the type(s) of bullying they reported. Participants could select more than one type of bullying when answering this question. As indicated in table eight above, together direct and indirect bullying account for approximately 75% of the reported bullying events in a school. More specifically, 38.52% (n=47) of the participants selected direct bullying, involving repeated physical and verbal attacks of a victim. Similarly, 36.89% (n=45) participants selected indirect bullying, which involved spreading lies and rumors without direct contact that may damage a student's reputation or social standing. Cyberbullying was the third type of bullying included as a response item for this question and 24.59% (n=30) of the participants selected this as the type of bullying experienced and/or witnessed in their report to the school. Since participants could

select more than one type of bullying they reported to the school, some of the reported events may have included multiple forms of bullying.

Table 9

Crosstabulation of Types of Bullying Reported to the School

Characteristic	Direct Bullying	Indirect Bullying	Cyberbullying
Respondent's Gender			
Male	10	5	2
Female	37	40	28
Total	47	45	30
Size of High School ^a			
Small (less than 250 students)	19	23	16
Medium (250-500 students)	21	13	9
Large (over 500 students)	7	9	5
Total	47	45	30
Location of High School			
Rural	26	28	16
Urban	11	8	6
Suburban	10	9	8
Total	47	45	30

^aSize of high school data is based on the number of students in the graduating class, not total school enrollment.

When this data was filtered by participant gender, 58.82% (n=10) of male participants reported direct bullying more often than indirect or cyberbullying. 29.41% (n=5) of male participants identified indirect bullying and 11.76% (n=2) of male participants identified cyberbullying as the type(s) of bullying they reported to the school (Table 9). The data for female participants across the three types of bullying had a similar distribution with 38.10% (n=40) reporting indirect bullying, 35.24% (n=37) reporting direct bullying, and 26.67% (n=28) reporting cyberbullying.

Next, when this data was filtered by participant gender, size of the school, participants attending both small and large schools indicated indirect bullying as the type that occurred most frequently during school. Direct bullying was noted as the second most frequent with cyberbullying selected as the least often reported type of bullying. However, participants who attended medium sized schools indicated direct bullying as the most common type of bullying, with indirect and cyberbullying noted as second and third.

Finally, when this data set was filtered by the location, participants who attended both urban and suburban schools had a similar distribution pattern. For these schools direct bullying was most frequently involved in reported events. This was followed by indirect bullying and cyberbullying. However, participants who attended rural schools indicated that indirect bullying was the most commonly involved in reported events. Direct bullying was second with cyberbullying as least common type of bullying in reported events.

Table 10

Factors Inhibiting the Reporting of Bullying

Factor	Frequency
I only heard about it, but never witnessed it	88
I didn't believe it was any of my business	63
Nothing was done when others reported bullying to teacher or school staff	60
I never experienced or witnessed bullying during high school	48
Teasing is a normal part of high school life	40
Fear of retaliation	38
Nothing I reported the bullying	32
Everyone knew, so I figured someone else would report it	24
I didn't know the victim	22
The bully was a friend of mine	15
I didn't know how to file a report	12
Other	9

Note. Participants (n=206) could “select all” the factors that inhibited them from reporting bullying to the school.

For the next question, participants (n=206) were able to select all factors that inhibited them from reporting an instance of bullying to their school. This resulted in 451 total responses to this question (Table 10). The most frequent factor selected by 19.51% (n=88) of participants was, “I only heard about it, but never witnessed it.” The second most common factor, selected by 13.97% (n=63) of participants was, “I didn’t believe it was any of my business.” The third most common factor, selected by 13.30% (n=60) of participants was, “Nothing was done when others reported bullying to teachers or school staff.” Interestingly, 10.64% (n=48) of participants indicated that the reason they didn’t report bullying was, “I never experienced or witnessed bullying during high school.” Additionally, 8.87% (n=40) of participants noted that they felt “Teasing is a normal part of high school life” as a reason for why they didn’t report bullying. 8.43% (n=38) of participants selected “Fear of retaliation,” 5.32% (n=24) of participants indicated, “Everyone knew, so I figured someone else would report it,” and 4.88% (n=22) of participants chose “I didn’t know the victim” as other factors that inhibited them from reporting bullying to the school. 3.33% (n=15) of the participants chose, “The bully was a friend of mine” as a reason to not report and 2.66% (n=12) of the participants noted that they “Didn’t know how to file a report.” Finally, 2% (n=9) of the participants chose the category of “Other” and wrote additional factors that inhibited their ability to file a report with the school. Some of these reasons were, “What I knew, I didn’t personally consider bullying,” “I told the person directly to stop instead of reporting to the school,” “I stopped reporting it because nothing was ever done by the school to intervene,” “I was attacked physically when I tried to report the social bullying,” “I was a peer mediator,” and “Getting other students to stand up to the bully was more effective than going to a teacher for help.”

Table 11

Top Rated Factor Inhibiting the Reporting of Bullying

Factor	Frequency	%
I only heard about it, but never witnessed it	40	19.4
I never experienced or witnessed bullying during high school	38	18.4
Nothing was done when others reported bullying to teacher or school staff	36	17.5
Nothing I reported the bullying	27	13.1
I didn't believe it was any of my business	22	10.7
Fear of retaliation	16	7.8
Teasing is a normal part of high school life	11	5.3
Everyone knew, so I figured someone else would report it	4	1.9
Other	4	1.9
The bully was a friend of mine	3	1.5
I didn't know how to file a report	3	1.5
I didn't know the victim	2	1.0

Note. Participants (n=206) could only select one response.

For this question, participants were provided with the same factors from the previous question but were asked to select their top factor that inhibited their decision to report bullying to the school (Table 11). The most frequently selected factor by 19.42% (n=40) of the participants was, "I only heard about it, but never witnessed it." The second highest factor selected by 18.4% (n=38) of participants was, "I never experienced or witnessed bullying during high school." The third most frequently selected factor by 17.5% (n=36) of participants was, "Nothing was done when others reported bullying to teachers or school staff." Three other notable factors were "I didn't believe it was any of my business" (selected by 10.7% of participants), "Fear of retaliation" (selected by 7.8% of participants), and "Teasing is a normal part of high school life" (selected by 5.3% of participants). The other five listed factors, although they were noted as participants primary reason for whether or not to report bullying, together accounted for less than 8% of the survey participants.

Table 12

Chi-Square Test of Gender and Teasing

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.962 ^a	1	.047
Likelihood Ratio	3.627	1	.057
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.943	1	.047
N of Valid Cases	206		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.57.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Further exploration of these data related to gender, size of high school, and location of high school was conducted for potential significance. Out of this analysis the only area that showed a significant association was gender. A chi-square test of independence was conducted between gender and the top factors that impede the reporting of bullying (Table 12). All expected cell frequencies were greater than five. There was a statistically significant association between gender and the factor of ‘teasing is a normal part of high school’, $\chi^2(1) = 3.962$, $p < .05$. The association was small (Cohen, 1988), Cramer’s $V = .139$.

Table 13

Crosstabulation of Gender and Teasing

			Teasing is Normal	
			Yes	No
Sex	Males	Count	12	27
		% within	30.8%	69.2%
		Adjusted Residual	2.0	-2.0
	Females	Count	28	139
		% within	16.8%	83.2%
		Adjusted Residual	-2.0	2.0
Total	Count		40	166
	% within		19.4%	80.6%

When reviewing the chi-square data more closely, there is a significant difference related to gender and the factor of “teasing is a normal part of high school”. 30.8% of male participants, more frequently indicated that teasing is a normal part of high school, as their top factor impeding their decision for whether to report a bullying event whereas, only 16.8% of female participants indicated this as their top factor (Table 13).

Qualitative Results

In relation to research question one, interview participants were asked to “Describe the bullying instances that you were aware of that took place in your school?”

Table 14

Types of Bullying Events that Occurred in School

Types	N Count	Associated Quotations
Indirect	10	<p>“Oh yeah, there was definitely bullying that went on in our school. Girls were bullying each other by calling names and poking fun.” (1)</p> <p>“Rarely, did students get involved in the typical bullying, like fights and stuff. The things that would occur in school would be more indirect or verbal bullying. I know a few instances; were it was interesting because most of bullying came from the girls and the girls would be upset over a boy or friends or something like that. It was hard to report because with verbal bullying there was no real proof to be like ‘that’s what she said’ and this is how the other person was feeling. It wasn’t easy to identify if it was happening.” (3)</p> <p>“So, some of the kids that were lower income would get picked on a lot more. Also, anyone that was new to the school they got picked on. Really anyone that was not part of a big group would get picked on. Like my friends were part of a small friend group and we would get picked on by others, almost daily.” (6)</p> <p>“There was a lot of verbal bullying that took place in my school and caused people to not want to go to school.” (8)</p>
Direct	6	<p>“I know that some students would kind of push others throughout the day to just kind of annoy them as much as they could. The typical kind of bullying stuff.” (2)</p> <p>“Um, there were a couple times when physical bullying occurred. I remember an incident where two kids got into a physical fight in the school. I can’t remember how it got started, who reported it, but I know that they did get into any trouble or suspended. I don’t feel like the rules were followed in my school. I felt more like a social hierarchy. Where if you were popular, then you never got into trouble or received a disciplinary measure for your actions.” (5)</p>
Cyber	2	<p>“I never saw anything physically happen at my school, like no physical bullying instances, but there were a lot of instances with online bullying” (12)</p> <p>“I would hear people talk about things they heard or read online about someone in the school that was very mean and cruel, but nothing ever happened to help the victim by other students or the school.” (15)</p>

A majority of the students (n=10) shared stories that involved indirect bullying, six participants described events with direct bullying, and cyberbullying was mentioned within two of the stories, but discussed as an extension of the indirect bullying occurring the school rather

than a separate occurrence (Table 14). These data vary slightly from the data presented from the survey, where direct bullying was a slightly higher occurring form of bullying over indirect methods. However, interview participants noted an awareness of more bullying events that involved indirect bullying methods, such as rumors, name calling, and poking fun at others from small groups or students that were new to the school.

Next, participants were asked if they ever reported any bullying instances to the school whether they were directly or indirectly involved. Eleven participants indicated that they did not report any bullying events to the school and four participants did submit a report. Three out of the four participants who reported bullying to the school were female.

Table 15

Reporting of Bullying and Resulting Themes

Reported Bullying	N Count	Associated Quotations	Resulting Themes
Yes	4	“I reported it because I felt terrified.” (7)	
		“Yeah, I told the counselor because I could tell it was affecting the person that was bullied and it wasn’t quite right that the bully was going to get away with it.” (10)	Safety
No	11	“Yes, I reported it because I physically saw it happening and it was a group of my friends, so I felt like it was the right thing to do because they couldn’t stand up for themselves.” (11)	Morality
		“I didn’t report it to a teacher because they never did anything, so instead I said something directly to the person.” (2)	School Nonaction
		“People are scared to report stuff. I personally didn’t want to get involved because nothing ever gets done about it.” (3)	
		“I just felt like it wasn’t my place to say anything because I didn’t feel like I really knew how the people involved felt or any of the precursors to what was going on.” (7)	Lack of Information
		“No. I was afraid of if people knew that I was the person that said anything. It never felt comfortable to go and talk with someone and even if I did, I felt like everyone would know and I would be targeted.” (12)	Fear
		“I didn’t typically report stuff in high school because there were threats made. A lot of threats.” (14)	

The researcher identified five themes during the analysis of the information shared by interview participants (Table 15). Of those participants who reported the bullying, they noted reasons that connected back to safety and morality. Participants discussed worry and concern for the safety of the victim(s). When they discussed safety, all participants’ statements included physical safety. However, comments related to emotional and mental safety were also mentioned within their explanations. The other theme of morality emerged from the participants discussions for why they reported the event. Participants noted that what the bullying was doing was not

right and should not be allowed. It was also noted by one participant that “when you see someone that cannot protect or stand up for themselves, it is the right thing to do to stand up for them and give them a voice for help.”

When the researcher analyzed the data for participants who did not report bullying, the themes of school nonaction (teacher, staff, and administration), fear, and lack of information were identified as factors that affected their decision of reporting the bullying. Interestingly, these themes connected and supported the resulting data from the survey. During the survey participants had to choose their top factor that impeded their reporting of bullying to the school. The top factor chosen by 19.4% of survey participants was “I only heard about it, but never witnessed it,” which connects to the interview theme of lack of information. Those interview participants who mentioned a lack of information, felt that they did not know enough about the bullying event because they did not directly witness the event. Therefore, they did not feel that it was their place to report the bullying to the school. The participants discussion about school nonaction when they were made aware of a bullying event connects to the data found within the survey portion of the study. “Nothing was done when others reported bullying to teacher or school staff,” was the third most frequently chosen factor indicated, by 17.1% of all survey participants, as the reason they did not report bullying. The final theme that emerged in this section of the interview was “Fear.” This also connected back to the survey, where 7.8% of the survey participants chose “Fear of retaliation” as their top factor that impeded their decision to report the bullying. Interview participants noted that they were not only afraid of becoming the bully’s next target, but they were also afraid of how their other peers would react. Some interview participants noted that in their school rumors and news spread quickly and people who did report something would be called ‘tattle tales’ and ‘snitches’ by their peers and even friends.

So, beyond fear of the bully, they didn't want to be ostracized by other peers for reporting something to a teacher or the school.

As a follow-up question, participants were asked what other factors may have affected their peers from reporting bullying to the school. Many of the participants reiterated comments from their previous statement concerning submission of reports for bullying events they knew of in the school. The most frequent responses were "nothing is done by the school" (n=13), "the people getting bullied are scared" (n=12), "everyone will know that they said something and it could come back on them" (n=10), and "I didn't want to get involved" (n=8).

Table 16

Understanding the School's Bullying Policy and Reporting

Affects Reporting	N Count	Associated Quotations	Resulting Themes
Yes	9 (60%)	<p>"I do think so because I feel like a lot of students don't know how to report bullying." (3)</p> <p>"I think it would make a difference, in a way, if they stressed it a little more, but it was never stressed until something occurred, or the teachers got involved." (8)</p> <p>"Absolutely! Because I think, it is not really taught as much. When I was in school it really wasn't addressed. Like, I think the school should teach how to understand what is bullying, what you can do, how to stop it, actions that can help, and even just giving a definition in common terms. I think that would help tremendously." (12)</p> <p>"I would say yes because I mean as students, if you ask anyone from my school, they would tell you that they knew it wouldn't get taken care of because our school counselor didn't take it seriously and it would get pushed to the side." (6)</p> <p>"If we knew more about how the school defined bullying and the policy for how to deal with it, that would be very helpful for students to know what they can and should do." (15)</p>	<p>School Nonaction</p> <p>Lack of Education</p>
No	6 (40%)	<p>"Um, no. I don't think that not knowing the definition or policy really affected the students' decision because either way some students will still report it and others still may not because they feel uncomfortable with if it ever got back to the bully." (4)</p> <p>"In my opinion even if the school has a definition and policy in place it wouldn't matter to those students who are bullied and feel alone." (11)</p>	<p>Morality</p> <p>Fear</p> <p>Helpless</p>

The final three questions in this section of the semi-structured interview related to participants recalling their high school's definition of bullying, the bullying policy, and whether knowing and understanding the definition and policy would affect a student's decision for whether to report bullying to the school. Out of the fifteen participants, zero could provide their school's definition of bullying or the policy. Although none of the participants could recall their

school's bullying policy, six of them did indicate an awareness that their school had a policy, but they were unsure what it exactly was. One participant stated, "I think it was something like, zero tolerance," and a second participant said, "I remember something about if you see something, say something, but I am not sure what that had to do with actually reporting a bullying event to the school."

When participants were asked if students knew and understood the school's definition and bullying policy and whether they thought it would affect a student's decision to report bullying, 60% said "Yes" and 40% said "No" (Table 16). Of those participants who stated knowing the policy would affect students' decisions for reporting bullying, the resulting themes from their statements were School Nonaction and Lack of Education. A majority of participants noted a need for more education about the school's definition and bullying policy beyond a whole school assembly. Participants recommended that schools should provide education for students and teachers in the following areas "defining and identifying bullying," "Providing guidance for how to stop bullying," and "Explaining, reminding, and posting information on how to file a report." Within the participants' discussions for teacher and school lack of action, several of their descriptions were related to once a teacher or the school was made aware of an incident through a report rather than from direct observation of bullying. These participants noted that, for the most part, teachers would listen to the students but didn't take that report to the administrator, or if they did, nothing further was done at the next level. Only one participant discussed the overall lack of awareness and action teachers and other school staff portrayed. Specifically, they stated, "Most of my teachers in school knew bullying and teasing was happening in the halls and classrooms but ignored it. I honestly can't think of any teacher that actually stepped in and did something to stop it without a student coming to them for help."

The researcher uncovered three themes after analyzing the statement for those interview participants who stated that knowing the school's definition and policy concerning bullying would not make a difference in reporting. These themes were Morality, Fear, and Helpless. Four participants noted that whether or not students know the policy, they will still report bullying because it is what is right to do when you know someone needs help. Within three participants' statements, the theme of Fear emerged. These participants noted, that even if schools increase awareness and understanding of the policy, there will still be students that are worried about retaliation from the bully towards them or getting ostracized by other peers. In particular, one participant stated, "...being liked and included by your peers is a powerful thing that you don't want to lose. So, I can see that for some students the risk associated with reporting and losing favor with their friends is too great to take a chance on." Two participants discussed the idea that victims may feel alone and helpless, even if they knew and understood the school's policy. Therefore, increasing the awareness of the policy may not affect their decision to report the event if the victims don't feel supported or that their voice will be heard if they do submit a report.

Research Question Two

Starting with research question two, the researcher decided to construct the remaining research questions with a narrower focus. This was done with two purposes. First, the factors embedded in these questions were identified in past research as potential factors and recommended additional research. Second, providing more specific and direct questions, required the participants to discuss their past experiences with reporting bullying in a different manner which could lead to identification of other factors that affect their decision to report bullying to the school. So, the researcher designed question two to investigate, "How does the

form of bullying or uncertainty about bullying have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report incidents?”

Quantitative Results

To answer research question two, the researcher conducted frequency tests and a one-way ANOVA to analyze the data to determine whether the results were statistically significant.

Table 17

Forms of Bullying by Participant Characteristics

Characteristic	Direct		Indirect		Cyber	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Respondent's Gender						
Male	29	10	33	6	28	11
Female	92	75	157	10	129	38
Total	121	85	190	16	157	49
Size of High School ^a						
Small (less than 250 students)	51	41	88	4	65	27
Medium (250-500 students)	51	32	76	7	66	17
Large (over 500 students)	19	12	26	5	26	5
Total	121	85	190	16	157	49
Location of High School						
Rural	66	40	102	4	80	26
Urban	25	7	30	2	25	7
Suburban	30	38	58	10	52	16
Total	121	85	190	16	157	49

^aSize of high school data is based on the number of students in the graduating class, not total school enrollment.

All 206 freshmen participants completed this question and could select multiple forms of bullying that occurred in their high school. An analysis of these data indicated that 40.60% (n=190) of the participants identified that indirect bullying is occurring most frequently in their schools (Table 17). Cyberbullying was identified as the second highest form of bullying occurring in schools at 33.55% (n=157) and direct bullying was identified as the least common to

occur in the schools by 25.85% (n=121) of the participants. When these data were separately filtered by gender, high school size, and location of high school, the distribution of the data was similar to the report above showing indirect bullying as the most frequently occurring type of bullying over cyber and direct bullying.

Table 18

Likelihood of Reporting Bullying by Type

	Definitely	Probably	Unsure	Probably Not	Definitely Not
Direct					
Count	69	81	30	22	4
%	33.5	39.3	14.6	10.7	1.9
Indirect					
Count	23	46	64	63	10
%	11.2	22.3	31.1	30.6	4.9
Cyber					
Count	25	53	59	55	14
%	12.1	25.7	28.6	26.7	6.8

72.8% of all participants responded that they would definitely or probably report direct bullying to their school (Table 18). Whereas only 33.5% of all participants would definitely or probably report indirect bullying and 37.8% would definitely or probably report cyberbullying. When analyzing the overall data for all three types of bullying, both indirect and cyberbullying had a close distribution across Likert scale response choices. For indirect bullying, 31.1% of participants selected “Unsure,” 30.6% selected “Probably Not,” and 22.3% selected “Probably.” Similarly, the data for reporting cyberbullying to the school also had a close distribution across the same three categories as reporting indirect bullying. 28.6% of participants selected “Unsure,” 26.7% selected “Probably Not,” and 25.7% selected “Probably”(see Table 18).

When these data were separately filtered by gender, high school size, and location of high school, the distribution of the data was similar to the report above. Participants, regardless of their gender, size of school, or location of school, most frequently answered “Definitely” or “Probably” for whether they would report direct bullying to the school. The distribution of the data for participant responses in the categories of “Unsure,” “Probably Not,” and “Probably” across each of the applied filters (gender, high school size, and location of high school) was similar to the unfiltered data presented in the table above.

To further analyze the data, a one-way ANOVA was run to determine whether the willingness to report bullying was different depending on the type of bullying involved in the event.

Table 19

ANOVA on Willingness to Report – Direct Bullying

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Between Groups	98.838	2	49.419	41.965	.000
Within Groups	724.262	615	1.78		
Total	823.100	617			

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The types of bullying were classified into three groups: direct (n=206), indirect (n=206), and cyber (n=206). Data was presented as mean \pm standard deviation. The willingness to report score was statistically significantly different between types of bullying, $F(2, 615) = 41.965$, $p < .000$, $\omega^2 = 0.117$. The willingness to report score decreased from direct ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.04$) to cyber ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.13$), and indirect ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.08$) types of bullying, in that order. A Tukey post hoc analysis uncovered that the mean decrease from direct to cyber (.874, 95% CI [.62, 1.13]) was statistically significant ($p = .000$), as well as the decrease from direct to indirect

(.820, 95% CI [.57, 1.107]) was statistically significant ($p = .000$), but no other group differences were statistically significant. Based on the results and analysis of the ANOVA test (Table 19), the type of bullying does indeed have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying instances. These results indicate that participants in this study were statistically more willing to report events involving direct bullying over indirect and cyberbullying instances.

Qualitative Results

Participants were asked two questions for data collection related to research question two. The first question was, “Did you ever report any of these instances that you knew were occurring in the school? Why or why not?”(see Table 20).

Table 20

Reporting of Bullying by Interview Participants

Report Filed	N Count	Associated Quotations	Resulting Themes
No	12	“I didn’t feel comfortable at my school. I mean, my teachers were nice, but nothing you shared with them stayed confidential from other students finding out what you said.” (3)	Safety
		“Honestly, I didn’t want to become the next target of the bullying by getting involved and reporting it to someone.” (11)	Lack of Information
		“Everyone knew everything at my school, so I didn’t feel safe, comfortable, or like I could trust a teacher to say anything. I definitely didn’t want to become a victim because I said something.” (8)	
		“In my opinion, it wasn’t any of my business to share what I heard. I didn’t actually see anything, so I also didn’t feel like I had all of the details.” (7)	Relationships
		“The bullying I was aware of during school didn’t involve anyone I knew, so I felt like it wasn’t my place to say anything.” (15)	School Nonaction
		“I previously did file a report, and nothing changed. The bully kept verbally attacking the victim. So, I didn’t believe that any future reports would have a different outcome.” (5)	

Yes	3	<p>“Yes, I reported it because it got really out of hand and it was affecting the victims’ mental health and well-being. They weren’t coming to school and when they did, they were so distant. It was almost like they were fading away.”</p> <p>“Yes, I did. There was a time were two people I was friends with broke up and stopped dating. Then the boy started dating a different girl, and my friend (the girl) started harassing the new girlfriend verbally to her face and through text messaging. The school did try to intervene but didn’t have enough ‘proof’ to punish her directly. Even though there were text messages, they said they couldn’t prove that she sent them because someone could have taken her phone and sent them to get her into trouble.”</p> <p>“I reported it because I felt terrified. I was concerned for my own safety and didn’t have any friends or teachers that I felt would speak up for me. If something was going to be done, I was going to have to voice it on my own. However, there were other bullying events that occurred in high school that I didn’t report because my school was so small that everyone knew everything and would know if you said something. Even though I was in a situation that was similar, I didn’t want to become a target again by a different bully. So, instead I spoke to the student that was being bullied and told them that they should speak up and say something.”</p>	Safety
			Morality
			Severity

A majority of participants (n=12) noted that they did not report any of the events that they were aware of or heard about during high school (Table 20). The reasons they provided for not reporting the event were “I didn’t think it was any of my business,” “I didn’t want to get involved and become a target,” “I didn’t really know the students that were involved in the bullying event,” “I didn’t feel comfortable and safe at school to submit a report,” and “nothing was ever done when something was reported to the school.” However, three of the participants indicated that they did submit a report to the school.

Next the interview participants were asked, “During high school, if you were going to report an instance of bullying, would the type of bullying (physical, verbal, social, or cyber) have an impact on whether or not you submit a report?” All fifteen participants indicated, in some

way, that they believe direct or physical bullying would and does get reported most frequently because it is easiest to recognize compared to indirect and cyberbullying.

Table 21

Does the Type of Bullying Impact Reporting?

Impact Reporting	N Count	Associated Quotations	Resulting Themes
Yes	12	<p>“Um, yes, I would say that most forms I wouldn’t but if it got physical then I would because you are not only endangering someone mentally, but physical harm could result.” (6)</p> <p>“I definitely think the type of bullying affects reporting. I think if it was more physical that would be my number one reason to report. But if it were verbal, that is almost like an insult, so it is not as pressing of a concern.” (13)</p> <p>“I definitely think if it was physical it would be reported quicker because of the fact that it is something that is immediately happening, rather than when it occurs on social media or someone saying something verbally and everyone ignores it for a minute.” (2)</p> <p>“If you’re having a full brawl in the hallway it [bullying] kind of gets addressed quickly.” (9)</p>	Safety
		<p>“Well, for physical, in my opinion it is much easier to identify, so it gets reported more often. But verbal, social, cyber, those are kind of harder because it is a ‘he said, she said’ type of situation.” (4)</p> <p>“Verbal bullying can simply be that something was taken out of context or cyberbullying could involve a fake account of someone. I don’t believe verbal and cyberbullying aren’t as clear cut always. It makes it harder to realize if it was bullying or if it was just kids joking around.” (7)</p>	Identification
No	3	<p>“No, I don’t think so. No matter what I think students should report it, whether it was physical, verbal, social, or cyber.” (15)</p> <p>“Depending on how bad the bullying was, I would report it. The type of bullying wouldn’t matter to me.” (1)</p> <p>“I would probably step in first, before reporting to the school. The type wouldn’t matter. It would be more about the degree in which they were being bullied.” (8)</p>	<p>Morality</p> <p>Severity</p>

Of the fifteen interview participants, twelve answered “yes,” that the type of bullying would impact their decision for whether or not to report bullying. From an analysis of their responses the theme of safety and identification emerged (Table 21). During their explanations, each of the twelve indicated that if there was any sort of physical safety concerns, they would definitely report the event. Additionally, two of the participants also discussed the need to take care of the victim’s mental safety. Specifically, one participant stated, “Most people worry about a person’s physical safety if they are getting beat up and stuff. However, I think it is also important to speak up for those that are experiencing the verbal bullying because it really can affect their emotions and mental thoughts. I had a friend that started talking about how foggy she felt all the time and just wanted it to stop.” Similarly, of the three participants that answered “no,” that the type of bullying wouldn’t impact their decision to report the event, two of the participants statements included elements related to a third theme of severity. These two participants noted the importance for people (students and teachers) to pay attention to the severity of the bullying. In particular, one participant noted, “Physical bullying is never good no matter how bad it is, it needs to be reported. I think though that teachers and other students need to also be aware of just how bad all the gossip and teasing is both within the school and online. Some of that stuff gets way out of hand and needs to be stopped.” The theme of morality also came up during the analysis of their responses. Participants noted that the type of bullying doesn’t matter because it [bullying] is wrong and therefore should be reported.

Research Question Three

Research question three was designed by the researcher to investigate, “Does the student’s relationship with the bully have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?” To answer this question, the researcher used both frequency tests and

a paired-samples t-test to analyze the quantitative data and supported these findings through a discussion of the found qualitative data themes.

Quantitative Results

Table 22

Likelihood to Intervene

	Definitely	Probably	Unsure	Probably Not	Definitely Not
Bully is unfamiliar	30	44	99	31	2
Count	14.56%	21.36%	48.06%	15.05%	0.97%
%					
Bully is a friend	68	77	45	15	1
Count	33.01	37.37%	21.85%	7.28%	0.49%
%					

A majority of the participants, 48.06% (n=99), responded that they are unsure whether they would intervene in a bullying incident if it involved someone (as the bully) that they didn't know (Table 22). However, 35.92% (n=74) of the participants indicated, "I definitely would," or "I probably would" intervene even if the bully was someone they didn't know. When these data were separately filtered by gender and high school size, the distribution of the data was similar to the report above indicating that a majority of participants were either unsure or responded positively in regard to the likelihood that they would intervene in a bullying incident.

Interestingly, when the filter for the location of the high school was applied, the data for both rural and suburban schools followed the same distribution as noted above. However, the data for urban schools shows a majority of these participants, 37.50%, were "Unsure" and 21.88% indicated "I probably would not." Together these two categories account for 59.38%, which is over half of the participants that attended urban high schools. This means that more than half of

urban high school participants would tend to have a neutral or negative reaction to reporting bullying with an unfamiliar peer as the bully. There was also an identical distribution across two other categories. In these categories, 18.75% of participants selected “I definitely would,” and another 18.75% of participants selected “I probably would.”

Interestingly, when asked if they would intervene if the bully was a friend, a majority of participants, 70.39% (n=145), selected “I definitely would” or “I probably would” report an incidence of bullying if the bully was a friend. The third highest category selected for this survey question was, “I’m unsure, it would depend what happened” by 21.84% (n=45) of participants.

When the filter for gender was applied to this data set, 69.23% of male participants selected “I definitely would” or “I probably would” report an incidence of bullying if the bully was a friend. Female participants had a slightly higher percentage of 70.65%, indicating “I definitely would” or “I probably would” as their response to the likelihood for reporting an incidence of bullying if the bully was a friend. Interestingly 0% of the female participants choose “I definitely would not,” whereas 2.56% of male participants did select this as an option connected to the likelihood for reporting bullying to the school if the bully was a friend.

When the filter of high school size was applied to this data set, similar distributions were seen compared to the unfiltered data in the areas of “I definitely would” and “I probably would,” as the most frequently selected responses to the stated question. 65.22% of participants who attended small high schools responded positively by selected either “I definitely would” and “I probably would.” 72.29% of participants who attended medium high schools and 81.09% of participants who attended large high schools indicated, “I definitely would” and “I probably would.”

Finally, when the filter of high school location (rural, urban, or suburban) was applied to this data set, similar distributions were seen compared to the unfiltered data, in the areas of “I definitely would” and “I probably would,” as the most frequently selected responses to the stated question. 65.10% of participants who attended rural high schools responded positively by selecting either “I definitely would” and “I probably would.” 71.88% of participants who attended urban high schools and 77.94% of participants who attended suburban high schools indicated, “I definitely would” and “I probably would.” Of the 77.94% of participants who attended suburban high schools, 48.53% selected “I probably would” and 29.41% selected “I definitely would.” This varies from the other school locations where almost equal amounts of students chose either “I definitely would” and “I probably would” in response to the stated question.

To further analyze these data, a paired-samples t-test was run to determine whether there was a statistically significant mean difference between the likeliness for a student to intervene in bullying event when the bully was someone they didn’t know versus a friend.

Table 23

Paired-Samples T-Test

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Someone you didn't know – A friend	-.621	1.092	.076	-.771	-.471	-8.167	205	.000

Participants that didn’t know the bully were less likely to intervene ($M = 3.33$, $SD = .952$) as opposed to the participants who were friends with the bully ($M = 3.96$, $SD = .944$), a

statistically significant mean decrease of -0.621, 95% CI [-0.771, -0.471], $t(205) = -8.167$, $p < .001$, $d = -0.57$ (Table 23). Therefore, the relationship a student has with a bully does impact the willingness of high school students to intervene during bullying events. Specifically, participants are more likely to intervene when the bully is a friend compared to someone they don't know.

Qualitative Results

In the third section of the interview, participants were asked if relationships affect the reporting of bullying to the school. Specifically, participants were asked, "Do you believe your personal relationship, or lack thereof, with the bully affected your decision of whether or not to report the event? Why or why not?".

Table 24

Personal Relationships and Reporting Bullying Events

Impact Reporting	N Count	Associated Quotations	Resulting Themes
No	9	<p>“I mean it wouldn’t affect my decision, because if someone is doing something wrong that is hurting someone else, then something needs to be done.” (1)</p> <p>“Everyone is different depending who they are with in that particular moment or situation, but if you have information about another student that is in trouble with a bullying, then it is your duty to report it.” (5)</p> <p>“Not at all. I actually reported a friend of mine because they were harassing this girl and it wasn’t right.” (9)</p> <p>“Absolutely not. I was in a situation where no one stood up for me and I felt awful and very alone. So, I believe it is the responsibility of others to give a voice to victims that can’t or won’t speak up for themselves.” (4)</p> <p>“No, my relationship wouldn’t affect reporting. For me it would be more about how ‘out of hand’ the situation was and how much it was affecting the victim.” (12)</p>	<p>Morality</p> <p>Severity</p>
Yes	6	<p>“I think if you were close with the bullying, you wouldn’t want to lose their friendship.” (10)</p> <p>“I think it does. I think people are less likely to report something if their friend is committing the bullying. I just think some people value regular friendship over their own character and helping someone else that is in trouble.” (2)</p> <p>“I do feel like it would be easier to report an instance of bullying if you were friendly with the person who is doing the bullying because you know more about how they would respond to you reporting the event compared to someone you don’t know.” (7)</p> <p>“When a personal friendship exists, you might hold back information trying to protect your friend, because it is your friend and you want to support them. Even if you know something that is happening is not right or okay, it definitely affects your decision.” (14)</p> <p>“Peer pressure is a real thing and it definitely affects my own personal actions, so I would think this would be the same for others.” (13)</p>	<p>Friendship</p> <p>Peer Pressure</p>

Nine participants indicated that it wouldn't matter to them if the bully was a friend or not. They would still report the event (Table 24). The other six participants stated that the personal relationship with the bully would affect their decision for whether to report the event to the school. From an analysis of the provided responses of those participants who noted that their relationship with the bullying wouldn't affect reporting, the themes of morality and safety emerged. Within these participants' statements, each of them noted that reporting the bullying was the "right thing to do" and "their responsibility" as a good person. Participants also discussed the severity of the bullying as a reason to report the event regardless of their relationship status with the bully. Some statements included the phrases, "it was out of hand", "the student [victim] was fading away," "they [victim] weren't coming to school anymore," and "things were escalating quickly."

Of those participants who noted their relationship, or lack thereof, with the bully would affect their decision to report, an analysis of their statements revealed the themes of friendship and peer pressure. Participants discussed the notion of not wanting to "lose," "damage," or "hurt" their friendship with the bully. One participant stated, "I would also feel very guilty and bad for being the one that reported them and got them into trouble. I mean friends stay true to either through the good and the bad. Right?" When discussing the aspect of peer pressure, participants made comments such as, "it isn't just about the one friend," "others will blame you," "everyone will know and treat you different," and "reporting affects you beyond that one friendship." This demonstrates that for some that there is a systemic effect beyond the one relationship that must be considered before deciding whether to report the event. All participants that responded "Yes" their relationship would affect their decision to report bullying made comments relating to a friendship with the bully. However, four out of six participants did

include within their responses that having a connection with the bully would make it easier to intervene in some way versus not knowing the bully. In particular, these participants made statement such as, “the worst that would happen is they wouldn’t talk to me for a week or so,” “they would be more likely to listen to my reasoning for reporting over someone I didn’t know,” and “at the end of the day, friends are still friends and would never harm you. Whereas, someone who doesn’t know me wouldn’t necessarily care to hear why I submitted a report and may be quicker to hurt me.”

Looking back at the stated research question, “Does the student’s relationship with the bully have an impact on the willingness of high school students to intervene in bullying incidents?”, the examination of these data sets answers the question. The analysis of the data from the interviews, supported the findings from analysis of the survey data. Both sets of data indicated that a student’s relationship with the bully does have an impact on the willingness to report. Overall, when the bully was a friend, participants were more likely to intervene compared to someone they don’t know.

Research Question Four

Research question four asked participants, “Does a lack of trust in teachers and other school personnel have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?” To answer this question, the researcher used an independent sample t-test to analyze the quantitative data and supported these findings through a discussion of the found qualitative data themes.

Quantitative Results

The researcher first created a composite score using the data from the survey question, “If you experienced bullying during high school, did you or would you have confided in a teacher?”.

Next, the researcher ran an independent sample t-test to compare participants who had someone they could confide in or trust (binary) and those who did not.

Table 25

Willingness to Report and Having a Teacher to Confide In

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. 2- tailed	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Willingness to Report	Equal variances assumed	-.021	.885	2.43 7	204	.016	.4588	.17477	.08129	.77048

There were 176 participants who had a school faculty member they could confide in and thirty who did not. Participants who had someone to confide in were more willing to report bullying ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.89$) than those participants that did not have someone to confide in ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.88$). There was homogeneity of variances for willingness to report scores for participants that did and did not have someone to confide in at school, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .885$). The participants', who could confide in a faculty member, mean willingness to report score was 0.46, 95% CI [0.08 to 0.77] higher than the participants', who couldn't confide in a faculty member, mean willingness to report score. There was a statistically significant difference in the mean willingness to report score between those who have someone to confide in and those that do not, $t(204) = 2.437$, $p = .016$ (Table 25). Therefore, those participants who had someone to confide in were more willing to report bullying than those participants who did not have someone to confide in during high school.

Table 26

Willingness to Report and Trust with a Teacher

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. 2- tailed	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Willingness to Report	Equal variances assumed	1.051	.306	.636	204	.525	.13735	.21592	-.28838	.56307

There were 187 participants who had school faculty member they could trust and nineteen who did not. Participants who had someone they trusted in were more willing to report bullying ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.88$) than those participants that did not have someone to trust ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.01$). There was homogeneity of variances for willingness to report scores for participants that did and did not have someone to trust at school, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances ($p = .306$). The participants', who could trust a faculty member, mean willingness to report score was 0.14, 95% CI [-0.29 to 0.56] higher than the participants', who couldn't trust a faculty member, mean willingness to report score. There was no statistically significant difference in the mean willingness to report score between those who have someone to trust and those that do not, $t(204) = .636$, $p = .525$ (Table 26). Overall, those participants who had a faculty member they could confide in or trust were more willing to report bullying than those who did not have a faculty member they could confide in or trust. Therefore, trust or the lack of trust does impact the willingness of high school students to report bullying.

Qualitative Results

Table 27

School Personnel Participants Would Confide in About Bullying

School Personnel	N Count	Associated Quotations	Resulting Themes
Coaches	6	<p>“Definitely my coach because he knows me really well outside of the classroom. He is someone I can talk to about anything without judgement” (8)</p> <p>“Um, I would say my coach. I see them frequently throughout the week and over several years, so I really feel like they know me and care about me.” (1)</p> <p>“One of my coaches. They are always there and would never share what I tell them with any of my teammates. I know I can trust them and that they have my back.” (4)</p> <p>“Hands down my coach! They’ve known me since ninth grade. So, they really know me well. There is a sense of comfort and connection with my coach that I don’t have with any of my teachers. It makes me feel safe and that I can trust them.” (15)</p>	<p>Personal Connection</p>
Guidance Counselor	4	<p>“I always felt comfortable with my guidance counselor. Even though I am one of many on their list, I feel like they really take the time to get to know each kid personally. Also, part of their job is to keep things private, so I felt like I could share private things without it going back to others.” (7)</p> <p>“My counselor was the best! I could always count on them to listen without judgement. I also loved that she remembered things about me. It really added that personal touch.” (14)</p>	<p>Comfort Level</p> <p>Trust</p>
Teachers	3	<p>“My science teacher. I had her for two years and she remembered personal details about me and that made me feel comfortable and welcome. She also took time to speak with students personally before or after class so others wouldn’t hear.” (2)</p> <p>“My Language teacher. He was really funny and down to Earth. He would ask you questions about your life as you entered the room to ‘check-in’ and make sure you were doing okay. Other teachers didn’t do that. I just feel like he is someone that I could trust if I had a problem.” (6)</p>	

Participant responses contained one of three key school personnel: coaches (n=6), guidance counselors (n=4), and teachers (n=3). The other two participants noted they would speak with the school administrator and the school nurse. Even though responses for the school personnel they would confide in varied among participants, all of their answers to the follow-up question asking why they would choose this person was the same. All fifteen participants indicated that they had a personal connection, level of comfort, and established trust with the school staff member they chose (Table 27). If they needed to talk about something personal or private, they knew they could speak openly and freely with this particular school personnel and it would stay confidential.

All interview participants noted that as a result of having a personal connection, feeling comfortable, and knowing they could trust someone made them more willing to share things with their coach, guidance counselor, teacher, or other chosen school personnel. Thus, if a high school student does not have someone to confide in or trust within their school building, they are less likely to submit a report involving bullying. The analysis of the interview data supports the survey data findings and answers the stated research question. Trust, or the lack thereof, does affect a student's willingness to report an incidence of bullying. Additionally, it is important to note that the findings related to research question three and four both connect to the critical role relationships play for high school students related to reporting. Therefore, further exploration around the nature of these relationships with peers, as well as teachers and other school personnel, is important to understand the impact on a student's decision whether to report bullying.

Summary of Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis

Prior to analyzing the data from the survey and interview, the demographic data for the participants was presented. Of the participants that took the survey, 81.07% of participants were female. Similarly, ten of the fifteen interview participants were female. For both the survey and interview, the number of female participants represented a majority of total participants. A review of the size of high schools for the survey participants showed an almost equal number of participants from small (44.66%) and medium (40.29%) sized high schools. Additionally, more than half of the survey participants, 51.46%, attended a rural high school. The distribution across the size of the high school, for interview participants, was close. Almost half (n=7) of the participants attended a medium size high school with between 250-500 graduating students per class. Additionally, more than half of the interview participants (n=8), attended a rural high school, which coincides with the data from the survey related to the location where most participants attended high school.

Research question one asked participants, “What factors do college freshmen recall as having impeded their willingness to report incidents of bullying in high school?” A large percentage of survey participants, 66%, never reported bullying to the school. However, of the 44% that did report bullying, they most often told a teacher about the incident and most incidents involved either direct and/or indirect bullying. The top three reasons that participants identified as affecting their decision to not report bullying were “I only heard about it, but never witnessed it,” “I never experienced or witnessed bullying during high school,” and “Nothing was done when others reported bullying to teachers.” An analysis of the interview data connected with research question one indicated that 60% (n=9) of the participants stated that they were involved in a bullying event during high school. However, 73% (n=11) never reported the event to the

school, which parallels the findings from the survey. Participants stated that they didn't report the event to the school because "nothing is done by the school" (n=13), "everyone will know that they said something and it could come back on them" (n=10), and "I didn't want to get involved" (n=8). Additionally, participants noted that in their opinion other students didn't report bullying because "the people getting bullied are scared" (n=12). All fifteen participants responded, "Yes," when asked if high school students should be encouraged to report instances of bullying to the school. Specifically, 60% of the participants (n=9) noted that students reporting bullying is the only way for something to be done and potentially not only stop it but also prevent it.

Research question two asked participants, "How does the form of bullying or uncertainty about bullying have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report incidents?" When asked on the survey about whether the type of bullying would affect their decision to report the event, the ANOVA indicated that participants were statistically more willing to report events involving direct bullying over indirect and cyberbullying instances. In reviewing the responses connected to the second research question from the interview, 100% (n=15) of participants stated that they don't believe the type of bully affects their decision to report bullying as much as what is actually going on, who is involved, and if they feel like the school will do anything about it. Additionally, 100% (n=15) of participants stated that they believe direct bullying would and does get reported most frequently because it is easiest to recognize compared to indirect and cyberbullying. 66.67% of participants (n=10) shared stories that involved indirect bullying over direct bullying and cyberbullying. 80% of participants (n=12) explained that they did not report any bullying events that they were aware of or heard about during high school. The reasons they provided for not reporting the event(s) were "I didn't think it was any of my business," "I didn't want to get involved and become a target," "I didn't really

know the students that were involved in the bullying event,” “I didn’t feel comfortable and safe at my school to submit a report,” and “nothing was ever done when something was reported to the school.”

Research question three asked participants, “Does the student’s relationship with the bully have an impact on the willingness of high school students to intervene in bullying incidents?” Specifically, when asked on the survey, if they would intervene if the bully was a friend, a majority of participants, 70.39% (n=145), selected “I definitely would” or “I probably would” report an incidence of bullying if the bully was a friend. The third highest category selected for this survey question was “I’m unsure, it would depend what happened” by 21.84% (n=45) of participants. To further analyze these data, a paired-samples t-test was used and demonstrated that participants who were friends with the bully were statistically more likely to intervene compared to a bully who was someone they don’t know. Nine interview participants indicated that it wouldn’t matter to them if the bully was a friend or not. They would still report the event. The other six participants stated that the personal relationship with the bully would affect their decision for whether to report the event to the school. From an analysis of the provided responses of those participants who noted that their relationship with the bullying wouldn’t affect reporting, the themes of morality and safety emerged. Of those participants who noted their relationship, or lack thereof, with the bully would affect their decision to report, an analysis of their statements revealed the themes of Friendship and Peer Pressure. Both sets of data indicate that a student’s relationship with the bully does have an impact on the willingness to report.

Research question four asked participants, “Does a lack of trust in teachers and other school personnel have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying

incidents?” Two independent t-tests were performed with the data from the survey to determine whether students who had a faculty member they could confide in or trust, impacted their willingness to report bullying. The first independent t-test showed a statistically significant difference in the mean willingness to report score between those who have someone to confide in and those that do not. The second t-test showed no statistically significant difference in the mean willingness to report score between those who have someone to trust and those that do not. Overall, those participants who had a faculty member they could confide in or trust were more willing to report bullying than those who did not have a faculty member they could confide in or trust. Therefore, trust or the lack of trust does impact the willingness of high school students to report bullying.

The final section of the survey included questions about the participants’ teachers and bullying events. 67.96% of participants indicated that they believed teachers were aware that bullying was occurring in the school. However, close to half of the participants, 46.60%, selected the response indicating that they did not believe teachers were effective in responding to bullying events. Additionally, 30.58% of participants were unsure of their teachers’ effectiveness when responding to bullying. An analysis of this data set suggests that a majority of students do not have an overly positive perspective of their teachers’ ability to effectively respond to bullying events. However, when asked a follow-up question rating teacher effectiveness, 34.95% of participants selected “Somewhat Effective,” 20.39% chose “Somewhat Ineffective,” and 19.90% selected “Unsure.” Next, when asked if participants experienced bullying during high school would they confide in a teacher, the responses were almost distributed equally across the three given choices. Participant responses were as follows: 34.47% “Maybe,” 33.01% “No,” and 32.52% “Yes.” The final question presented in this section asked participants to select the school

personnel member (from those listed) that they felt was most trustworthy. The top two choices by participants were: 28.16% chose “Other – Teachers” and 24.76% selected a “Coach.” The most interesting aspect of this section of the survey was when filters for gender, school size, and location of school were applied, the resulting data sets often demonstrated variances from the overall unfiltered data sets. All interview participants noted that as a result of having a personal connection, feeling comfortable, and knowing they could trust someone made them more willing to share things with their coach, guidance counselor, teacher, or other chosen school personnel. Thus, high school students are less likely to submit a report if they do not have someone they can confide in or trust within their school building,. The analysis of the interview data supports the survey data findings and answers the stated research question. Trust, or the lack thereof, does affect a student’s willingness to report an incidence of bullying.

Overall, the data collected and analyzed from the surveys represented the frequency of participants’ responses related to the set research questions. Further investigation of the survey data was conducted through descriptive statistics, Chi-Square, ANOVA, paired-samples t-test, and independent t-tests. Additional frequency and descriptive statistics were examined during fifteen in-depth interviews. Then data from the interviews were analyzed and coded for emergent themes to support the findings from the quantitative data set.

To summarize, this chapter presented and analyzed from survey and interview responses to determine key factors that impede the reporting of bullying by high school students. Within chapter five the researcher will present a discussion and summary of the data collected in connection with each of the research questions. Additionally, in chapter five the researcher will identify limitations and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

“Things get done only if the data we gather can inform and inspire those in a position to make [a] difference.” Mike Schmoker

Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents a discussion of the results offered in chapter four, along with conclusions, study limitations, and recommendations for future research. The researcher begins with an overview of the mixed-methods case study and a summary of the results in connection with the stated research questions. Next, the researcher provides a discussion related to limitations of the study, implications for school administrators and teachers, and recommendations for future research. The researcher concludes the chapter with a reflective summary of the study.

Overview

Students today continue to encounter varying degrees of teasing, taunting, social scrutiny, isolation, humiliation, and threats that occur through verbal, emotional and physical forms (Juvonen & Graham, 2001; NCES, 2009; Robers et al., 2013). Several researchers regard bullying as one of, if not the most prevalent type of school violence that is reported (Blosnich & Bossarte, 2011; Brown et al., 2011; Karna et al., 2011; Pearce, Cross, Monks, Waters, & Falconer, 2011; Scholte, Sentse, & Granic, 2010; Swearer & Espelage, 2011). It is critical for school administrators to address bullying because it is a continual dilemma and barrier to education. School administrators must also develop interventions, refine policies on bullying, and deliver consequences for engaging in such behaviors that speak to the seriousness of this problem (Beale & Hall, 2007). School administrators and teachers need to hold bullies

accountable. School administrators and teachers also need to stress healthier, more acceptable ways for students to deal with bullying as well as other social issues with their peers. (Mason, 2008).

Research surrounding the phenomenon of why students are not reporting instances of bullying during school from the student perspective is still limited. Earlier research conducted on bullying in schools often failed to include student perspectives concerning the lack of reporting to the school (deLara, 2008; Garbarino & deLara, 2002; Mishna & Alaggio, 2005; Pepler et al., 2008). More recently researchers have made efforts to include the student perspective related to bullying, especially concerning students from diverse backgrounds and students with exceptionalities (Ashburner et al., 2018; Lai & Kao, 2018; Ronksley-Pavia et al., 2019; Wachs et al., 2019). However, without additional and current information from the students who are at the center of the problem, it is difficult for teachers and other school personnel to provide the proper supportive and corrective measures to appropriately intervene, decrease, and stop ongoing bullying from occurring in schools (Poyhonen et al., 2012; Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2012).

Bullying in schools can occur in various forms and is often confused with teasing or harassment. Being able to identify bullying amidst the many forms may be a compounding factor that affects a student's ability to accurately report it to an adult (Dracic, 2009; PACER, 2010). Across the research surrounding the lack of reporting, there is often a discussion about whether the type of bullying a student encounters affects their decision to tell someone (Bazelon, 2013; Black et al., 2010; Davis & Nixon, 2011; DeLara, 2012; Dracic, 2009; Perkins et al., 2014; Petronsino et al., 2010). Additionally, high school students have a higher likelihood to describe events as altercations or arguments and not bullying. Therefore, many incidences of bullying often go unreported (Smith et al., 2012; Stockdale et al., 2002).

At the high school level, most bullying incidents occur within unstructured environments where adult supervision is limited (Allen, 2010; Hong & Espelage, 2012; PACER, 2013; Perkins et al., 2014). In studies where teachers were present during bullying events and studies where students have reported concerns to an adult, researchers found that the assistance provided by a teacher was viewed as ineffective (Bierman, 2004; Black et al., 2010; Davis & Davis, 2005), made the bullying worse (Bradshaw et al., 2007), or caused problems for the students with their friends (Farmer et al., 2011; Rigby & Barnes, 2002). In some instances, when students did confide in a teacher, the response was to just ignore the bullying. This created the perception that adults were unreliable authority figures (Novick & Isaacs, 2010; Yoon & Bauman, 2014). Since bullying events are more likely to occur in these unstructured environments it increases the need to understand the factors that impede students' decisions for whether to report these incidents to teachers to make the necessary changes to school policy and procedures to improve these reporting rates.

Purpose of the Study

The intent of this dissertation study was to elicit the self-reported memories of college freshmen relating to their experience(s) of bullying and the factors that impeded their decision to report the bullying during high school. The insights gained from this study may be of use to researchers, administrators, teachers, and specialists to address and respond to bullying in schools. These insights may also assist school administrators when revising school policy related to bullying to promote a positive school climate while ensuring the safety and welfare for all students. Consideration of these factors when revising policies is important because if the current reporting policies and procedures are factors that prevent students from reporting, then they need to be addressed and adjusted. Knowing and understanding the factors that impeded the students'

decisions related to reporting are important for teachers to respond effectively to reported bullying events. Therefore, the insights gained from this study may also provide school administrators the guidance necessary to create targeted training for teachers to improve their capacity to deliver appropriate interventions to address all reported instances of bullying. Adjustments to the school policies by administrators and procedures for teachers and other personnel may have a positive impact on the reporting rates of bullying to teachers.

Summary of the Study

The research instruments in this study consisted of a survey and an interview. The survey was created by the researcher for alignment to the stated research questions and based on current literature, research, and components from three major surveys in the field of research surrounding bullying: Bauman, Rigby, and Hoppa's (2008), the Handling Bullying Questionnaire, the Bully Survey – Student Version BYS-S (Swearer & Carey, 2003; Swearer et al., 2008), and the Student School Survey (The Colorado Trust, 2007). During the beginning of the Spring Semester of 2019, the researcher contacted several university faculty members responsible for teaching orientation and introduction classes via email for permission to attend their class and disseminate the survey (see Appendix E). Three university faculty responded to the email request and provided access to a total of seven courses for the distribution of the paper and pencil survey created by the researcher.

The survey was distributed to 272 college students; 206 were accessible for this study as six were not fully completed and sixty were identified as upper classmen at the university. Of the 206 remaining surveys, 100% completed and returned the survey. Thus, 206 respondents were included in the data analysis. 102 freshmen students volunteered for the semi-structured interview portion of this study. Due to the overwhelming response of interested participants for

an interview, the researcher used random selection when selecting the study maximum of fifteen participants. The findings of this study were reported and summarized in connection with the stated research questions.

1. What factors do college freshmen recall as having impeded their willingness to report incidents of bullying in high school?
2. Does the type of bullying have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?
3. Does the student's relationship with the bully have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?
4. Does a lack of trust in teachers and other school personnel have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?

Discussion of Research Findings

The survey consisted of twenty questions and the semi-structured interview contained twenty-one questions. The first section for both the survey and interview consisted of questions designed to collect demographic information from the participants related to gender, current year in college (freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior), size of high school (based on graduation class size), and location of high school (rural, urban, or suburban). These demographic factors were not explicitly stated within the research questions but were included in the analysis of the data. The four other sections in the survey and interview directly aligned to the research questions. Section B asked participants questions relating to the reporting of bullying in their high school. Section C asked participants questions connected to the reporting of the different types of bullying while section D asked questions pertaining to the relationships with the bully and reporting. The final section, E, asked participants about teachers and reporting. All of these

sections (B to E), in the survey, consisted of multiple-choice questions, Likert-scale questions, and checklist items. However, in the semi-structured interview, the researcher designed open-ended questions to acquire more in-depth data than what would be collected from using the survey alone.

Research Question One

What factors do college freshmen recall as having impeded their willingness to report incidents of bullying in high school?

The study participants identified several factors and themes that impeded their willingness to report bullying. Data from the survey suggested the following top factors: “I only heard about it but never saw it,” “it wasn’t any of my business,” “teasing is a normal part of high school”, and “nothing was done when other peers reported similar events.” During the analysis of interview data, the following themes emerged: Safety, Morality, School Nonaction, Fear, and Lack of Information.

The social ecological theory provided an important contextual background for the discussion and research related to bullying but also peer victimization within a student’s environmental and social surroundings (National Academy of Sciences, 2016; Swearer & Hymel, 2015; Swearer et al., 2010; Thornberg et al., 2017). So, when participants noted not reporting bullying due to only hearing about it and not seeing it, this connects to both the interview participants noting a lack of information to file a report and also their environmental and social surroundings.

Interestingly, survey participants noted that “it wasn’t any of my business,” however, the theme of Morality emerged from interview participants. This notion of morality and doing what is right connects to what students are learning from the start of their school experience. Within

some interview participants statements, they discussed how they felt worried for the victim's safety, both physically and mentally. They also commented that it wasn't right for the bully to get away with their actions and that is why they personally decided to say something to teacher or other school personnel. One participant stated, "No one should be allowed to make someone feel like less than nothing and that don't matter. It didn't matter to me that I didn't know everything, I knew enough to know that it wasn't right and that is why I reported it."

Teachers and other school staff are constantly modeling and explaining the importance of demonstrating various character traits, as part of adopted anti-bullying programs, to elementary and even middle school students, (Cunningham et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2012; Leadbeater & Sukhawathanakul, 2011) among those are being respectful and responsible (Allen, 2010; Brown et al., 2011; Cohen, 2013). Notifying an adult of safety concerns to themselves and others is a demonstration of responsibility and respecting the well-being for all (Burns, Cross, & Maycock., 2010; Davis & Davis, 2005; Eliot et al., 2010; Thornberg et al., 2017). However, many interview participants noted that during their high school experience, this constant focus on character traits was almost non-existent. One participant noted, "I remember in elementary and middle school being rewarded and recognized for displaying appropriate behaviors. We received recognition within our class and during monthly school assemblies, so kids wanted to do what was right to get the recognition from others. When I moved to high school all we had was one assembly at the start of the year and that was it." Without the consistent modeling, positive school climate, and consistent focus on rewarding appropriate behaviors by students, both the pro-social behaviors of high school students and their reliability in their teachers to effectively respond to bullying decreases (Gower et al., 2015; Veenstra et al., 2014; Yablon, 2010; Yoon & Bauman, 2014).

Another factor noted by participants is the notion that “teasing is a normal part of high school.” Analysis of survey data revealed that male participants more frequently selected this as their top factor impeding their reporting over female participants. Prior research found that males are not as negatively affected as females when it comes to teasing and therefore consider it to be normal, which may explain why they would not report this more indirect type of bullying to the school (Bhutani, Sudhir, & Philip, 2014; Gregg, Somer, Pernice-Duca, & Van Dale, 2016; Rawlings, 2017). Under social learning theory, Bandura (1977; 1999) stated that learning is the result of a cognitive process which involves observation, imitation, or direct instruction within a social context. Therefore, if other students are witnessing teasing and observing their peers having a nonreaction to this event, then teasing is accepted as a normal act. However, if they witness and see peers or teachers intervening when teasing occurs, then it will not be accepted.

A student’s decision for whether to report bullying to adults in the school setting can be extremely stressful and difficult (Song & Oh, 2017), especially when it is perceived that the school doesn’t act and, “Nothing was done when other peers reported similar events.” In order for a student to act against another student their decision is critically examined across multiple areas almost simultaneously. Some areas are the potential impact to their peer relationships, social standing, and protection by teachers and school staff from peer retaliation in the school environment (Espelage et al., 2014; Hong & Espelage, 2012). One participant noted, “I wanted to say something, but I started to think about how my friends would treat me once I reported my other friend. I was also worried about if she would then turn on me and would the school believe me if I had to then submit another report for myself. I didn’t want to be seen as that girl that constantly reports the smallest thing. I was beyond stressed when thinking about reporting the event to someone at the school.” This participant’s response demonstrates how the resulting

decision for whether a student reports an instance of bullying is influenced and shaped (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) during their environmental and social interactions in school (Moses & Villodas, 2016, Rigby & Griffiths, 2002; Wang, Berry, & Swearer, 2013).

The final theme that emerged in this section of the interview was ‘Fear’. This also connected back to the survey, where several survey participants chose ‘Fear of retaliation’ as their top fact that impeded their decision to report the bullying. Additionally, the effects of bullying extend beyond relationships and interactions of those directly involved. It infiltrates relationships with other school peers, their teachers, the school culture, and even at home with their parents and siblings (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Hong & Espelage, 2012; Lopez-Castedo, Alvarez, Dominguez, & Alvarez, 2018). This was evident during analysis of interview participant statements, where it was noted that they were not only afraid of becoming the bully’s next target, but also afraid of how their other peers would react. Some interview participants noted that in their school rumors and news spread quick and people who did report something would be called “tattle tales” and “snitches” by their peers and even friends. So, beyond fear of the bully, they didn’t want to be ostracized by other peers for reporting something to a teacher or the school.

As a result of this study, school administrators may become aware of the importance of cultivating a positive, safe, and trusting school environment. While realizing that the factors identified by participants that affect their decision to report bullying may not always be in the control of teachers or the school administrators, they may suggest that additional bullying awareness and prevention training should be implemented. These trainings should be available to all students, teachers, school personnel, administration, and parents on a continual and on-going basis. To change the perception of school nonaction, teachers and other school personnel should

take time and engage in meaningful conversations with students and make referrals, as necessary, to provide additional support(s) for students.

Research Question Two

Does the type of bullying have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?

Throughout this study, participants indicated that direct, indirect, and cyberbullying occurred in their high schools. Survey participants were statistically more willing to report events involving direct bullying over indirect and cyberbullying instances. During the interview sessions, all fifteen participants indicated, in some way, that they believe direct or physical bullying would and does get reported most frequently because it is easiest to recognize compared to indirect and cyberbullying. During their explanations, interview participants indicated that if there was any sort of physical safety concerns, they would definitely report the event. The results of the survey and interview analysis coincide with previous research study findings. Students involved in direct bullying have a higher likelihood to disclose the event to a teacher, even though the students are concerned and fearful of the consequences for reporting bullying (Aceves et al., 2010; Smith, 2011; Yablon, 2010).

The results of this study align with findings from previous research and suggest that students are more likely to report direct bullying over indirect and cyberbullying in high school. This is due to the fact that direct bullying is easier to spot and is perceived by students as more harmful. Since direct bullying is perceived as more harmful by participants, it can be interpreted as more worth reporting to the school over the other types of bullying. However, a few interview participants noted that they were aware of indirect bullying in the school, but not all reported the indirect bullying. One participant stated, “I did report it to the school, because I could see how it

was affecting the victim. But the school said that there was no real proof that the student I reported did anything. They said it was too hard to prove without some type of evidence. So, nothing happened.” Another participant noted, “I knew it was happening, but I didn’t say anything because it was one of those he said, she said type situations. I was the only witness and I knew my friend wouldn’t say anything if interviewed. So, how could the school do anything just based on my report if no one else could support it?” These types of statements received by the interview participants are similar to what was found in some other previous research. It has been noted that for students that are aware of bullying events that do not include physical violence, they often feel a state of disequilibrium. They know something isn’t right but are not sure how or if they should say something because they don’t have any evidence beyond what they witnessed or heard (Aceves et al., 2010; Davis & Nixon, 2011, DeLara, 2012; Denny et al., 2015)

Due to the fact that students are less likely to report indirect and cyberbullying, school administrators should offer trainings or assemblies on the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive signs of direct, indirect, and cyberbullying. Students should be encouraged to not only watch for these signs within the classroom, but also in other school settings and activities. Examples may include the lunchroom, hallways between classes, bathrooms, after school activities, school sporting events, and so forth. This training should also include information on actions students can take if they are aware of indirect or cyberbullying and how the school will respond to these types of reported bullying events (Beale & Hall, 2007; Black et al., 2010; Freis & Gurung, 2013). Teachers and school personnel should also receive similar training, so when students report an incidence of indirect or cyberbullying they can effectively respond to the report (Farmer et al., 2011). Teachers and other school personnel should also openly discuss

bullying with students continually throughout the school year and what students can do if they hear or witness bullying, to help increase prevention and detection of bullying in the school. Increased training may help students to more readily identify signs of indirect and cyberbullying, which in turn could lead to an increase in reporting for these types of bullying. Improved and continued open discussions about bullying with teachers and school personnel, may also increase the students' feelings about their teachers' knowledge and ability to effectively respond to a reported bullying event. Which in turn, may result in students reporting indirect and cyberbullying to the school more frequently.

Research Question Three

Does the student's relationship with the bully have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?

Although there is research to support that peers are a positive factor in reducing bullying, evidence exists demonstrating that students are not willing to intervene for fear of damaged friendships, loss of social status, and retaliation from the bully (Espelage et al., 2012; Veenstra et al., 2014). Interestingly, analysis of the survey data contradicted results from previous studies. The data in this study demonstrated that participants who were friends with the bully were statistically significantly more likely to intervene compared to those participants who did not know the bully. The analysis of survey data is supported by the interview data findings. Both sets of data indicate that a student's relationship with the bully does have an impact on the willingness to intervene, but not necessarily report the bullying. Overall, participants who were friends with the bully were more likely to intervene compared to someone they don't know.

In answering question three it is important to note that although there were significant findings from the quantitative data that were supported with the qualitative data, however these

findings do not directly answer the set research question but do add to the discussion and analysis. When analyzing the survey data, the researcher noticed that the two questions created for connection to this research question used language that may have potentially changed their response. The questions did not ask how likely participants were to report bullying if the bully was a friend or someone they didn't know. Instead the questions asked how likely the participants were to intervene if the bully was a friend or someone they didn't know. A student's willingness to intervene may be higher than their willingness to report the event, but this was not what research question three meant to address. Therefore, the results from the quantitative data were shared, but only results from the qualitative data were used to specifically answer research question three.

During the interview when participants were asked to explain why they wouldn't report a friend and would report someone they didn't know; the themes of friendship and peer pressure arose. The value and impact of friendships on an adolescent's development cannot be understated. These relationships, whether positive or negative, are powerful. When a student has a friend, who is engaged in bullying other students, they often experience a state of moral disengagement and try to rationalize why they shouldn't report the event. Some of these rationalizations include the student brought the bullying on themselves or the teachers are the ones responsible for intervening to protect students (Bandura, 1990; Bandura, 2002; Humel & Bonanno, 2014). Participants noted a fear concerning potential loss of their friendship with the bully, as well as other potential impacts to their general social standing among other peers within their social group at school. One interview participant noted, "I would be more willing to talk with the bully if they were my friend and try to encourage them to stop. I don't believe I would report them because it could affect our friendship moving forward." Another participant stated,

“My relationship with the bully would affect my decision to report them. I don’t think I would report a friend, but I would get involved. I would say something to stop it and even get in the middle of a fight to help. If I didn’t know anyone involved, I would probably mind my own business.”

These findings suggest that students are more willing to get involved and intervene in bullying if the bully is a friend. However, they are less likely to report the event when the bully is a friend for fear of loss of friendship with the bully and others in their social circle. Which is consistent with past research findings. Friendships during these adolescent years are crucial to their development and rightly so, students are concerned about damaging those relationships (Bazelon, 2013; Espelage et al., 2012; Veenstra et al., 2014; Volk et al., 2014). Therefore, providing ongoing and open discussions about bullying with students is important to help them learn strategies for how to navigate friendships in the midst of bullying. These discussions should focus on what students can do if they hear about or see bullying and more specifically what to do if their friend is the bully (Barcaccia et al., 2018; Merrin et al., 2018; Sijtsema, Rambaran, Caravita, & Gini, 2014). Students need to be reminded, even more during high school, that moral character is important and just because someone is your friend doesn’t mean you can’t report them for being a bully.

Research Question Four

Does a lack of trust in teachers and other school personnel have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?

Trust is an element that continually comes up within the discussion of students reporting instances of bullying to teachers within their schools. Although the most common recommendation is for students to report bullying to a teacher (Luxenberg, Limber, & Olweus,

2015; Olweus, 1993), students who sought out support from their teachers were often told to ignore the bullying (Yoon & Bauman, 2014), leading students to view teachers as unreliable and untrustworthy for help in dealing with bullying (Eliot et al., 2010; Maunder et al., 2010; Novick & Isaacs, 2010). However, the analysis of the survey and interview provide a hopeful outlook. Participants who noted that they could confide in a teacher demonstrated a statistically higher willingness to report bullying score over those participants who do not have someone to confide in at the school. When examining the element of trust and willingness to report, although the results were not statistically significant, the data did demonstrate that participants who had a teacher they could trust were more willing to report bullying over participants who did not have someone they could trust.

The researcher discovered that creating and maintaining genuine relationships wherein students feel confident, safe, and able to trust a teacher make a difference in a student's willingness to report bullying. It is suggested that teachers establish a safe and welcoming classroom environment with opportunities to engage with students in a meaningful way beyond the curriculum. One suggested activity is providing classroom-based surveys throughout the year to understand more about what is occurring in the school, and clear expectations of what bullying is and how to report it need to be shared frequently throughout the school year. Participants noted that these surveys would show a deeper level of caring than what many of them experienced during high school. It is also recommended that teachers need to be more alert or attentive to what is going on around them. Many of the participants noted that teachers need to take time as students are getting settled into the class, when they are packing up, or even during group work to actively listen to the conversations taking place between the students. One participant in particular noted, "So much is going on right in front of the teachers in the

classroom, but they are often too busy prepping materials or standing in the door/hallway chatting with another teacher and are missing opportunities to get involved at the entry level of some bullying events.”

Limitations of the Study

Limitations were present in the current study. The first limitation was the variance in the high schools of the study participants. Since all high schools in Pennsylvania are not mandated to follow the same anti-bullying program or follow the same bullying policies and procedures, it should be noted that although the students attend the same college, the high schools they attended could vary. Therefore, the results of the data in the study may be limited by the responding students’ high school of attendance even though they all attend the same university.

The second limitation was the potential responding students’ accuracy in memory recall from their high school experiences. Even though previous research indicated that for people under the age of eighteen or between eighteen and twenty-six, age does not affect memory accuracy and recall (Rich & Goodfriend, 2016; Lacy & Stark, 2013; Charness, 1987; Leippe, 1985), it is still important to note accuracy of memory could have affected the resulting data. It would be interesting to run this study again with students currently in high school and compare the results.

The third limitation was related to gender. Within this study, the researcher identified that a majority of the participants were females. Therefore, responses, discussions, and perspectives from males were limited and could affect the overall distribution of the resulting data sets. Future researchers may be interested to see if when more data is collected and analyzed from male participants if the factors that impede a student’s decision for whether to report bullying change. Especially, in the areas of bullying types, friendships, and trust in teachers.

Noting these limitations are important when analyzing the factors affecting the participants' decision(s) of whether to report bullying to the school. Further research might attempt to include more male participants, as well as a more equitable distribution of participants across high school locations and sizes.

Implications for Schools

This study examined the self-reported memories of college freshmen relating to the factors that impeded their decision of whether report instances of bullying that occurred while they were in high school. The college freshmen participants' experiences provided a clear and distinct understanding of the factors that impede their decisions regarding reporting bullying. This study adds to the previous body of research and literature surrounding bullying. The information from this study may be helpful and add to the current, yet limited research surrounding the limited and lack of reporting of bullying by high school students. The researcher offers the following implications based on the provided data analysis:

- School administrators should evaluate the current amount of teacher supervision within all school environments. Based on the information provided in this study, there was an identified need and interest for increased adult supervision throughout the school building.
- School administrators should emphasize the importance of cultivating a positive, safe, and trusting school environment. While realizing that the factors identified by participants that affect their decision to report bullying may not always be in the control of teachers or the school, they may suggest that additional bullying awareness and prevention training should be implemented. Another component to these trainings should include a discussion around the importance of confidentiality when students submit a

report. Due to the need for confidentiality to protect students involved, the results of the submitted report may not be shared with the reporting student. Explaining the process that occurs after a student submits a report, as part of these trainings, may assist in the student perception of school nonaction. These trainings should be available to all students, teachers, school personnel, administration, and parents on a continual and on-going basis. To change the perception of school nonaction, teachers and other school personnel should take time and engage in meaningful conversations with students and make referrals, as necessary, to provide additional support(s) for students.

- School administrators should be aware of the need for targeted assemblies (large and small groups) throughout the year to understand more about what is occurring in the school (new programs, policies, etc.) and clear expectations of what bullying is and how to report it. Additional trainings should be offered concerning acceptance of differences to address statements shared by participants in this study related to students with exceptionalities and diverse backgrounds experiencing higher rates of bullying. School administrators should also plan targeted assemblies about the Safe2Say Something program. Since Act 44 was enacted during the course of this dissertation, participants in this study did not have access to the Safe2Say Something reporting hotline. School administrators should continually embed reminders and discussions of how the Safe2Say Something program works for students to submit a report outside of the school if they are concerned about school nonaction. These assemblies need to be planned frequently throughout the school year and open to students, teachers, other school personnel, administration, and parents. In order for teachers to get more involved in a positive and effective way, they need more professional development on how to respond to bullying.

However, prior to these trainings, the school needs to have clear definitions and guidelines/policies surrounding bullying that everyone (teachers, staff, students, parents, etc.) know and understand.

- School administrators should offer trainings or assemblies on the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive signs of direct, indirect, and cyberbullying. Students should be encouraged to not only watch for these signs within the classroom, but also in other school settings and activities. Additionally, these trainings or assemblies should include strategies for how students can navigate friendships where bullying may be involved and especially what to do if the bully is a friend. This training should also include information on actions students can take if they are aware of indirect or cyberbullying and how the school will respond to these types of reported bullying events.
- School counselors should participate in further professional development training concerning the importance of how to foster feelings of trust and safety in high school students during counseling sessions and other interactions with students. It was noted within the study results that school counselors are one of the top three school personnel who students feel they can confide in and trust when reporting bullying. Therefore, it is important that counselors make more concerted efforts to make these types of relationships with students assigned to their caseload and as many other students as possible.
- Teachers should place an emphasis on creating and maintaining genuine relationships wherein students feel confident, safe, and able to trust in their teachers. Participants noted these genuine relationships make a difference in their willingness to submit a report to teachers or other school personnel. It is suggested that teachers establish a safe and

welcoming classroom environment with opportunities to interact with students in a meaningful way beyond the curriculum. One suggested activity is providing classroom-based surveys throughout the year to understand more about what is occurring in the school, and clear expectations of what bullying is and how to report it need to be shared frequently throughout the school year. Participants noted that these surveys would show a deeper level of caring than what many of them experienced during high school.

Additionally, as part of developing trusting relationships with students, teachers should also let students know what to expect from their teachers if they decide to submit a report. Part of this discussion should include the need for confidentiality for everyone involved in the reported event. This may mean that the student submitting the report, may not be provided with further information regarding the required actions by both the teacher and school administration once a report is submitted. Having this open discussion with students about the process and how confidentiality works to protect everyone may strengthen a student's feeling of trust and confidence in their teacher(s).

- Teachers should be more alert or attentive to what is going on around them. Teachers need to take time as students are getting settled into the class, when they are packing up, or even during group work to actively listen to the conversations taking place between the students. One participant in particular noted, "Often my teachers would assign our work and then just sit at their desk doing other things instead of walking around to make sure we were on task. I can't tell you how often I heard obscene and inappropriate discussions during our group work in class. It is sad that the teacher is in the room but has no idea that bullying is occurring." Additionally, teachers should openly discuss bullying with students continually throughout the school year within their classes. These discussions

should focus on what students can do if they hear about or see bullying and more specifically what to do if the bully is a friend.

The researcher offers these six implications based on the analyzed data from this study. These implications are a result of information gleaned from the surveys and detailed semi-structured interviews with college freshmen.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this study, the researcher examined the retrospective self-reported memories from college freshmen related to reporting bullying during high school. The work presented within this study extends the previous research efforts in the area of bullying. The researcher proposes the following three recommendations for continued research on bullying and factors that impede a student's decision to report bullying during high school.

First, a future research opportunity may include a qualitative study on how students and teachers define bullying. In order to report a bullying event, a student or teacher needs to first be able to identify that bullying is occurring. The data received from students and teachers could be analyzed separately, to determine if similarities or differences exist. This could help schools design more accurate and complete definitions of bullying that satisfy the perspectives of both students and teachers. It could also help to improve teacher response and intervention within reported bullying events.

Secondly, future research could include a qualitative study on why students are more willing to intervene in, but not report bullying when the bully is a friend. The data from this study suggested that participants were statistically more likely to intervene when the bully was a friend compared to someone they didn't know. However, data from the qualitative interviews, showed that participants were less likely to actually report an event when the bully was a friend

over someone they didn't know. Information from the suggested study could help provide further insight into why students would be willing to get involved in bullying over actually submitting a report. Findings from this study could help schools refine their bullying policies, targeted trainings for students for how to manage friendships when bullying is involved, and the school's reporting protocols.

Thirdly, the future research could include repeating this mixed-methods study with current high school students in grades nine through twelve and include a more equitable distribution of female verses male participants. This study would decrease the potential limitation for accuracy of memory relating to factors that impede a student's decision for reporting bullying. This input could help schools identify targeted prevention measure to target students within their own school setting.

These future recommendations for research include examining the relationship between gender, class size, and school setting (location), as well as teacher perspectives related to defining bullying. These recommendations also suggest repeating the current study with current high school students to get more accurate memory recall related to the factors that impede reporting. All of these recommendations might provide an in-depth insight into factors that prevent students from reporting bullying and how schools, as well as teacher, could enhance their programs, prevention measures, and responses to reported bullying events.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study the researcher identified that there are several factors that impede a student's decision for whether to report bullying, including connections to types of bullying, friendship with the bully, and having teachers or other school personnel that a student can trust. School administrators and teachers are the first line of defense when students do report

an instance of bullying. School administrators and teachers may need to make some changes to foster an environment where students feel safe, comfortable, and able to trust that their report will be taken seriously. Teachers are in constant contact with students and have the greatest potential to make a positive impact. However, this study identified that none of the participants knew if their school had a bullying policy or could state it during the interview. Therefore, if the students could not identify how the school defined bullying, how can they identify it in order to report it to a teacher? A student's decision to report and a teacher's ability to take the appropriate action could be positively influence through increased awareness and training concerning bullying policy, prevention measures, and reporting methods.

Throughout this study, two themes were more present than all others. Participants often discussed the notion of safety and morality when deciding whether to report bullying, regardless of the type, whether they were friends with the bully or not, and whether they had a teacher they could confide in or trust at school. Therefore, a school's bullying policy, prevention measures, and target trainings should include elements related to the students concerns about safety and morality as part of their decision process.

Participants shared in-depth personal experiences related to various bullying events during high school in this mixed-methods study. All interview participants noted that bullying was a serious, on-going, and systemic problem in their school. In order to increase reporting of bullying by high school students, it is important that school administrators and teachers take action, have consistent policy language that is enforced, increase targeted and on-going trainings throughout the year, and foster an environment where everyone feels safe, welcome, and has someone they can confide in and trust with their concerns. To conclude the semi-structured interview, all participants were asked, "Is there anything additional that you would like to share

about what influenced your decision of whether to report instances of bullying during high school?” All fifteen participants indicated that they either didn’t have anything additional to say or that they felt like they shared everything they had to share. However, one participant shared the following additional statement that truly captures the essence of this study. “I just think that, if I had to do it all over again, there are times I could have stepped up or done more and I wish I would have. I hope that people [students] in the future decide to step up and do their part to stop bullying because it is the only way that it can be addressed is if it [bullying] is brought to the attention of others in a position to effect change.”

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Appendix A

Permission to Use Figure

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National Academies Press
Rights & Permissions

April 10, 2017

Reference #: 04101701

Kali Fedor
103 Saint Johns Road
Drums, PA 18222

Dear Ms. Fedor:

You have requested permission to reproduce the following material copyrighted by the National Academy of Sciences in your dissertation:

Figure 3-2, Preventing Bullying Through Science, Policy, and Practice, 2016

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Thank you,

Barbara Murphy
Barbara Murphy
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Appendix B

Permission to Use Bauman, Rigby, and Hoppa Survey

RE: Signature Needed - Permission to use Questionnaire in Dissertation Research - Kindly Respond

Subject: RE: Signature Needed - Permission to use Questionnaire in Dissertation Research - Kindly Respond
From: Kenneth Rigby <Kenneth.Rigby@unisa.edu.au>
Date: 09/17/16 08:57 PM
To: Kali Fedor <k.fedor@iup.edu>
Cc: 'sherib@email.arizona.edu' <sherib@email.arizona.edu>

Dear Kaki

I am more than happy to sign, scan and send you approval. Unfortunately I am away from facilities to do the scanning the University for the next week or so. I am very shortly to go into hospital for an operation which I am told will restrict my movements and prevent returning to work for a while. I hope you can go ahead with your planning. An alternative is to contact Sheri Bauman who could also give permission

Best Wishes

Ken Rigby

From: Kali Fedor [mailto:k.fedor@iup.edu]
Sent: Sunday, 18 September 2016 1:47 AM
To: Kenneth Rigby <Kenneth.Rigby@unisa.edu.au>
Subject: Re: Signature Needed - Permission to use Questionnaire in Dissertation Research - Kindly Respond
Importance: High

Good Day Mr. Rigby,

Thank you for responding so fast! I greatly appreciate your permission to use this questionnaire in my dissertation research. Would it be possible for you to sign and return the attached document. This is something that my university requires as 'proof' of permission to use the questionnaire in my research.

Once again, I am very thankful for your permission and assistance!

~Kali

Kali Fedor, ABD

June 21, 2016

Good Afternoon Mr. Rigby,

I am a doctoral student from Indiana University of Pennsylvania writing my dissertation tentatively titled, Identifying retrospective memories of college freshmen of factors that that impeded their reporting of bullying in high school, under the direction of my dissertation committee chaired by Dr. Beatrice Fennimore.

I would like your permission to adapt and reproduce your survey instrument in my research study. The survey instrument I am interested in using is The Handling Bullying Questionnaire (HBQ) produced by Bauman, Rigby & Hoppa (2008). I would like to use your survey under the following conditions:

1. I will use this survey only for my research study and will not sell or use it with any compensated or curriculum development activities.
2. I will include the copyright statement on all copies of the instrument, providing credit to you as the original creator.

If these are acceptable terms and conditions, please indicate so by printing the attached letter, signing, scanning, and returning it via email.

Sincerely,



Kali Fedor

Doctoral Candidate

Expected date of completion March 31, 2017

I, Sheri Bauman, grant permission under the above terms for Kali Fedor, Doctoral Candidate, to adapt and reproduce The Handling Bullying Questionnaire (HBQ) for use in her doctoral dissertation study.


Signature

9/19/16
Date

Appendix C

Permission to Use Swearer Survey

From: Susan M Swearer <sswearemapolitano1@unl.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, October 17, 2018 5:48:34 PM
To: Kali Fedor
Subject: RE: Permission to Adapt The Bully Survey

Hi Kali,

I'm sorry this got buried in my email inbox!! Yes, you have my permission to use the Bully Survey – Student version. I also have a retrospective version that one of my students used for her data collection with college students. Let me know if you'd like both versions and my GA, Alia, will email you the current versions of the Bully Survey.

Here are the citations that you can use for the Bully Survey:

Swearer, S.M. (2001). *The Bully Survey-Student Version. Unpublished manuscript.* The University of Nebraska – Lincoln.

Swearer, S.M. (2001). *The Bully Survey-Retrospective Version. Unpublished manuscript.* The University of Nebraska – Lincoln.

Swearer, S.M., Turner, R.K., Givens, J.E., & Pollack, W.S. (2008). "You're so gay!": Do different forms of bullying matter for adolescent males? *School Psychology Review*, 37, 160-173.

Best, Sue

Susan M. Swearer, Ph.D., LP
Willa Cather Professor of Educational Psychology
Director of Faculty Development
University of Nebraska–Lincoln
40 Teachers College Hall 68588-0345
402-472-1741
<http://cehs.unl.edu/empowerment>

From: Kali Fedor <lwvt@iup.edu>
Sent: Sunday, July 29, 2018 11:13 AM
To: sswearer@unlserve.unl.edu
Subject: Permission to Adapt The Bully Survey

Good Afternoon Dr. Swearer,

I am a doctoral student from Indiana University of Pennsylvania writing my dissertation tentatively titled, What Kept You From Reporting Bullying in High School?: A Retrospective Mixed-Methods Case Study of College Freshmen, under the direction of my dissertation committee chaired by Dr. Kelli Jo Kerry-Moran.

I would like your permission to revise and adapt your survey instrument in my research study. The survey instrument I am interested in using is The Bully Survey – Student Version (BYS-S). I would like to use your survey under the following conditions:

1. I will use this survey only for my research study and will not sell or use it with any compensated or curriculum development activities.
2. I will include the copyright statement on all copies of the instrument, providing credit to you as the original creator.

If these are acceptable terms and conditions, please indicate so by printing the attached letter, signing, scanning, and returning it via email.

Sincerely,
Kali Fedor
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix D

Permission to Use Colorado Trust Survey

5/19/2019

Bullying Prevention | Colorado Trust

Bullying Prevention

 2005 to 2009

National research shows the effects of bullying can last a lifetime. Victims have an increased chance of academic failure and health problems, low self-esteem and inability to connect socially.

There are long-term implications for bullies as well. Research shows that youths who bully are more likely to have a criminal record by age 24. Bullying has become such a serious problem that many states, including Colorado, have anti-bullying laws.

The Colorado Trust's Bullying Prevention initiative helped schools and community-based organizations to prevent bullying and bullying-related behaviors. The Bullying Prevention initiative revealed higher academic achievement schoolwide when students and teachers are willing to intervene in bullying behavior, and when students perceive trusting, accepting and caring relationships between themselves and their teachers.

The 45 grantees estimate they reached 50,000 young people and adults in 40 Colorado counties through the initiative. Subtle and overt bullying activities include intentional exclusion of targeted youths in activities, gossiping meanly about others, unprovoked physical and verbal attacks and using the Internet to anonymously and repeatedly harass others. The development of new programs and the expansion of existing bullying prevention programs provided both youth and adults with the opportunity to learn how to effectively intervene and prevent bullying activities.

Evaluation

The Trust asked CADRE (<http://www.colorado.edu/education/cadre>), in collaboration with JVA Consulting (<http://jvaconsulting.com/>), to find out whether beliefs and behavior about bullying changed over time in schools and community-based organizations funded by the Bullying Prevention initiative. Evaluation findings showed that bullying in funded schools and community-based organizations was prevalent during the initiative's first year—particularly in middle schools—but declined over the three-year period. [Click here for the full evaluation report \(/sites/default/files/COTrust_FINALAPRVD_112408.pdf\)](#). Also available are an [overview of the initiative \(/sites/default/files/BullyingBrochure4PAGES.pdf\)](#), and a [downloadable brochure \(/sites/default/files/TrustBPIBrochure3-09.pdf\)](#) for educators, parents and policymakers. Survey instruments used for the Bullying Prevention initiative evaluation included the following:

- [Staff Survey \(http://www.coloradotrust.org/sites/default/files/BPI_Staff_Survey.pdf\)](http://www.coloradotrust.org/sites/default/files/BPI_Staff_Survey.pdf)
- [Student Survey \(http://www.coloradotrust.org/sites/default/files/BPI_Student_Survey.pdf\)](http://www.coloradotrust.org/sites/default/files/BPI_Student_Survey.pdf)
- [Student Survey \(http://www.coloradotrust.org/sites/default/files/BPI_Student_Survey_Spanish_.pdf\)](http://www.coloradotrust.org/sites/default/files/BPI_Student_Survey_Spanish_.pdf) (Spanish)

The survey instruments for the bullying prevention initiative are in the public domain. It is not necessary to request permission to use part or all of them.

Year one findings showed that the majority of students in fifth through 12th grades experienced bullying, including physical, verbal or Internet/cyberbullying, and students from elementary through high school reported that they had bullied others that year. Yet the findings also show that schools and youth centers can reduce bullying over time. The evaluation included surveys of over 3,000 students and 1,500 adults, case studies of four school programs, focus groups with staff and students, and an analysis of demographic and school achievement data. Evaluation contact: [Nancy Baughman-Csuti, DrPH \(mailto:nancy@coloradotrust.org\)](mailto:Nancy.Baughman-Csuti.DrPH@mailto.nancy@coloradotrust.org), Director of Research, Evaluation & Strategic Learning, 303-837-1200.

GRANT AMOUNT: \$9 million

Appendix E

Email Request to Disseminate Survey in Classes

Email Subject Line: Request to Conduct a Survey

Dear Dr. _____,

My name is Kali Fedor, a doctoral student from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I am currently conducting a study for my dissertation on What Kept You from Reporting Bullying in High School?: A Retrospective Mixed-Methods Study of College Freshmen.

This study has received IRB approval from both Indiana University and Bloomsburg University. I am requesting permission to come into your section of _____ and distribute a paper survey to your students. This should take approximately 15 - 20 minutes of class time.

If you would be willing to support my research and data collection, please reply to this email with available dates/times that would work for me to attend your class.

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (PHONE 724.357.7730). If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 570-599-5789 or k.fedor@iup.edu

Thank you so much for your time and help.

Sincerely,

Kali Fedor
Doctoral Candidate
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Department of Professional Studies in Education
k.fedor@iup.edu

Faculty Sponsor
Dr. Kelli Jo Kerry-Moran
Associate Professor
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Department of Professional Studies in Education
kjkmoran@iup.edu
Davis Hall, Indiana, PA 15705

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724/357-7730).

Appendix F

Language and Directions for Survey Administration

- Hello Everyone! My name is Mrs. Kali Fedor and I am a doctoral candidate at Indiana University of Pennsylvania conducting my dissertation titled, What Kept You from Reporting Bullying in High School?: A Retrospective Mixed-Methods Study of College Freshmen
- Your instructor, Dr. _____, is graciously allowing me to disseminate my survey to your class today.
- Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary.
 - Each person will receive a survey packet.
- The first page you will see is the consent page.
 - This is for you to keep for your records. Your signature is not required because your consent to participate is implied through your completion and submission of the survey.
 - I will then read and review the informed consent page with all students.
 - It is important to note that you can opt out of completing the survey at any time, but once it is completed and handed in, there will be no way to destroy your data if you change your mind later since all surveys are anonymous. Completion of the survey will require approximately 10-15 minutes of your time.
 - You will notice that as part of this research there is an interview component. The interview will require approximately 30 minutes of your time. If you would be interested in volunteering to participate in an interview, please include your name and email address on this separate piece of paper (hold up the colored piece of paper for students to see). For those students that are selected for an interview, you will receive your choice of a gift card to either the university bookstore or Amazon as a thank you for your participation.
 - Remember that you will keep this informed consent page for your own records, so you can place that into your folder or backpack at this time.
- After the informed consent document has been reviewed:
 - For those students completing the survey, once you are finished with the survey, please turn it upside down on your desk.
 - For those students that do not wish to complete the survey, you may read the article attached to the back of the survey while the other students complete the survey. This article relates to a topic in your course that was chosen by your instructor. To read the article, turn your survey packet over.
- Are there any questions before I pass the survey packets out?

After Survey Completion

- Thank you again for your participation today. Please pass all surveys, still face down, to the front of your row for pick-up.
- Have a great day!

Appendix G

Survey Participant Informed Consent Form



Informed Consent Form (Survey)

You are invited to participate in this research study because you are freshmen who completed high school during the previous school year. The following information is provided to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to participate. Your signature is not required because your consent to participate is implied through your completion and submission of the survey. This informed consent document is for you to keep for your own records. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher: Kali Fedor, (k.fedor@iup.edu or 570-599-5789), or the Dissertation Advisor, Dr. Kelli Jo Kerry-Moran (kjkmoran@iup.edu).

Purpose and Benefits of this Study:

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that impede the reporting of bullying instances that occurred during high school. During the survey, you will be asked to select answers to questions relating to your personal knowledge concerning bullying incidents. The information and data gained from this study may help high schools to encourage reporting of bullying incidents. You may experience personal satisfaction knowing that your responses can assist schools and teachers to better understand why students are not reporting experienced, witnessed, and/or known bullying incidents during high school.

Your Involvement in this Study:

If you choose to participate, completion of the survey will require approximately 10-15 minutes of your time. You can also self-select to submit your contact information to the researcher, on a separate sheet of paper, for potential selection to participate in an interview component (approximately 30 minutes) of this study and receive your choice of a gift card (\$25 maximum value) to either the university bookstore or Amazon as a token of appreciation for your time.

Potential Risks:

Participation in the study involves no risk beyond the minimal risks of the self-reported memories concerning bullying incidents the participants had knowledge of during high school.

Your Participation in this Study is Voluntary:

Your participation in this survey is voluntary and anonymous. It is your choice to participate or not. You can withdraw your voluntary participation at any time, up until the surveys are collected, by notifying the researcher verbally, drawing an 'X' or 'slash' across the page where you changed your mind, or by physically leaving the interview setting. If you request to withdraw from this study, all data collected from you will be destroyed. Since the survey is anonymous, no one, even the researcher, will be able to identify the participants based on the survey. If you choose to participate, all information provided in the survey will be kept confidential. None of your responses can be traced back to you. Your responses will be used as aggregate data, to be compared with other participants. The information obtained in the study may be published in academic journals or presented at academic meetings. The collected data will only be used for academic purposes.

If you are willing to participate in this study, your consent is implied through completion and submission of the survey to the researcher.

If you have any questions about the survey, you may contact the researcher and/or dissertation advisor using the email addresses listed below.

Kali Fedor
Doctoral Candidate
Indiana University of Pennsylvania - Department of Professional Studies in Education
k.fedor@iup.edu

Dr. Kelli Jo Kerry-Moran
Associate Professor
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kjkmoran@iup.edu

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724-357-7730).

Appendix H

The Reporting of Bullying Survey

Students have alternative ways of dealing with incidents of bullying in high school. To some extent, what is done depends on the circumstances in which the bullying takes place, and the severity of the bullying.

Instructions:

In this survey you will be asked to respond to questions about factors that may have impeded your reporting of bullying during high school. There are five parts to this survey A – E and should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

For the purposes of this survey, the following definitions for bullying and reporting are used.

Bullying: Includes elements of aggression with an involvement of unwanted or negative actions including an imbalance of power or strength that is repeated over time (Olweus 1978, 1993).

Reporting: Providing a detailed account of bullying to someone poised to aid in responding to the event (Olweus, 1993, 1999; PACER Center, 2010).

The Reporting of Bullying Survey – Part A

In this part, you will be asked some demographic questions.

4. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
5. What is your current year in college?
 - a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
6. How would you classify your high school (based on your graduation class size)?
 - a. Small (less than 250 total students)
 - b. Medium (250-500 students)
 - c. Large (over 500 students)
7. How would you classify your high school (based on the given definitions below)?
 - a. Rural – Settled places outside towns and cities, lower populations
 - b. Urban – Highly populated areas, with many buildings and businesses
 - c. Suburban – A residential area on the outskirts of a city

The Reporting of Bullying Survey – Part B

In this part, you will be asked about the reporting of bullying in your high school.

REMEMBER: For the purposes of this survey, the following definitions for bullying and reporting are used.

Bullying: Includes elements of aggression with an involvement of unwanted or negative actions including an imbalance of power or strength that is repeated over time (Olweus 1978, 1993).

Reporting: Providing a detailed account of bullying to someone poised to aid in responding to the event (Olweus, 1993, 1999; PACER Center, 2010).

8. Did you ever report an instance of bullying while in high school?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (Skip to Number 8)

9. What method did you use to report the bullying incident?
- Spoke to a teacher
 - Placed a note in the school's "bully reporting box"
 - Used the school's anonymous reporting system (phone, text, or online)
 - Called a national bullying hotline
 - Other: _____
10. Which type(s) of bullying were involved in the incident(s) you reported? (Select all that apply)
- Direct Bullying – Includes repeated physical and verbal attacks
 - Indirect Bullying – Spreading lies and rumors without direct contact that may damage a student's reputation or social standing
 - Cyberbullying – Sending, posting, or sharing of negative, false, mean, or harmful content about someone through various digital devices and online/social media platforms
11. During high school, what stopped you from reporting bullying instances? (Select all that apply)
- Nothing, I reported the bullying
 - Fear of retaliation
 - I didn't know the victim
 - The bully was a friend of mine
 - I only heard about it, but never witnessed it
 - I didn't believe it was any of my business
 - Nothing was done when others reported bullying to teachers or school staff
 - I didn't know how to file a report
 - Teasing is a normal part of high school life
 - Everyone knew, so I figured someone else would report it
 - I never experienced or witnessed bullying during high school
 - Other: _____
12. Out of the factors you selected above, which would you choose as the 'top' factor that affected your decision to not report bullying during high school? (Select only one response)
- Nothing, I reported the bullying
 - Fear of retaliation
 - I didn't know the victim
 - The bully was a friend of mine
 - I only heard about it, but never witnessed it
 - I didn't believe it was any of my business
 - Nothing was done when others reported bullying to teachers or school staff
 - I didn't know how to file a report
 - Teasing is a normal part of high school life
 - Everyone knew, so I figured someone else would report it
 - I never experienced or witnessed bullying during high school
 - Other: _____

The Reporting of Bullying Survey – Part C

In this part, you will be asked questions connected to the reporting of the different types of bullying.

REMEMBER: For the purposes of this survey, the following definitions for bullying and reporting are used.

Bullying: Includes elements of aggression with an involvement of unwanted or negative actions including an imbalance of power or strength that is repeated over time (Olweus 1978, 1993).

Reporting: Providing a detailed account of bullying to someone poised to aid in responding to the event (Olweus, 1993, 1999; PACER Center, 2010).

10. Which forms of bullying occurred in your high school? (Select all that apply)
- a. Direct Bullying – Includes repeated physical and verbal attacks
 - b. Indirect Bullying – Spreading lies and rumors without direct contact that may damage a student's reputation or social standing
 - c. Cyberbullying – Sending, posting, or sharing of negative, false, mean, or harmful content about someone through various digital devices and online/social media platforms
11. How likely were you to report an incident involving each of the following types of bullying?

	Definitely	Probably	Unsure	Probably Not	Definitely Not
Direct Bullying					
Indirect Bullying					
Cyberbullying					

The Reporting of Bullying Survey – Part D

In this part, you will be asked about relationships with the bully and reporting.

REMEMBER: For the purposes of this survey, the following definitions for bullying and reporting are used.

Bullying: Includes elements of aggression with an involvement of unwanted or negative actions including an imbalance of power or strength that is repeated over time (Olweus 1978, 1993).

Reporting: Providing a detailed account of bullying to someone poised to aid in responding to the event (Olweus, 1993, 1999; PACER Center, 2010).

12. In high school, if the bully was someone you didn't know, how likely were you to intervene?
- a. I definitely would
 - b. I probably would
 - c. I'm unsure, it would depend what happened
 - d. I probably would not
 - e. I definitely would not
13. In high school, if the bully was your friend, how likely were you to intervene?
- a. I definitely would
 - b. I probably would
 - c. I'm unsure, it would depend what happened
 - d. I probably would not
 - e. I definitely would not

14. What do you believe your role as a high school student was if you witnessed or knew about bullying that was occurring, regardless of whether you knew the bully and/or the victim?

	Always	Sometimes	Never
To get help			
To intervene and stop it			
To talk with the victim later about how to get help			
To leave the area and not get involved			

The Reporting of Bullying Survey – Part E

In this part, you will be asked about teachers and reporting.

REMEMBER: For the purposes of this survey, the following definitions for bullying and reporting are used.

Bullying: Includes elements of aggression with an involvement of unwanted or negative actions including an imbalance of power or strength that is repeated over time (Olweus 1978, 1993).

Reporting: Providing a detailed account of bullying to someone poised to aid in responding to the event (Olweus, 1993, 1999; PACER Center, 2010).

15. In your opinion, were teachers aware that bullying was occurring in the school?
a. Yes b. No c. Unsure
16. In your opinion were the teachers in your high school effective in responding to bullying?
a. Yes b. No c. Unsure
17. How effective were teachers in responding to incidents of bullying?

Extremely Effective	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Unsure	Somewhat Ineffective	Very Ineffective	Not Effective At All

18. If you experienced bullying during high school, did you or would you have confided in a teacher?
a. Yes b. No c. Maybe
19. If you experienced bullying during high school, did you or would you confide in any of the school personnel listed below? (Select only **one** answer)
- a. School Counselor
 - b. A specialty area teacher: Physical Education/Gym, Librarian, Music, Art, Foreign Language, etc.
 - c. Coach
 - d. Administrator: Vice-Principal or Principal
 - e. School Security Officer
 - f. Custodian
 - g. Support Staff/Teacher Aide
 - h. School Office Secretary/Assistant
 - i. I didn't feel like I could confide in any school personnel during high school
 - j. Other: _____

20. Among school personnel, who did you feel you could trust the most? (Select only **one** answer)
- a. Teacher
 - b. School Counselor
 - c. A specialty area teacher: Physical Education/Gym, Librarian, Music, Art, Foreign Language, etc.
 - d. Coach
 - e. Administrator: Vice-Principal or Principal
 - f. School Security Officer
 - g. Custodian
 - h. Support Staff/Teacher Aide
 - i. School Office Secretary/Assistant
 - j. I didn't feel like I could trust any school personnel during high school
 - k. Other: _____

Conclusion of Study

Thank you for participation in the survey.

If you indicated an interest to participate in an interview to share some additional information relating to bullying and reporting measures in your high school, you will be contacted by the researcher via email. Remember this interview may take approximately 30 minutes. All information will be kept confidential and you will receive a gift card for either the university bookstore or Amazon as a thank you for participation in the interview process.

Once again, I am grateful for your participation in my study. Thank you.

Appendix I

Email Contact Language for Interview Participants

After reviewing the informed consent documents from the administered survey, if there is an overwhelming interest to participate in an interview, the researcher will randomly select participants. The researcher will send an email to all students that provided an email with one of the following messages below.

1. Thank you for your interest in participating in an interview. As part of this research study, random selection was used to choose participants for this interview opportunity from those that identified an interest. However, at this time you were not randomly selected as a participant for an interview opportunity.

OR

2. Thank you for your interest in completing an interview. You have been randomly selected to participate in an interview. What is your availability this week (day and time) to conduct the interview with you?

Appendix J

Interview Participant Consent Form



Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Informed Consent Form (In-person Interview)

You are invited to participate in this research study because you are freshmen who completed high school during the previous school year. The following information is provided to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to participate. You will sign and return one copy to the researcher before starting the interview session and you will keep the other copy for your own records. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher: Kali Fedor, (k.fedor@iup.edu or 570-599-5789), or the Dissertation Advisor, Dr. Kelli Jo Kerry-Moran (kjkmoran@iup.edu).

Purpose and Benefits of this Study:

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that impede the reporting of bullying instances that occurred during high school. During the interview, you will be asked to provide memories relating to your knowledge concerning bullying incidents. The information and data gained from this study may help high schools to encourage reporting of bullying incidents. You may experience personal satisfaction from knowing your responses can assist schools and teachers to better understand why students are not reporting experienced, witnessed, and/or known bullying incidents during high school. Additionally, you are personally benefitting through the receipt of a gift card for your time responding to the interview questions.

Your Involvement in this Study:

Based on your completion of a survey and self-indicated interest to participate in an interview, the researcher has selected you to take part in the interview component of this research study. If you choose to participate in an interview, limited identifying information will be collected at the start of the interview process and it will require approximately 30 minutes of your time. All interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. Since the session will be audio recorded, it is requested that during the interview you refrain from using any identifying information during your responses to protect your identity. If at any time during the interview you decide to no longer participate in the study, all the information you provided will be destroyed. All information provided during the interview, including the audio recording and their transcripts, will be kept on a password-protected computer, accessible only to the researcher. All data collected and analyzed from individual interviews, will be assigned a code name to keep individual responses confidential in any presentation of data from the study. As a token of appreciation for your time and participation in an interview, you will receive your choice of a gift card (\$25 maximum value) to either the university bookstore or Amazon upon completion of the interview process.

Potential Risks:

Participation in the study involves no risk beyond the minimal risks of the self-reported memories concerning bullying incidents the participants had knowledge of during high school.

Your Participation in this Study is Voluntary:

Your participation in this interview is voluntary and confidential. It is your choice to participate or not. You can withdrawal your voluntary participation at any time by notifying the researcher verbally, in writing, or by physically leaving the interview setting. You can also withdrawal your voluntary participation from contacting the dissertation advisor. If you request to withdraw from this study, all data collected from you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information provided in the interview will be kept confidential. Your responses will be used as aggregate data, to be compared with

other participants. The information obtained in the study may be published in academic journals or presented at academic meetings. The collected data will only be used for academic purposes.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please read the statements below and place a 'check mark' or 'your initials' next to each statement. Then, print, sign, and date on the lines provided.

If you have any questions about the survey, you may contact the researcher and/or faculty sponsor using the email address listed below.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

_____ I have read and understand the information on the informed consent form and

_____ I consent to volunteer to be a subject in this study.

_____ I consent to being audio-recorded during this interview and understand that this audio recording and their transcripts will be kept on a password-protected computer, accessible only to the researcher.

_____ I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time.

_____ I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name: (PLEASE PRINT)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Kali Fedor
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Dr. Kelli Jo Kerry-Moran
Associate Professor
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This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone: 724-357-7730).

Appendix K

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Read to all participants: Thank you for volunteering for this interview opportunity. As a reminder before we begin, this interview session will be audio recorded for transcription. You have the right to opt out of this interview at any time without penalty and all your information will be destroyed. You have been provided with a pseudonym for use during the interview to protect your identity and confidentiality.

Demographic Questions:

13. Please state your pseudo name, age, and gender.
14. Would you classify your high school as small (less than 250 total students), medium (250-500 students), or large (over 500 students)?
15. Would you classify your high school as rural, urban, or suburban?

What factors do college freshmen recall as having impeded their willingness to report incidents of bullying in high school?

16. Were you or any of your friends involved in bullying instances? If so, please explain what happened.
 - a. How did you feel during this event?
 - b. Was this event reported to the school? Why or why not?
17. While in high school, did you ever report any other instances of bullying where you were not directly involved?
 - a. If yes:
 - i. Why did you decide to report the bullying?
 - b. If no:
 - i. Why didn't you report the bullying? Can you elaborate on why you didn't report, what stopped you?
18. During high school, from talking with peers, what are some other factors that may have affected other students' decision for whether or not to report bullying events?
19. Do you believe that high school students should be encouraged to report instances of bullying to the school? Why or why not?
20. Can you tell me your high school's definition of bullying?
21. Can you explain your high school's the bullying policy?

22. Do you think that a student's understanding of their school's definition of bullying, the bullying policy, and how to report bullying events would affect their decision for whether or not to report bullying events? Why or why not?

How does the form of bullying or uncertainty about bullying have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report incidents?

24. During high school, if you were going to report an instance of bullying, would the type of bullying (physical, verbal, social, or cyber) have an impact on whether or not you submit a report? Can you elaborate?
25. Please describe the bullying instances that you were aware of that took place in your school. Can you elaborate?
26. Did you ever report any of these instances that you knew were occurring in the school? Why or why not?

How does the relationship with a bully have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report incidents?

27. What do you believe your role as a high school student is when you witness or know about bullying that is occurring?
28. Do you believe your personal relationship, or lack thereof, with the bully affected your decision of whether or not to report the event? Why or why not?

How does a lack of trust in teachers and other school personnel have an impact on the willingness of high school students to report bullying incidents?

29. Explain your school's procedures for reporting instances of bullying?
30. Do you believe teachers are effective in responding to reported bullying events? Can you elaborate?
31. If you would confide in a teacher or school staff about something personal, such as bullying:
- a. Who would you confide in?
 - b. Why would you choose to speak to this person over someone else at the school?
32. How do you think teachers and other personnel should respond when a bullying event is reported? What steps should they take?
33. What else could school teachers and other personnel do to reduce bullying instances?

Conclusion of Study

21. Is there anything additional that you would like to share about what influenced your decision of whether or not to report instances of bullying during high school?

Read to all participants: Thank you for participation in the interview. As a reminder, this interview session was audio recorded for transcription. All of your information will be kept confidential. Just in case you need to speak with someone, this paper contains the information for your campus counseling center and help/hotlines for individuals affected by bullying. Once again, I am grateful for your participation in my study. Thank you.