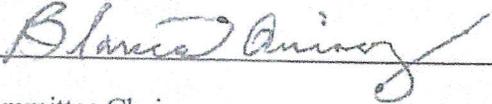
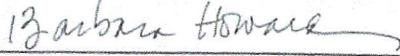
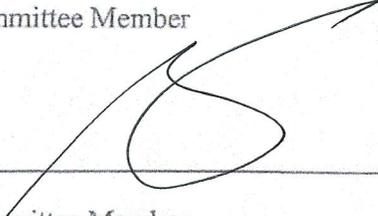


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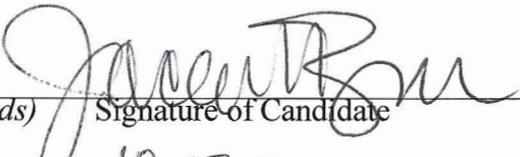
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PARENTS AND TEACHERS PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE PREVALENCE AND
PREVENTIONS OF CYBERBULLYING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

by

Jacqueline Brown

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for the
Degree of
Doctor of Education
in
Educational Leadership
February 2021

School of Education
Concordia University Irvine

ABSTRACT

Bullying has been a pervasive problem since the beginning of human history, however, with the advent and progression of technology, bullying has evolved. Cyberbullying is defined as “behavior performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicate hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others” (Akar, 2017). Unlike traditional bullying, those who use cyberbullying can reach their victims any hour, any day, and with complete anonymity. The purpose of this study was to investigate and compare parent and teacher perspectives regarding the prevalence and perceptions of cyberbullying. Participants included seventy-two parents who had children attending, and twenty-five teachers teaching at, elementary schools, middle and high schools, and colleges from around Southern California.

Child on child aggressive behavior is performed through verbal, physical, social, and/or cyber actions. Contributing factors which add to a youths antagonistic and sometimes violent attacks on another, and the consequences their actions have on their victim, are examined in this mixed-methods study. Using the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents and the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Teachers, the researcher used a combination of twenty-three quantitative linear scaled questions, two qualitative questions, and two qualitative statements, to analyze their prevalence and perceptions on cyberbullying.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Those that have read any of my papers know that I love quotes. As I type my final thoughts before closing this chapter of my life, I want to thank those who have assisted me in this journey, in my own special way.

Mama – You tell me how smart and special and beautiful I am in every single conversation we have. Mom you never let me doubt that I am truly loved.

“The giving of love is an education in itself.” Eleanor Roosevelt

Daddy – You are the one who talked me into going back to school to get my doctorate, (therefore this is all your fault), and never let me doubt myself. You are also the proof that there really are superheroes in this world.

“There are two ways of exerting one's strength: one is pushing down, the other is pulling up.”

Booker T. Washington

Richard – You have been with me through this entire journey; celebrating my acceptance into the doctorate program, traveling across the world to support me in Ireland, and throughout the highs and lows of this dissertation. Thank you for your love, and for your continual faith in me, even when I lose faith in myself.

“In all the world, there is no heart for me like yours. In all the world, there is no love for you like mine.” – Maya Angelou

“Love is when he gives you a piece of your soul that you never knew was missing.”

– Torquato Tasso

Dr. Quiroz – Thank you for being patient with me while I redid my dissertation, over, and over, again, and again. You traveled to Ireland to support me during my first conference presentation, so here is a quote from the Irish poet William Butler Yeats, who happens to be my favorite.

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” William Butler Yeats

Dr. Merwin – If I end up in Washington, DC I will only have you to blame. Thank you for introducing me to the idea of changing policy when the current laws are inadequate.

“When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps.” Confucius

Dr. Howard – The first time we met was during my preliminary defense. Thank you for jumping on board, providing support and ideas, and showing faith in a student with a dream.

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” Eleanor Roosevelt

Cohort 8 (aka: my ten editors, therapists, coaches, cheerleaders, sounding boards, and friends)

I could not choose just one quote, so these represent our journey together.

(Beginning) *The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential... these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence. Confucius*

(Middle) *That which does not kill us makes us stronger. Friedrich Nietzsche*

(End) *How did it get so late so soon? Its night before its afternoon. December is here before its June. My goodness how the time has flown. How did it get so late so soon? Dr. Seuss*

Dr. Collins – Thank you. You became my lifeboat when I was thinking about dropping out of the doctorate program after my fourth class, and never let me drown through ten classes and a two-year dissertation.

“When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on.” Franklin D. Roosevelt

Facebook Friends – When several school districts denied my requests to investigate cyberbullying, my friends through social media (ironically) answered my surveys and forwarded them to other people who met the criteria.

“Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light.” Helen Keller

ME – And my final quote as I take my leave from this journey...

“I’d rather take coffee than compliments just now.” Louisa May Alcott

CHAPTER 1

“My pain may be the reason for somebody's laugh. But my laugh must never be the reason for somebody's pain.”

Charlie Chaplin

Problem of Practice

Bullying has risen to an alarming frequency since the increase in social media usage. Worldwide, up to 45% of children have experienced some form of bullying, with cyberbullying escalating in recent years (Craig et al., 2009; Harcourt, Jasperse, & Green, 2014; Harel-Fisch et al., 2011). This is particularly prevalent in urban school districts and among students 12-18 years old (Calvet et al., 2016; Davis & Schmidt, 2016; Festl & Quandt, 2016; Garaigordobil & Machimbarrena, 2017; Guan, Kanagasundram, Ann, Hui, & Mun, 2016; Litwiller & Brausch, 2013; Pabian & Vandebosch, 2016; Paez, 2018). Research finds the effects of cyberbullying especially damaging for this age group, with higher incidences of depression and self-harm. Cyberbullying is harder to prevent than traditional bullying due to advances in technology and a lack of parental understanding in this area (Fousiani, Dimitropoulou, Michaelides, & Van Petegem, 2016). School districts are implementing new anti-bullying policies, but there is very little data to prove its effectiveness. On average, the state of California loses \$276 million each year due to absenteeism, with the attendance-based school funding program. One of the factors for students missing school is the fear of being bullied (Baams, Talmage, & Russell, 2017). The economic loss related to being targeted based on race or ethnicity, is an estimated \$78 million in unallocated funds (Baams et al., 2017). Bullying is taking a toll on children physically, emotionally, psychologically, and for our schools, financially.

Research Problem

In the United States, bullying is a persistent and prevalent problem found in schools nationwide. In 2015 a meta-analysis was conducted on forty-seven studies analyzing the relationship between bullying and suicidal ideation and behaviors. After conducting six different meta-analyses, their findings determined that “involvement in bullying in any capacity is associated with suicidal ideation and behavior” (Holt et al., 2015).

In 1978, Scandinavian researcher Dan Olweus created what has become an accepted definition of bullying: “A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself” (Bibou-Nakou, Tsiantis, Assimopoulos, Chatzilambou, & Giannakopoulou, 2012; Guan et al., 2016; Hong & Espelage, 2012; Letendre et al., 2016; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012; Thornberg, 2010). Many researchers have studied this phenomenon, learning the ramification a bully’s actions have on the victim and perpetrator. However, the world has changed drastically since 1978, and this also pertains to how bullies intimidate their victims. With modern laws unable to keep pace with modern technology, cyberbullying and the use of social media has become the norm to threaten and intimidate others. Bullying in the twenty-first century is more rampant than ever before.

Previous studies mainly focused on the long-term effects bullying has on children, and the fact that bullying does exist worldwide. These studies were often conducted through the lens of a psychologist, and do not necessarily include the perceptions of children, teachers, and/or parents. The majority of studies include a definition of bullying and provide an analysis of its meaning, although it is very rare for a researcher to ask the participants of a study what they believe or understand bullying and cyberbullying mean.

In this new era of technology, students are using electronic devices and outlets to conduct widespread victimization. Studies have shown that students victimized by others through traditional bullying and cyberbullying suffer long-term health effects including, but not limited to: anxiety, stress, depression, low self-esteem, increase in suicidal behaviors and ideation, self-harm and mutilation, absenteeism, academic and social problems, withdrawal from school activities, negative body image, eating disorders, substance abuse, self-alienation, stress-induced headaches and nausea, diminish self-worth, hopelessness, an overabundance of fear, and exhibit future bullying behaviors to others including violent retaliation (Akar, 2017; Calvete et al., 2016; Davis and Schmidt, 2016; Guan et al., 2016; Hutson et al., 2018; Notar et al., 2013; Paez, 2018; Schneider et al., 2013; Thornberg, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this explanatory mixed-methods study is to collect data on the phenomenon of cyberbullying and to investigate and compare the parent and teacher perspectives regarding the prevalence and perceptions of cyberbullying in Southern California. For the purpose of this study, the term cyberbullying will be defined as “any behavior performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicate hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others” (Akar, 2017).

Research Questions

The following questions will be addressed using quantitative and qualitative data:

1. What are the perspectives of parents and teachers regarding the prevalence of cyberbullying in a sample of schools in Southern California?
2. What are the perspectives of parents and teachers regarding the measures that have been taken for the prevention of cyberbullying in a sample of schools in Southern California?

3. How do parents' and teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying compare in various components of cyberbullying?

Theoretical Framework

General Strain Theory (reactive behavior), Social Cognitive Theory (learned behavior), and Ecological Systems Theory (environmental factors) are three theories that can explain bullying and they are the theoretical frameworks that will be used to explain bullying in the context of this study.

Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory (GST) is a sociological theory that focuses explicitly on a person's negative relationships with others, which is associated with criminal acts and delinquency. Theorists state that negative relationships often occur when an individual believes they are not being treated in the manner they feel they should be treated (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Cohen, 1955; Merton, 1938), and therefore they exhibit a reactive behavior. Often adolescents who engage in bullying behavior feel warranted when they do not feel an attachment to their families, school, or other aspects of the community; they have minimal monitoring by the adults in their lives; or lack any form of investment in their community (Agnew, 1992, p.49).

Robert Agnew (1992) adds to this explanation of General Strain Theory, stating that the individual may be experiencing a failure in achieving his or her goals, a lack of popularity and/or the inability to remove themselves from a legal or painful situation (p. 50). By engaging in delinquent behavior, such as bullying, the adolescent may seek to improve their circumstances by gaining power, respect, wealth, or an increase in status. In most cases the reward is immediate and provides a sense of control (Agnew, 1992, p. 51); however, the delinquency often occurs in order to eliminate the negative stimuli that is continual in their lives, and it therefore will ultimately fail, causing the delinquent behavior to continue (Berkowitz, 1982). There are

three major forms of delinquencies associated with General Strain Theory: (1) preventing an individual from achieving their goals, (2) remove or threaten to remove something of value to another, or (3) present, or threaten to present, a negative provocation (Agnew, 1992; Bandura, 1973; Hinduja and Patchin, 2007; Zillman, 1979).

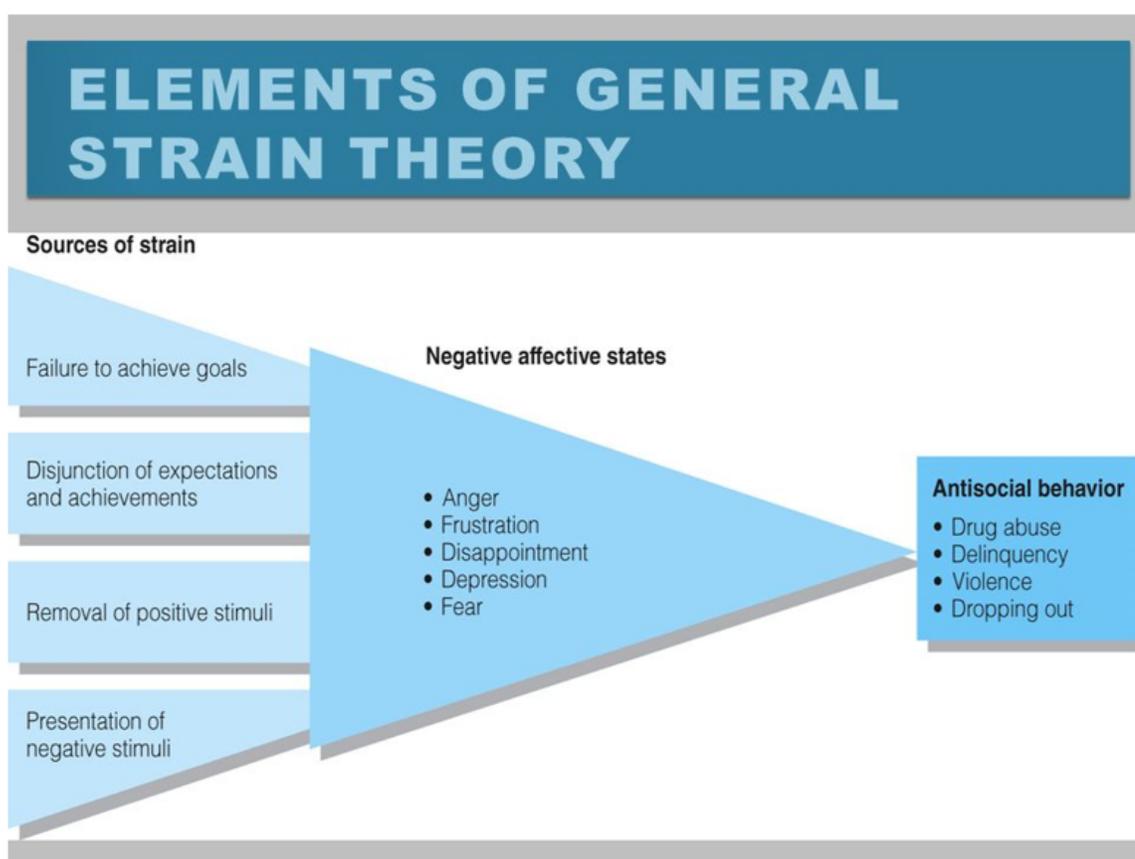


Figure 1. 1. Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory (Siegel, L. J., & Welsh, B. C., Sociological Views of Delinquency, SlidePlayer.com 2019)

As seen in Figure 1.1, the negative affective associated with General Strain Theory are anger, frustration, disappointment, depression, and fear. When an individual blames other people for their negative circumstances, the need for revenge will increase while their inhibitions decrease. It is easier to justify delinquent behavior when the fault is on another (Agnew, 1992; Averill, 1982; Berkowitz, 1982; Kluegel and Smith, 1986). Adolescents who are subjected to

strain are predisposed to delinquency (Agnew, 1992; Averill, 1982). Repeated exposure may cause an individual to develop a hostile and suspicious attitude toward others and reduce their ability to refrain from delinquent behaviors (Agnew, 1992; Bandura, 1986; Bernard, 1990; Edmunds & Kendrick, 1980). Sameer Hinduja and Justin W. Patchin, founders of the Cyberbullying Research Center, state that there is empirical support on GST as the theoretical framework involved with bullying. They have discovered a strong correlation between the concept of strain and antisocial behavior (Hinduja and Patchin, 2007).

Social Cognitive Theory, associated with psychologist Albert Bandura, is a learned behavior through continual observation. Youths who are by nature highly impressionable, model the behaviors that they see daily. Their perception and understanding of how to react, how to feel, how to think, and how to respond, contributes to the development on how they deal with aggression (Bandura, 1986; Espelage et al., 2018). As shown in Figure 2.1, Social Cognitive Theory demonstrates a strong connection between a child's personal factors, their environmental factors, and their behavior, which can combine to form aggression toward their peers (Bandura, 1986; Espelage et al, 2018; Perry-Parrish & Zeman, 2011). This inability to regulate emotions, added to a learned hostile behavior, can result in the bullying of others. This mixture of factors coalesces into how a child handles a situation to gain the result they desire.

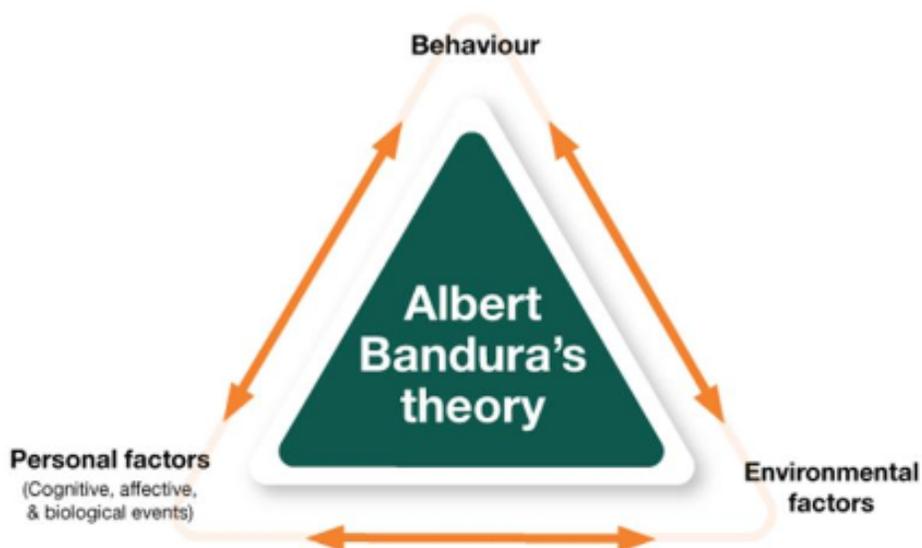


Figure 2. 1. Gillian, Conor (2017). Social learning: A retail case study. *Training Journal*.

Studies have shown that children raised in homes where domestic violence occurs, who socialize with peers who perpetrate violent acts on others or commit crimes, and/or live in neighborhoods where violence is a common occurrence, are more likely to replicate the behavior than those who are not exposed to these situations (Baldry, 2003; Bowers et al., 2009; Swearer, Wang, Berry, & Myers, 2014). Nevertheless, exposure to negative influences and interactions are not a prerequisite for aggressive behaviors.

Positive recognition for demonstrating behaviors that show cognitive decision making in a non-violent resolution helps facilitates the ability to decide, whether bullying is acceptable or not, and whether there will be rewards or consequences (Swearer et al., 2014). If the recognition is given by someone who is respected and/or admired by the child, particularly a family member or peer, that influential power will have a formidable effect on the child's social behavior (Swearer et al., 2014).

Therefore, a child can change their learned behavior, substituting the old negative behavior with a new positive one, by observing an individual who shows the youth how to act accordingly through actions and words (Bandura, 1986).

Psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner established the Ecological Systems Theory (EST), believing that a child's environment was the determining factor of their development.

Bronfenbrenner (as cited in Cherry, 2019) believes that,

...children typically find themselves enmeshed in various ecosystems, from the most intimate home ecological system to the larger school system, and then to the most expansive system which includes society and culture. Each of these ecological systems inevitably interact with and influence each other in all aspects of the children's lives ("Psychology Notes HG", 2020).

The Ecological Systems Theory, shown in Figure 3.1, revolves around the premise that problems involving bullying originate from interactions between a child and the environments they reside in, and whether aggressive behaviors are accepted as the norm (Bacchini, Esposito, & Affuso, 2009). Students' behavior is directly linked to bullying through two factors, (1) their influences and perceptions outside of the school, and (2) their influences and perceptions inside of school. The five systems of EST that surround a child have direct influence on who they become, the behaviors they exhibit, and the manner in which they respond to provocation.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

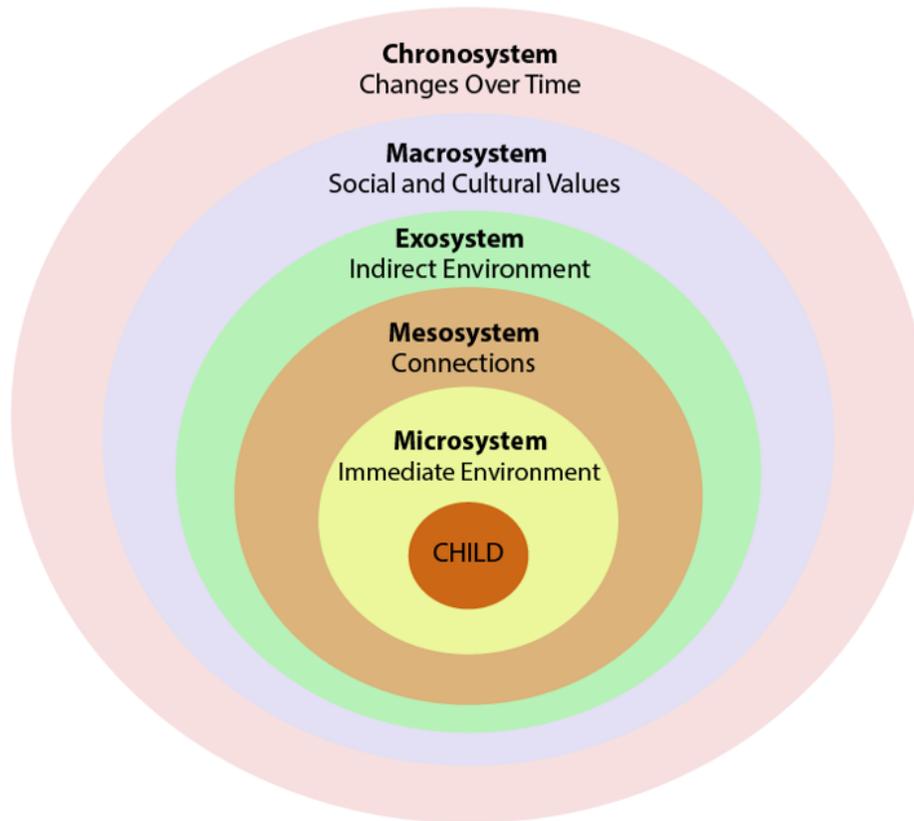


Figure 3. 1. What is Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory?

The first system in Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory is Microsystem, which involves the child's immediate environment, including family, friends, classmates, teachers, and anyone else who has direct social interaction with the child. The second system is Mesosystem. This system comprises connections that are made between the Microsystem and the Mesosystem, such as the relationship between the family and the school, and the family and the child's friends. The Exosystem is the third system in EST and consists of those with an indirect environmental relationship with the child. The parent's job, or lack of employment, parental arguments, and contact with extended family. System four, Macrosystem, refers to the social and cultural values of those in the child's household, the family's socioeconomic status, their ethnicity, and the

geographic location in which the child lives. The last circle of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory is Chronosystem. This system encompasses changes over time, including the effects of a divorce as the child ages, changes in their economic status, as well as state and federal laws. These variables, and more, relate to the Ecological Systems Theory and its correlation to bullying (Bacchini et al., 2009; Espelage et al., 2000; Schwartz and Gorman, 2003)

Significance of the Study

State and Federal policies tend to focus on liability and the repercussions once a newsworthy crisis has occurred. Research in this area tends to isolate the students, but preventing bullying needs to be a community approach. The significance of this study is to develop an understanding of cyberbullying using a sampling of schools in Southern California to obtain the parent and teacher perspectives regarding the prevalence and perceptions of cyberbullying. The implications of gaining their input will help delineate the role of adults in addressing this societal problem.

Definition of Terms

With the expansion of technology, and the increase of online harassment, new phrases, categories, and forms of violating another's rights and privacy, have also been invented. The following are definitions highlighting a portion of the terms used in cyberbullying:

Bash Boards: Online bulletin boards where children post negative and deprecating information about the target child (Nuccitelli, 2019).

Bullying: A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself (Olweus, 1978).

Bystander: Anyone who witnesses bullying, either in person or online; a spectator or onlooker.

Catfishing: Creating a fake identity online and using it to lure people into a relationship.

Covert Bullying: Can include repeatedly using hand gestures or threatening looks, whispering, excluding a person, restricting where a person can sit and/or who they are allowed to talk to.

Cyber Harassment: Generally defined as not involving a credible threat. Cyber-harassment usually pertains to unconsented conduct, such as threatening or harassing email/instant messages, or to blog entries or websites dedicated solely to tormenting an individual. Harassment does not include constitutionally protected activity or conduct that serves a legitimate purpose, i.e., free speech (Michigan Technical University, 2020).

Cyberbullicide: Suicide indirectly or directly influenced by experiences with online aggression (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Cyberbullying: Any behavior performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicate hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others (Akar, 2017).

Cyberstalking: Use of the Internet, email, or other electronic communications to stalk; generally, refers to a pattern of threatening or malicious behaviors, including communicating a credible threat of harm (Michigan Technical University, 2020).

Delinquency: Wrongful, illegal, or antisocial behavior.

Denigration: “Dissing” someone online. Sending or posting gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships (Notar et al., 2013).

Direct: Bullying not directly communicated to a targeted youth, such as spreading rumors.

Discrimination: Making a distinction in favor for or against a person based on the group, class, or category to which that person belongs rather than on individual merit.

Exclusion/Gossip Groups: Singling out and/or excluding an individual from a group. An online equivalent of relational bullying, the group then taunts the excluded person using the Internet or an electronic device (Notar et al., 2013).

Exposure: Tactic that includes the public display, posting or forwarding of personal communication, images, or video by another to target a specific person (Nuccitelli, 2019).

Falsify Identity: This occurs when the offender hacks another person's account and begins posting content or pictures aimed at causing embarrassment or damage to the victim's reputation, often resulting in isolating the victim from others (Notar et al., 2013).

Flaming: Corresponding through chat rooms, e-mail, and instant messenger via electronic communication. Flaming refers to arguments or messages that are supplemented with graphics, specific images, and harsh language to drive home a point (Notar et al., 2013).

Happy Slapping: The target child is physically attacked or embarrassed in person while an accomplice video records or takes pictures of the incident, then posts the images online (Nuccitelli, 2019).

Image Shaming (Body Bashing): Any form of mocking, bullying, or insulting comments focused on deviations from body or appearance "norms" (Center for Eating Disorders, 2011).

Indirect: Bullying that occurs in the presence of the targeted youth.

Intimidation: To make timid; fill with fear; to overawe or cow, as through the force of personality or by superior display of wealth, talent, etc.

Malicious Code Dissemination: Malicious information is sent intentionally to a target child to damage or harm their technology (viruses, spyware, hacking programs) (Nuccitelli, 2019).

Masquerading/Impersonation: Sophisticated form of cyberbullying in which an individual creates a false identity and harasses another while pretending to be someone else. Masquerading or impersonation can include theft of another person's login information to broadcast harassing or humiliating information about the target online (Notar et al., 2013).

Non-consensual Image and Video Dissemination: Images and videos of the target child are emailed to peers, while others are posted to online video sites (Nuccitelli, 2019).

Online Grooming: When a predator builds an online relationship with a child by giving compliments or a "shoulder to lean on" or sending gifts until the child trusts the predator (Notar et al., 2013).

Outing: An individual disclosing private information online to friends that is then disseminated over the Web through social websites and/or electronic device (Notar et al., 2013).

Overt Bullying: Involves physical actions such as punching or kicking or observable verbal actions such as name-calling and insulting (aka: traditional, direct, or physical bullying) (Bullying No Way!).

Phishing: An attempt to get your personal information by pretending to be a site you are familiar with or trust (Notar et al., 2013)

Physical Aggression: Behavior causing or threatening physical harm towards others. It includes hitting, kicking, biting, using weapons, and breaking toys or other possessions (Springer).

Relational Aggression: Nonphysical aggression towards another with the purpose of bringing down their reputation or social status or heightening one's own social status (study.com).

Relational Bullying/Social Bullying: Using social groups to hurt peers and the peer's standing within a group (BRIM, 2015); intentionally manipulate and damage the relationships of their victims (Lee, 2015).

Sexting: Sexting is sending sexually explicit messages via cell phone or instant messenger (Notar et al., 2013).

Slut Shaming: Videos and photographs are taken of the target child that can easily be construed as sexually provocative, then shared with others (Nuccitelli, 2019).

Voting & Polling Booth Degradation: Creating an online polling/voting booth that allows others to vote online for categories that are deemed highly embarrassing or hurtful by the target child (Nuccitelli, 2019).

Limitations

There were multiple factors that proved limitations which altered the initial intent of the researcher's investigation into the prevalence and perceptions of cyberbullying. The largest, and most challenging constraint was the reluctance of many school districts to grant permission for students to answer questions that focus on bullying and cyberbullying. The original topic of research triangulated the perceived prevalence and perceptions of students, teachers, and parents. Due to this barrier the researcher had to eliminate the portion of the study that would have gained the understanding and the perceptions of bullying from a students' point of view.

Another limitation for the researcher was that only self-reported data was collected using a questionnaire. Parents and teachers responded to questions regarding their prevalence and

perceptions of cyberbullying, Due to the sensitivity of the topic, their beliefs and attitudes would be included in their responses. The final limitation that the researcher faced was the size of the sample. Without the assistance of a specific school district, the researcher had to rely on their own ability to recruit participants. After creating an online post through social media, a single district was no longer needed. This provided a snowballing effect by participants forwarding the surveys to those they knew who met the participation requirements.

Delimitations

Although not having access to a district was problematic, using social media offered a larger range to gather participants and helped the generalizability of the findings. By the end of the allotted time the researcher provided for results to be submitted, seventy-two parent participants from twenty-one schools, and twenty-five teachers from six school districts throughout Southern California had answered the surveys.

Summary

In this chapter the researcher introduced the concept of bullying and the evolution of physical bullying into cyberbullying. Bullying is not a new occurrence; kings, rulers, and politicians have been breaking down their opponents to seek power since the beginning of civilization. However, advancements in technology have led to advances in bullying. Traditional bullying, which required face-to-face interaction, is now only one way bullies can reach their intended victims (Akar, 2017; Calvete et al., 2016; Davis & Schmidt, 2016; Guan et al., 2016; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008, 2009, 2013; Hutson et al., 2018; Notar et al., 2013; Paez, 2018;). Social media platforms and text messaging can be used to intimidate and harass anyone, at any time, with limited restraints. Research has been conducted on the effects bullying has on the victim, aggressor, and even the economy (Baams et al., 2017; Hong & Espelage, 2012; Mishna,

2004; Olweus & Limber, 2010; Patton et al., 2017; Side & Johnson, 2014; Thornberg, 2010, 2011), yet few studies have looked at the parent and teacher perspectives. The purpose of this study is to find the prevalence and perceptions of bullying throughout schools in Southern California's diverse ethnic and socio-economic population. The significance of this study is to develop a sense of community understanding of cyberbullying through parent and teacher input and begin to find solutions to this new era of bullying. Multiple theorists have delved into the concept of bullying, trying to explain and understand what causes a child to inflict physical and psychological pain on another, as well as how a child becomes a target for others to harass. The researcher chose three specific theoretical frameworks that together encompass the whole child including their reactive behaviors, their learned behaviors, and the environmental factors that affect their life.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The first researcher to discuss the phenomenon of bullying looked at the concept of mobbing, focusing on a group verbally or physically attacking an individual. It was not until 1978 when psychologist Dan Olweus expanded the definition to include the psychological and mental components of bullying, most often perpetrated by one individual to another (Olweus & Limber, 2010).

In 1998 Olweus once more expanded on his own definition to include that the behavior of the bully must be intentional and cause harm to another. This behavior must also be repetitive, occurring over time, and found in at least one of the four categories: physical, verbal, social, and the newly added category, cyber (Olweus & Limber, 2010). It was one year later that Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris walked into their high school in Littleton, Colorado and killed thirteen and wounded twenty before taking their own lives. The largest school massacre in United States history is known simply by the school's name, Columbine.

Researchers, psychologist, analysts, and profilers have investigated the world post-Columbine, trying to find the underlying factors that have led to the extreme violence perpetrated by children. Adults at both ends of the political spectrum, media outlets, and both advocates and protestors of the Second Amendment, have all pointed fingers and assigned blame, yet the number of school shootings have still increased. Ten years after Columbine, more than 288 school shootings occurred in the United States, which is "57 times as many school shootings as the other major industrialized nations combined" (Grabow & Rose, 2018). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), reported that 2018 was the year with the

highest amount and/or level of gun violence in the United States, including ninety-seven incidents which led to fifty-six deaths (NCES, n.d.).

An imbalance of power combined with the intent to hurt can cause devastating episodes of violence that Americans see too often on the news. Yet what is not being reported are the crimes that occur daily, to millions of children as they suffer in silence, and carry the pain and psychological damage inflicted on them, well into their adult lives without retaliating in a violent and public manner (Guan et al., 2016; Litwiller & Brausch, 2013; Mishna, 2004; Perren et al., 2012; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012).

The U.S. Secret Service defines school shootings as a "targeted incident of violence" which needs to be addressed in every school's safety plan; however, the number of shootings that have occurred are lower than the underlying issues that result in these displays of violence (Patch, 2019). The NCES reports on the increasing level of school shootings, puts these numbers into perspective in relation to other crimes on campus, "students are 15,000 times more likely to be the victim of theft or violence and 500,000 times more likely to be bullied than to be the victim of a school shooting" (NCES, n.d.).

As the phenomenon of bullying becomes more recognizable as a precursor to criminal and self-destructive behaviors (Agnew, 1992; Paez, 2018), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the United States Secret Service, and the National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) compile data concerns relating to the protection of America's schools. The latest report issued in November 2019, includes the United States Government's official definition: Bullying is any "unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children with an intent to do physical, social, or emotional harm; which involves a real or perceived power imbalance; and is, or could be, repeated" (Secret Service, 2019).

The National Education Association (NEA) proclaimed in 2019 that approximately 160,000 students refuse to go to school every day in the United States because of their fear of being bullied (National Education Association, 2019); but this number does not include those who are too afraid to report what is happening due to fear of retaliation, afraid that they will not be heard, or having the person they turn to not believe them (Letendre et al., 2016). The correlation between school shootings and a child that is being bullied is no longer just a theory but has been corroborated with statistical data provided by the National Threat Assessment Center (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2019):

- In 2017, approximately 16 percent of students in grades 9-12 admitted to carrying a weapon at least once during the last 30 days. Four percent of those students carried the weapon to school.
- In 2019, between one-quarter and one-third of students in the United States admitted to being bullied.
- In 2019, three-fourths of students and school employees (including teachers and administrators) reported witnessing bullying in the school.
- In 2019, 46 percent of victims had at least one parent aware that their child was being bullied.
- In 2019, 80 percent of victims stated that their aggressor was a classmate.

Dr. Joan Letendre of the University of Connecticut states poignantly that bullying, “not only compromises safety, but also affects students academically, physically, socially, and emotionally. The role of bullying in school shootings and highly publicized youth suicides has promoted legislation requiring schools to develop programs ensuring every child in a public school the right to learn without being teased, humiliated, or assaulted” (Letendre et al., 2016).

Modes of Bullying

Those who research the phenomenon of bullying behaviors most often use Olweus' categories of verbal, physical, social, and cyber (Guan et al., 2016; Hong & Espelage, 2012; Litwiller & Brausch, 2013; Olweus & Limber, 2010; Paez, 2018). However, within those four types of bullying there are multiple methods in which the aggressor may inflict harm, harass, or ostracize their victim. Traditional bullying is the overt, or direct, threat executed against another person. This is typically accomplished through verbal or physical actions. The more discreet aggressor may use a more covert approach of socially or verbally bullying their victim. This may include hand gestures or facial expressions meant to instill fear or threaten, or by purposely excluding them by instructing others to follow their actions. Covert actions are more difficult for the outsider to observe and, therefore, it is harder to hold the perpetrator accountable for this type of bullying.

Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying is a form of bullying where the aggressor uses words to inflict harm on their victim. This type of bullying can cause a stronger negative effect on self-esteem than traditional bullying, creating mental health issues that can affect confidence and undermines one's own abilities into adulthood. Verbal bullying includes: name calling, making threats, insulting another's physical characteristics, degrading a person based on their race, sexuality, or religion, taunting, teasing, spreading rumors, making inappropriate sexual comments, using hand gestures to instill fear or intimidate, or rejection in order to exclude (Bullying No Way!, n.d.; Don't Stick It, 2020; Harcourt et al., 2014; Hong & Espelage, 2012; Malian, 2012; Stop Bullying, n.d.).

Physical Bullying

Physical bullying is a term used when an aggressor uses their own physicality to intimidate or inflict harm on another (Don't Stick It, 2020). Physical bullying includes any kind of assault (pushing, hitting, shoving, kicking, striking), that is used to physically intimidate the victim with the threat of violence, including spitting on an individual, and taking or breaking another's possessions (Bullying No Way!, n.d.; Harcourt et al., 2014; Hong & Espelage, 2012; Litwiller & Brausch, 2013; Paez, 2018; Stop Bullying, n.d.). Just as with verbal bullying, physical bullying can cause mental health issues, as well as injury (Don't Stick It, 2020).

Social Bullying

Social bullying is a form of bullying where “the perpetrators try to isolate their victim from wider social networks” and/or “by ostracizing a person from a specific group, the perpetrator is reducing the opportunity for their victim to seek support” (Don't Stick It, 2020). Social bullying includes exclusion, spreading rumors, social isolation or exclusion from the group, using hand gestures to instill fear or intimidate, giving threatening looks, whispering, gossiping, restricting another's movements (where they sit, who they talk to), sharing information or images that will have a harmful effect, manipulating another, ruining another's reputation, or purposely embarrassing an individual (Bullying No Way!, n.d.; Stop Bullying, n.d.; Litwiller & Brausch, 2013; Paez, 2018).

Cyber Bullying

With the creation of social media, the newest form of bullying is cyberbullying. This type of intimidation is related to technology and is more challenging to seek assistance with. Aggressors can intimidate their victims at a safe distance, and with the ability to hide behind anonymity. Cyberbullying is any bullying that occurs through an electronic device, such as cell

phones, computers, and tablets. It may take place through text messaging, social media, message boards, apps, gaming, or any other program that people can view and participate in, or where content is shared. Cyberbullying includes “sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation” (Hutson et al., 2018; Litwiller & Brausch, 2013; Notar et al., 2013; Nuccitelli, 2019; Stop Bullying, n.d.).

Aggressors

If a child is happy, loved, has friends and positive role models, gets along with others, is finding success in life, and their basic needs are being met, they most likely will not turn any negative stimuli into anger and aggression toward others (Agnew, 1992). However, this scenario does not fit all children (Thornberg, 2010; Wright & Li, 2013). Children are forced to learn how to cope with negative emotions and situations that adults find challenging: loneliness, depression, resentment, pain, and seeing others accomplish their dreams. Children have less capability to reason, disassociate, and seek the necessary support needed. They often need to find a justification for their unhappiness, someone who is either weaker than they are, or someone they can blame for having what they want (Akar, 2017; Bibou-Nakou et al., 2012; Guan et al., 2016; Malian, 2012; Notar et al., 2013).

Agnew’s General Strain Theory (GST) explores children who internalize their anger, resentment and stress, proposing that “individuals who experience various forms of strains are more prone to develop negative emotions like anger and frustration that may lead to criminal or deviant behavior to mitigate those undesirable feelings” (Paez, 2016). According to GST, the anger, fear, and/or stress a child feels is the catalyst to the aggressive behavior which comes in the form of a reactive response known as Reactive Aggression. This is an impulsive and

immediate reaction to the negative provocation. When the child engages in maladaptive behaviors, even if they are done in a spontaneous and hasty reaction, the child is still aware of the pain and anguish they are causing their intended target (Nuccitelli, 2019).

The second form of aggressive behavior is Proactive Aggression, which is planned, with the anticipation of acquiring an award. This type of aggression is a form of domination and is calculated with a goal they want to obtain (Kempes et al., 2005; Stoltz et al., 2016; Vitaro et al., 2006). This premeditated intention illustrates a more profound form of aggression and strongly correlates to the child who has moved past the immediate reward, and whose criminal and delinquent behavior is calculated and deliberate. Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory states that bullying is a learned behavior. Proactive Aggression is an intentional action which requires cognitive understanding of their activities, which were taught through observation and interaction with another aggressor (Kempes et al., 2005; Stoltz et al., 2016; Vitaro et al., 2006).

Children who show aggression toward another, repeatedly, and with the intent to cause harm or distress, are considered bullies. However, there is another subgroup of children known as Bully-Victims who experience victimization and in retaliation they become bullies themselves (Pouwels et al., 2016, p. 54). In a large-scale study of 19,869 students, ages 7-15, researchers Yang and Salmivali proved their theory that bully-victims are often boys, found that they are more prevalent in elementary school than middle school, and are less adept to regulating their emotions. These children are often more impulsive, show a stronger reactive form of bullying, and are at a greater risk for delinquency than other children their age (Schwartz et al., 2001; Yang & Salmivali 2013). Social-Ecological issues can create bully-victims by the reactions of others within their lives. Children and adolescents who bully others or who are the victims of a bully will unsurprisingly be treated differently in their multiple environments: home, school,

community activities (church, sports teams, clubs) (Swearer et al., 2009), even if these perceptions are misinterpreted.

Contributing Factors and Consequences of Aggression

There are multiple factors that might contribute to the transformation of a child into an aggressor/bully: the need for the admiration of peers, aggression, advancement in social hierarchy, disengagement, the need to obtain dominance, lower level of empathy, exposure to violence (in the home, neighborhood, video games), low amount of parental control, social exclusion, parental unemployment or even retaliation for being bullied themselves (Akar, 2017; Bibou-Nakou et al., 2012). One of the most prominent factors is the desire for peer acceptance and admiration (Guan et al., 2016; Malian, 2012).

Research shows that aggressors who are predominately liked by others, who are considered attractive, and who have a high status among schoolmates, are more likely to engage in Proactive Aggression. By spreading rumors or ostracizing others, they maintain their hierarchy in a non-violent manner (Cillessen & Rose, 2005; Currie, Kelly & Pomerantz, 2007; Puckett et al., 2008). Whereas aggressors who are on the lower end of the hierarchy, are considered unattractive, and are not as well liked as their peers, will show Reactive Aggression due to their treatment and/or circumstances (Dodge, 1991; Lochman & Dodge, 1998; Stoltz et al., 2016).

However, bullying another does not eliminate the negative stimuli and often more aggression is applied. Finding a sense of power in their victims' pain and silence, the torment continues until someone breaks the cycle (Bibou-Nakou et al., 2010). Unfortunately, the breaking of this cycle often ends in extreme violent incidents, like school shootings and suicides that have occurred in the United States (Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012). As with every negative action, there is a negative consequence. In addition to finding a person to target their anger and

aggression toward, bullies often hurt themselves. “Students who initiate bullying will be at a higher risk of developing criminal behavior as compared to other young adults. Bully-victims are the most at-risk group regarding the development of psychological problems and poor social adjustment” (Thornberg, 2010). As well as criminal behaviors, they are more prone to drinking, smoking, drug use, anti-social behaviors, vandalism, dropping out of school, self-mutilation and suicidal ideation and attempts (Bibou-Nakou et al., 2012; Guan et al., 2016; Malian, 2012; Notar et al., 2013; Paez, 2018; Perren et al., 2012) Evidence has linked the anti-social and psychological problems that children develop in their youth to long-lasting emotional and relational issues into adulthood (Bibou-Nakou et al., 2012; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Perren et al., 2012; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012).

Victims

Why are children targeted by an aggressive personality? Multiple studies and theories have investigated what characteristics make a person the focus of another’s anger. The correlation between perceived self-blame and self-perception, to victimization by peers, display a major factor in the development of a victim. In 1958 Psychologist Fritz Heider introduced his idea of Attribution Theory. This idea is concerned with how people explain the cause of behaviors and events. For example, a boy is walking down the hallway at school carrying a pile of books, another boy knocks the books out of his hands. How does the first boy internalize the situation? Does he contribute it to the other boy being a jerk? Having a bad day? Or something that he believes is negative self-perception? (Graham & Juvonen, 1998; McCleod, 2012). Sandra Graham states that,

From an attributional perspective, characterological self-blame is internal to the person, stable over time, and relatively uncontrollable. It is as if the victim is saying to himself, ‘It’s

something about me; things will always be that way, and there is nothing I can do about it' (Graham, 2016).

Bullying constitutes an imbalance of power between the bully and their victim. There are physical, mental, and academic consequences to both parties involved. As with the aggressor, the victim's psychological factors related to the negative interactions can come from a multitude of reasons and have a long list of ramifications (Kennedy et al., 2012).

Contributing Factors and Consequences of Victimization

Although no psychologist or researcher can distinguish the exact trigger that changes someone into a target of another individual, multiple factors have been identified as similarities among victims. Studies have shown that children with mental health problems, such as an increased attention and hyperactivity disorders, "increase the risk of being bullied. This could perhaps be due to behavior that irritates or provokes other children" (Beckman, Svensson, & Frisen, 2016). Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory states that behaviors are learned through life's experiences. These self-learned perceptions can be reinforced with the attention of an aggressor. Those that have "individual personality characteristics (e.g., shyness, social skills deficits) that influence how their social development will progress as they enter different social contexts" are often identified as common victims of bullying and will "exacerbate or minimize the development of bullying perpetration" (Swearer et al., 2009). Therefore, children that have defects in their social skills can minimize the effect that a bully has on them. It is also determined that how a child responds to their victimization will contribute to whether the bullying continues.

Families have been identified as to being a major socialization factor in the development of children. It is through parents and caregivers that children learn how to regulate emotions,

how to negotiate conflicts, how to develop problem-solving skills, and how to interact in the world (Swearer et al., 2009). Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and Ecological Systems Theory (EST) both acknowledge the importance of the child's immediate environment in developing the necessary skills needed for a child to relate to the world. Although family dynamics vary, positive and negative experiences will contribute to the emergence of aggressive or passive responses to stressful situations (Swearer et al., 2009). Baldry and Farrington state that children who become bullies often have parents who are more authoritarian, approve of retaliation to settle arguments, and use physical punishment at home. They tend to provide less affection, lack family cohesion, and have a high level of conflict in the home (Baldry & Farrington, 2000; Swearer et al., 2009).

Unfortunately, victimization is often a social activity. As with all peer groups, common behavioral characteristics attract individuals to socialize, and bullies engage in offensive and destructive behaviors to maintain status and popularity among friends (Olweus, 1978; Olweus & Limber, 2010; Swearer et al., 2009).

Research shows that there are many physical characteristics and personal beliefs that can make a person become a victim to an aggressive perpetrator. Some of the characteristics identified are race, gender, religion, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, clothing, appearance, weight (over or under), less attractive, height, poverty, social awkwardness, speech impediment, etc. (Calvete et al., 2016; Garaigordobil & Machimbarrena, 2017; Letendre et al., 2016; Malian, 2012; Notar et al., 2013; Olweus & Limber, 2010). These are just a few justifications a person may use to bully another. There are no standard factors that make a person a victim, only the perpetrator knows the real reason why they concentrate their aggression on a specific person.

Understanding the justification behind one individual's aggression toward another is all based on self-reported data. Researchers and psychologist collect information, examine the material, and look for commonalities and characteristics made public knowledge. Additional issues that have been documented with bullying included the physical, psychological, educational, and behavior problems related to being a victim.

Psychologist Naomi Eisenberger examined neuroimages of victimization in terms of social exclusion. Her documented research suggests that “experiences of social pain – the painful feelings associated with social disconnection – rely on some of the same neurobiological substrates that underlie experiences of physical pain” (Eisenberger, 2012). Physical health problems linked with peer harassment include sleeping disorders, stress-induced headaches and nausea, anxiety, chronic stress, and altered cortisol levels (Akar, 2017; Calvete et al., 2016; Graham, 2016; Guan et al., 2016; Letendre et al., 2016; Paez, 2018).

Long-term consequences of being a victim of bullying have been associated with several severe mental health conditions. Psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety, anorexia, and low self-esteem, have been linked to adult mental illness (Beckman et al., 2015). The continuation of victimization can result in withdrawal from family, school and friends, trouble with concentration, self-destructive behaviors, ill-formed social development, suicidal ideation, and suicidal intentions (Akar, 2017; Calvete et al., 2016; Guan et al., 2016; Letendre et al., 2016; Paez, 2018).

For many children, school is a place where they feel welcomed and safe, yet for those that associate school with victimization, they not only suffer from health concerns but academic problems as well. Absenteeism, a decline in academics, and high rates of dropping out of school, have a high regularity among victims (Akar, 2017; Calvete et al., 2016; Guan et al., 2016;

Letendre et al., 2016; Paez, 2018). Research shows that “the negative relation between being bullied and academic achievement is evident as early as kindergarten and continues into middle school and high school” (Graham, 2016). Bully-victims, children who are aggressive to others, while being victimized themselves, are reported to have lower grades and classroom engagement than other students (Swearer et al., 2009). A direct correlation has been discovered between being a bullied and excessive trouble in school, suspension, and disciplinary transfers (Gastic, 2008).

Divergent behaviors may develop due to victimization: internalized or externalized. Children who internalize the pain of harassment and react to their sense of powerlessness with self-harm, mutilation, alienation, and suicidal attempts (Akar, 2017; Calvete et al., 2016; Guan et al., 2016; Letendre et al., 2016; Paez, 2018). Other children resort to aggressive behaviors to externalize the anguish, resulting in truancy, theft, vandalism, delinquency and criminal associations and activities (Gastic, 2008; Sansone et al., 2013). Studies show that those that externalize their victimization were at a greater risk of carrying a weapon and found justification in their belief of a violent retaliation toward their aggressor (Sansone et al., 2013). The U. S. Secret Service’s National Threat Assessment Center reports that “two-thirds of the (school) shooters reported feeling bullied, persecuted, or threatened by others prior to the shooting” (Kennedy et al., 2012).

The emotional and psychological health problems a victim suffers continue into early adulthood, and if not treated or addressed, can affect the rest of their lives (Davis and Schmidt, 2016; Garaigordobil & Machimbarrena, 2017; Hutson, 2018; Side & Johnson, 2014; UPI., 2018) Bullying is a problem that affects the health and wellbeing of thousands of children each day in

schools across the United States (Baams et al., 2017; Craig et al., 2009; Harcourt et al., 2014; Harel-Fisch et al., 2011; Holt et al., 2015; Letendre et al., 2016).

The Influence of Adults

How children react to aggressive behavior is a learned response, shaped by observing the social behaviors of caregivers in their lives (Bandura, 2001). Parents' and teachers' perspectives have been associated with children's understanding of relational and physical aggression (Swit et al., 2017). When a negative behavior is executed, does the caregiver react with punishment? Do certain behaviors warrant punishment, and other acceptance? Establishing these patterns at an early age determines the child's development (Swit et al., 2017). Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory concludes that children internalize adults' reactions to negative behaviors, and are more acceptable of relational aggression, than they are with physical aggression (Bandura, 2001; Harcourt et al., 2014; Swit et al., 2017). In other words, if a child physically assaults another for wanting to play with their toy, caregivers find this form of aggression unacceptable. If a child tells another, they will no longer be their friend if they do not give them the toy, caregivers often ignore this manipulative behavior, which inadvertently conveys this aggression as acceptable (Swit et al., 2017). Harcourt, Jasperse, & Green state that:

The social-ecological systems perspective proposes that social behavior patterns, such as bullying, are influenced by a range of social and environmental conditions, dynamics, and experiences. This perspective, influenced by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, suggests that bullying is a complex phenomenon involving the interaction of individuals, their families, schools, and wider communities (2014).

The Parental Factor

Research into bullying has yielded three specific correlations between families of children who bully, children that are victims, and children that are bully-victims. Meta-analysis has shown that parental unawareness, home environment and parenting styles, and acknowledgement of responsibility, play key roles in determining the degree of bullying and the repercussions to all involved (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Harcourt et al., 2014; Lereya et al., 2013).

Studies have discovered a strong discrepancy between the number of children who have reported experiences of being bullied, and the number of parents who were aware that their child was being affected by bullying. Matsunaga (2009) found that the “information gap” between children and parents provided an “unignorable risk factor because parents cannot render support for their bullied children if they do not know of the need for such support in the first place” and that this understanding “is the rule, rather than the exception (p.223). Unawareness of the incidents of bullying (whether their child is the bully or victim) was shown to exist in half the parents who participated in the 2005 study by Fekkes, et al. The poor child-parent communication denies the families the opportunity to provide emotional support, and the chance for a quick resolution.

Family support significantly reduces anxiety, assists in developing coping skills that lessen the psychological repercussions, and begins the understanding of conflict resolution (Hunter and Borg, 2006; Hunter et al., 2004; Matsunaga, 2009). Children who had a “high parent involvement and support, warm and affectionate relationships, and good family communication and supervision were significantly likely to protect children and adolescents against peer victimization” (Harcourt et al., 2014), while those children who were lacking strong parental

relationships, live in homes where abuse is witness or received, and experience neglect, would fear the repercussions within the home for coming forward (Harcourt et al., 2014; Lereya et al., 2013; Matsunaga, 2009; Swit et al., 2018).

In addition to the support a child receives in the home, research denotes the way parents approach provocations determines the child's resiliency when being bullied. Studies indicate that parents who believe that bullying is inevitable, and part of growing up (Sawyer et al., 2011; Harcourt et al., 2014) and are inconsistent in how they discipline aggressive behaviors or choose not to punish those actions, in fact reinforce those behaviors (Nelson & Crick, 2002; Swit et al., 2018). Parents who provide a positive home atmosphere tend to engender an open and trusting environment are "predicted fewer emotional and behavioral problems in children who had been bullied, compared to those who had not" (Harcourt et al., 2014).

The third correlation between families and children were the parents' perspectives as to who was responsible for handling the issue of bullying: parents or schools. Harcourt, Jasperse, and Green, (2014) found that the general belief among parents was that schools should be doing more to prevent bullying and respond when bullying occurs (Brown, 2010). They also discovered that parents have a "tendency not only to normalize bullying, but to place the problem of bullying, and the responsibility for fixing it, back on the victim" (Brown, 2010; Harcourt et al., 2014).

The Teacher Factor

Besides the family, the teacher, or teachers, is the primary caregiver in a child's daily lives. A teacher's beliefs and their attitudes toward bullying all make an impact in shaping their students' beliefs and attitudes as well. Research shows that students who develop a positive and supportive relationship with their teachers are more likely to become willing to follow their rules

and expectations. This will lead to a decrease in behavioral issues since they will have a sense of belonging with their classmates (Ertesvag, 2016). Sigrun K. Ertesvag (2016) investigated teacher-student relationships and their perspectives on bullying. He noted that,

A teacher's ability to support social and emotional functioning in the classroom is, therefore, central to any conceptualization of an effective classroom. Children and adolescents who are more motivated and more connected to others are much more likely to establish positive developmental trajectories in both social and academic domains (p.828).

Due to the immense influence teachers wield in the classroom, their perspectives on bullying, and how they handle situations regarding bullying, are detrimental to students understanding of their own actions and how to conduct peaceful conflict resolution. It is also found that those teachers who do not have a positive and friendly relationship with their students, and/or those who tend to ignore aggressive behaviors in the classroom, have an increase in bullying behaviors and have less students willing to come forward to seek help (Ertesvag, 2016; Kennedy et al., 2012). Therefore, students who receive less emotional support from their teachers, and feel that there is very little classroom management and backing of the rules and appropriate behavior, will find an increase in aggressive behaviors within the classroom (Ertesvag, 2016; Kennedy et al., 2012).

Not only are the teacher's perspectives and attitudes toward bullying important, the school climate and the implementation and follow through of the rules and policies are as well. These beliefs will convey to children how the adults around them handle aggressive behaviors and shape their perception as to whether they will be supported for coming forward or if the situation will only become worse (Ertesvag, 2016; Kennedy et al., 2012; Harcourt et al., 2014;

Swearer et al., 2009). In the book, *Bullying Prevention, and Intervention: Realistic Strategies for Schools*, by Swearer, Espelage, and Napolitano, reported in 2009 that:

Bullying tends to be less prevalent in classrooms where most children are included in activities, teachers display warmth and responsiveness to children, and teachers respond quickly and effectively to bullying incidents. Furthermore, when school personnel tolerate, ignore, or dismiss bullying behaviors, they are conveying implicit messages about values that victimized students internalize. Additionally, students who bully others tend to do so when adults are not around (p.24).

In Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, a child's perspectives and understanding of the world is greatly influenced by the family, and those that have the greatest amount of contact with the child, schools. Positive student-school and parent-school relationships are associated with "lowered risk of student substance abuse, truancy, and other acts of misconduct" (Swearer et al., 2009). Yet, regardless of the amount of influence a teacher has on their students, eliminating or escalating aggressive behaviors in children, very little training has been afforded to teachers on how to handle bullying situations (Ertesvag, 2016; Kennedy et al., 2012; Swearer et al., 2009).

School districts are required by state law to have an anti-bullying policy in place; however, this requirement does not make staff development training and workshops mandatory. Teachers' and administrators' agreed implementation of any anti-bullying program is essential to create a collegial climate, where students find a cohesive and consistent culture where bullying and aggressive behaviors are deemed unacceptable.

The Consequence of Suicide and Suicidal Ideation

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) published a booklet entitled, “The Relationship Between Bullying and Suicide: What We Know and What it Means for Schools” (2014). This public resource states that:

“(1) We know that bullying behavior and suicide-related behavior are closely related. This means youth who report any involvement with bullying behavior are more likely to report high levels of suicide-related behavior than youth who do not report any involvement with bullying behavior; (2) We know enough about the relationship between bullying and suicide-related behavior to make evidence-based recommendations to improve prevention efforts” (CDC, 2014).

Findings prove that suicide is one of the greatest risk factors for children who suffer from bullying and cyberbullying. In a large-scale meta-analysis of forty-seven studies involving bullying and suicide, researchers concluded that “involvement in bullying in any capacity is associated with suicidal ideation and behavior” (Holt et al., 2015). Not only are the victims of bullying vulnerable, but the perpetrators and bully-victims are also at risk from the devastating and permanent damage created by bullying and susceptible to the idea of suicide as an escape.

Suicide is the act of purposely ending one’s own life. The World Health Organization estimates globally that approximately 800,000 people die each year by taking their life, which is twice the number of people who die by homicide. That is one death every forty seconds (Ritchie et al., 2015; AACAP, 2018). In 2014, the Center for Disease Control reported that suicide was the third leading cause of death among youths ages 10-24 (Williams et al., 2017). Two years later in 2016, it had become the second leading cause of death in youths 15-19, the first being accidental deaths (Heron, 2016). After an additional two years, in 2018 suicide remained the

second leading cause of death, however the increase in the rate of deaths has accelerated (Chatterjee, 2019).

While bullying does not necessarily lead to suicide it has been identified as a contributing factor. Fifteen years ago, Dr. Sameer Hinduja and Dr. Justin W. Patchin founded the Cyberbullying Research Center, and are considered experts in their field consulting schools, districts, companies, international organizations, and members of the United States government. Throughout their careers, Dr.'s Hinduja and Patchin have conducted multiple studies to identify the correlation between school bullying and cyberbullying victimization, and adolescent suicide rates and suicidal ideation. In 2018 Dr. Hinduja and Dr. Patchin released his latest report noting two significant findings:

Students who experienced only school bullying or only cyberbullying were about 1.6x significantly more likely (for each) to report suicidal ideation. Students who experienced both forms of bullying, however, were more than 5x as likely to report suicidal ideation (Hinduja & Patchin, 2018, Cyberbullying Research Center)

Those who experienced only school bullying or only cyberbullying were at no greater risk for attempted suicide, while those who experienced both forms of bullying were more than 11 times as likely to attempt suicide compared to those who had not been bullied. (Hinduja, 2018, Cyberbullying Reacher Center)

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychology defines suicide as a mental disorder often associated with depression, anxiety, and those with attention and hyperactivity challenges. These are all treatable conditions with proper diagnosis, however, suicide attempts among children and teens are often the result of impulsivity (AACAP, 2018). Figure 4.1 provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is a representation of children

diagnosed with depression, anxiety, and/or a mental disorder. However, this does not illustrate children that have gone undiagnosed.

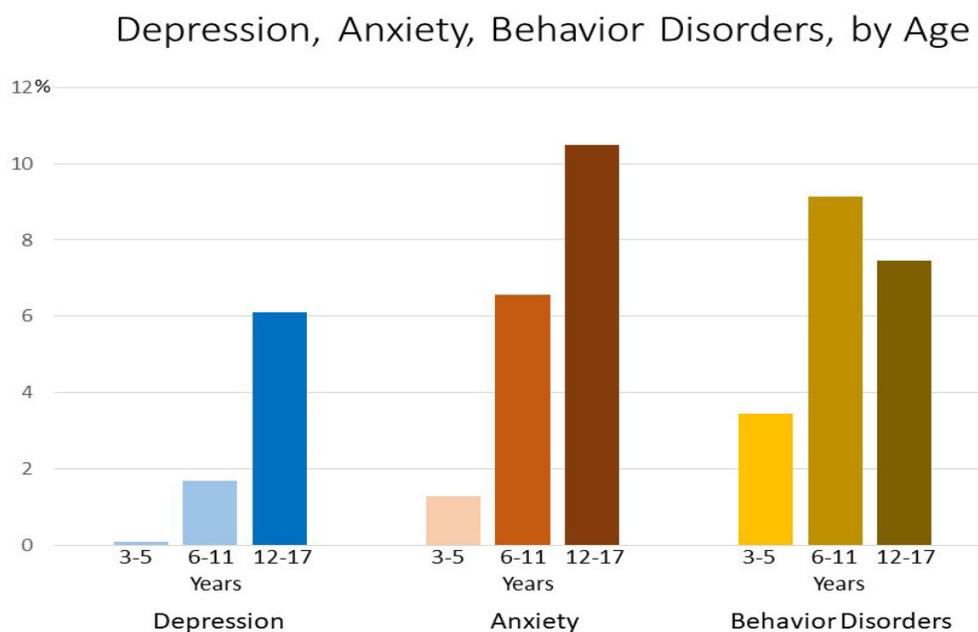


Figure 4. 1. Childhood Depression, Anxiety, and Mental Disorders by Age (CDC, 2020).

Risk factors correlated with childhood suicide and suicidal ideation are not only linked to mental disorders, but also associated to external factors such as an exposure to violence, the death of a family member or friend, easy access to firearms in the home, feelings of rejection, and bullying and cyberbullying (AACAP, 2018; Dickerson-Mayes et al., 2014). Figure 5.1 contains a brief illustration of how those tormented by bullying/cyberbullying can end with suicide, regardless of their age.

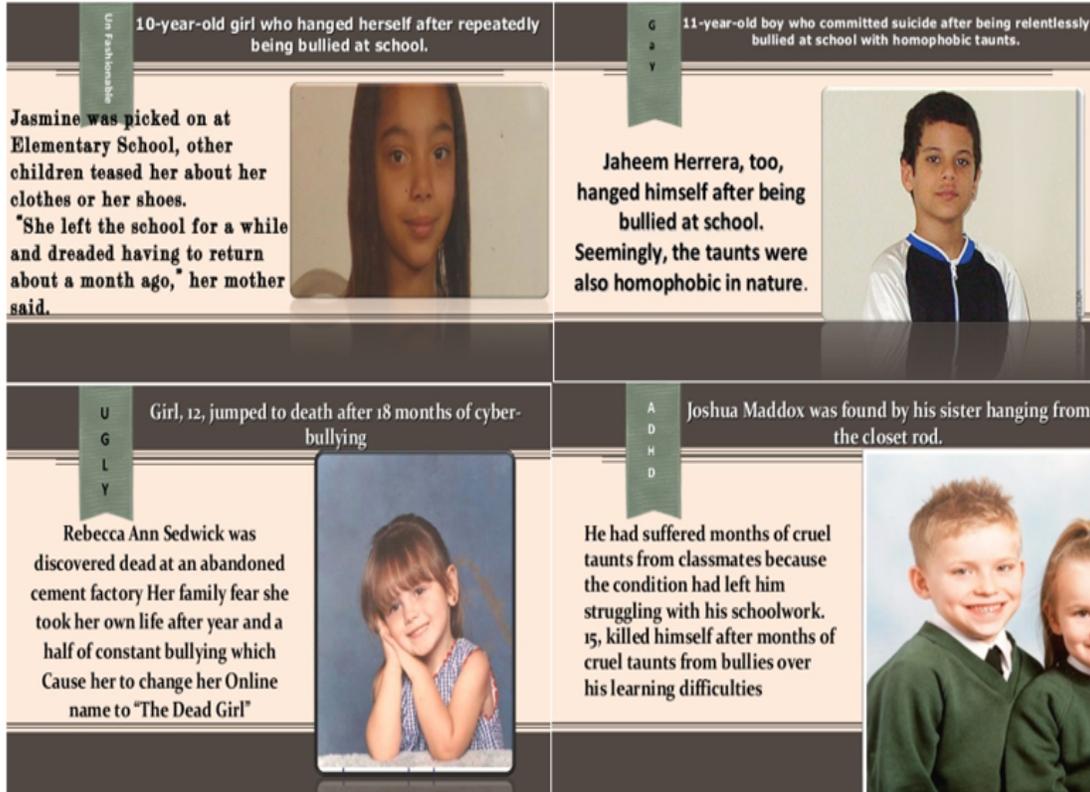


Figure 5. 1. IN SlideShare: Children committing suicide over bullying at younger and younger ages. (2019). LinkedIn Corporation.

For those who research and study bullying in any form will recognize the name Megan Meier. In October 2006, at the age of thirteen, Megan hung herself in her family's home in Missouri. She had formed a friendship with a boy online through a social media site called MySpace, and for over six weeks she shared her thoughts, feelings, doubts, and joys. In October, "Josh" her online friend, turned hateful and started sending cruel comments, ending with the post "The world would be a better place without you" (Malone, 2007). It was later discovered that the boy did not exist and was the creation of a neighbor, a fifty-year-old woman, who had a daughter Megan's age. She was not prosecuted in Megan's death, and no one was held responsible. The

police, prosecutors, and the FBI, said that no laws were broken (Malone, 2007; Megan Meier Foundation, n.d.).

Although progress is made in bullying prevention and intervention, after the spotlight fades the idea of children committing suicide becomes once again obscure. Until another child makes the headlines. Four years after Megan, in January 2010, 15-year-old Phoebe Prince, from Massachusetts, hung herself after allegedly being raped and harassed in person and online by classmates. Unlike Megan Meyer's death, the outcome following Phoebe's suicide was different. Nine children were indicted: seven girls and two boys. The offenses ranged from statutory rape, violation of civil rights with bodily injury, criminal harassment, and stalking (Oliver, 2010).

Technology changes daily, while changing policy and law takes time. The legal system is facing a new era of children harassing and tormenting others while confined with strictures and antiquated regulations that have not caught up to this new 21st century form of bullying.

Law and Policy

As educators, as state and local officials, and at the federal level, we simply have not taken the problem of bullying seriously enough...It is an absolute travesty of our educational system when students fear for their safety at school, worry about being bullied or suffer discrimination and taunts because of their ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability or a host of other reasons. The fact is that no school can be a great school until it is a safe school first (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). – Former Education Secretary Arne Duncan

Federal Law

There is no federal statute directly addressing the issue of bullying or cyberbullying. However, if harassment occurs due to race, ethnic origins, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation or disability, it can be deemed as a crime violating the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 (Cyberbullying Research Center, n.d.; Donegan, 2012; Green, 2016; Notar et al., 2013; Stop Bullying, n.d.; United Advocates for Children and Families, 2018). The federal government does allow schools to discipline students for “off-campus behavior that results in a substantial disruption of the learning environment at school” (Cyberbullying Research Center, n.d.).

State Law

All fifty states, as well as most of the commonwealths and territories, have anti-bullying laws that prohibit bullying in a school setting, however cyberbullying, even when off-campus, is considered a violation of school policy and is handled through the district. It must be proven that the bullying/cyberbullying interfered with the student’s rights to an education (Kimmel and Willard, 2018; Stop Bullying, n.d.) Of the fifty states, forty-eight have laws against electronic harassment, and twenty-three specifically protect against cyberbullying (Kimmel and Willard, 2018; Stop Bullying, n.d.) Unfortunately, fourteen states do not require school districts to have policies to protect students from any form of electronic harassment that occurs off-campus (Cyberbullying Research Center, n.d.; Donegan, 2012; Green, 2016; Kimmel and Willard, 2018; Stop Bullying, n.d.). The biggest obstacle in prosecuting cyberbullying as a crime is whether comments made off-campus are protected under the First Amendment’s right to free speech. However, the landmark case of *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* states that if the expression of free speech “would substantially interfere with the work of the

school or impinge upon the rights of other students” school officials may intervene and apply appropriate consequences (American Civil Liberties Union, 2019; Kimmel and Willard, 2018).

District Policy

Most of the states require school districts to provide and implement regulations to protect students against bullying and cyberbullying. A few states include prevention programs, and “a handful of states also require bullying prevention programs, inclusion of bullying prevention in health education standards, and/or teacher professional development” (Stop Bullying, n.d.).

In 2010, the first federal National Summit on Bullying was held to combat the rising violence in the nation’s schools and address the social and emotional well-being of children. In a joint effort, a task force consisting of the departments of Education, Justice, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Defense and Interior was created to find solutions to the dangers of bullying, both traditional and cyber (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

Bullying behavior is not only troubling in and of itself but if left unaddressed, can quickly escalate into harassment, violence and tragedies,” Assistant Deputy Secretary Jennings says. “We hope this summit will help us get ahead of the game by focusing on prevention and doing everything we can to bring this plague to an end. (U.S. Department of Education, 2010)

Since this statement in 2010, the U.S. Department of Education has piloted their Successful, Safe and Healthy Students program that will try to reform the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. With more funding the U.S. Department of Education is looking to expand current and piloted programs to reach more children, helping them develop a deeper understanding of their action (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

Summary

This literature review began with a discussion of the major constructs of bullying and the four different modes in which bullying occurs: verbal, physical, social, and cyber. The researcher focused on the key components associated with bullying: modes of bullying, the aggressor, the victim, the adults in the children's lives, suicide and suicidal ideation, and the current laws and policies. The researcher listed the factors that contribute to the formation of a bully and those that contribute to the victimization of children. Robert Agnew's concept of General Strain Theory, Albert Bandura's idea of Social Cognitive Theory, and Urie Bronfenbrenner's conception of Ecological System's Theory all have essential ideologies that lay a foundation to understand why bullying occurs. Commonalities among these psychologists is the impact parents and teachers have on the ability for a child to relate to his or her peers and learn how to manage stress in a non-violent manner. Their perspectives and perceptions of bullying correlate to their influence on the children under their care.

An examination of the literature found that suicide among children and adolescents is now the second leading cause of death in the United States, with findings from the Center of Disease Control (CDC), U.S. Justice Department, and the World Health Organization, that specifically links bullying to suicide and suicidal ideation.

Laws and policies have been enacted to prevent bullying, and anti-bullying policies are required by the state, they are not uniform among schools and do not provide teacher training or schoolwide accountability. Cyberbullying is under the jurisdiction of the individual school district, however; there are few restrictions and guidelines to assist the schools, leaving acknowledgement of the problem and holding the aggressor liable, dependent on the victim coming forward.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This mixed-methods study uses quantitative and qualitative analysis to determine the prevalence and perceptions of cyberbullying throughout schools in Southern California. Most studies that focus on bullying are from either a quantitative perspective, focusing on the data, removing the emotions and concentrating on the statistics, or they are a longitudinal, qualitative study, following the children through several years of schooling to monitor behavior and outcomes. Bullying is an emotional topic. The qualitative component of this mixed-method study brings personal experiences and perspectives into account which in turn humanizes the research. The quantitative component validates the research and helps determine common patterns of the data. Therefore, to form a comprehensive analysis of this study, both methods are needed to complete a thorough understanding.

Multiple theoretical frameworks are applicable to bullying, attempting to triangulate the specific cause that turns a child into an aggressor. General Strain Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Ecological Systems Theory all examine the child's emotions and behaviors and how they relate to the world around them. Caregivers impact children's lives daily and conjure strong emotional responses based on their actions. Talking about bullying brings a vulnerability to parents, and their instinct to protect their children. For teachers, bullying is a topic that is difficult to address and often sanctioned and scripted by district and state control thus, the validity of self-reported data in this topic is questionable. The opportunity to elaborate with open-ended questions build on the validity of the information obtained through the survey. To protect the vulnerability of the participants, all surveys were anonymous.

The following research questions were used to guide this research and seek to explain the prevalence and perceptions of cyberbullying within schoolteachers and parents:

1. What are the perspectives of parents and teachers regarding the prevalence of cyberbullying in a sample of schools in Southern California?
2. What are the perspectives of parents and teachers regarding the measures that have been taken for the prevention of cyberbullying in a sample of schools in Southern California?
3. How do parents' and teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying compare in various components of cyberbullying?

Setting and Participants

Parents with children in twenty-one school districts, and teachers from six school districts throughout Southern California will participate in this research study on cyberbullying. Southern California is home to eight counties, containing 422 school districts, and educating children in 12,271 schools (public, private, and charter). California is known for its high ethnic diversity, with socioeconomics ranging from homelessness to some of the wealthiest people in America.

In order to gain as many participants as possible, the researcher requested the participation from those that meet the requirements: parent of a child/children attending a school in Southern California, and/or a teacher who is currently teaching in a school or university in Southern California. The following are areas where the researcher sought to gain information:

- Doctoral students and professors at Concordia University, in Irvine, California, who qualify, as well as their family, friends and colleagues who qualify.
- Teachers and staff in the school where the researcher is currently employed, as well as their family, friends and colleagues who qualify.

- Friends, family, colleagues, and acquaintances, as well as their contacts that meet the requirements.
- Former and current parents of students who know the researcher, as well as their family, friends and colleagues who qualify.

The researcher stated to potential participants that the research was not in association with any school district. If they agreed to participate, they were to notify the researcher and provide a personal email not affiliated with any school district, which granted the researcher the right to email the survey. At the close of data collection, the researcher determined the number of parents ($N=72$) and teachers ($N=25$) who chose to participate in this study by completing the provided questionnaire.

Sampling Procedures

The instruments for this research study were initially piloted with the assistance of three administrators, three teachers, and three parents. At that time, the administrator and teacher questionnaires consisted of four different scenarios illustrating distinct forms of cyberbullying. Following these scenarios, were multiple-choice and open-ended questions. After obtaining the finished questionnaires and soliciting feedback from the participants, the researcher concluded that the format in which these surveys provided the data was flawed. The parent survey that the sampling of participants completed was adequate, however; it was not cohesive with the questionnaire from the teacher. Once the researcher completed the review of all responses, changes were made to the format of the surveys, the questions, as well as the selection of participants for the study.

The researcher changed the nine multiple-choice questions that were gauged to be too narrow and designed twenty-three linear scaled questions to extract a broader range of

information. The four qualitative scenarios were changed to four open-ended responses containing two statements and two questions. By altering the scenarios to open-ended responses, the researcher will be able to remove some of the bias that might have been generated based on the storylines involving students being bullied. The researcher also chose to remove administrators from the study and focus only on teacher and parent perspectives.

During the pilot study the researcher was containing the investigation into cyberbullying to one district. However, due to restrictions placed on the researcher which would limit the contact with parents and teachers, the researcher chose to expand their study to any school district within Southern California. Since this study was not limited to one district, no site authorization was required. To reach parents and teachers throughout Southern California without the assistance of any governmental program, the researcher used social media, Facebook, to request the aid of any parent or teacher involved with any school district in Southern California, and for those who knew of others who met these requirements to forward the information to them. It is through social media that a snowballing effect took place, with a total of ninety-seven participants. The researcher also found that by not focusing on one district, a more comprehensive view of cyberbullying throughout Southern California would be more complete in identifying this twenty-first century issue.

Instrumentation and Measures

Two instruments were used to answer the research questions on the prevalence and perceptions of cyberbullying within the schools located in Southern California. The surveys were created by modifying a questionnaire previously used in a student dissertation entitled, "Parents' Perceptions and Awareness of Cyberbullying of Children and Adolescents" (Clarke, 2013). This survey focused only on parents' understanding, which led to the researcher modifying the

questions to relate to both parents and teachers, to gain both perspectives. The researcher emailed the creator of the original questionnaire but did not receive a response. The new Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents was then replicated and altered to create the additional Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Teachers. These two surveys have identical questions that are altered based on their relationship to the student.

The Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents (Appendix A) and the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Teachers (Appendix B) consist of twenty-three quantitative questions that ask the participant to state their responses by choosing: *Completely Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Completely Disagree*. Using this Likert scale, the researcher can determine the strength and/or intensity of the participants view of cyberbullying. Following the linear scaled portion, the surveys include two qualitative statements and two qualitative questions that allow the researcher to determine the personal views of the participants, and cross-tabulate consistencies and differences between parents and teachers.

To discern the prevalence of cyberbullying, the questionnaires contain five quantitative multiple-choice questions using a Likert Scale. To gain an understanding of the different facets of prevention (perception of preventions that in place, who is responsible for preventing cyberbullying, and what roles do parents and teachers play in preventing cyberbullying), the researcher included eleven quantitative questions using a Likert Scale, and one qualitative question. The final construct the researcher included on the survey's was the area of perceptions. Seven quantitative Likert Scale questions, one qualitative question, and two qualitative statements, comprised the final component of the questionnaires to help the researcher grasp parents' and teachers' beliefs and biases already held.

After receiving the completed surveys, the information will be analyzed through Google Sheets, providing graphing and detailed information. Descriptive information and frequency tables of the major variables will be derived from Google Docs. The processed, coded and cleaned data will be transferred into an Excel Sheet to be analyzed using STATPLUS.

Reliability

To ensure reliability of the study, the researcher designed parent and teacher questionnaires that contain quantitative and qualitative questions and statements. These surveys request the same information with slight deviation based on the relationship of the adult to the child. The twenty-seven questions are geared toward answering the three research questions, which focus on the prevalence, prevention, and perception of cyberbullying. By using data from parents and teachers who are located throughout Southern California, the researcher will gain a high generalizability value due to the diverse ethnicity and socioeconomics of this region. The fidelity of implementing the surveys through Google Sheets guaranteed anonymity, which allows parents and teachers to express their feelings without fear of repercussion. The researcher will consult with fellow educators to confer interrater reliability after themes are chosen based on the responses to the two qualitative questions and two qualitative statements.

Validity

The validity of a research study is dependent on whether the instrument used for gaining information is accurate. To guarantee the validity of the original research, a pilot study was conducted using a subsample of participants and a scenario-based survey for administrators and teachers, and a previously validated twelve question survey for parents. However, once the information was gathered and analyzed, the researcher concluded that the scenario-based survey was not an accurate instrument. The parent survey the researcher utilized during the pilot study

was adequate, but the researcher felt it was not detailed enough, and therefore was not validated. By altering the scenario-based survey to a questionnaire that utilizes a Likert Scale and open-ended questions and statements, the researcher will be able to maintain validity.

The second form of validation was to create identical surveys between parents and teachers. By building questionnaires that mirrored each question and response options, the researcher will be able to compare the beliefs, understandings, and sentiments of all those involved.

The final validation strategy is one that needs to be addressed prior to conducting the study: clarifying researcher bias. The researcher has a strong bias regarding the topic of bullying, which means that this is an area in which the researcher will need to remain aware of. Creswell and Puth (2018) remark that the researcher needs to comment on “past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study” (Creswell & Puth, 2018, p. 251). The researcher will control their own bias using quantitative data to maintain an objectivity. The researcher’s own personal experiences will also enrich their understanding and provide an insider’s perspective. To check their own biases the researcher will be able to reflect on how an outsider would view the same phenomenon.

Research conducted on the topic of bullying and cyberbullying had been either a qualitative study, with long-term observation in the field, or quantitative, using data only to find descriptive results. Studying bullying is challenging due to its sensitive nature for both the victim, the aggressor, the family, the community, and the school. Self-reported data on cyberbullying poses a threat to validity. Obtaining pragmatic responses from a topic that evokes emotional reactions, and detaching the feelings from the data, will prove challenging for the researcher.

Plan for Data Collection and Processing

To recruit participants for this study, the researcher emailed friends, co-workers, colleagues in education, and current and former parents of students they have taught, requesting assistance from all who met the requirements for the study: live in Southern California, have a child in a school located in Southern California, and/or teach at a school in Southern California. To extend the range of recruitment, the researcher created a Facebook post asking friends who qualified to participate and requested their assistance in forwarding the post to those they knew who met the requirements.

All surveys will be conducted online for participant's convenience, ease of distribution, and for data collection. When participants begin the survey, they will be asked if they agree to participate. Once they have given their consent, they are directed to the twenty-three Likert Scaled questions, followed by the two open-ended questions and two open-ended statements. All results will be anonymous, and the researcher will not know individual responses to questions. The cumulative results will remain confidential, and will not be shared with teachers, parents, schools, or districts. The researcher will only share cumulative results with the university.

Upon completion of the allotted time provided to gather surveys, the researcher will accumulate the data through Google Sheets and download the information into an Excel Spreadsheet. Quantitative questions will be answered using a Likert Scale answering: *Completely Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Completely Disagree*. A few of the questions are asked in the negative, therefore these questions will need their responses reversed prior to calculating the Mean and Standard Deviation of each question. The four open-ended responses will be color coded based on perspective themes, which will be narrowed and cleaned using professionals in the field of education to rate the validity.

Plan for Data Analysis

The Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents and the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Teachers contain a total of twenty-seven questions pertaining to the prevalence, prevention, and perception of cyberbullying. Twenty-three questions use a Likert Scale with answers ranging from *Completely Agree* (5), to *Completely Disagree* (1). Using this Likert scale, the researcher can determine the strength and/or intensity of the participants view of cyberbullying. Questions that are written in the reverse (have not, would not) requires the researcher to reverse the responses to correlate with the Likert Scale.

To obtain the answer to the first research, “What are the perspectives of parents and teachers regarding the prevalence of cyberbullying in a sample of schools in Southern California?”, the researcher asked five quantitative questions:

- Cyberbullying is a problem at (the school I teach at/ my child’s school)
- Cyberbullying occurs during school time.
- Cyberbullying occurs outside of school.
- Cyberbullying occurs less frequently than traditional bullying (at our school/in my child’s/children’s school).
- I haven't (have not) heard about students involved in cyberbullying on the news, radio or television. (*reverse*)

These questions will allow the researcher to analyze the perceptions of the prevalence of cyberbullying in the minds of parents and teachers to identify themes throughout the responses.

The second research question, “What are the perspectives of parents and teachers regarding the measures that have been taken for the prevention of cyberbullying in a sample of

schools in Southern California?”, will be answered by asking eleven quantitative questions, and one qualitative statement. The Likert Scaled questions are:

- Cyberbullying is an issue that needs increased attention from parents.
- Schools’ increased involvement in addressing cyberbullying would not significantly reduce cyberbullying. (*reverse*)
- Parents should be more proactive in addressing cyberbullying with their child/children (whether their child is a victim or a cyberbully).
- Parents’ involvement in addressing cyberbullying would not reduce their child/children’s cyberbullying, whether as a victim or as a cyberbully. (*reverse*)
- More laws should be passed to prevent or punish cyberbullying.
- I have discussed cyberbullying with my (students/child).
- I do not know whether cyberbullying is addressed at (school/my child’s/children’s school). (*reverse*)
- I believe it is important to monitor my (student’s/child’s) use of the Internet.
- I believe it is important to place restrictions on my (student’s/child’s) use of the Internet.
- (Our/my child’s/children’s) school has informed (parents/me) about cyberbullying.
- I have learned about cyberbullying from my (school district/child/children).

The qualitative statement associated with the prevention of cyberbullying asks, “Please list any additional ways you think that cyberbullying could be better addressed.” The third research question, “How do parents’ and teachers’ perceptions of cyberbullying compare in various components of cyberbullying?” looks at the data retrieved from teachers’ and parents’ responses to measure their understanding of cyberbullying. To analyze this, the researcher

included seven Likert Scaled questions, one open-ended statement, and two open-ended questions. The quantitative questions are:

- I believe my (students/child) would talk to me about cyberbullying, or any form of bullying.
- Laws or school policies currently in place address cyberbullying adequately.
- Schools should be proactive in addressing cyberbullying.
- I have done my own research/investigation about cyberbullying.
- Cyberbullying is more harmful than traditional bullying.
- I believe that cyberbullying can cause psychological harm to a child/children.
- I have heard or read that cyberbullying has contributed to suicide among students.

The three qualitative statements/questions asked on the surveys that relate to perception are: “When a child is cyberbullied, I believe the following are obstacles toward him or her receiving help.”, “What are some reasons you think cyberbullying happens?”, and “What does cyberbullying mean to you?” The qualitative questions allow the researcher to determine the personal views of the participants, and cross-tabulate consistencies and differences between parents and teachers.

The researcher will look at the descriptive part of the parents’ and teachers’ responses to find similarities and differences in the understanding of cyberbullying. The researcher is expecting to find a basic understanding of cyberbullying by parents, and a moderate understanding by teachers. Yet based on the different environments in which parents and teachers spend time with students, and the differing grade levels, the researcher is expecting a wider range of beliefs in why cyberbullying occurs.

Data will be compared across teachers' and parents' perspectives and will occur to identify prevalence and perceptions of cyberbullying. For qualitative coding, the researcher will use axial and selective coding. The researcher will look over the open-ended responses to delineate themes and categories prior to axial coding. For the quantitative coding, the researcher will use Microsoft Excel.

Ethical Issues

Ethics, defined by Merriam-Webster, is "the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation" (2020). Under this definition the concept of bullying is ethically and morally wrong. However, when conducting a research study, the researcher's personal perspectives must remain unbiased. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, respect for each participant's beliefs, preconceived opinions, and experiences need to be expected and understood throughout the research, from obtaining participants, gathering information, correlating responses, and final analysis.

Only the researcher and professor will have access to the information; online data will be secured in an encrypted file and any hard copy documents will be kept in a locked cabinet. No link between a participant's identity and their answers will be kept. The information will be compiled as a group of respondents and no individual identity will be used, and all data will be reported in aggregated form.

The researcher's fear is that with the qualitative portion of the study there will be challenges in analyzing the data, sorting through emotion and bias to get to the information underneath. The researcher understands that there will be a natural bias against bullying and will counteract by reversing a few of the quantitative questions, and allowing personal opinions stated through qualitative answers.

Summary

The purpose of this mixed-methods study is to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, to identify the prevalence and perceptions of cyberbullying within the schools in Southern California. In this chapter the researcher discussed the previously conducted pilot study which provided the necessary information to modify the form of data collection, from using a scenario-based questionnaire to a survey consisting of a Likert Scale and open-end questions and statements. Due to complications with the use of a single school district, the researcher expanded the study to include parents and teachers throughout schools in Southern California.

Using email and Facebook, the researcher will be able to employ a larger pool of participants, and conduct the survey procedures, collection, cleansing, and analyzing, through Google Sheets and Excel. The reliability and validity of the research will be maintained by using identical surveys for parents and teachers, requesting the assistance of fellow educators to act as interrater' to confirm themes established, and support emotional understanding by respecting individual bias and preconceived opinions. The data collection, processing, and analysis will be conducted focusing on the three main constructs the researcher is analyzing: prevalence, prevention, and perception. Anonymity of participants, and a respect for the sensitive nature of the topic will be present during the research, data collection, and final examination.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed-methods, phenomenological study, was to investigate the prevalence and perceptions of cyberbullying in schools throughout Southern California. In this study the researcher used a mixed-methods design, using both quantitative and qualitative data to explore this phenomenology study, which subjectively used first person point of views. The researcher enlisted the assistance of ninety-seven participants comprised of parents and teachers from school districts throughout Southern California. Each participant received a Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents or a Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Teachers through Google Survey, depending on their relationship with the child/children the questionnaire was referring to. The surveys were created with a total of twenty-three quantitative questions using a five-point Likert Scale, and four open-ended qualitative written responses.

Once the data was obtained from parents and teachers, the researcher downloaded the information into a Microsoft Excel database which allowed the researcher to perform statistical analysis on the quantitative data with the StatPlus program. The researcher calculated the total scores by construct out of the twenty-three quantitative questions on the parents' survey and on the teachers' survey, to find the Mean (*M*) and Standard Deviation (*SD*). The researcher notes that the ninety-seven participants of parents and teachers were not equal in quantity, which equated to seventy-two parents and twenty-five teachers. Therefore, all information was calculated using the average by group. Even though the surveys were anonymous, the researcher was aware of two participants that responded to both the parent and teacher questionnaire, providing their perspective to both views.

The data that was collected from the four qualitative open-ended written responses were analyzed to find themes among the ninety-seven participants. The four open-ended responses consisted of two statements and two questions, which allowed parents and teachers to state their opinions and beliefs pertaining to the prevalence of cyberbullying and express their perceptions of cyberbullying in the Southern California school system. The shared beliefs that emerged from this sample of participants assisted the researcher to use a thematic approach, analyzing and comparing the patterns that developed from the data. These themes were then validated with the assistance of four professionals who work in the educational system. Demographic data was collected from parents and teachers to establish a clear understanding and the presence of commonalities among participants. The survey responses were not analyzed or compared using the demographic data, only the relationship of the participant to the child/children under their care.

The first three chapters of this dissertation focused on the significance and purpose of this study, reviewed the literature that is affiliated with the topics of cyberbullying, bullying, and suicide among children. The students' beliefs and perceptions on cyberbullying, parents' beliefs and perceptions on cyberbullying, teachers' and administrators' beliefs and perceptions on cyberbullying were also reviewed for this study. Factors that relate to cyberbullying, such as, student Internet use, laws associated with online harassment, social media, and psychological theoretical frameworks, were also considered in answering the three research questions affiliated with this dissertation. In this chapter, the researcher will discuss the quantitative results of the questionnaires and the four open-ended written qualitative responses to determine:

1. What are the perspectives of parents' and teachers' regarding the prevalence of cyberbullying in a sample of schools in Southern California?

2. What are the perspectives of parents' and teachers' regarding the measures that have been taken for the prevention of cyberbullying in a sample of schools in Southern California?
3. How do parents' and teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying compare in various components of cyberbullying?

Demographic Data

A sample of teachers and parents from Southern California participated in this study which consisted of seventy-two parents and twenty-five teachers from school districts throughout Southern California. Most of the participants were female, 85% of parents ($N=72$) and 88% of teachers ($N=25$). The majority of the participants selected their ethnicity as Caucasian/Not Hispanic (66%, $N=97$), or Latino/Hispanic (22%, $N=97$), with the remaining 12% of participants marking their ethnicity as 6% Asian ($N=97$), 2% Native American ($N=97$), 2% African American ($N=97$), 1% identified as other ($N=97$), and 1% chose not to disclose their ethnicity ($N=97$). All of the participants were between the ages of 22 and 63, yet the largest percentage of parents and teachers who completed the survey were within the range of 43 to 52 (44% teachers, $N=25$: 62.5% parents, $N=72$).

Of the sampled teachers surveyed, 68% ($N=25$) disclosed that they have not had any training in cyberbullying and are currently employed at the elementary schools (72%, $N=25$), middle and high schools (24%, $N=25$), and colleges (4%, $N=25$) throughout Southern California. The participating sampling of parents recorded that they had children attending elementary schools (43.2%, $N=72$), middle and high schools (48%, $N=72$), and at colleges (8.8, $N=72$) in Southern California. All data related to the participant's demographics are summarized in Table 1.1, with additional characteristics regarding teachers summarized in Table 2.1 and additional characteristics regarding parents summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 1. 1

Demographic Data: Teachers (N=25) and Parents (N=71)

| Characteristic | Teachers Count | % | Parents Count | % |
|---------------------------|-------------------|----|------------------|------|
| Gender | | | | |
| Male | 3 | 12 | 11 | 15.3 |
| Female | 22 | 88 | 61 | 84.7 |
| Ethnicity | | | | |
| African American | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1.4 |
| Asian | 1 | 4 | 5 | 6.9 |
| Latino/Hispanic | 5 | 20 | 16 | 22.2 |
| Caucasian/Not Hispanic | 15 | 60 | 49 | 68.1 |
| Middle Eastern | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Native American | 2 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1.4 |
| Did not disclose | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Age | | | | |
| 22-32 | 6 | 24 | 2 | 2.8 |
| 33-42 | 5 | 20 | 14 | 19.4 |

| | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|----|------|
| 43-52 | 11 | 44 | 45 | 62.5 |
| 53-62 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 9.7 |
| 63+ | 1 | 4 | 4 | 5.6 |
| Did not disclose | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |

Marital Status

| | | | | |
|-----------|----|----|----|------|
| Single | 5 | 20 | 3 | 4.2 |
| Married | 16 | 64 | 50 | 69.4 |
| Separated | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4.2 |
| Divorced | 4 | 16 | 13 | 18.1 |
| Widowed | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2.8 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1.4 |

Highest Level of

Education

| | | | | |
|--|---|----|----|------|
| Did not complete high school | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1.4 |
| Graduated high school or GED diploma | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2.8 |
| Some college | 0 | 0 | 17 | 23.6 |
| Associate degree | 0 | 0 | 7 | 9.7 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 5 | 20 | 27 | 37.5 |

| | | | | |
|-----------------|----|----|----|------|
| Master's Degree | 17 | 68 | 13 | 18.1 |
| Graduate Degree | 3 | 12 | 4 | 5.6 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1.4 |

Demographic findings that only pertained to the teachers that participated in the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Teachers illustrated that 52 percent of the teachers surveyed had sixteen or more years of teaching experience. Additionally, of the twenty-five teachers who responded, 68 percent had no training in cyberbullying, regardless of the grade they were currently teaching or years of experience.

Table 2. 1

Additional Demographics: Teachers (N=25)

| Characteristics | Count | % |
|---|-------|----|
| Years of experience as a teacher | | |
| 1-5 | 7 | 28 |
| 6-10 | 3 | 12 |
| 11-15 | 2 | 8 |
| 16-20 | 10 | 40 |
| Over 20 | 3 | 12 |
| Training in cyberbullying | | |
| No | 17 | 68 |
| Yes | 8 | 32 |
| Grade you currently teach | | |
| 4-6 | 18 | 72 |
| 7-8 | 2 | 8 |

| | | |
|---------------------------|----|----|
| 9-12 | 4 | 16 |
| College | 1 | 4 |
| County currently teach in | | |
| Orange County | 13 | 52 |
| Riverside | 3 | 12 |
| San Bernardino | 3 | 12 |
| Other non-specific | 6 | 24 |

Additional findings that were asked of the parents who participated in the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents found that among the seventy-two participants, 91.2 percent were the parents of a child/children in grades four through twelve.

Table 3. 1

Additional Demographics: Parents (N=72)

| Characteristics | Count | % |
|--|-------|------|
| Relationship to child/children under your care | | |
| I am the parent | 66 | 91.7 |
| I am the grandparent | 3 | 4.2 |
| I am the legal guardian | 1 | 1.4 |
| I am the foster parent/guardian | 1 | 1.4 |
| Other | 1 | 1.4 |
| Grade level of child/children (N=125) | | |
| Elementary School | 54 | 43.2 |
| Middle School | 18 | 14.4 |
| High School | 42 | 33.6 |
| College | 11 | 8.8 |

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis

The Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents and the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Teachers contained twenty-three quantitative questions, two qualitative questions, and two qualitative statements, to determine the following: parent and teacher perspectives regarding the *prevalence* of cyberbullying, perspectives regarding the measures that have been taken for the

prevention of cyberbullying, and their *perceptions* of cyberbullying in schools and through technology in the home.

After marking consent to participate in the study, the responder filled out demographic information for categorical purposes (Tables 1.1-3.1). The surveys were created with identical questions, only altering the relationship the respondent has to the child/children. The twenty-three quantitative questions were composed using a Likert Scale of one to five and focused on three categories of research in cyberbullying: prevalence, prevention, and perceptions. When responding to each of the twenty-three qualitative questions, the parent or teacher would choose one of the following five options: *Completely Agree*, *Agree*, *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, *Disagree*, or *Completely Disagree*.

Prevalence

Parents and teachers were asked five questions to help determine research question number one, “What are the perspectives of parents’ and teachers’ regarding the prevalence of cyberbullying in a sample of schools in Southern California?” As shown in Table 4.1, the results of the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents/Teachers determine that there is little difference between parents’ and teachers’ opinions concerning the prevalence of cyberbullying, where it occurs, and how often it occurs. According to the results, both groups marked these questions as *Completely Agree*, *Agree*, or *Neither Agree nor Disagree*. However, the responses to the fifth question, “I haven’t heard about students involved in cyberbullying on the news, radio or television.”, greatly differed. Most teachers ($M=4.4$) stated that they *Completely Disagree* with this statement, indicating that they had prior knowledge of cyberbullying through a form of media. Yet parents ($M=1.9$) stated their exposure, or awareness of exposure, being very limited.

Table 4. 1

Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Teachers (N=25) and Parents (N=72): Prevalence

| | Teacher | Teacher | Parent | Parent |
|---|---------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| | Mean | <i>SD</i> | Mean | <i>SD</i> |
| Prevalence | | | | |
| Cyberbullying is a problem at (the school I teach at/ my child's school) | 2.6 | 1.2 | 2.7 | 1.0 |
| Cyberbullying occurs during school time. | 2.6 | 1.1 | 2.5 | 1.1 |
| Cyberbullying occurs outside of school. | 1.6 | 0.6 | 1.7 | 0.7 |
| Cyberbullying occurs less frequently than traditional bullying (at our school/in my child's/children's school). | 3.6 | 1.0 | 3.0 | 0.9 |
| I haven't (have not) heard about students involved in cyberbullying on the news, radio or television. | 4.4 | 1.0 | 1.9 | 1.0 |

Prevention

Eleven questions on the surveys revolved around research question number two, “What are the perspectives of parents’ and teachers’ regarding the measures that have been taken for the prevention of cyberbullying in a sample of schools in Southern California?” These questions investigate different aspects of prevention: perception of prevention, perception of who is responsible for prevention, and the role of parents as educators (Table 5.1). The overall perception of cyberbullying and its existence was nearly identical between parents and teachers throughout this section, with only slight deviations. However, the data resulted in significant variations among participant responses regarding the responsibility of educating children on cyberbullying, the significance pertaining to the role of the parent, and the programs that are currently in place within the schools. The question that specifically states that “Schools’ increased involvement in addressing cyberbullying would not significantly reduce cyberbullying”, was neutral by teachers ($M=3.8$), stating that they *Neither Agree nor Disagree* with the statement, while the majority of parents ($M=2.0$) disagreed with this question, believing the schools involvement would decrease cyberbullying. The opposite side of this question was whether “Parents’ involvement in addressing cyberbullying would not reduce their child/children’s cyberbullying, whether as a victim or as a cyberbully.” This statement contained a significant difference with teachers ($M=4.5$) choosing they *Completely Disagree or Disagree*, that parent involvement would not have an impact in the reduction of cyberbullying. However, unlike teachers, parents responded in agreement that parent involvement would not reduce the likelihood of cyberbullying.

Two other questions generated a noticeable difference in parent and teacher responses: whether they had discussed cyberbullying with their student/child, and whether the school had

addressed cyberbullying with the student/child. In both cases the parents selected *Completely Agree or Agree*, where teachers had a slightly lower number, choosing *Agree or Neither Agree nor Disagree*.

Table 5. 1

Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Teachers (N=25) and Parents (N=72): Prevention

| | Teacher | Teacher | Parent | Parent |
|--|---------|-----------|--------|-----------|
| | Mean | <i>SD</i> | Mean | <i>SD</i> |
| Preventions | | | | |
| Cyberbullying is an issue that needs increased attention from parents. | 1.3 | 0.5 | 1.5 | 0.6 |
| Schools' increased involvement in addressing cyberbullying would not significantly reduce cyberbullying. | 3.8 | 1.1 | 2.4 | 1.1 |
| Parents should be more proactive in addressing cyberbullying with their | 1.3 | 0.8 | 1.4 | 0.8 |

child/children (whether
their child is a
victim or a cyberbully).

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Parents' involvement in addressing cyberbullying would not reduce their child/children's cyberbullying, whether as a victim or as a cyberbully. | 4.5 | 0.8 | 2.0 | 0.8 |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| More laws should be passed to prevent or punish cyberbullying. | 1.8 | 0.9 | 1.9 | 0.9 |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| I have discussed cyberbullying with my (students/child). | 2.3 | 1.2 | 1.7 | 1.2 |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|

| | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| I do not know whether cyberbullying is | 3.4 | 1.1 | 2.8 | 1.1 |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|

addressed at (school/my
child's/children's school).

| | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| I believe it is important to monitor my (student's/child's) use of the Internet. | 1.6 | 1.0 | 1.3 | 1.0 |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| I believe it is important to place restrictions on my (student's/child's) use of the Internet. | 1.6 | 1.0 | 1.4 | 1.0 |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| (Our/my child's/children's) school has informed (parents/me) about cyberbullying. | 2.7 | 1.0 | 2.9 | 1.0 |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| I have learned about cyberbullying from | 3.1 | 1.1 | 3.0 | 1.1 |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|

my (school
district/child/children).

To ascertain a more personal understanding of parents' and teachers' perspectives on the prevention of cyberbullying, a qualitative statement was included on the surveys. Participants were asked to include in a written response any additional ways they felt cyberbullying could be better addressed. The researcher specifically left out a person (parent, teacher, administrator) or location (home, school, community) to keep the direction of the response open for interpretation by the respondent. After disaggregating the information, several themes were identified. To validate the topics, four professionals in the field of education were asked to review the responses provided by respondents and concluded that the themes identified by the researcher were accurate.

Themes that were extrapolated through the qualitative responses provided to the question, "Please list any additional ways you think that cyberbullying could be better addressed" were categorized into five themes: Education & Resources, Technology, Laws & Policy, Parents & Family, and No Problem. The findings indicated in Figure 6.1 illustrate how the fifty-three parent and twenty-five teacher responses were sorted by frequency.

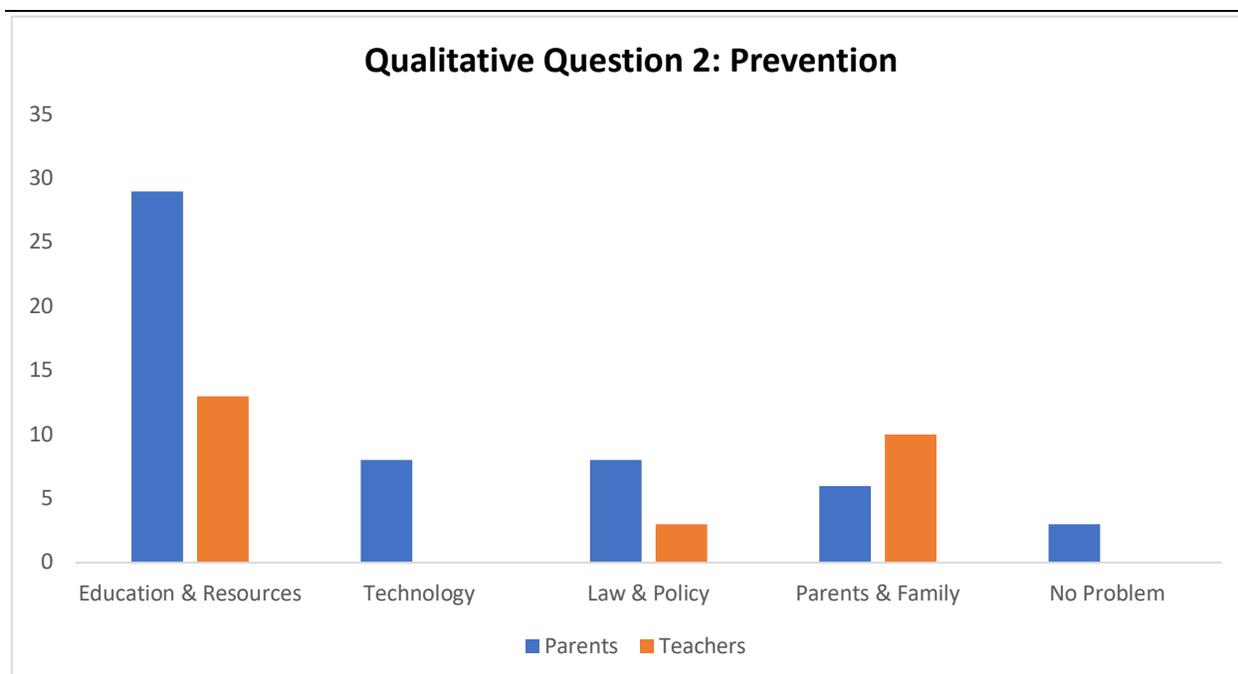


Figure 6. 1. Please list any additional ways you think that cyberbullying could be better addressed. Parents ($N=53$) and Teachers ($N=25$).

Education & Resources

The largest number of responses, by both parents and teachers, was the need for more education and resources. In reviewing the statements provided, it is strongly believed that more education and resources are needed for all members of the community: parents, teachers, students, and school districts. Among the parent's comments, 55% ($N=53$) focused on educating parents and children on how to prevent cyberbullying from occurring and providing students with an understanding of how their actions have real life implications. Teachers' statements ($N=25$) request resources that include formal training for teachers and school employees, and outreach programs for students. It is interesting that this frequency complements the demographic question for teachers, asking if they had any training in cyberbullying. At the time of this survey, 68% ($N=25$) stated that they had no training. A common request throughout the

responses from parents and teachers, was the need for an anonymous, safe, and confidential reporting system, whether the caller is a victim, bystander, or perpetrator.

Technology

From the seventy-eight respondents, only parents, 15% ($N=78$) expressed that cyberbullying could be better addressed by stronger controls and restrictions on technology. Ideas on combating cyberbullying include less technology used in schools, due to the lack of restrictions on websites and teacher monitoring, and the overuse of cell phones on campus. One parent stated that, "Schools allow access to websites and do not have sufficient blocks on devices that some homes have in place", while another remarked, "NO cell phones at school. Period. No phones, No phones, No phones".

Law & Policy

The researcher found that only eight parents (11%) and three teachers mentioned that current laws and or policies needed to be altered to better address cyberbullying. Those that addressed this theme, stated a need for harsher or stricter consequences for the perpetrators. Parents and teachers who responded felt that stronger laws and consequences, and mandated reporting by social media sites, should be improved or increased. Statements made by parents included the removal of cyberbullies from the school upon their first offense, harsher punishments starting on the first offense, mandatory parent and student education, and holding parents accountable as well as the student for the bullying committed by their child. Teachers requested more policy at the school level and to treat cyberbullying as a hate crime involving law enforcement. One parent responded that the only way to address cyberbullying, was "The bully must be confronted and brought out of the shadows of the Internet."

Parents & Family

Among the five themes the researcher established based on survey responses, 15% of parents ($N=53$) and 32% of teachers ($N=25$) noted that to better address cyberbullying, the parents and the families of students needed to be involved. Some of the assertions made by both parents and teachers were very similar and all fell within the following subthemes:

- Parents/families lack an understanding of how social media works.
- Parents/families need to increase their involvement and awareness with their child's online activities.
- Parents/families need to accept responsibility of teaching their child appropriate online behaviors.
- Parents/families need to have an open form of communication with their child.
- Parents/families need to share accountability in cases of cyberbullying to increase their interest in monitoring their child's online activities
- Children should not have unlimited access to devices connected to the Internet

Parents and teachers alike felt that using these guidelines regarding cyberbullying would improve the issue of children using the Internet to threaten and bully others. Teacher's comments were straightforward in stating parent involvement was necessary to make changes to the current culture of online harassment. Teachers made direct statements including, "Make parents more accountable, then they would pay attention," "Parents need to be made aware of the severity and pervasiveness that is cyberbullying," and "Having parents be more aware of social media platforms that their kids are using and having them be more involved in monitoring their child's cyber activity" would increase cyberbullying awareness.

No Problem

Three parent responses fell into the theme of No Problem. This minority, 6%, stated that they felt schools addressed cyberbullying well and that there was no need of increased attention. One parent remarked that the “Parents who monitor and ask questions don’t have the problem.” There were no statements made by teachers in this category.

Perception

Seven quantitative questions were included on the survey for research question number 3, “How do parents’ and teachers’ perceptions of cyberbullying compare in various components of cyberbullying?” to establish an insight into parents’ and teachers’ diverse perceptions of cyberbullying (Table 6.1). Parents indicated a higher degree of confidence in their child speaking to them regarding any form of bullying ($M=1.9$) than the teachers felt about their students coming forward to confide in them regarding harassment ($M=2.6$). The data also indicates that a slight difference of perception exist on whether the laws that currently exist are sufficient or not, and if they had conducted their own research into the subject. Parents’ responses indicated agreement with the statement “Laws or school polices currently in place address cyberbullying adequately” ($M=2.6$) and agreed that they have done their own research into cyberbullying ($M=2.3$). Teachers’ selected a neutral stance on both the statement regarding laws and policies currently in place ($M=3.5$) and whether they had completed any research into cyberbullying ($M=3.2$).

The majority of responses regarding perception were nearly equivalent. Both parents and teacher choose *Agree* to the belief that cyberbullying is more harmful than traditional bullying (parents $M=2.0$; teachers $M=2.3$). Furthermore, the three strongest responses, with parents and teachers all choosing *Completely Agree* on the surveys with very little deviation, were; *Schools*

should be proactive in addressing cyberbullying (parents $M=1.6$; teachers $M=1.3$), *I believe that cyberbullying can cause psychological harm to a child/children* (parents $M=1.3$; teachers $M=1.2$); and *I have heard or read that cyberbullying has contributed to suicide among students*, which had identical scores (parents $M=1.6$; teachers $M=1.6$).

Table 6. 1

Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Teachers (N=25) and Parents (N=72): Perception

| | Teacher | Teacher | Parent | Parent |
|--|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD |
| Perceptions | | | | |
| I believe my (students/child) would talk to me about cyberbullying, or any form of bullying. | 2.6 | 0.9 | 1.9 | 0.8 |
| Laws or school policies currently in place address cyberbullying adequately. | 3.5 | 1.0 | 2.6 | 1.0 |
| Schools should be proactive in addressing cyberbullying. | 1.3 | 0.6 | 1.6 | 0.6 |
| I have done my own research/investigation about cyberbullying. | 3.2 | 1.1 | 2.3 | 1.1 |

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Cyberbullying is more harmful than traditional bullying. | 2.3 | 1.0 | 2.0 | 0.9 |
| I believe that cyberbullying can cause psychological harm to a child/children. | 1.2 | 0.4 | 1.3 | 0.6 |
| I have heard or read that cyberbullying has contributed to suicide among students. | 1.6 | 1.0 | 1.6 | 0.7 |

To understand components of parents' and teachers' perception of cyberbullying, and to help the researcher to comprehend any beliefs and biases the participants would bring to the survey, one qualitative statement and two qualitative questions were included. The qualitative statement to address perception asked, "When a child is cyberbullied, I believe the following are obstacles toward him or her receiving help". When analyzing the data, the researcher found five themes that developed: Victim, Education & Resources, Technology, Laws & Policy, and No Problem. The findings indicated in Figure 7.1 illustrate how the fifty-nine parent responses and twenty-four teacher responses were sorted.

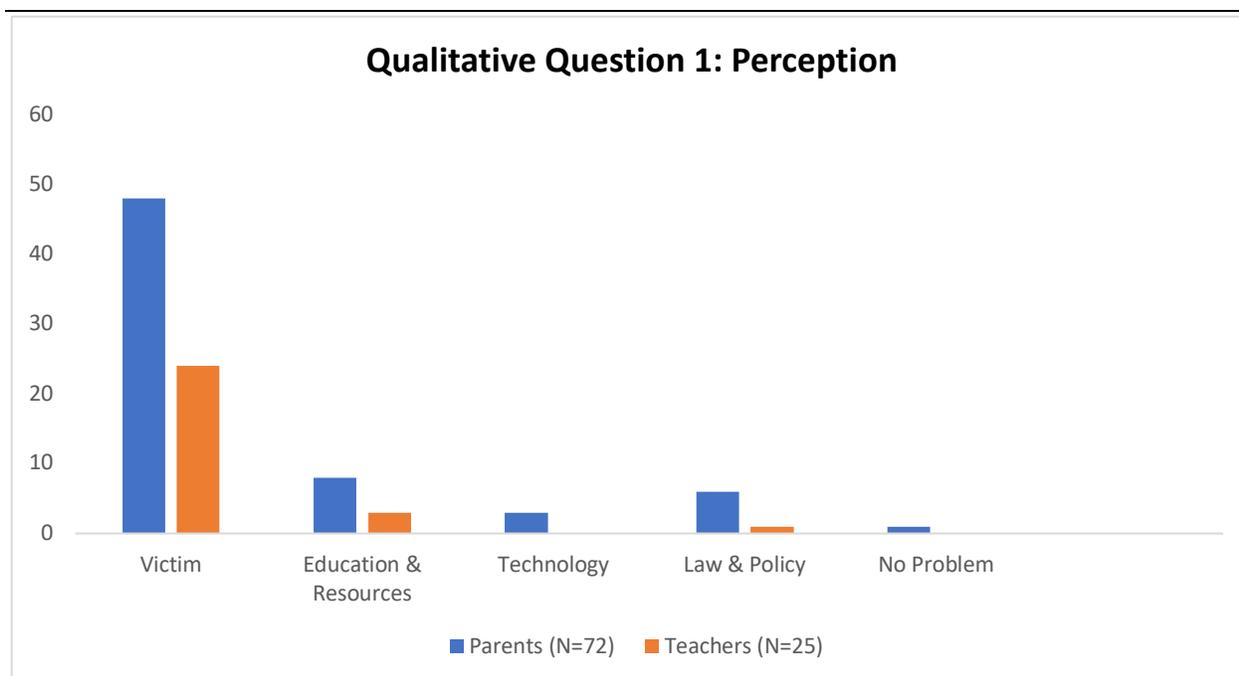


Figure 7. 1. When a child is cyberbullied, I believe the following are obstacles toward him or her receiving help. Parents ($N=59$) and Teachers ($N=24$).

Victim

The greatest significant finding through the qualitative questions, was identifying the obstacles a child faces when seeking help after being cyberbullied. Eighty-one percent of parents ($N=59$) and 100% of teachers stated that the largest obstacle was the victim themselves. The child's thoughts, emotions, insecurities, beliefs and even understanding that bullying is a crime, can prevent a child from looking for a way to end the violation and assault. The most frequent words used by both parents and teachers to describe the impediments facing the child are the following:

- Embarrassment; shame; humiliation
- Fear of retaliation; make things worse; continued harassment; increased bullying
- Rejection by other peers; social rejection; peer pressure; loss of friends
- Lack of confidence

- Self-imposed isolation
- Difficulty in admitting the harassment
- Having the mental strength to handle the situation
- Do not understand that the harassment is not a normal act
- Afraid of getting in trouble
- Self-esteem
- Depression
- Fear that nothing will be done
- Suicidal thoughts and ideation
- No one to tell; no one to help; no one will believe them
- Powerlessness; looking weak
- Becoming known as a tattler; labeled a snitch
- Lack of parental help; no family support; parents would not understand; can't tell family; lack of family communication
- Friends and family do not notice

The results of these responses collaborate data and information found by the researcher, supporting the data which states that there are psychological effects and damage formed by cyberbullying and bullying. The remaining parent and teacher responses are divided among the other four themes.

Education & Resources

A commonality among the 14% of parent responses ($N=59$) and the 13% of teacher responses ($N=24$) felt that obstacles that stand in the way of children seeking help regarding cyberbullying, are in education and resources. Both parents and teachers stated that the lack of

resources on campuses, and the belief that they had no one to confide in, stood as a barrier between isolation and support.

Technology

Three percent of parents ($N=59$) did state on their survey, that technology was a small obstacle against children seeking help regarding cyberbullying. These parents felt that a student's fear of being punished or getting in trouble for using technology inappropriately, may keep them from speaking up. Although the Internet, especially social media, is a forum where cyberbullying occurs, youths today depend on technology for socializing and for schoolwork, and they may not be willing to risk its loss.

Law & Policy

Under the theme of law and policy, 6% of parents ($N=59$) and 1% ($N=24$) of teachers believed that the obstacle preventing children from seeking help were the current lack of laws and legal enforcement. One parent stated, "Knowing it is occurring, and I think it is more outside of school, so police must get involved". Those that chose this theme, remarked that insufficient district policies and outside support created a hindrance.

No Problem

Only 1% ($N=59$) of parents stated that they believed there was not a problem and that there were plenty of programs currently in place.

To form a more thorough understanding of parents' and teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying, the researcher included the question, "What are some reasons you think cyberbullying happens?" Sixty-three parents and twenty-five teachers stated their opinions. After analyzing the results, and validating the themes that the researcher generated, the following five

categories were created to answer this question: Perpetrator, Technology – Ease of Access, Technology – Anonymity, Laws & Policy, and Parents & Family (Figure 8.1).

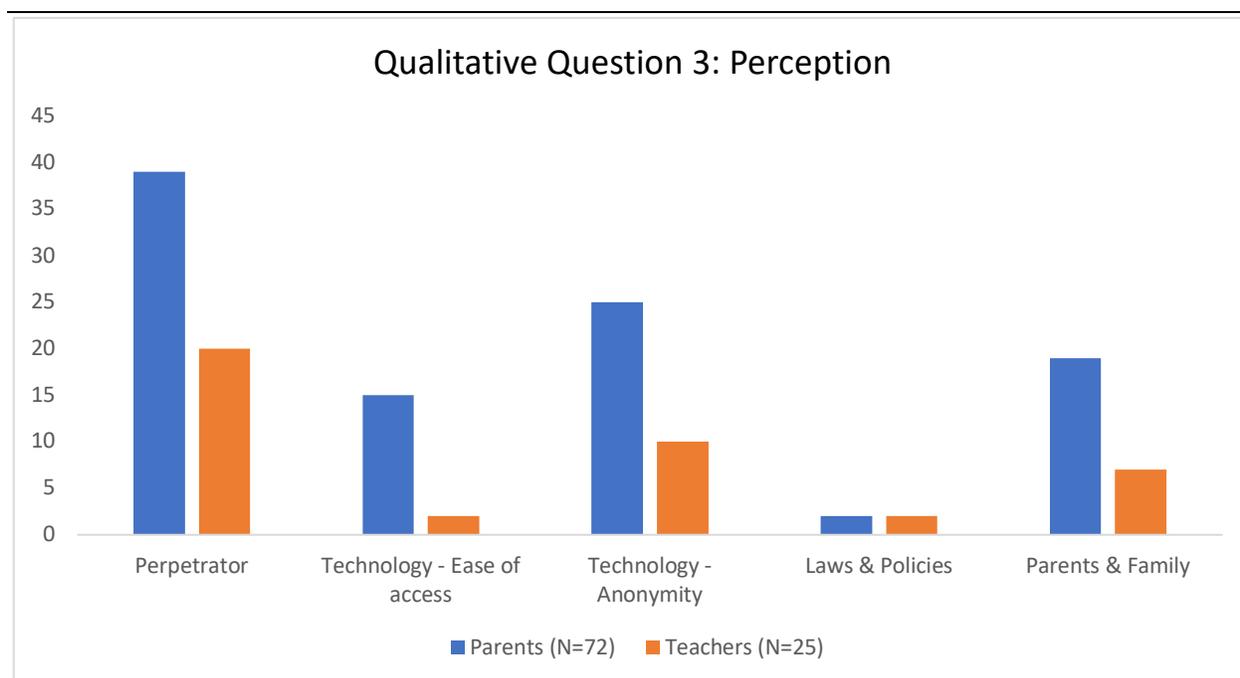


Figure 8. 1. What are some reasons you think cyberbullying happens? Parents ($N=63$) and Teachers ($N=25$).

Perpetrator

Sixty-two percent of parents ($N=63$) and 80% of teachers ($N=25$) who answered this question, commented that the strongest reason cyberbullying occurs is due to the emotional beliefs and behaviors of the perpetrator. This supports Robert Agnew’s General Strain Theory which states that, the perpetrator may be trying to “improve their circumstances by gaining power, respect, wealth, or an increase in status” (Agnew, p. 51, 1992). Parents’ and teachers alike believe that a child who has insecurities, jealousy, disappointment, and their own desire to fit in, lead to their willingness to inflict their pain on others. They may not even have developed the cognitive ability to comprehend that their actions online have real-world consequences much different than on the playground. One parent noted, “Kids feeling bad about themselves reach out

in painful ways toward others, kids are trying to fit in with a peer group, kids feeling jealous of the victim.”

Technology – Ease of Access

The theme **Technology** was divided into two categories, the first being ease of access. Twenty-four percent of parents ($N=63$) and 8% of teachers ($N=25$) noted that the ease in which children access technology is part of the problem and a factor of why cyberbullying happens. Children place personal information on social media sites, speaking about their lives, hopes, and dreams. This allows cyberbullying a forum to make inappropriate or deprecating comments to other people’s posts with only a few clicks of the mouse. With the ease of technology and with the rapid speed in which social media outlets can dispense the information, negative comments can reach a multitude of people within seconds.

Technology – Anonymity

The second category that devolved from the theme **Technology**, was the issue of anonymity online. Forty percent of both parents ($N=63$) and teachers ($N=25$) stated that the anonymity that is provided by the Internet is the second strongest reason why cyberbullying happens. Traditional face-to-face bullying takes strength and confidence that their victim will be too weak to retaliate and has a disregard to the consequences due to bystanders and witnesses. Cyberbullying removes the in-person requirement of traditional bullying and desensitizes the situation. Many of the twenty-five parents that committed about anonymity online, stated that social media has created a lack of empathy in today’s generation, and an acceptance of hateful remarks as part of the online culture. Parents’ remarked that, “Kids spend too much time on their phones/devices and social media and are not learning social skills as a result”, and “Cyberbullies feel empowered behind a screen to say/write whatever they think or feel regardless of the

emotional consequences to the victim since they are faceless." Teachers collaborated the remarks made by parents, observing that students hide behind the screen, even at school, walking around with their nose in their phone. Today's youth see a phone or computer screen as a barrier, providing them with a way to disconnect and express negative emotions aimed toward another.

Law & Policy

The least number of comments was made under the theme of law and policy. A total of four people, two parents and two teachers, stated that there were not enough consequences in place or enforced under the law or under the school's policy to deter students from cyberbullying.

Parents & Family

The third largest theme that emerged from the survey to answer the question, "What are some reasons you think cyberbullying happens?" is the parents and family. Thirty percent of parents ($N=63$) and 28% of teachers ($N=25$) felt that parents and the family need to take more responsibility on preventing and reporting cyberbullying. Two psychologist the researcher referred to under the Theoretical Framework in chapter one related the actions of a bully or perpetrator to their family and environment. Albert Bandura, who wrote the Social Cognitive Theory, and Urie Bronfenbrenner who wrote the Ecological Systems Theory, both support this theme. All the following remarks were stated as criticisms about the family, especially the role of the parent, as to why cyberbullying occurs:

- Parents do not have consequences
- Parent denial
- No supervision at home
- No monitoring

- Parents don't monitor or pay attention to what their kids are doing
- Parents do not monitor child's phone/texts
- Parents don't think their kids could do anything wrong
- Parents are not teaching their kids social skills
- Lack of proper guidance
- Learned behavior at home
- Something bad is going on at home
- Parents have no idea of what their kids are doing on their devices
- Parents are not teaching their kid empathy

The final question that the researcher inquired about to ascertain information on parents' and teachers' perspectives on cyberbullying, was an open-ended question, "What does cyberbullying mean to you?". This question allowed responders to include their bias and preconceived beliefs, as well as allow the researcher the opportunity to compare how the participants read this question. Fifty-eight parents ($N=72$) and all twenty-five teachers answered with a response that was classified under two themes and a third theme was created for those that chose not to disclose (Figure 9.1). The researcher found that the remarks made to answer this question were more personal, especially the theme of emotion, and therefore needed to be expressed in the words of the respondent.

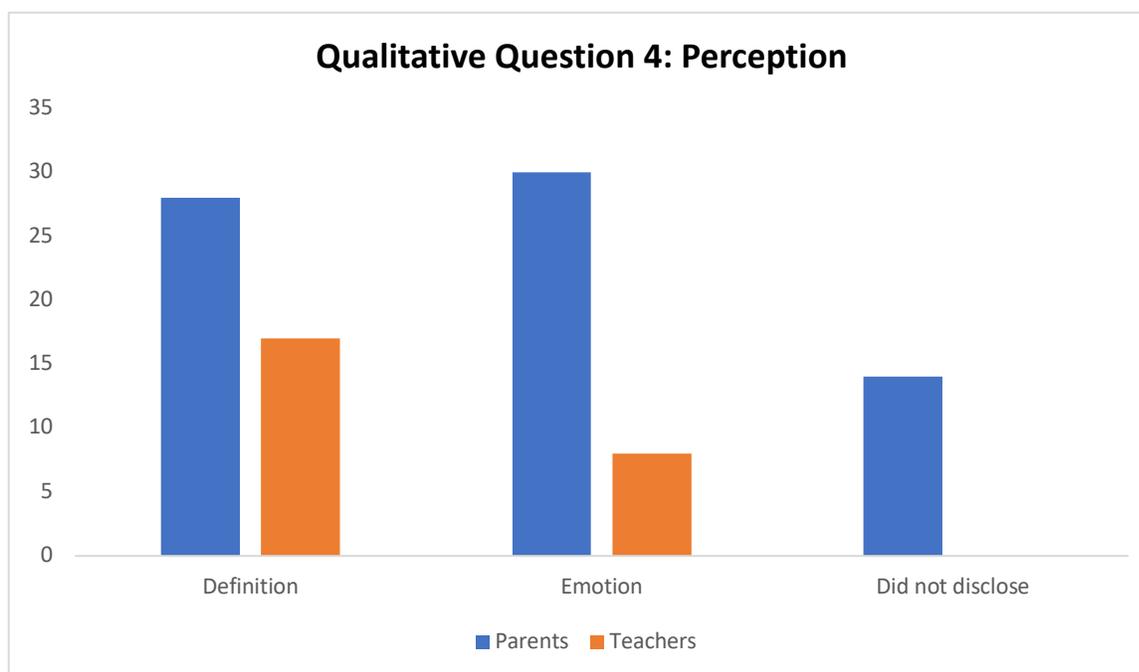


Figure 9. 1. What does cyberbullying mean to you? Parents ($N=72$) and Teachers ($N=25$).

Definition

Forty-eight percent of parents ($N=58$) and 68% of teachers ($N=25$) recited a definition of cyberbullying using key words such as *online*, *digital*, *technical*, *social media*, and/or *Internet*. Each respondent remarked that using one or more of these methods, one person harasses, threatens, or bullies another person. Below is a representative sample of comments made by both parents and teachers:

Directed, unsolicited, negative attention on social media towards another individual.

Cyberbullying means negative online posts or comments about one's appearance, sexual identity, gender, culture and or ethnicity. I also feel sharing these posts magnifies the negative effects.

Hiding behind a keyboard and screen in pursuit of hurting others.

Unwanted or unjust comments, pictures, or messages with malicious intent which includes all forms of social media.

Someone deliberately using the Internet to shame or hurt another.

Kids used to be bullied at school but now, with the Internet and the advent of text messaging/anonymous apps there is no escape. You can be in the safety of your room and still see the hurtful messages/have them sent to you.

Harassing somebody through technology

Regardless of the relationship to the child, whether they are the parent, guardian, or teacher, those that participated in the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents and the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Teachers had a general understand on what it means to be cyberbullied.

Emotion

Almost an equal number of parents, 52% ($N=58$) and 32% of teachers ($N=25$) focused on the emotional damage that cyberbullying creates. These respondents noted the victim, the perpetrator, today's society, and the efficacy of the family. These participants reference an emotional response when defining cyberbullying:

Cyberbullying equals cowardice.

It means we are really lacking as a society.

Mental anguish

... (daughter's friends) who have dealt with episodes of cyberbullying for years because their parents have allowed them to participate in that arena (social media) from an early age.

It means there's too much hate in the world.

...one of the lowest, most cowardly ways to mistreat another. It has the potential to be relentless and unending...which is a very scary thought. And it can very easily, and sometimes very accidentally get out of hand. Escalating at a rate that even the abuser did not intend - and for these reasons, I believe we owe it to our children and ourselves to foster kindness, tolerance, and connection in our lives.

I think, in general, many people have inner struggles, low self-esteem, anger, confusion...especially developing youth. It is a defense mechanism to “hate” on others to subconsciously mask your own confusion about feelings and general teen/tween angst. I think the “cyber” part of it makes it easier to distance yourself from it being “bad” and also a lack of maturity and understanding of long term consequences and that you could be capable of truly having an impact on others that is serious is not something most adolescents are able to fully grasp.

It's an expression of human nature, our desire to tear down others to feel powerful & elevated. It's no different than traditional bullying, save that it is carried out via technology.

I feel that those who cyberbully are cowards when they say or post things, they would never say to someone's face! It's just hateful and more often than not, comes from someone who is already unhappy and struggling. A happy, confident person has better things to do or post about!

It's sad, most who engage in it are not happy, sane people - they want to attack others to feel better temporarily. Yet teens are not equipped to understand this yet...we need to somehow help them understand this.

The parents' and teachers' perceptions of the definition of cyberbullying indicate a general knowledge of the topic. Their answers express a combination of harming another person with the use of technology. The participants who answered the question, "What does cyberbullying mean to you?" with a response that involved emotions, reveal an anger toward society, the pain of the victim, and/or an outrage at the perpetrator.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher presented the quantitative and qualitative data collected and analyzed to determine the prevalence and perceptions of cyberbullying in schools throughout Southern California. Demographic data was presented to illustrate the sampling of parents and teachers who participated in the study. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the Mean (*M*) and Standard Deviation (*SD*) of the participant responses to the twenty-three quantitative questions to form a comparison between the parents' and the teachers' reactions to each statement. Lastly, the researcher coded and validated themes that represented the participants responses to the two qualitative statements and two qualitative questions.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The objective of this mixed-methods, phenomenological study was to examine the prevalence and perceptions of cyberbullying in schools throughout Southern California. The significance of the research was to develop an understanding of the role's adults play in this new form of bullying. Until the 1970's, bullying was considered a rite of passage, a problem between children who just needed to talk it out, or as the old saying goes, kids will be kids. Psychologist Dan Olweus began to research and observe this mob-like mentality and began focusing on the phenomenon we now refer to as bullying (Olweus & Limber, 2010).

The researcher found that previous studies focused mainly on quantitative statistics using data to find descriptive results or focused on qualitative statistics with long-term longitudinal field observations. In using a mixed-method construct of both quantitative and qualitative questions, the researcher studied not only at the descriptive level, but also validated the patterns found from quantitative analysis with qualitative data on the participant perspectives of cyberbullying. After the end of the sampling, the researcher received seventy-two responses to the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents and twenty-five responses to the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Teachers.

Utilizing a previously validated study, the researcher altered the questions to correlate to the relationship those participating in the study had with the child/children under their care, and to better represent the climate of the schools in Southern California. In the beginning of 2020, the researcher collected data to analyze the following research questions:

1. What are the perspectives of parents' and teachers' regarding the prevalence of cyberbullying in a sample of schools in Southern California?

2. What are the perspectives of parents' and teachers' regarding the measures that have been taken for the prevention of cyberbullying in a sample of schools in Southern California?
3. How do parents' and teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying compare in various components of cyberbullying?

Quantitative data was incorporated into the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents/Teachers by using twenty-three questions that measured parent and teacher perception of the prevalence and prevention of cyberbullying. These questions were answered using a Likert Scale of one through five, with the choices ranging from *Completely Agree*, *Agree*, *Neither Agree nor Disagree*, *Disagree*, and *Completely Disagree*. The researcher used this linear scaled portion to determine the strength and intensity regarding the participant view of cyberbullying. By using identical questions on both surveys, the researcher was able to delineate responses while minimizing the effect of personal assumptions.

Qualitative analysis was conducted using two statements and two questions to determine the opinions of the participants through their assertions and commentary. After reviewing and categorizing the frequency of responses, the researcher was able to develop topics under the subthemes of prevalence, prevention, and perception. These themes were validated through others in the field of education, which integrated the reliability of the researcher's topics. To continue the analysis of the qualitative data, the researcher cross-tabulated the participant remarks for consistencies and differences between the parents and the teachers.

The first three chapters of this study discussed the problem of practice, research problem, purpose of the study, research questions, review of the literature associated with cyberbullying, and the research methodology. The fourth chapter analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data that the researcher gained through the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents/Teachers. This

chapter will discuss the findings of this study, the implications for the practice, and the recommendation for future research.

Summary of the Study

Adult influences are crucial elements to a child's development, especially in how they perceive and respond to a situation (Harcourt et al., 2014). For this investigation, the researcher had a sample of parents and teachers from Southern California, which included seventy-two parents and twenty-five teachers, predominantly female and the majority identified their ethnicity as Caucasian (mainly teachers) and Latino or Hispanic (mainly parents). The data collected and interpreted in chapter four revealed that the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding the prevalence and prevention of cyberbullying had both differences and similarities in this sample of schools surveyed throughout Southern California. Unfortunately, the researcher found that the vast majority of the teachers in this study had no training in cyberbullying (68% , $N=25$), with 52% having at least sixteen years of teaching experience.

Upon completion of the quantitative data analysis, the findings illustrated in Tables 4.1-6.1 compare the Mean (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) of parent and teacher responses for each of the three categories: prevalence, prevention, and perception. In addition, the researcher integrated four qualitative written responses in the surveys, which allowed the researcher to obtain categorical data, providing the respondents to include personal opinions and beliefs. A previous study on teachers' perceptions on cyberbullying surveyed three-hundred and twenty-eight teachers, and found similar results and revealed that, "teachers' perceptions, beliefs and concerns about cyberbullying, could serve as a basis for developing policy guidelines in schools as well as establishing programs for school teachers to cope with cyberbullying" (Eden, Heiman, & Olenik-Shemesh, 2013).

A systematic review of parents' perspectives conducted in 2015 found that parent diversity pertaining to their struggle with obtaining cyberbullying resources and assistance were hindering their understanding of the topic (Harcourt et al., 2014). This social-ecological perspective describes bullying as "a complex social phenomenon, influenced by numerous social variables within a child's school, home, peer, and community environments" (Harcourt et al., 2014, p. 373). This review coincides with the researchers' twenty-three quantitative questions on the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents/Teachers.

Implications for Practice

The initial research into cyberbullying revealed three sociological theories associated with bullying. Each theory demonstrated specific aspects correlated with the harassment of others. Robert Agnew developed the idea of General Strain Theory (GST), which believes the foundation of bullying comes from a reactive response based on emotions (Agnew, 1992). When asking parents and teachers the qualitative question, "What are some reasons you think cyberbullying happens?" two themes formed. The first reactive response was due to the perpetrator's own thoughts and feelings associated with their own lives. Thirty-nine parents and twenty teachers placed the direct cause of cyberbullying on the perpetrator, and the choices they make due to their current emotions and circumstances. The second reactive response was due to the lure of anonymity provided by technology to help conceal the perpetrator's actions. Eighty percent of participants felt that hiding behind a screen catered to those that need to vent their anger and frustration, providing an unlimited amount of prey.

A second theory associated with bullying was designed by Albert Bandura known as Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). This ideology revolves around the suggestion that children intimidate others as a learned behavior (Bandura, 1986). The researcher posed the following

qualitative statement to parents and teachers, “When a child is cyberbullied, I believe the following are obstacles toward him or her receiving help.” After analyzing the responses, two themes formed that supports Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory. The first is that the child themselves stand as an obstacle due to the behaviors they have learned through exposure, and what they have associated with positive and negative gains. The second theme that supports Bandura’s idea is the concept of Education & Resources. Children form their perceptions based on the education they have yielded from others, as well as the resources at their disposal. Following the first statement, a qualitative question was then asked of parents and teachers, “What are some reasons you think cyberbullying happens?” Three themes emerged from the responses provided to support Social Cognitive Theory. The first two were both related to technology: The ease in which children have access to a variety of devices and media outlets, and the anonymity associated with the online world. The third theme is the behavior learned by observing their parents and their family (Espelage et al., 2000) whether that behavior is constructive or destructive.

Additionally, the Ecological Systems Theory (EST), which was established by psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner, formed the largest of the categorical themes created by the parents and teachers who responded to the surveys. This concept relates to how the child interacts with their environment. The qualitative question, “When a child is cyberbullied, I believe the following are obstacles toward him or her receiving help” had two Social Cognitive responses however, there was also a correlation to three environmental factors associated with Ecological Systems Theory. These three themes consisted of Education & Resources, which is part of the child’s Exosystem (Indirect Environment), Technology, pertaining to the child’s

Mesosystem (Connections), and Laws & Policy, resulting in an effect on their Chronosystem (Changes Over Time).

The second qualitative question, “What are some reasons you think cyberbullying happens?”, contained four themes referring to the Ecological Systems Theory. The first theme, Perpetrator, was applied to Agnew’s General Strain Theory however, it also applies to Bronfenbrenner’s theory. The Perpetrator (Child) is at the center of Ecological Systems Theory and affected by all five concentric systems (Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, Macrosystem, and Chronosystem). The second theme, Technology – Ease of Access, was applied by the researcher to Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory, yet this theme overlaps with ECT. The Ease of Access in which children can move through the online world provides them with the means and opportunity to engage in cyberbullying without the discernment of their parents. This Ease of Access connection the child can form online is part of Bronfenbrenner’s second level known as the Mesosystem. The third theme, Parents & Family, also overlaps with Social Cognitive Theory. A person’s immediate surroundings is part of the Microsystem, which incorporates a child’s parents, siblings, and those in their immediate family. The final theme of Law & Policy belongs to the Chronosystem, which is the area of Ecological System Theory that engages a person’s interactions and how they change of time. This incorporates both modifications of state and federal laws and school district policies.

The final qualitative statement that links the researcher’s themes to this theory is “Please list any additional ways you think that cyberbullying could be better addressed.” All the themes generated by parents and teachers, are associated with Ecological Systems Theory: Education & Resources (Exosystem), Technology (Mesosystem), Laws & Policy (Chronosystem), and Parents & Family (Microsystem).

The final qualitative questions the researcher asked the participants, was to express “What does cyberbullying mean to you?” The responses given were categorized into two themes: definition and emotion. Forty-eight percent of parents, and 68% teachers, answer the question with a definition that had similar aspects to one another, but were not identical. Researcher Faye Mishna found a similar problem when she conducted a qualitative study from multiple perspectives, “the prevailing pattern that emerged is how difficult it is to define bullying” (Mishna, 2004, p. 238). A literature review of bullying (including cyberbullying) found the agreement of a definition a similar problem among scholars (Stop Bullying, n.d.; Litwiller & Brausch, 2013; Notar et al., 2013). The second theme that developed from the question, “What does cyberbullying mean to you?”, was the emotional component. Fifty-two percent of parents and 32% of teachers defined cyberbullying regarding the emotional toll it took on the victim. Logically from what the researcher found into both bullying and cyberbullying where similarities in parent and teacher responses. All referenced the damaging psychological effects a person suffers when they are humiliated, tormented, and shamed, publicly, and/or privately. The participants noted repercussions related to the victim including depression, suicidal tendency, decrease in academics, and/or violent retaliation (Akar, 2017; Calvete et al., 2016; Guan et al., 2016; Paez, 2018).

Recommendations for Further Research

The researcher determined that one limitation was accessibility to parents and teachers throughout the school districts in Southern California. Integrating a larger span of participants to this study would provide a more comprehensive insight and help understand the similarities and differences in the prevalence, prevention, and perception of cyberbullying in each individual school district in Southern California.

Although information gathered by parents and teachers did provide an understanding into perceptions regarding cyberbullying, the researcher believes that a second limitation of not being granted access to students through school districts, denied a true understanding of cyberbullying. Any future study would greatly benefit by including an anonymous and open forum for children to express their experiences and fears, which in turn, would profit parents, teachers, schools district's policy and state and federal laws to address this growing form of bullying.

Future research using this study would also profit by increasing the number of quantitative questions on the surveys. The twenty-three questions on the Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents/Teachers laid a foundation for the study however after the data was collected the researcher believed that additional inquiry into all three areas of study, prevalence, prevention, and perceptions, should include an increased amount of questions regarding current and future laws and policies, media influence, and parental understanding of the technology their student uses on a daily basis.

Conclusions

Previous research into cyberbullying indicates that this new form of bullying is on the rise and more challenging to prevent due to continual technological advances. This mixed-media phenomenological study has found that the sampling of parents and teachers from Southern California schools have a varying range of perceptions concerning the prevalence and preventions that are implemented within their schools. The ease to which children can access technology, social media, and the Internet are obstacles both parents and teachers face.

The relationship between the home and school need to coexist and support each other. Creating an understanding of the problem, and providing education and resources, would be the

first step in providing support and intervention to a child who becomes a target of bullying, and to help those that find themselves the perpetrator with a need to lash out.

Summary

The researcher associated with the study PARENTS AND TEACHERS PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE PREVALENCE AND PREVENTIONS OF CYBERBULLYING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA began their journey into the world of cyberbullying in October 2017. In that time the rates of bullying and cyberbullying have increased. According to the Cyberbullying Research Center established by Dr. Sameer Hinduja and Dr. Justin W. Patchin in 2005, school bullying has increase by 35% across the United States (May, 2019) and the incidents of reported cyberbullying have risen from 16.5% in 2016 to 17.4% in 2019 (Cyberbullying Research Center, n.d.).

Findings of this investigation correlate with current and past research. To reduce the number of bullying and cyberbullying incidents, all those that have interactions with children need to be aware and proactive on their behalf. This not only involves the parents and teachers that were a sampling of those in Southern California schools. It must include communities, school districts, social media sites, and the states and federal government.

“One's philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes... and the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents

Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Parents

The goal of this study is to develop an understanding of the current prevalence and perceptions of cyberbullying in Southern California. All participation is completely voluntary, and you can stop at any time without consequence. Your opinions and perceptions are very important and there are no right or wrong answers. I will not use the identity of any participant, and your answers will be confidential. Thank you for your participation in this study, which eventually will help us in learning how to protect our students.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at, jacqueline.brown1@eagles.cui.edu or (562) 335 8873.

Please check the box to agree to participate.

* Required

1. I agree to participate *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Demographics

Please complete the demographic portion of this survey before beginning. If any question makes you uncomfortable you may leave it blank.

2. Gender

Mark only one oval.

Male

Female

Non-specific

3. Ethnicity

Mark only one oval.

- African American
- Asian
- Latino/Hispanic
- Caucasian/Not Hispanic
- Middle Eastern
- Native American
- Other

4. Age

Mark only one oval.

- 22-32
- 33-42
- 43-52
- 53-62
- 63+

5. Marital Status

Mark only one oval.

- Single
- Married
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Other

6. Relationship to child/children under your care

Mark only one oval.

- I am the parent
- I am the grandparent
- I am the legal guardian
- I am a foster parent/guardian
- Other

7. Grade level(s) of child/children under your care

8. Highest level of education attained

Mark only one oval.

- Did not complete high school
- Graduated high school or GED Diploma
- Some college
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Graduate Degree
- Other

9. If you feel comfortable, please list your school name and/or district. Information will be for statistical analysis only.

**Cyberbullying
Survey
Questions**

For the purpose of this study, cyberbullying refers to the use of social media or the internet to threaten, humiliate, imitate or target another person.

10. Please check the box that best voices your opinion to each statement:

Check all that apply.

| | Completely agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Completely disagree |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cyberbullying is a problem at my child's school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cyberbullying occurs during school time. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cyberbullying occurs outside of school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cyberbullying is an issue that needs increased attention from parents. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cyberbullying is more harmful than traditional bullying. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I have discussed cyberbullying with my child. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe my child would talk to me about cyberbullying, or any form of bullying. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I do not know whether cyberbullying is addressed at my child's/children's school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe that cyberbullying can cause psychological harm to a child/children. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cyberbullying occurs less frequently than traditional bullying in my child's/children's school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

I have heard or read that cyberbullying has contributed to suicide among students.

I believe it is important to monitor my child's use of the internet.

I believe it is important to place restrictions on my child's use of the internet.

I have not learned about cyberbullying from the news, on the radio or on television.

I have learned about cyberbullying from my child/children.

I have done my own research/investigation about cyberbullying.

Laws or school policies currently in place address cyberbullying adequately.

Schools should be proactive in addressing cyberbullying.

Schools' increased involvement in addressing cyberbullying would not significantly reduce cyberbullying.

Parents should be more proactive in addressing cyberbullying with their child/children (whether their child is a victim or a cyberbully).

Parents' involvement in

addressing cyberbullying
would not reduce their
child/children's
cyberbullying, whether as
a victim or as a cyberbully.

More laws should be
passed to prevent or
punish cyberbullying.

My child's/children's
school has informed me
about cyberbullying.

11. When a child is cyberbullied, I believe the following are obstacles toward him or her receiving help.

12. Please list any additional ways you think that cyberbullying could be better addressed.

13. What are some reasons you think cyberbullying happens?

14. What does cyberbullying mean for you?

Thank you for
participating in this
survey on cyberbullying!

Clarke, Bryan David. (2013). Parents' perceptions and awareness of cyberbullying of children and adolescents, Antioch University (Modified version)

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Appendix B: Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Teachers

Cyberbullying Questionnaire for Teachers

The goal of this study is to develop an understanding of the current prevalence and perceptions of cyberbullying in Southern California. All participation is completely voluntary, and you can stop at any time without consequence. Your opinions and perceptions are very important and there are no right or wrong answers. I am trying to understand this phenomenon and be part of the solution. Your answers will all be kept confidential. Only the researchers have access to the information and there will be no link between your identity and your answers. Thank you for your participation in this study.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at, jacqueline.brown1@eagles.cui.edu or (562) 335 8873.

Please check the box to agree to participate.

* Required

1. *Mark only one oval.*

Option 1

2. I agree to participate *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Demographics

Please complete the demographic portion of this survey before beginning. If any question makes you uncomfortable you may leave it blank.

3. Gender

1 point

Mark only one oval.

- Male
- Female
- Non-specific

4. Ethnicity

1 point

Mark only one oval.

- African American
- Asian
- Latino/Hispanic
- Caucasian/Not Hispanic
- Middle Eastern
- Native American
- Other

5. Age

Mark only one oval.

- 22-32
- 33-42
- 43-52
- 53-62
- 63+

6. Marital Status

Mark only one oval.

- Single
- Married
- Seperated
- Divorced
- Widowed

7. Highest level of education attained

Mark only one oval.

- Bachelor's Degree
- Masters Degree
- Graduate Degree

8. Years of experience as a teacher

Mark only one oval.

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- Over 20

9. Have you had any training on cyberbullying?

Mark only one oval.

- No
- Yes

10. If you answered yes to the question above, please list and describe the training you have participated in.

11. What grade do you currently teach?

Mark only one oval.

- 4-6
 7-8
 9-12
 college

12. What county do you currently teach in?

13. If you feel comfortable, please list your school name and/or district. Information will be for statistical analysis only.

Cyberbullying
Survey
Questions

For the purpose of this study, cyberbullying refers to the use of social media or the internet to threaten, humiliate, imitate or target another person.

14. Please check the box that best voices your opinion to each statement:

Check all that apply.

| | Completely agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Completely disagree |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cyberbullying is a problem at the school I teach at. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cyberbullying occurs during school time. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cyberbullying occurs outside of school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cyberbullying is an issue that needs increased attention from parents. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cyberbullying is more harmful than traditional bullying. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe my students would talk to me about cyberbullying, or any form of bullying. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I believe that cyberbullying can cause psychological harm to a child/children. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cyberbullying occurs less frequently than traditional bullying at our school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I have heard or read that cyberbullying has contributed to suicide among students. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I haven't heard about students involved in cyberbullying on the news, radio or television. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

I have done my own
research/investigation
about cyberbullying.

Laws or school policies
currently in place address
cyberbullying adequately.

Schools should be
proactive in addressing
cyberbullying.

Schools' increased
involvement in addressing
cyberbullying would not
significantly reduce
cyberbullying.

Parents should be more
proactive in addressing
cyberbullying with their
child/children (whether
their child is a victim or a
cyberbully).

Parents' involvement in
addressing cyberbullying
would not reduce their
child/children's
cyberbullying, whether as
a victim or as a cyberbully.

More laws should be
passed to prevent or
punish cyberbullying.

I have discussed
cyberbullying with my
students.

I do not know whether
cyberbullying is addressed
at school.

I believe it is important to
monitor my students use
of the internet.

I believe it is important to place restrictions on my student's use of the internet.

Our school has informed parents about cyberbullying.

I have learned about cyberbullying from my school district.

15. When a child is cyberbullied, I believe the following are obstacles toward him or her receiving help.

16. Please list any additional ways you think that cyberbullying could be better addressed.

17. What are some reasons you think cyberbullying happens?

18. What does cyberbullying mean for you?

Thank you for
participating in this
survey on cyberbullying!

Clarke, Bryan David. (2013). Parents' perceptions and awareness of
cyberbullying of children and adolescents, Antioch University
(Modified version)

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Appendix C: Qualitative Data

Parent (P) and Teacher (T) Responses to Qualitative Statements and Questions

| Participant: Parent (P) or Teacher (T) | Q1 When a child is cyberbullied, I believe the following are obstacles toward him or her receiving help. | Q2 Please list any additional ways you think that cyberbullying could be better addressed . | Q3 What are some reasons you think cyberbullying happens? | Q4 What does cyberbullying mean for you? |
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| P1 | Could be embarrassed to tell. student Not enough Resource Officers at school. resource | | Easy to do with technology. Tech-case Parents not monitoring child's phone/texts Tech-no supervision | Shaming or humiliating someone via text, any child social media sites (tik tok) |
| P2 | | | | |
| P3 | When they don't feel like they can tell their parents. parents | | Insecurity, jealousy, peer pressure to belong, just a mean person that enjoys making others feel bad bully | Anytime an electronic divide is used to hide behind and say things you would never say to someone's face whether it is through text message or social media. |

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| P4 | Admitting it student | | Jealousy bully | |
| P5 | | | People are jerks bully | |
| P6 | Fear student | Ultimately, I believe social media is the biggest problem. technology I really don't have a solution. | Insecurities and feeling that they can overpower someone else. bully | It means we are really lacking as a society. |
| P7 | fear of retaliation student | | | |
| P8 | Being strong enough to tell someone and then have that person act in the child's best interest. student | I am not sure how to solve this problem. Children don't always have the mental capacity to really see how they hurt someone. student | Parent's don't think their kid could do it. | Mental anguish |

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| P9 | Fear of retaliation, fear of being student punished for using technology inappropriately, no one to tell | Presentations to parents starting with Elementary School on the harm and steps to prevent it before it becomes an issue. education | Kids spend too much time on their phones/ devices and social media and are not learning social skills as a result. Parents There also seems to be less consequences for cyber bullying | My daughter did not have access to social media until this year, junior year and my son still does not. This has limited their exposure dramatically. They have friends who have dealt with episodes cyberbullying for years because their parents have allowed them to participate in that arena from an early age. |
| P10 | Ashamed or afraid of getting in trouble student | All cellular/Wi-Fi providers should have FREE and easily understood parent controls with stricter monitoring abilities. technology A better way for | Easy access to internet. | Chronic harassment or negative comments online. |

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| | | <p>parents to share any concerns with other parents that they don't know well enough to talk to in person.</p> <p>parents</p> <p>Better Reporting process by social media. policy</p> | | |
| P11 | Embarrassing student lack of resources | | Easier for people to bully online | It means there's too much hate in the world |
| P12 | The child does not want to talk to their parents or school because of fear of retaliation. They are also embarrassed. student | If there were anonymous ways of reporting cyberbullying, policy then more victims may come forward. | <p>I think it cyberbullying happens more often than face to face bullying because it is much easier to hide behind a screen.</p> <p>Tech-anon It also spreads so fast within social media outlets.</p> | <p>Cyberbullying is any form of bringing someone down, criticizing, teasing, or making fun of someone through social media outlets.</p> <p>It also includes posting photos or threatening to post photos of someone.</p> |

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| P13 | fear of social rejection student | educate students about real world consequences for online actions | peer pressure, bully not understanding online actions have real-world consequences | Causing emotional harm to another person online |
| P14 | The fact that they are scared of the bully student | | It's another platform for bullies to bully | A child who is threatened/made fun of in online games are social media sites |
| P15 | | | | |
| P16 | Fear of retribution from other students for telling parents or school, continued harassment, losing friends for telling , fear that nothing will be done, kids will think they're a tattler student | Parents, school, ad campaigns referencing cyber bullying education | People hide behind a keyboard and have more bravery to say something online than to someone's face, kids want to appear cool to other kids, internet culture is rude and repercussions are not so easily seen as in face to face interactions, people or kids think they're untraceable | It will not be tolerated from or to my kids. It's mean spirited and the repercussions are long lasting because it's a public forum |

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| P17 | Self-esteem, depression, suicidal thoughts student | News outlets, stricter monitoring of social media, technology parent and student education about cyber bullying | No consequences, peer pressure bully, no monitoring of social media | Cyberbullying means negative online posts or comments about one's appearance, sexual identity, gender, culture and or ethnicity. I also feel sharing these posts magnifies the negative effects. |
| P18 | Not enough resources | More laws | Popularity bully, no consequences | Unacceptable |
| P19 | Bot wanting to tell anyone because of embarrassment or fear. student | Kids should not be on social media or have unlimited access to devices that connect to the internet. parents | It's too easy to be mean when you don't have to do it to someone's face. Tech-no face | As far as I know it has not happened to my children personally, but I stay on top of them about appropriate behavior online and in person, encourage them to always talk to me if anything is bothering them and remind them how to treat |

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| | | | | <p>people either in person or online.</p> <p>They also have very little social media exposure.</p> |
| P20 | Afraid to speak up students | Workshops for parents and students | Attention, trying to fit in with other bullies | <p>It is something that needs to be addressed not only in school but especially by parents. Parents need to make sure they are involved and are keeping track of what their kids are doing online. There needs to be a stronger line of communication</p> |
| P21 | Peer Pressure, lack of response of those in authority Student authority | True limiting of access on Chrome books. The district said websites were blocked but they are not. We do | Because the students can and get recognition from their peers with no consequences for the harm it does. bully | <p>I have not had to deal with it yet, but can see it coming down the line with the more access to the internet and less supervision outside</p> |

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| | | not allow our children to have private e-mail accounts at home, but the schools allow on the chrome books. technology | | of the home atmosphere. |
| P22 | Lack of parental and school involvement. | More parental involvement. | It's easy to say something mean to someone when it is not to their face. | Cyberbullying equals cowardice. |
| P23 | fear of being bullied even more - fear of the bully not being addressed. Student school | to create more education and to promote more kindness and awareness - kids need to know that what they say and do hurts and can cause severe harm. Student i don't believe they are aware of the | to fit in, to be cool, to make someone feel bad bc you feel bad, to get attention. bully | |

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| | | consequences of their actions. | | |
| P24 | shame/embarrassment, fear of retaliation, those in authority will not or cannot stop the cyberbullying student | Education for parents, Safe process for reporting cyberbullying, clear consequences for cyberbullies | Cyberbullies feel empowered behind a screen to say/write whatever they think or feel regardless of the emotional consequences to the victim since they are "faceless." | It means I need to be more aware of what my children are doing and seeing online. |
| P25 | Fear of retaliation student | Require mandatory student & parent education | Kids do not always understand the effects that social media & "simple" actions can have on other children Bully descen | Directed, unsolicited, negative attention on social media towards another individual |
| P26 | Family has no knowledge their student has social media. parent | Doing an annual presentation. | It the new way of being mean. bully | Bullying is bullying and it is not acceptable. |
| P27 | Fear of retaliation, humiliation, lack of adult | Creating/fostering empathetic connection in our | Loneliness, boredom, lack of proper guidance, | We're fortunate in that none of my children have |

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| | <p>support/education, feeling helpless or afraid to make things worse student</p> | <p>youth, teaching and demonstrating compassion; solutions that are focused on right behavior as opposed to condemning the wrong behavior.</p> | <p>abuse/negligence, desire for the ego-mind to feel powerful, dark sense of humor, apathetic, disconnected...the cliché: hurt people hurt people.</p> | <p>experienced cyberbullying. However, to me, it's one of the lowest, most cowardly ways to mistreat another. It has the potential to be relentless and unending...which is a very scary thought. And it can very easily, and sometimes very accidentally get out of hand. Escalating at a rate that even the abuser did not intend - and for these reasons, I believe we owe it to our children and ourselves to foster kindness, tolerance, and connection in our lives.</p> |
| P28 | <p>Fear of retaliation, fear of looking</p> | | <p>Kids brains are not fully developed and</p> | <p>I think, in general, many people have</p> |

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| | <p>“weak”, low self esteem preventing them to reach out to a trusted adult/friend student</p> | | <p>they have self esteem issues and the need to fit in, bully assimilate, etc. often they are trying to impress someone else or feel better about themselves by bringing someone else down without the full capability or empathy to understand how it affects the other person. It is easier to cyber bully because there is a feeling of disconnection and distance to make it “less real” and easier to get away with also.</p> | <p>inner struggles, low self esteem, anger, confusion...a specially developing youth. It is defense mechanism to “hate” on others to subconsciously mask your own confusion about feelings and general teen/tween angst. I think the “cyber” part of it makes it easier to distance yourself from it being “bad” and also,, lack of maturity and understanding of long term consequences and that you could be capable of truly having an impact on others that is serious is not something most adolescents are able to fully grasp.</p> |
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| P29 | Fear of increased bullying student | Going back to less technology and not allowing children to have smartphones or other devices | Our children are still developing mentally and emotionally and are not mature enough or ready for the content they have access to on internet and therefore create an image or standard they don't yet understand , making self esteem issues and judging of others their main focus | Hiding behind a keyboard and screen in pursuit of hurting others |
| P30 | Afraid of bringing attention to the bullying or might be seen as a sign of weakness to ask for help student | | Lack of self respect bully | Using social media to bully |
| P31 | Fear of retaliation. student | | Jealousy. bully | |
| P32 | Shame, a feeling of weakness, | cyberbullying is bullying. Clearly define both. | Privacy - technology makes it easy to do | It's an expression of human nature, our desire to tear down |

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| | embarrassment over the incident, student | | these things in darkness | others to feel powerful & elevated. It's not different than traditional bullying, save that it is carried out via technology. |
| P33 | Feeling ashamed,, feeling like nobody can really help make it stop, feeling powerless, student | I don't know. I check my son's text messages and emails for signs. He does not have access to social media and he turns his phone/chrome book in at night. parent | Kids feeling bad about themselves and reach out in painful ways toward others. Kids trying to fit in with a peer group. Kids feeling jealous of the victim. Bully Kids finding entertainment in the reaction of the victim or others reaction towards the victim. Kids not fully understanding the impact of their actions. | Teasing/taunting, shaming, intimidating, humiliating etc over text messaging and social media. |

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| P34 | Trusting an adult, scared of retaliation student | At my sons school, they address it often. He says that kids get disciplined. They get suspended, not expelled. education | Jealousy. Wanting to bring others down. bully | Harmful comments (true or untrue) that spreads online. |
| P35 | Afraid of what might happen if they report it student | media, school, classes | people feel protected by a computer or phone | It is devastating to those who are cyberbullied |
| P36 | | Maybe a class or on campus club education | It's easy to hide behind technology | Posting hurtful things from the safety of ur device |
| P37 | Scared/ embarrassed that it is happening to them. student | Parenting Parents monitoring what their children are doing online. | Kids are bored. bully Kids think they are tuff on the other side of the key board. Kids trying to be cool. | Nothing I constantly monitor what my kids are doing on their phones and they do not have social media |
| P38 | Fear of not being heard or being targeted for speaking up. | | Some may be learned behavior at home. Being a victim themselves. | It means there is a lack of communication and guidance at home. |

| | student | | bully | |
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| P39 | Identifying and /or omitting a problem and where to find help. education | More information presented to children and parents. Resources for kids who feel like they are a victim. More defined consequences for those that are bullying. | Easy access with little consequences for those that wish to prey on other children. | Unwanted or unjust comments, pictures, or messages with malicious intent which includes all forms of social media. |
| P40 | I do not believe that is an issue. There are several programs offered through the district and even my work. No problem | Awareness to students via a class. | Kids are mean bully, and or victims of something at home. This is just a different form of bullying. Bullying has always existed. | Someone deliberately using the internet to shame or hurt another. |
| P41 | The bully is not reprimanded authority | To much focus is on the person being bullied. More focus needs to be put on the bully, resources | It's easy to say anything when you are behind a computer. It's way harder to say it to someones face. | Mean kids not being monitored by their parents. |

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| P42 | Parents not understanding | Make it as important as academics education | Behind a monitor Tech face | Pain for the children |
| P43 | Communication, follow up, lack of disclosure. education | Schools countering cyber bullying, preventative measures from the bullied prospective (how not to get bullied). education | People online taking out anger or problems on others. bully | Ridicule, demeaning, belittling. |
| P44 | | | | |
| P45 | Fearful of repercussions student | More parental monitoring of social media | Children are insecure and feel the need to judge others to make themselves feel more powerful bully | Using social media to intimidate and/or demean another peer. |
| P46 | Fear nothing will be done; peer retaliation will occur student | Harsher punishment from the first occurrence authority | Immaturity, lack of empathy, allowed by friends and family, jealousy, | It's yet another way for kids to think it's "okay" to emotionally harm |

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| | | | consequences are mild, bully | another kid for fun or ?? |
| P47 | | | Peer pressure, self insecurities, jealousy bully | |
| P48 | Feeling of embarrassment or scared to speak up student | | Children can be jerks and possibly imitate what's going on at home bully | Degrading, slanderous language toward a human. Putting pictures or videos on social media without consent |
| P49 | Knowing it is occurring and I think it is more outside of school so police must get involved | Parent classes | It is not face to face | Internet stalking and continual teasing and derogatory abuse |
| P50 | They don't seek help usually because they don't understand that it's not a normal thing. student | | Easier for kids because it's not face to face. | I've seen kids crying historically because of things said on social media. |

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| P51 | <p>They are ashamed and embarrassed.</p> <p>They think if they tell someone, it will be worse for them.</p> <p>student</p> | | <p>1. accessibility to apps that erase content within minutes. 2. kids brains are not developed enough to know the consequences of their words onto another bully 3. Kids, even adults, bully online...its easier to type words on a page than to say it to someones face. Most things people type, they would not say to someone in person</p> | <p>attacking someone verbally online.</p> |
| P52 | | | <p>Kids feel to free to express themselves through technology when they wouldn't otherwise if they were face to face. They hide behind their phones thinking</p> | <p>I feel that those who cyberbully are cowards when they say or post things they would never say to someone's face! It's just hateful and more often then not, comes from</p> |

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| | | | they can get away with it. | someone who is already unhappy and struggling. A happy, confident person has better things to do or post about! |
| P53 | | | Jealousy bully | |
| P54 | Peer pressure student | | | |
| P55 | Fear, embarrassment, feeling isolated/ alone student | Parents should monitor | many children are not taught empathy, compassion, and manners (by their parents) | It's when people personally attack others through social media. |
| P56 | | | Bully Because that person probably has gotten bullied and they are miserable so why not hide behind a screen and keyboard | Name calling while playing video games, picking on others online. |
| P57 | Shame, lack of confidence, isolation student | The bully must be confronted and brought out of the | The bully feels safe in their attack - people tend to ignore | Using media to demean, harm, or otherwise negatively affect another |

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| | | shadows of the internet authority | the attack of they are not the target | |
| P58 | If they are not supposed to be on the social media platforms they can't get help or talk to an adult. In addition, they may fear removal from internet access more than the actual cyber bullying. technology | In school service. Community outreach go to teach parents . | Kids are mean, this is just increased access. bully | Kids used to be bullied at school but now, with the internet and the advent of text messaging/anonymous apps there is no escape. You can be in the safety of your room and still see the hurtful messages/have them sent to you. |
| P59 | | | | |
| P60 | The school leaders taking appropriate action authority | Have students that are in leadership roles address the students about the harm amongst peers education | Children do not have boundaries and respect for themselves coupled with parents that are either disengaged or overengaged. Child does not have self esteem. bully | Constant mistreatment online to tear down another child whether through humiliation or fear |

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| P61 | | | | |
| P62 | Agreed | Informative at schools education | It's so easy just to go into social media and let everyone know personal information. | Bullying through social media |
| P63 | Fear of retribution/ social embarrassment student | Educational workshops for youth/ parents; media literacy education/ therapy for bullies | Too many to list, but all issues work together. Doubt one is particularly the "reason" | Threatening and ridiculing through technology |
| P64 | Fear of more bullying, feeling helpless, student | If there were peer leaders that stood up against cyber bullying resources | Easy access to social media and impulsivity and lack of empathy bully | Kids saying mean or untrue or confidential things about other kids. Which then spreads quickly and can isolate the victim |
| P65 | | The social media that was used to bully should report to authorities | No stern repercussions in place family | |

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| P66 | Afraid of what may happen if they talk about it no confidence in the system set to help them. students | Examples - Testimonies of kids and parents that were successful education | Internet freedom and a hurting child lashing out. Ease | Someone hiding behind a screen to bring mind threats to another and tear down their confidence making them fill insecure and cyber bully in control. |
| P67 | The ability of others finding out student | First seek help immediately And confidentiality student | Peer pressure, jealousy, power, Control bully | The ability to sabotage, put down, control, under mine others and Hatred |
| P68 | Once on the internet it is always on the internet. It is hard to remove the initial cause of the cyber bully incident. technology Child is embarrassed. They are kids and they want to fit in and be cool. student | NO cell phones at school. Period. No phones No phones no phones. Not sure that will happen. technology | To be cool, popular. Kids are just mean. They feel safe to bully when not face to face. They have too much time on their hands. Maybe parents don't monitor. | Making fun of someone. Teasing. |

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| P69 | Lack of seriousness given to the matter, difficulty finding the offending party authority | | It's easy to be cruel while hiding behind a screen | Bullying done via text, social media, email, etc |
| P70 | Self esteem student | More teaching about it in the ho.e and schools. | Emotional issues within the bully | Unacceptable and heart breaking |
| P71 | Not having good Communication with parents | More media involvement | Parents not teaching their children respect for others | A serious problem among teenagers |
| P72 | | | | |
| T73 | Fear of retaliation, embarrassment, feeling guilty for having possibly been a perpetrator at one time. student | Having parents be more aware of social media platforms that their kids are using and having them be more involved in monitoring their child's cyber activity. | Jealousy, insecurity, problems at home, attention issues, desire for power/popularity, ignorance, culture of silence among peers bully | For me it means the use of technology to target students and to make them feel sad, hurt, helpless. |
| T74 | Telling someone and having witnesses. | I feel the school addresses it well | Kids can be jerks to each other. Some are | Any activity that intentionally inflicts |

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| | student | No problem | not in tune with their feelings and can easily hurt others with unkind words and actions. bully | emotional pain from another student |
| T75 | | Have victims present real life experiences to students. education | Because students are bored. Students are jealous. Students are seeking revenge. Students are mad at others. bully | Someone who is being harassed or bothered repeatedly through technology. |
| T76 | Students are afraid to tell an adult for future repercussions from bully. | Formal training on addressing/teaching kids about it would be a start. | Kids have become desensitized behind a screen. The reaction of the victim is missing and therefore bully doesn't see it as "big deal." I also think kids' freedom on the internet has led to increased cyber bullying. | Bullying through technology. |
| T77 | Fear of reprisal, fear of being socially | More education for students about | Lack of bully compassion or | Using electronic communication to |

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| | ostracized, fear of being a "snitch" student | consequences, try to eliminate anonymous sites | empathy, no consequences for actions (especially those done online or anonymously) | cause emotional harm to another person |
| T78 | finding someone to tell, fearful of speaking to adults about the matter student | parent education at an early age, limit phone and device use as well as social media | too much time spent on social media without supervision | schools can provide parents with information about the harmful effects of children's access to social media, but it is up to parents to enforce restrictions and always supervise online behavior |
| T79 | I think sometimes kids are afraid to come forward because they are in fear of retaliation or not being accepted by others. Also, some kids think they are at fault for being bullied. student | | I think certain kids feel empowered bully behind a screen and they certainly wouldn't say these things to a peers face. It's easier to say mean and hurtful things to a screen. | Cyber bullying is using an electronic device to bully a person, this is done by sending messages or intimidating or threatening a person. |

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| T80 | Fear of getting other students in trouble; Fear of getting in trouble for using inappropriate websites; fear of losing electronic devices student | Sharing simulations of cyber bullying and discussing feelings, empathy, kindness, self respect, etc education | Students trying to gain “popularity” bully | Improper use of photos; malicious gossip; conversations leading toward unsafe, illegal, or immoral activities |
| T81 | The child not knowing how serious it is, the child not wanting to get in trouble education | Parent workshop | Anonymity of the internet, perception of not getting caught or held accountable | Anything that is repeated instances of taunting, making fun of, or hurtful words toward another person use the use of the internet. |
| T82 | Being embarrassed or not knowing who to reach out to. student | Going over it as a class and school. It should be well voiced that cyberbullying is not tolerated in school, even if the cyberbullying took place while the student was at home. | Students/children/teens can feel more confident cyberbullying because they are hiding behind a screen. Students can also hide their identity online and bully someone while pretending to be | Doing something that harms someone else emotionally, psychologically, etc. online. It can be through texting or on social media. |

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| | | education | someone else. Traditional bullying reveals identity and seems more prone to retaliation since it happens face-to-face, rather than behind a screen. | |
| T83 | Fear and embarrassment student | Consequences for actions authority | Lack of confidence, trying to fit in bully | Using digital media to harass another |
| T84 | They feel that they cannot come forward, either to parents or teachers. They may think they are to blame or will get in trouble. student | Parents need to be made aware of the severity and pervasiveness that is cyber bullying. | Children in adolescent stages feel the need to make themselves feel better while tearing others down. bully | A taunting of any kind done through an electronic device or over any media/ communication platform. |
| T85 | Not telling about what is happening to them to an adult they trust. students | More training and seminars about the different ways(applications) it could happen | Lack of control/supervision from the parents on what are their children doing with their technology devices. bully | Anything that could offend or make another person feel less, rejected, criticized meanly |

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| T86 | The child's reluctance to inform an adult of the situation. student | Parenting classes, tougher consequences when it is done, classes for students | Easier to say things online, no real fear of getting caught, don't think there is anything wrong with it | Anyone who engages in inappropriate behavior towards another person through the internet. |
| T87 | Parents not knowing their children could be involved specifically when their child is the offender. | | It happens when a student takes it out on another student. bully | It is when one student regularly or consistently does harmful things to another student via social media, technology, or internet. |
| T88 | Peer interactions, learning, self-esteem student | | Insecurity about themselves bully, lack of parental involvement, lack of monitoring, laws are not strict enough enough, sites do not screen content, | Harassing, humiliating another person on social media, email, or internet |
| T89 | Fear of retribution from the cyberbully for telling adults | Cyberbullying falls within the category of hate- | Cyberbullying happens because the bully's get a kick out | It is a hate-crime targeted towards the |

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| | about the bullying. I believe fear is the major factor. student | crime, and should be addressed accordingly. authority | of feeling superior to someone else without having to face them one-on-one. | emotionally vulnerable. |
| T90 | Willingness to inform others. student | Encourage victims to speak out. education | Bullies believe they can get away with their actions. | Intention to make someone feel threatened, or hurt. |
| T91 | Embarrassment & shame. Some kids don't know they've been/are being bullied. Student education | I think there needs to be a better understanding of what bullying is, not just cyber bullying. I also believe kids need to understand how their actions can invite them to be bullied, or put them in positions to bully someone else. education | It's easy to hide behind technology. | Another expression of our broken human nature. |
| T92 | The student discussing it with adults. Adults being aware | Heavier parent monitoring of student social media | It's passive for students and hey don't have to expose their identity no face | Repeatedly harrowing someone or demoing them over the internet. |

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| T93 | District policies | Move to another school policy | Kids lack of self esteem and they take it out on others bully | Unproductive way of developing relationships |
| T94 | Maybe students are being threatened, Maybe students feel hopeless as to what can be done about it, maybe students are embarrassed or ashamed, maybe students are afraid that adults will find them at fault for some reason | | Entertainment, make bully feel better than victim, bully is in pain themselves, bully thinks that's the way to gain acceptance from a peer group | Social media shaming, hurtful texting, harassment over text, guiltting peer to do something against their morals |
| T95 | 1- They student need to actually speak up and let adults know, not all kids: teens are comfortable to do that. 2- Parents should be looking at child's social media | 1- schools discuss it 2- parents discuss it and monitor social media | Easy for kids to attack- it's passive. Kids need to know how to address conflicts face to face again. Parents need to take some responsibility in these actions- many | It's sad, most who engage in it are not happy, sane people - they want to attack others to feel better temporarily. Yet teens are not equipped to |

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| | for these reasons and others. | | <p>behave the way they have witnessed.</p> <p>However, we also need to assist our youth in understanding how to ignore or not take personal written attacks- Most are just from angry people not happy with themselves, yet this is a hard concept to get youth to understand-</p> | <p>understand this yet...we need to somehow help them understand this.</p> |
| T96 | Having someone to trust, retaliation from other kids, lack of support at home student | Make parents more accountable then they would pay attention | Kids do not fit in take it out on others, popular kids enjoy putting others down to gain attention bully | Harassing someone through technology |
| T97 | They do need to tell someone about it and sometimes they are too shy and don't want to bring it up or | Upper grade students should have a 1 or 2 session class in which a presenter comes to address | Kids are in their home and think they can say whatever they want with no consequences- like | A student has been bullied in an online format. |

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| | get the other person in trouble. student | cyber bullying to the class or they should make a video for teachers to show the class. | some adults on social media as well. | |
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