


2006

A Study of Demographic Variables and Their Influence on Teachers' Perception of Bullying Behavior in a Suburban New Jersey High School

Brian Purzak

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations>

 Part of the [Educational Administration and Supervision Commons](#), and the [Secondary Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Purzak, Brian, "A Study of Demographic Variables and Their Influence on Teachers' Perception of Bullying Behavior in a Suburban New Jersey High School" (2006). *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses (ETDs)*. 123.
<https://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations/123>

A STUDY OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON
TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF BULLYING BEHAVIOR IN A SUBURBAN NEW
JERSEY HIGH SCHOOL

BY

BRIAN PURZAK

Dissertation Committee

John W. Collins, Jr., Ed.D.

Barbara Strobert, Ed. D.

Lisa Antunes, Ed. D.

Michael Raj, Ed. D.

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
Seton Hall University

2006

ABSTRACT

Bullying is a problem that continues to be faced by schools. The effects of bullying are felt by both bully and victim. Some of the victims of bullying suffer from severe emotional and psychological trauma; others turn to severe violence such as homicide and suicide in order to escape. Effects on the bullies themselves are pervasive as well, as bullying behavior appears to be a gateway to adult anti-social and criminal behavior. The research suggests that much of the bullying that occurs in schools goes unnoticed or ignored leading to a culture of violence and victimization that makes school uncomfortable for many children.

This study investigated whether certain demographic variables influence teachers' perceptions of bullying behavior on the high school level. The study extended the research of L. Henry Edwards (2003) in that it explored similar demographics. In fact, with permission from Dr. Henry Edwards her survey, *A Teachers Perception of Bullying* was used in this study as well. Responses were received from 49 teachers representing a 54% rate of return.

Frequency analysis showed that while many subjects felt that bullying was a problem in their school, few observed such incidences and fewer still reported that students tell them about being victimized by bullies. Further, the frequency analysis showed that the non physical type of bullying was observed or reported more than was the physical form.

Statistical testing consisted of ANOVA, Independent Sample T – Test and One Sample T- Test. This testing revealed that the variables that were studied had no statistically significant influence on teachers' perception of bullying behavior. However,

statistical testing did reveal that there was a significant difference between elementary and high school teachers' perceptions of bullying behavior.

As a result of these findings the researcher suggests that further study be done in both similar and dissimilar schools and areas. Further, the researcher believes that schools should introduce bullying training for teachers and that such training should be a component of new teacher induction and orientation programs as well as teacher and administrator preparation programs. Finally, it is recommended that training be implemented for students as well.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this doctoral dissertation could not have possibly happened without the support and efforts of many people. First, I must acknowledge the members of my dissertation committee; Dr. John Collins, Jr, Dr. Barbara Strobert, Dr. Michael Raj and Dr. Lisa Antunes for their support and encouragement at varying times throughout this process. Thanks are also due to Dr. Lisa Henry Edwards who was gracious enough to grant me permission to use the survey that she developed for use in her own study. The use of this survey was immeasurably helpful.

It is with the utmost gratitude and appreciation that I thank my dissertation mentor, Dr. John Collins, Jr., a true American hero. It was Dr. Collins' support and encouragement and his willingness to accept my writing him several emails per day at times that has helped me get this dissertation completed. His responses to my emails were to the point, unbelievably helpful and provided me with a pep talk in those times when it was so desperately needed. His responses sometimes came so quickly that it seemed like he was sitting at his computer and waiting for my emails. Dr. Collins, you are awesome.

Special thanks are due to Lawrence Everett, Crystal Lovell and Frank Sheboy. Crystal and Frank served as my unofficial stats advisors while Lawrence and I were study buddies. All three have become great friends and have helped me through some of the rough moments both academically and emotionally. Frank and Lawrence have become two of the closest friends that a person can have.

Finally, I must acknowledge every one of my fellow members of Cohort VIII. It was all of you that made this entire journey so worthwhile. I found that I would actually be looking forward to classes just so I could be around all of you. You are all brilliant,

amazing people and it wouldn't have been the same without you. I have cherished the support and encouragement that we all have for one another and I will miss each and every one of you. It has been a joy to be with so many people from so many different walks of life. I fully expect that some of us will be lifelong friends.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is first and foremost dedicated to my wonderful wife and children.

Sharon, without you, none of this would have ever happened, you have pushed and supported me every step of the way and although I don't always show it, I appreciate and love you more than you can ever imagine. My children, Max, Jake and Sela have sacrificed the most along this journey. Thank you for all of the times that I missed your practices or games or just missed being around because I was writing or reading or researching. The support and encouragement from you, as young as you are, has been incredible. The three of you are mature beyond your years. You are the most amazing family that a person can ever dream of having. I love you!

Next this is dedicated to some very special friends who have been there for my family and I throughout the process. Jackie Rial, who is the child care provider for our three children, but has become much, much more than that. Jackie, you are both friend and family. Without your flexibility to allow me to come home late those many evenings this could never have come to fruition. More importantly than that, however is the nurturing, guidance and love that you show our children. We all love you dearly.

A very special thank you is due to Rick & Leslie Brown, who took my children to the practices and games when I couldn't and took care of my kids as though they were their own. Thank you so much. We love you and I can never express to you just how much you mean to this family.

Finally, this is dedicated to my parents, Harold and Ferne Purzak, who instilled in me a love for learning and the intrinsic value and reward of doing well in school.

Congratulations, you have done a phenomenal job in raising both of your children.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	II
	DEDICATION	IV
	LIST OF TABLES	VII
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Background	1
	Statement of the Problem	3
	Purpose of the Study	4
	Research Questions	6
	Limitations and Delimitations	7
	Limitations	7
	Delimitations	7
	Theoretical Assumptions	8
	Definition of Terms	8
	Summary	11
II.	REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	13
	Introduction	13
	Bullying Defined	15
	Victimization Defined	16
	History of Bullying	17
	Common Misconceptions about Bullying	17
	School Size	17
	Competition	18
	External Characteristics	18
	Low Self-Esteem	18
	Attention Seeking	19
	Bullying Is a Stage of Adolescence	19
	Teacher Awareness	19
	Victims Should Just Defend Themselves	20
	Location	20
	Victims are Few	20
	Passiveness	20
	Stereotypes	21
	Characteristics of Bullies	21
	Effects on Bullies	23
	Characteristics of Victims	24
	Effects on Victims	25
	Social Aspects of Bullying	27
	Gender and Bullying	28

Psychological Aspects of Bullying	28
Academic Aspects of Bullying	33
School Climate and Bullying	34
School Personnel and Student Bullying	36
Summary	42
III. METHODOLOGY	44
Introduction	44
Population and Sample	45
Instrumentation	46
Pilot Study	47
Data Collection	48
Research Questions and Data Analysis	49
IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA	53
Introduction	53
Subjects	53
Frequency Analysis	54
Demographic Variables	54
About Student Reporting of Bullying	58
About Teacher Observation of Bullying	62
Reliability Analysis	68
Results	68
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	75
Introduction	75
Generalizability	82
Recommendations for Policy, Practice and Future Results	83
Conclusion	87
References	89
Appendices	94
A. Survey Permission E-Mail	95
B. Survey Permission Letter	97
C. Instrument for Study	99
D. Letter to Superintendent.	103
E. Superintendent Approval Letter	105
F. Principal Approval Letter	107
G. Researcher Survey Script	109
H. Participant Letter	110

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Psychological, Behavioral and Personality Symptoms of Bullying	31
Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Demographic Variables by Mean	55
Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Demographic Variables by Percentages	56
Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Student Reporting Questions	59
Table 5: Frequency Distribution of Teacher Observation Questions	63

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Recent research has shown that the problem of bullying in school has led to increased absenteeism, lowered academic achievement, suicide, and incidents of severe violence in schools. Henry (2003) has stated that according to Hoover, Oliver, and Hazler (1992), “approximately 77% of all students will become the victim of a bully at some point in his or her educational career” (p.1). Coy (2001, p. 3) has found that “160,000 students skip school each day because of intimidation by their peers.” According to Winter and Orecklin (2000), these children suffer from physical symptoms such as daily headaches and stomachaches. In addition, students who have been victims of bullies tend to have a lower rate of achievement than their peers. “Students who are targeted by bullies often have difficulty concentrating on their schoolwork” (Lumsden, 2002, p. 3).

Koki (1999) reports that in studies conducted by Rigby and Slee in Australia, adolescent students who have had thoughts of suicide or attempts to harm themselves report that bullies have victimized them. On March 2, 1987, Nathan Feris, a seventh grader at DeKalb High School in Missouri brought a gun to school and shot and killed a classmate before he killed himself. He had decided that he had been called *chubby* and *walking dictionary* long enough. When asked why they picked on him, his classmates

indicated that they really didn't have anything against him. According to Barone (1997) they said, "He was just someone to pick on" (p. 1).

The most alarming statistic is the increase in the prevalence of severe violence in schools around the world. "A time line of recent worldwide school shootings" (2005) includes the following incidents:

On February 2, 1996 in Moses Lake, Washington, Barry Loulkatis, 14 years old, began shooting in his Algebra class killing two students and a teacher and wounding one other. On February 19, 1997, 16-year-old Evan Ramsay killed his Principal, a student and wounded two others in Bethel, Alaska. In Pearl, Mississippi on October 1, 1997 two students were killed and seven others were wounded in an attack by 16-year-old Luke Woodham. Luke and his friends were characterized as outcasts who worshipped Satan. Exactly two months later, on December 1, 1997, 14-year-old Michael Carneal killed three students and wounded five other students at Heath High School in West Paducah, Kentucky, as they participated in a prayer circle at the school. Precisely two weeks later in Stamps, Arkansas, two students were wounded when Colt Todd, also 14 years old, opened fire at other students as they stood in the parking lot while he hid in the woods nearby. On March 24, 1998 ten students were wounded, while four other students and a teacher were killed in Jonesboro, Arkansas when Mitchell Johnson, 13, and Andrew Golden, 11, shot at their fellow students and teachers from the woods during a false fire alarm at the school . One month later on April 24, 1998 a teacher was killed and two students were wounded at a dance at James R. Parker Middle School in Edinboro, Pennsylvania. After the incident a 14-year-old boy, Andrew Wurst, was charged with the shooting. Less than one month after the Edinboro incident, on May 19, 1998 in

Fayetteville, Tennessee a student was killed in the parking lot of Lincoln County High School just three days before graduation. His killer was Jacob Davis, an 18-year-old honor student. Just two days later in Springfield, Oregon, 15-year-old Kip Kinkel killed two and wounded 22 other students in the cafeteria of Thurston High School after killing his parents. Kip had been arrested and released the day before for bringing a gun to school. Three weeks after that on June 15, 1998 in Richmond, Virginia, a teacher and a guidance counselor were wounded by a 14-year-old boy in the hallway of their school. On April 20, 1999 at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, the deadliest school shooting in the history of our nation occurred when 12 students and one teacher were killed while 23 others were wounded when 18 year old Eric Harris, and 17 year old Dylan Klebold opened fire in the school prior to committing suicide. Harris and Klebold had been planning for more than a year to blow up their school and had hoped to kill at least 500 people. Dylan and Klebold were ostracized and bullied by other students at the school. Since the incident at Columbine High School there have been 27 additional incidents of school shootings around the world ("Time line of", 2005).

With the growing number of children that have been committing murder, suicide or both after being the targets of peer victimization, it is clear that bullying is a problem that is in dire need of our attention. The one thing that many of the perpetrators of school shootings have in common is the fact that they have been ostracized, picked on, made fun of, and physically abused by their peers. In a word, they had been "bullied".

Statement of the Problem

It has been estimated by the National Resource Center for Safe Schools that "30 percent of American children are regularly involved in bullying, either as bullies, victims,

or both” and “approximately 15 percent of students are “severely traumatized or distressed” by encounters with bullies. In addition, “eight percent report being victimized at school at least once a week” (Brewster & Railsback, 2001, p.4).

Regrettably, as pointed out by Lumsden (2002), “school personnel often minimize or underestimate the extent of bullying and the harm it can cause. In many cases, bullying is tolerated or ignored” (p. 1). In fact, as has been reported by Atlas and Pepler (1998) teachers seem to not even notice bullying. Their research has shown that teachers and other school personnel observed only four percent of the bullying episodes that occur. The dilemma is that teachers and administrators need to know about bullying and how to recognize it, yet teacher and administrator preparation programs do not currently address the issue.

This study was designed to investigate whether there is a link between teachers’ background characteristics such as age, gender, years of teaching experience, level of education, upbringing, and their own experiences with bullying during that upbringing and its influence on their perception of bullying behavior in a high school setting. It was designed to establish whether there are unique characteristics that are held by teachers who report bullying and those who tend to ignore it. In essence, are there variables that contribute to teacher’s perception of bullying behavior?

Purpose of the Study

Harachi, Catalana, and Hawkins (1999) have reported that there have been few publications of research on bullying in the United States. The preponderance of the research that has been conducted has focused on the student. The results have shown that a great majority of bullying behavior by students goes unnoticed by teachers. In their

study, Froschl and Gropper (1999) found that although teachers or other adults were present all the time they were either uninvolved in or ignored 71 percent of the observed incidents of bullying. Barone (1997) has stated that many children continue to have problems with bullying because it is generally tolerated. Barone (1997) also says that “teachers, school officials, parents and other students too often seem to stand by as children are degraded, humiliated, beaten and ridiculed”(p. 1).

According to Boulton (1997), sparse research has been done on teachers’ perceptions of bullying. Boulton (1997) believes that an increase in teacher awareness will expand their interventions in bullying incidents. One of the reasons that Barone (1997) cites for teacher inaction in regards to bullying is that “educators have become desensitized to bullying and do not even see it” (p. 1). In order for us to combat this desensitization, increase teacher awareness of bullying, and in turn improve their ability to intervene in incidents of bullying, it is necessary to determine why some teachers tend to ignore bullying behavior.

It is crucial that we examine teacher’s perceptions of bullying and the reasons for those perceptions. If educators are to be able to successfully combat the problem of bullying in schools, it is essential that they have an understanding of teacher’s perceptions, so that appropriate policies and procedures can be developed. This research study was designed to determine whether there are certain demographic characteristics that contribute to teacher’s perception of bullying. In effect, are there specific characteristics that lead to a “kids will be kids” attitude amongst teachers? In addition, this study sought to conclude whether there are characteristics that are specific to teachers who take a proactive approach and do not ignore bullying behavior by students.

Research Questions

This study spoke to the question of whether there are specific demographic characteristics that influence teachers' perception of bullying behavior. The research questions that were addressed are as follows:

1. What influence does teachers' gender have on their perception of bullying behavior?
2. What influence does teachers' years of experience have on their perception of bullying behavior?
3. What influence does a teacher's level of education have on their perception of bullying behavior?
4. What influence does chronological age have on teacher's perception of bullying?
5. What influence do differences in teacher's upbringing (urban, suburban or rural) have on their perception of bullying behavior?
6. What influence does a teacher's own experience with bullying as a child (bully, victim of bullies or both) have on their perception of bullying behavior?

Permission has been granted by Dr. Lisa Henry Edwards to use her survey, entitled "A Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying" that was used in her 2003 study of teachers' perceptions of bullying among elementary school students. As such, questions 1 – 4 represent demographic variables that were studied by Dr. Henry, while questions 5 (teachers' upbringing) and 6 (teachers' own experience with bullying) represent variables of particular interest to this researcher.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations and delimitations of this study are related to several factors. The study was conducted in one northwest New Jersey high school and while the data collected may be reflective of the participants of the study, the researcher did not attempt nor would it be have been appropriate, to generalize the findings to schools in different areas of the state, of different populations, socio-economic status or different grade levels. Further research will be required in order to generalize the findings of this study.

Limitations

For the purpose of this study, the following limitations existed:

1. The study used a survey instrument that relied on self-reporting. As such, teachers may not have been entirely forthright in their responses.
2. The variables that were examined in the study were limited to specific background characteristics and teachers perceptions of bullying behavior.
3. Since the study was conducted in one school, the culture of the school and the characteristics that the school looks for when hiring staff may have had an effect on the results of the study.

Delimitations

For the purpose of this study, the following delimitations existed:

1. The subjects of the study all came from one suburban Northwestern New Jersey High School with a predominantly Caucasian teaching staff and were not randomly selected; therefore the results may not be indicative of all high school teachers or to teachers across all grade levels.

2. The subjects all came from a public school. Therefore the results may not be indicative of teachers in private or parochial schools.
3. The subjects all came from a school located in Northwestern New Jersey therefore the results may not be indicative of teachers in other areas of the state, the nation or the world.

Theoretical Assumptions

The following theoretical assumptions were made during the course of this study:

1. The research instrument accurately assessed the population sampled and was a suitable method of collecting data for this study.
2. The sampled population gave honest and factual responses to the questions asked for this study.

Definition of Terms

The terms used in this study are defined as follows:

Bully – Atlas and Pepler (1998) define the bully as “The person who initiates the negative action The aggressive behavior is not invited by both parties involved in the interaction” (Appendix A).

Aggressive Bully - An aggressive bully is one who will initiate a bullying incident. They are seen as ... “belligerent, fearless, coercive, confident, tough, and impulsive.” (Coy, 2001, p. 3)

Passive Bully – Passive bullies take the less belligerent role in a bullying incident. The passive bully is a follower of a more aggressive bully. During the incident the passive bully will simply go along or may actively participate in the bullying incident. (Coy, 2001, p. 3)

Bullying – Olweus (1993, p. 9) said that “a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students”. According to Juvonen and Graham (2001, p. 6), Olweus expanded on the definition in the following way:

We say a student is being bullied when another student, or several other students

- say mean and hurtful things or make fun of him or her or call him or her mean and hurtful names
- completely ignore or exclude him or her from the group of friends or leave him or her out of things on purpose
- hit, kick, push, shove around, or lock him or her inside a room
- tell lies or spread false rumors about him or her or send mean notes and try to make other students dislike him or her
- and do other hurtful things like that.

When we talk about bullying, these things happen repeatedly, and it is *difficult for the student who is being bullied to defend himself or herself*. We also call it bullying when a student is teased repeatedly in a mean and hurtful way.

But we *don't call it bullying* when the teasing is done in a friendly and playful way.

Also, it is *not bullying* when two students of about the same strength or power argue or fight.

Atlas and Pepler (1998) clarify the definition of bullying even further as “...a form of social interaction in which there is an implied imbalance of power or strength in the interaction. Bullies are always more powerful than victims.... This power imbalance may

be demonstrated through physical size, physical stance, tone of voice, or the number of children.” (p. 86)

Direct Bullying – “Direct bullying involves open attacks on the victim and may be either verbal or physical” (Atlas & Pepler, 1998, p. 86).

Indirect Bullying – “Indirect bullying is less visible and more subtle than direct bullying. It is also negative actions ... but takes the form of social isolation, exclusion, and ostracism from a group. Another form of indirect bullying is aggression directed toward a victim who is not present” (Atlas & Pepler, 1998, p. 86).

Negative Action – Olweus (1993) defines negative action as follows:

...when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another... Negative actions can be carried out by words (verbally), for instance, by threatening, taunting, teasing, and calling names. It is a negative action when someone hits, pushes, kicks, pinches, or restrains another – by physical contact. It is also possible to carry out negative actions without use of words or physical contact, such as by making faces or dirty gestures, intentionally excluding someone from a group, or refusing to comply with another person’s wishes. (p. 9)

Physical Aggression – This type of aggression takes the form of hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, spitting on or using threatening gestures toward a victim (Atlas & Pepler, 1998).

Victim_– “The person who is subjected to the aggressive actions (physical or verbal) of another more dominant individual” (Atlas & Pepler, 1998, p.86).

Aggressive Victims - Aggressive victims have been defined as those who although they are victims of bullying behavior, display hostile behavior of their own. They can be

highly emotional and are characterized as quick-tempered. They are victims who show a lack of self control when provoked and therefore react aggressively toward provocation (Pellegrini, Bartini & Brooks, 1999).

Passive Victims – These types of victims are usually physically weaker than their peers and lack confidence in their interactions. Their overall demeanor sends the message to others that “they are insecure and worthless individuals who will not retaliate if they are attacked...” (Olweus, 1993, p. 32).

Provocative Victims – These victims show a combination of traits. They are nervous children, yet they are hostile as well. Their behavior patterns can be an annoyance to others and may cause tension to exist around them. As a result, they elicit a negative response from others (Olweus, 1993).

Summary

This research study attempted to determine if certain demographic variables influence teachers’ perceptions of bullying behavior. The research has shown that 30 percent of American children are involved in bullying on a regular basis, 15 percent are severely traumatized by bullying and eight percent report being victimized at school at least once per week (Brewster and Railsback, 2001). As a result, it has been found that many students skip school every day.

One of the myths that this study will discuss is that bullying is just a part of growing up and is a regular part of a child’s development, but there is nothing regular about the effects that it has had on its victims. These effects have manifested themselves in the form of anxiety, depression, fear, physical ailments and truancy. In addition, many of the

children who have committed acts of severe violence in schools have been the victims of bullying behavior.

However, the research shows that teachers appear to not even notice when bullying does occur. In fact, the research has shown that teachers and other adults only observe about four of every one hundred incidents of bullying that take place. The goal of this study was to determine what factors may contribute to this lack of recognition and what may be done to improve teachers' recognition of bullying behavior.

Chapter II will present a review of the related literature as it relates to bullying in general. In addition there will be discussion of the characteristics of both victims and bullies, the social, psychological, and academic aspects of bullying.

Chapter III will detail the methodologies and procedures that are used in this research study, including the population and sample, instrumentation, method of data collection and analysis of the research questions.

Chapter IV will be a presentation of the findings of the study. Chapter V will summarize and present conclusions and implications of the data that was presented in Chapter IV. In addition, Chapter V will include a discussion of the generalizability of the study as well as recommendations for policy, practice and future research that present themselves as a result of the data collected and analyzed in Chapter I

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter will explore some of the issues concerning bullying amongst school-aged children. As described in the previous chapter, Olweus' (1993) definition of bullying will be used as a base to steer this research study. Bullying is behavior that has at its root an imbalance of power in which the dominant person or persons repeatedly and over time cause stress through harassment of a weaker individual. This behavior can be verbal, physical, through gestures or exclusion.

Bullying has become such a major concern that many state legislatures have begun to address the problem by passing laws concerning bullying and societies' response to it. Anti-bullying legislation has been enacted in seventeen states and in Guam. Specifically, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and West Virginian have each passed laws concerning bullying. Each of these policies includes a definition of bullying. The remaining portions of the legislation vary from state to state in their inclusion of sections on state level support, local board requirements, student services, school intervention strategy, curriculum reporting requirements and immunity, student rights and sanctions, parent rights, school

employee rights and responsibilities teacher professional development provisions and school public reporting requirements. Dounay (2005) states that “a comprehensive state anti-bullying policy defines bullying, prohibits bullying by students, informs students and others of the anti-bullying policy, allows students and parent a way to report incidents of bullying, requires teachers and school staff to report incidents of bullying provides immunity and protection from reprisals to those who report bullying, requires administrators to investigate reported incidents and encourages or requires bullying prevention education in schools. Dounay (2005) also tells us that the statutes on Connecticut, New Jersey, Oregon, Vermont and West Virginia contain all of those elements.

Schools have the responsibility of providing a safe, secure environment that is conducive to learning and to teaching. A school where bullying exists is neither safe nor is it secure. As a result, the environment is not conducive to learning and teaching. Smith (as cited by Henry, 2003) who tells us that the Supreme Court has ruled that schools do indeed have the responsibility of protecting students from abuse at the hand of others.

Bullying is a behavior that affects school climate in ways that can only be considered to be negative. Therefore, teachers have the responsibility of being able to identify this behavior. Schools have the responsibility of developing and implementing programs that can reduce the incidence of bullying. In order to do so, it is important that teachers are able to identify bullying behavior when they see it.

Bullying Defined

There are a number of definitions that have been posed by researchers who have studied the phenomenon of bullying. Olweus (1993) defines bullying as when someone is “exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons” (p. 9).

The definition for bullying given by Hoover, Oliver and Hazler (as cited by Gibson, 2003) is the physical or psychological abuse of an individual by one or a group of students. They assert that the harassment is usually directed toward those who are weak and unable to defend themselves and that the aggression is mild, long in duration, and unprovoked.

Banks (1997) defines bullying as “direct behaviors such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and stealing that are initiated by one or more students against a victim.” (p. 1) He also states that it can be “...indirect by causing a student to be socially isolated through intentional exclusion” (Banks, 1997, p. 1).

Bullying as defined by Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simmons-Morton, & Scheidt (2001) is behavior that has, at its root, an intention to harm another person, where the attacking person or group is stronger than the victim and where the behavior occurs repeatedly over a period of time.

Victimization Defined

Victimization and bullying are defined in similar terms. Olweus defines both terms with the same definition. The definition states that “a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students” (Olweus, 1993, p. 9).

Researchers have documented several different types of victims. The research has identified passive victims, provocative victims and aggressive victims. Passive victims are those who are usually weaker in physical stature and exhibit a lack of confidence. Olweus (1993) found that passive victims exhibited cautiousness and sensitivity at a very early age and tended to experience difficulty in asserting themselves within their peer group. Aggressive victims, although they are the targets of bullies, have a tendency toward hostile behavior of their own. They exhibit poor impulse control and are considered to be quick tempered (Pellegrini, Bartine & Brooks, 1999). Finally, provocative victims are those who show a mixture of character traits. They are both hostile and nervous. They tend to bother others and according to Olweus, they “behave in ways that may cause irritation and tension around them” (p. 33). Their behavior has a tendency to provoke others and cause harassment from their classmates, in some cases the entire class, to be directed toward them.

In a follow up study of two groups of boys, one victimized and one not, Olweus found that the victimized group, at the age of 23, had a higher tendency to be depressed and

have lower self esteem than those who had not been victimized. It is clear that victimization has a psychological effect on the victims.

History of Bullying

Bullying is certainly not a new phenomenon, yet according to Olweus (1993) little is known about the underlying causes of bullying behavior or the details as to the prevalence and manifestations of bullying.

Harachi, Catalana, and Hawkins (1999) have reported that there has been little published research on bullying in the United States. The majority of the research that has been done has focused on bullies and their victims. In a study conducted by Hoover et al. (1992), of students 12 through 18 years old, it was discovered that 75% of them reported being persecuted at some time and that 14 percent of both genders suffered from trauma as a result.

As a final point, as was mentioned briefly earlier, many students who have been the perpetrators of school shootings, have at least one thing in common, they have been victimized by bullies. Lumsden (2002) has pointed out that the United States Secret Service, in a study of 37 school shootings have discovered that the majority of the shooters had endured "bullying and harassment that was longstanding and severe"(p. 1).

Common Misconceptions about Bullying

There are quite a number of misconceptions regarding bullying and its causes. Some of those myths are addressed in this section.

School Size

One of the misconceptions concerning bullying behavior is that it only occurs in large schools or in schools that have large class sizes. The proponents of this view believe that

the larger the class or school, the higher the incidence of bullying. The truth is quite the opposite. O'Moore, Kirkan & Smith (as cited in Gibson, 2003) found that, in fact, the larger the school, the lower the incidence of bullying behavior in that school. In addition, Olweus (1994) concluded that there was no correlation between bullying behavior and school or class size.

Competition

Another misconception regarding the bullying issue is that it occurs as a result of competition for grades in school (Carney & Merrell, 2001). This view holds that an individual will bully another because of a need to compete for and go all-out for grades in school. Those that espouse this view of bullying in schools justify the behavior as a result of frustration over receiving poor grades. Again, in this case, Olweus (1994) found no correlation between poor grades and bullying behavior.

External Characteristics

One of the most common misconceptions regarding bullying behavior is that it occurs as a result of external characteristics that make people appear different than others. Characteristics such as being overweight, wearing glasses or having a different color hair are attributed to bullying behavior. According to Olweus (1993) and Hazler (2000), although this does occur to some extent, it does not play as large a role in bullying as once believed.

Low Self Esteem

Another of the misconceptions that is associated with bullying is that of low self esteem. It is believed that bullies behave the way that they do in order to enhance their own feeling of self worth. It is believed that bullies have low self esteem. It has been

stated by Clarke and Kiselica (1997) that bullies do not, in fact, suffer from lower self esteem than do others.

Attention Seeking

In some cases, the victims of bullies are told that if they ignore the bully, then they will leave them alone when, in fact, bullying that is ignored will usually increase in its intensity. The misconception in this case is that bullies behave the way they do in order to garner attention from others. The reality is that the bully is not looking for attention but is looking for control (Title, 1996).

Bullying is a Stage of Adolescence

Some have suggested that bullying is simply a vital part of growing up and a stage that adolescents must go through (Froschl & Gropper, 1999, Smith & Brain, 2000). The truth here is that bullying is not a stage and is not something that the bully will grow out of. Starr (2000) has found that 60% of the boys who are identified as bullies in middle school commit at least one crime by the time they are 24 years old.

Teacher Awareness

Another misconception is that teachers are aware when bullying becomes a problem in their classroom. As stated earlier, Atlas and Pepler (1998) have reported that teachers seem to not even notice bullying. Their research has shown that teachers and other school personnel observed only four percent of bullying episodes that occurred. Added to this is the fact that victims of bullies are leery of reporting incidents of bullying due to their fear of embarrassment or retaliation (Starr, 2000).

Victims Should Just Defend Themselves

Some who are aware of bullying propose that the victims should simply learn to defend themselves. The difficulty with this theory is that victims of bullies tend to be younger or physically weaker than those who bully them and therefore can not possibly deal with the situation themselves (Starr, 2000).

Location

One myth involves the belief that most bullying behavior occurs away from schools. A review of the research shows that most bullying, in reality, occurs on school grounds, in classrooms, hallways and playgrounds. Research by Harachi et al. (1999) has shown us that 50% of bullying actually occurs in the classroom itself with another 35% occurring in the schools bathrooms. In addition, Olweus (1994) and Whitney and Smith (1993) have indicated that the majority of bullying does occur on the school playground.

Victims are Few

It is also a misconception that only a small number of students are actually affected by bullying. In fact, it has been estimated that 160,000 children stay home from school each day because they are afraid that they will be bullied (Lumsden, 2002).

Passiveness

Another myth is the belief that bullying only affects those children who are passive and allow it to happen to them. Bullies do target those who would rather resolve conflict without the use of violence, but there are other targets as well. Bullies have a tendency to target provocative victims, those that are both anxious and aggressive at the same time. Olweus (1993) has called this group provocative because their behavior is often irritating to others and as a result provokes them. In addition, bullies target those of high

intelligence as well as those of high integrity. According to Olweus (1993) the bullies target these children out of envy and jealousy.

Stereotypes

Finally, it is important to dispel the notion of the stereotypical bully, who is thought to be intellectually backward, yet physically powerful and imposing. Sutton, Smith and Swettenham (1999) have found little evidence to support this view. They feel that given the social aspect of bullying, it is certainly within the realm of reality that the bully is, in fact, able to process social information correctly and will use that information to their advantage.

Characteristics of Bullies

Coloroso (2003) has stated that you can not identify a bully by the way that they look, but that you can indeed, identify a bully by how they act. According to Olweus (1993), implied in the definition of a bully is their aggression toward peers. He continues that “bullies are often aggressive towards adults as well, both teachers and parents” (Olweus, 1993, p. 34). He found that bullies generally react with aggression to situations where conflict or differences occur. He has also found that contrary to the popular view held by many psychologists that bullies have a high level of anxiety and insecurity; bullies were found to have average levels of both anxiety and insecurity. In addition, Olweus has also found that bullies crave power and seek to have control over people and situations and according to Sullivan, Cleary and Sullivan (2004) “The most important characteristic of bullies is that they know how to use power” (p. 15).

It has been written that it is “the combination of an aggressive reaction pattern and physical strength” (Olweus, 1993, p. 37) that appears to be characteristic of bullies. They

have the perception that the world revolves around them, they manipulate others verbally, defy and intimidate adults and prey on vulnerable people. Bullies have a need for power and control. Ingram (2000) in attempting to determine what makes some people bullies found that the reason that they behave the way that they do is because of this need for power. They have the impression that power will make them popular. In fact, they do, indeed have friends, although those friends are typically those who either empower the bully or are empowered by their connection to the bully.

In addition, bullies feel more secure and less anxiety when they are in control. Unfortunately the bullies' sense of security comes at the expense of their victims. Olweus (1993) has found that bullies think that they bully others because they are provoked or because they just don't like their victims. Many of them come from homes where bullying behavior is the norm. Batsche and Knoff (1994) found that many bullies have parents who prefer to employ physical means of discipline, are hostile with a tendency toward rejection, are described as both hostile *and* permissive, have poor parenting skills and who teach their children to strike back at the smallest amount of provocation. In essence these children have learned that bullying is ok and fail to see anything wrong with their behavior.

According to Garner (2003), The Safe Child Program collected data that showed that bullies have often been victims of bullies or abuse themselves. They are children who may have poor social skills, or have difficulty meeting the expectations of their families or schools. They tend to bully in order to make themselves feel competent or successful, to control or to find a respite from their own feelings of powerlessness. Unfortunately for the bully, Bosworth and Espelage (as cited in Henry, 2003) have found that "As bullying

increased, self reports of negative correlates (misconduct and anger) increased and pro-social skills (confidence in using nonviolent strategies) decreased” (p.15).

It has been found by Bjorkqvist (1994) that bullying in high schools becomes more verbal than physical, more often taking on the form of rumor spreading and exclusion. Perhaps adults only observe four percent of all bullying incidents as a result of the nonviolent nature that it takes on in the latter school years.

Effects on Bullies

Bullying behavior has both long and short term negative effects on the bullies themselves. According to Garner (2003), Olweus (1993) has indicated that teachers have described bullies as having a strong need for dominance, a low level of tolerance for frustration, tempers that are violent, an inability to handle criticism and easily angered.

According to Garner (2003) a review of the research has shown that by the age of 24, more than half (60%) of the boys who had been characterized by their teachers as bullies in grades 6 – 9 had at least one court conviction on their records. Marano (1995) has told us that the person who is often hurt most by bullying is the bully themselves, and that although this may not be obvious at first, there are negative effects that occur over time. These negative effects cause difficulties in learning, and cause interference with friendships, work, intimate relationships, income and mental health. On the whole, bullies have a tendency to become adults who exhibit antisocial behavior and are more likely to commit crimes, abuse their spouses and children, and produce children who are bullies as well. Marano (1995) states that bullying is the “first and perhaps most identifiable stop on a trajectory that leads almost directly to criminal behavior.”

Fifty percent of all bullies are already behind their age appropriate grade by the end of elementary school. They have a tendency to drop out of school and hang out with others who are aggressive which, in turn, drives further deviance, which ultimately may be what turns the bully into a criminal.

It is clear that we should be concerned about bullying for the sake of the future of the bullies as well as the victims for they are not just hurting others but are causing damage to themselves as well.

Characteristics of Victims

Those children who are victims of bullies have a tendency to be more insecure than other students. These children are careful, sensitive and quiet. They cry easily and when attacked their reaction is to withdraw rather than to assert themselves. Often times the victim of bullies will have a low self image and have the impression that they are failures. They feel stupid, ashamed and unattractive (Olweus, 1993). According to Ingram (2000) they want to fit in with others and will not speak out when they are treated badly. They may have poorly developed social skills and few friends. Olweus (1993) has stated that victims of bullies are loners who may not have a single discernible friend in class. More often than not the victims are male and tend to be physically weaker than other boys. This type of victim has been defined by Olweus (1993) as passive. Their behavior patterns send a signal to others that they are insecure and will not retaliate if they are attacked or insulted.

According to Garner (2003), the characteristics of children who are picked on include, low self esteem, insecurity, a lack of social skills, a failure to pick up on social cues, a tendency to cry easily, an inability to defend themselves and they suffer from fatigue and

mood swings. These types of children are referred to as passive victims because they do not fight back.

Garrity et al. (as cited in Garner, 2003) noted that there is another group of victims of bullies that are called provocative victims. These are restless and irritable children who tease and provoke others. These victims can be hard to identify because they seem to be engaged with the bully. Provocative victims are those who are emotionally aroused and who may be diagnosed as having attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD). The child who is a victim of bullies has a tendency to keep the facts of his victimization to himself. Many do not report it and do not ask for help.

Effects on Victims

As Marano (1995) points out, there will always be a bully around. But, just as no one really likes a bully, no one likes the victims of bullies either. When victims do not stick up for themselves in bullying situations, it makes other children uncomfortable. The victims wind up being rejected by their other children as well as by the bullies because of their victimization. As time wears on, whipping boys (a term coined by Olweus) become isolated in increasingly larger amounts from their peers. As Sullivan, Cleary and Sullivan (2004) have said, victims have lower levels of self esteem, are depressed, anxious, overly sensitive, cautious and quiet. They are lonely and don't have many friends. Being a victim of bullies has been linked to psychosomatic illnesses and psychiatric referral. They are unhappy at school and develop psychosomatic physical ailments, such as stomach aches and headaches in order to avoid going to school. As a result, like the bullies, victims also are more likely to drop out of school. Rigby and Slee (as cited in Sullivan et al., 2004) have found that" those involved in bullying showed the highest risk for suicide

ideation, and suicide” (p.20). In another study, Peterson and Rigby (as cited by Sullivan et al., 2004) found the following effects to being bullied:

1. 31 percent of boys and 46 percent of girls felt worse about themselves:
2. 40 percent of boys and 60 percent of girls reported feeling angry or miserable; and
3. 14 percent of boys and 12 percent of girls reported staying away from school as a result.

Both Olweus and Rigby (as cited by Sullivan et al., 2004) have found that there is a cause and effect relationship between being victimized and poor mental health. It is however, important to note that although victimization is inherently bad, it can sometimes have positive effects. In some cases in order to avoid being victimized, children may thrust themselves into reading and school work with the natural result being that they excel in school. This however, is a not the route to academic excellence that one would prefer.

Flaherty (as cited in Garner, 2003) has pointed out that “students who are habitually bullied or harassed because they are different from their peers may retaliate in a violent manner in order to get revenge later on in their school days” (p. 38). Indeed there have been numerous incidents of severe school violence all around the world, the most infamous having occurred at Columbine High School on April 20, 1999. Regrettably, there have been 27 additional incidents of severe violence in schools since that time. As discussed earlier, the one thing that many of the perpetrators of school shootings have in common is the fact that they have been ostracized, picked on, made fun of, and physically abused by their peers. In a word, they had been “bullied”. Obviously, it is

important that we learn how to stop bullying behavior so that we can reduce the effects that it has on both bullies and victims alike.

Social Aspects of Bullying

Bullying is a serious problem in schools. According to Banks (1997), bullying impedes students' ability to learn and progress academically as well as socially. It is incumbent upon schools to provide a safe and secure environment for our students.

It has been shown that bullying has an effect on the bullies as well as the victims. In a study by Nansel, et al. (2001) it was found that students who bully others tended to dislike school and had a higher prevalence of discipline problems than their victims. The same study also showed that the victims tended to be insecure, depressed, lonely, unhappy, and have low self-esteem, while those who were both bullied and bullies had the worst psychosocial functioning of all.

Bullies have a tendency to continue to live this type of aggressive life into their adult years. They have a greater tendency to have difficulties and involvement with the legal system. Olweus (1993) believes that we should work at thwarting the bullying problem for the sake of the bullies as well as the victims. Since bullies are likely to continue down this path of harmful behavior, it is essential that we do something about the bullying problem for the bullies as well as for the victims. In addition, there has been no evidence to indicate that adults having a permissive attitude toward bullying will help these children to outgrow this type of behavior.

Gender and Bullying

In *Big, Bad, Bully*, Marano (1995) points out that girls can be bullies just as boys can. It is suggested that bullying among girls takes on a “far more subtle and complex means of meanness than the overt physical aggression boys engage in”(Marano, 1995).

Robinson (2000) believes that bullying behavior occurs at the same rate for girls as it does for boys. The difference is that bullying behavior by girls tends to go overlooked because it takes on an entirely different form than bullying by boys. Olweus (1993) has also noted that bullying behavior by girls is more difficult to discern than is that of boys. He made note of the fact that male bullies are three to four times more likely to commit physical assaults than females and that females mostly bully through ridicule, teasing and social isolation.

Robinson (2000) states that girls usually use less visible and more covert means to bully other children and that children bully in ways that will have the most harmful effect on the gender group that is being bullied. Hence, boys will bully in a physical manner (kicking, pushing, hitting, etc.) while girls bullying tends to be of the non physical type (social isolation, rumor spreading, ignoring, etc.). Barone (1997) agrees with this, as he has also noted that boys tend to be more physical in their bullying than girls. Robinson did note, however, that girls are becoming more physical in their bullying behavior as they are beginning to believe, as boys do, that power comes with physical force.

Psychological Aspects of Bullying

Brewster and Railsback (2001, p. 4) quote the following poem, entitled *I Hate My Life*, in the introduction to their paper:

I have always been bullied, I don't know why or anything
 but it's something I thought would go away but it didn't and
 I often think that I'm going to completely crack. I do have
 friends and they are the bestis friends that you could possi-
 bly ask for but it doesn't make you feel any better!
 I told the school cause it's really hard but they haven't
 done anything about it and I now suffer from tension
 headaches because of it. I have exams this year and I don't
 want it to get in the way but it probably will and that really
 ***** me off!

According to Barone (1997), some children who are bullied never get over it. Being victimized by bullies can be devastating. While not all situations lead to either murder or suicide the psychological consequences of victimization can be overwhelming. Barone (1997) has described several cases of bullying that have had tragic consequences.

On March 2, 1987, Nathan Feris, a seventh grader at DeKalb High School in Missouri brought a gun to school and shot and killed a classmate before he killed himself. He had decided that four years of being called "chubby" and "walking dictionary" was more than he could endure. When his classmates were asked why they picked on him their reply was that they didn't really have anything against him. They said, "He was just someone to pick on" (Barone, 1997, p.1).

In a Japanese case the parents of a 13-year-old boy filed a damage suit for 22 million yen. The defendants of the suit were the Tokyo metropolitan government and the parents of two alleged bullies. The parents claim that their son's suicide came as a result of

“ijimi” or bullying. The parents claim also include allegations that the principal of the school and several teachers did not just fail to stop the harassment of their son, but assisted in his victimization. Their son had hanged himself and left a note that named his two classmates as the source of his torment.

In her study, to illustrate the devastating psychological effect that bullying can have, Garner (2003), cites several other tragic cases from Elliot’s article “Bullies and Victims: A Practical Guide to Coping for Schools”. In one case, a nine-year-old boy named Mark was walking home from school when a group of bullies attacked him. His arm was broken, his money stolen and his books were destroyed. His self-confidence was also destroyed – he became withdrawn, hated to go to school and eventually sought counseling to help him through the trauma. He knew the boys who attacked him, but refused to tell who they were. He was frightened of repercussions if he reported his attackers.

Sarah was cornered on the playground by a group of ten boys and girls when she was 14 years old. She was stripped to the waist and forced to beg on her hands and knees in order to get her clothes back. The group pushed her, punched her and pulled her hair. As they were leaving one of her attackers said, “Tell and you’ll get worse”. So Sarah did not tell until they did it again and took pictures of her. When Sarah’s mother confronted the school about the incident she was told that it was “only horseplay.” Sarah attempted suicide after the latest incident, but is now thriving in a new school.

Therese was 13 years old when she had a similar incident to Sarah’s. She was held down by a group of nine girls, physically assaulted and stripped in front of a group of boys. The school advised her father that he should not go to the police. The school also

advised him that since Therese's attackers would soon be leaving the school that the consequence for their behavior would be nothing more than detention.

At the age of twelve, Simon had endured bullying by three boys at his boarding school for two years. Simon had been beaten, locked out of his room, shoved outside in his underwear in the middle of January and continually subjected to taunts about his weight. After running away from the school, Simon suffered a nervous breakdown.

Graham, (1998) says that bullying can cause symptoms that can, among others, manifest themselves as psychological, behavioral and personality factors. The following table shows some of the psychological, behavioral and personality symptoms that Graham discussed (see Table 1).

Table 1

Psychological, Behavioral and Personality Symptoms of Bullying

<u>Psychological</u>	<u>Behavioral</u>	<u>Personality</u>
Panic attacks	Tearfulness	Shattered self confidence and esteem
Reactive depression	Irritability	Low self image
Thoughts of suicide	Angry outbursts	Loss of self worth
Stress breakdown	Obsessiveness	Loss of self love
<u>Psychological</u>	<u>Behavioral</u>	<u>Personality</u>
Forgetfulness	Hyper vigilance (feels like but not paranoia)	

Impoverished or intermittently functioning memory	Hypersensitivity
Poor concentration	Sullenness
Flashbacks	Mood swings
Excessive guilt	Withdrawal
Disbelief	Indecision
Confusion	Loss of humor
Bewilderment	Hyperawareness (of time, distance traveled)
Unusual degree of fear	Excessive teeth grinding, picking, scratching or tics
Sense of isolation	Increased reliance on drugs
Insecurity	Comfort spending (causing financial difficulties)
Desperation	Phobias
Acute anxiety of meeting the bully or visiting the location	

Graham says that over time these symptoms can result in psychiatric injury.

According to Graham (1998) a psychiatric injury is markedly different from mental illness. The key differences are that:

- a) mental illness is assumed to be inherent (internal) whereas psychiatric injury is caused by something or someone else (external) – who is liable;
- b) an injury is likely to get better;
- c) the person suffering the mental illness exhibits a range of symptoms associated with mental illness (paranoia, schizophrenia, delusions, etc.) but not with psychiatric injury, whereas the person suffering psychiatric injury will typically exhibit a range of symptoms (e.g. hypervigilance, hypersensitivity, obsessiveness, irritability, fatigue, sleeplessness) associated with psychiatric injury but not with mental illness.

Academic Aspects of Bullying

As stated earlier, Coy (2001) has found that “160,000 students skip school each day because of intimidation by their peers” (p. 3). Banks (1997) states that 7 % of eighth graders in America stay home from school as often as once per month because of bullies and students who have been victimized by bullies tend to be fearful of school, and view it as an unsafe place to be. Garrity et al. (as cited in Brewster and Railsback, 2001) have stated that 20 % of all students are scared throughout the school day. According to Hoover and Oliver (1996) 14 % of students between eighth and twelfth grade and 22 % of students between fourth and eighth grade have said that bullying has an effect on their ability to learn. In addition, Weinhold and Weinhold (as cited in Brewster and Railsback, 2001) said that “10 percent of students who drop out of school do so because of repeated bullying” (p.11). In her dissertation, Garner (2003) cites the article, “Bullying: Peer Abuse in Schools” when she says that bullying often impedes student learning and usually occurs away from teachers view. She states that if bullies are not held accountable then “a climate of fear envelops the victims” (p. 34). Garner summarizes the

article as saying that victims' grades may suffer, their fears may lead to absenteeism, truancy or dropping out and if the problem continues, victims sometimes feel a need to take drastic measures, such as vengeance in the form of fighting back, weapon carrying or even suicide. Finally, as noted earlier, victims of bullying and peer harassment can sometimes see no escape short of committing homicide.

School Climate and Bullying

Sullivan et al. (2004) have said that "the most effective way for a school to address bullying is for it to adopt a whole-school approach (p. 93). In her study, Garner (2003) indicates that the Bullying Task Force Report of 2001 agreed that any violence prevention and anti-bullying model that focus on the whole school are the ones that have been the most effective. It is well known by educators that when an environment is created in our schools that is safe and secure our students will clearly reap the most benefit. An atmosphere such as the one described above will foster student personal growth as well as the ability to achieve a high rate of academic growth.

Effective whole school anti-bullying programs will have at their core, attention to the social and ethical development of children and will focus on academic standards, in order to "create effective learning conditions for every student to succeed" (Garner, 2003, p. 39). The program will have as its base moral, ethical and legal conduct that will stress responsibility, integrity, citizenship, and a sense of community while always taking into account the individual rights of people as well as the common good. The staff in an environment such as this will provide a milieu that results in a challenging and comfortable classroom in which every child feels both valued and empowered.

Unfortunately, according to Bullock (2002) many teachers still foster the attitude that children picking on or teasing one another is a normal part of growing up and they may not intervene because of their belief in the myth that these types of conflicts are best resolved by children working things out themselves. Bullock also states that for children to be successful in school they must feel that they are in an environment that is safe, secure and comfortable.

If this type of a setting does not exist then school is perceived as a threatening and uncomfortable place where students will experience issues with adjustment, loneliness and have the desire to skip school. It is indicated that because bullying can have long lasting negative effects on the bully and the victim, schools should take steps to intervene as soon as it begins. In this way, schools will avoid fostering the culture of victim and victimizer that might exist.

Clearly, there is no one answer to the problem that bullying poses for schools. As an example of this Garner (2003) describes a situation, in which a student came to school with a loaded shotgun, proceeded to an area where many students were congregated and pulled the weapon. Fortunately, he changed his mind and nobody was hurt. The point of this example is that all of the media reports stated that the school in this near fatal incident had taken steps to combat bullying in their school and had a bullying prevention policy in place. Yet, the student indicated that he had been bullied unmercifully at the school and the news reports stated that there were other witnesses to these bullying events.

Garner (2003) takes the position that schools today are face with many “complex issues when it comes to school safety - youth gangs, emotionally unbalanced parents and

visitors, students with violent behavior disorders, drug activity and child abuse, and students who feel bullied and teased” (p. 41). School administrators are bombarded with offers from companies offering a myriad of devices and programs to help them combat violence in their schools. There are books, cameras, metal detectors, software programs and numerous other products that claim to have the ability to make schools safe. Yet, despite all of the products and programs that are being offered, as the aforementioned incident shows, there is no one solution to the multifaceted issue of school safety and security.

School Personnel and Student Bullying

Lumsden (2002) has stated that school staff does not recognize the harm that bullying can cause and often miscalculate the amount of bullying that does, indeed take place in schools. Viadero (1997, ¶ 4) agrees, as she states that teachers and principals “underestimate the amount of bullying that takes place under their noses—on playgrounds, in hallways, even in classrooms. And too many educators are reluctant to get involved.” She continues that adults say that kids will be kids and as a result some of them dismiss children’s complaints about being bullied. They believe that bullying is something that is unavoidable and a part of growing up. But, research into the effects that bullying has on victims and bullies shows that bullying has far too negative an effect for it to be ignored. The boys will be boys, or more accurately, kids will be kids philosophy must come to an end.

It is clear by a review of research that bullying rarely discriminates. While a common myth about bullying is that only certain types of children are bullied, Weinhold (as cited

in Garner 2003) has found otherwise. According to Weinhold, the following is a list identifying some of the students who are bullied:

1. fat children
2. skinny children
3. smart children
4. children who get poor grades
5. children who smell
6. children who wear certain types of clothes
7. children who talk funny
8. children who walk funny
9. teacher's pet
10. special need children
11. minority children
12. blonde haired girls
13. curly haired children
14. children with freckles
15. children with diseases
16. children with glasses

Clearly bullying effects many different types of children, hence it is critical that school personnel learn how to recognize and attend to incidents of bullying as they occur in their schools.

Barone (1997) argues that teachers, school officials, parents and other students too often seem to stand by as children are degraded, humiliated, beaten and ridiculed.

In her article, Viadero (1997) relays that much of the research has indicated that there is a large disparity between the amount of bullying that actually occurs, and the amount of bullying that teachers perceive. The research of Atlas and Pepler (1998) has shown that teachers and other school personnel observe about four of every one hundred (4 %) bullying incidents that do occur. Further, it has been found by Froschl and Gropper (1999) that teachers and other adults ignore seventy one percent of the observed incidents of bullying. This means that of every one hundred incidents of bullying that occur, adults observe only about four of them and according to the research, only deal with approximately one out of every one hundred bullying incidents that occur.

Garbarino and deLara (2002) asked students whether they thought that adults in the school were aware of what's going on. The following are excerpts form some of the students' answers:

1. I don't think they have a clue. They choose not to care (Molly, 15)
2. The teachers often have no clue about what's going on in school. They are unaware if someone is about to hurt someone else. (Josh, 15)
3. Half the time the teachers don't want – really don't have a clue about what's going on. So if there's anything if there's *anything* that needs to be done about something that isn't right, the teachers aren't going to do it ... because the teachers don't know what's going on. (Natalia, 16)

They also report that about 25% of the students that they surveyed believe that the adults are not aware of “anybody that makes the school unsafe for others.” In addition, it was found that the students do not feel that they are “mature enough to interact with one another safely and respectfully on school grounds with the current level of supervision

that they have” (Garbarino & deLara (2002, p. 185). Below are some of the comments that the students made in regard to this issue:

1. Like the only times adults really do something about anything is if they *see* it going on. Like if they hear about it, they won't really do anything much as ... well, if two girls start screaming at each other and getting into a fight in the hall, that's the only time they'll do anything. Otherwise, if they see someone trying to trip you, they'll pretend they don't see it, because they don't want to deal with it.
(Molly,15)
2. Little things where you get physically hurt during the day, like punching you in the halls, pinching, and kicks. This stuff adds up and makes me feel unsafe.
(Sharon, 16)
3. Teachers walking the hallways make me feel safe. (Joseph,16)

O'Moore (as cited in Garner 2003), puts forth that there are many reasons that teachers see so little of the bullying that occurs, including the covert nature of bullying and the fact that students are hesitant to report incidents of bullying to their teachers.

Beane (1999) poses that parents, teachers and administrators do not take action because they don't know how to recognize bullying behavior and don't know what to do when they do recognize it. Bullying continues unabated because it is unnoticed, unreported and misunderstood. In addition bullies tend to abuse their victims when adults are not around to see it. Further, victims do not report it because they “are ashamed of being bullied, fear retaliation or worry that adults can't or won't help them” (¶4).

Beane (1999) says that in order to combat this problem the first step is for teachers to get rid of all of their assumptions about bullying. Teachers and other school personnel

must eliminate the thinking that bullying is a part of growing up or that children bring it on themselves and begin to show children that bullying is a behavior that is not acceptable, that victims can have more control over their lives, and that the bullies themselves can change their behavior.

Remboldt (1998) argues that the following defense mechanisms that teachers put up allow bullying in school to continue:

1. Denial: "We don't have problem with bullying and violence, but that other school does."
2. Minimization: "Name calling and pushing and shoving are just normal behavior for kids."
3. Rationalization: "Kids have to learn to fight, to stand up for themselves."
4. Blame: "The parents aren't taking responsibility for their children's behavior."
5. Avoidance: "Bullying in school is for the administration and the police to deal with; I'm a teacher."

At this point, when students realize that the adults in the school either can't or won't protect them, they develop their own mechanisms for dealing with bullying. These defenses include hiding, ignoring, fear and frustration. Finally, many students, upon seeing that bullying is tolerated in their school assume that it is acceptable behavior and think that they are entitled to bully as well.

Sullivan, et al. (2004) add that teacher behavior and style of classroom management can contribute to the fostering of a bullying culture in school as well. They have identified the types of teacher behavior that would most likely coexist or encourage bullying as the following:

1. The authoritarian teacher (“In my class...”)
2. The narcissistic, queen bee teacher whose goal is to be adored by some at the expense of others
3. The active bully teacher
4. The disinterested teacher (“Tell someone who cares”)
5. The wishy-washy, liberal, permissive teacher, who is all talk and no action, and lets everything wash over him or her

Given that there is evidence that bullying at school can have severe negative consequences for both bullies and victims it is critical that something be done to reduce the amount of bullying that occurs. According to Juvonen and Graham (2001), there is research that shows that interventions in schools can, indeed be successful. As has been discussed the most successful interventions are those that take a whole school approach; one where the entire staff of the school act in a pre-planned and agreed upon matter to combat bullying behavior. They also state that teachers’ behaviors as they interact with students have “important consequences for the level of peer victimization in a school” (p. 325). They have identified a number of ways that teacher behavior in school can have a significant impact:

1. By expressing disapproval of bullying whenever it occurs, not only in the classroom but also in the school playground.
2. By listening sympathetically to students who need support when they are victimized. Teacher may then initiate or take action, when requested to do so by victimized children, according to procedures approved by the school.

3. By encouraging cooperative learning in the classroom and by not setting a bad example by their own dominating or authoritarian behavior
4. By engaging in discussion with groups of students so as to mobilize student support for action to reduce bullying. Most students are in fact “against” bullying, and, with encouragement, many of them can learn to take positive action to discourage bullying behavior when they see it happening and to provide support for frequently victimized students.
5. By inviting interested students to form an Antibullying Committee, under teacher guidance, to discuss ways in which bullying can be effectively countered. It has been found that such bodies can rapidly acquire considerable credibility with students – more so than teachers – and can effectively promote positive prosocial behavior in a school.

Clearly, teachers’ behavior has an impact on the school environment in a number of ways. It is their inaction, or action in response to bullying behavior, as well as their own behaviors that have an impact on whether a school will be one with an environment where students feel safe and valued or a school where a culture of bullying and peer victimization exists. For this reason, this study was undertaken in order to determine the influence that demographic variables may have on teachers’ perception of bullying behavior.

Summary

Researchers have found that bullying comes in many forms. There is direct bullying, indirect bullying, passive bullying and aggressive bullying. Additionally, researchers have identified passive, provocative and aggressive victims. In his research, Banks

(1997) discovered that boys are more apt to engage in direct bullying like threatening, teasing or hitting, while girls have a tendency to use more indirect methods of bullying such as intentionally excluding someone from the group or spreading rumors. As Garner (2003) so aptly stated, it does not matter if the bullying is "...direct or indirect, the key component of bullying is that the physical or psychological intimidation occurs repeatedly and over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse" (p. 50).

Banks (1997) also found that bullying negatively affects its victims as well as the bullies themselves and that there are both short and long-term effects. Further, bullying can have implications on people's social, academic, psychological and behavioral functioning. It is clear that bullying is a problem that can not be ignored. Its effects have implications on how bullies and their victims will function for the remainder of their lives.

Finally, the research has shown that teachers either ignore bullying behavior or are not skilled at recognizing it when it occurs. This study was undertaken in order to examine what demographic variables, specifically as discussed earlier, might have an influence on how teachers perceive and respond to bullying in a high school setting, so that administrators may implement professional development activities to heighten teachers' awareness of what constitutes bullying. In this way, administrators can help teachers to learn to respond to bullying and peer harassment appropriately. By so doing the social, psychological and academic functioning and well being of our students will be enhanced.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to examine teachers' perceptions and responses to bullying in a suburban New Jersey high school. One focus of the study was on teachers' perception of bullying. The study focused on whether the demographic variables of age, gender, years of teaching experience, level of education, upbringing, and their own experiences with bullying during that upbringing, have an effect on teachers' perception of bullying behavior.

A survey method was employed in order to collect data for this investigation. Permission was granted by Dr. Lisa Henry Edwards to use her survey entitled "A Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying" that she used in her own study, "Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying among Elementary School Students" that was conducted at the University of Alabama. The survey was designed so that it would collect descriptive data. The data was collected in order to examine the research questions regarding teachers' background characteristics and whether those variables have had an effect on how they perceive bullying behavior.

Population and Sample

The study was conducted in one suburban, ninth through twelfth grade high school in northwest New Jersey. The student population of the school is just over 1000 and the staff consists of approximately 100 predominantly Caucasian teachers. The school is a middle of the road New Jersey high school that is located in Morris County. What is meant by “middle of the road” is that it is not considered urban or rural but is considered a suburban school. The students and their families are not upper class or lower class, they are not affluent nor poor, but are once again “middle of the road”, in that the community is a purely middle class community. The New Jersey Department of Education District Factor Group (DFG) classification system has identified the school as a school in the GH category. According to the New Jersey Department of Education, District Factor Groups are calculated by using the following variables:

1. Percent of adults with no high school diploma
2. Percent of adults with some college education
3. Occupational status
4. Unemployment rate
5. Percent of individuals in poverty
6. Median family income.

Using these variables there are 81 high schools throughout the state of New Jersey that are located in GH districts and of those 16 are located in Morris County. As such, this researcher believes that by choosing a high school that is located in a GH district, and thereby controlling the demographics, the study allows for generalization to other schools with those same demographics.

With permission from the Principal and Superintendent, the survey was distributed to all of the regular teachers in the school at the end of a regularly scheduled faculty conference.

Instrumentation

An email transmission (Appendix A) and a letter granting permission (Appendix B) has been received to use the *Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying Questionnaire* (Appendix C) that was developed by Dr. Lisa Henry for her study at the University of Alabama entitled, "Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying Among Elementary School Students" in 2003. The survey instrument is broken into two distinct parts.

Part I of the survey was used to collect demographic information (i.e., gender, degree level, upbringing, personal experience with bullying, years of experience in education, and age). This information is an important part of this study, as Leff and Kupersmidt (as cited in Henry, 2003) said, "Given the important role that teachers have in identifying at-risk children, a better understanding of the factors that influence their judgments is critical" (p. 506).

Part II of the survey was designed by Dr. Henry in order to determine what perceptions teachers have of bullying. In her study, Dr. Henry (2003) stated that, "Each teachers' perception of bullying was measured by presenting questions (i.e., my students know it is wrong to hit, kick, or push others)" (p. 56). Dr. Henry's survey provides all of the participants with a key, which directs the subjects to record their responses to the survey questions on a four point Likert type scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Agree, 4= Strongly Agree). Dr. Henry used a 4 point scale rather than a 5 point scale based on her research that found that when a researcher uses a 4 point rather than a 5

point scale the researcher eliminates the possibility of a response of neutral, therefore each subject would have to take a stand on each of the questions posed by the survey.

Pilot Study

In order to assess the reliability of the survey instrument, Dr. Henry conducted a pilot study involving the participation of 52 teachers (p. 56). These teachers were all teachers from five schools in Catoosa County, Georgia. Each of the 52 teachers was invited to participate in the pilot study by completing both Part I and Part II of the survey. As a result of her pilot study, Dr. Henry removed seven questions from the original design of her survey leaving her with 17 questions remaining. Dr. Henry reports in her study that each of those 17 questions was deemed reliable, leaving her with the survey that this researcher used for the current study. Dr. Henry assessed the internal reliability of the instrument through the use of Cronbach's alpha. Dr. Henry (2003) reports that, "The assessment resulted in coefficient alpha from .83 to .89, which, according to Cronk (as cited by Henry, 2003) is acceptable in establishing the reliability of the instrument" (p. 58).

Dr. Henry (2003) also tested the content validity of the instrument by assembling a panel of experts comprised of counselors from seven schools. Each member of the panel held a counseling certificate that had been issued by the Georgia Department of Education. Dr. Henry asked each of her panel to complete the demographic information in order to account for their years of experience and level of education. Each expert was then asked to determine whether the items included in the survey were appropriate for the topic being studied. Finally, the responses were then analyzed for validity.

Data Collection

A letter of consent was mailed to the Superintendent of Schools requesting permission to survey the teachers of the high school for the purpose of this study (Appendix D). The letter requested the Superintendent's authorization, in writing, to conduct the research study. Included in the letter was a discussion of the purpose of the study, the fact that participation on the part of the subjects would be strictly voluntary, that all responses would be anonymous and that the results would remain confidential and under lock and key. After receiving approval from the Superintendent and Principal (Appendix E) and prior to administering the survey, the researcher met with the High School Principal so that she was fully aware of the purpose of the study as well as the procedure that was to be employed in conducting the survey. During this discussion the actual time and place to conduct the survey was discussed and agreed upon between the Principal and this researcher. With agreement from the Principal, the study took place immediately after a regularly scheduled faculty conference at which time the researcher used a script (Appendix F) to explain the purpose of the questionnaire and the teachers were asked to complete the survey and informed that their participation was of a voluntary nature.

At this point each teacher was given a manila envelope, that contained the Teachers' Perception of Bullying survey (Appendix C) and the Participant Invitation Letter (Appendix H). A total of 90 packets were distributed at the conclusion of the faculty conference and they were collected by a secretary at the school as they were completed. The surveys took approximately 10 minutes to complete. At the conclusion of the faculty conference 49 completed surveys were returned to the secretary who, in turn, returned

them to the researcher. The surveys were then coded from 001 to 049 in order to facilitate and expedite data analysis.

Research Questions and Data Analysis

The statistical analysis for the study was conducted using a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 12.0, 2003). Reliability was established through the use of an Inter-Item Correlation and Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items (.865). The significance of each research question was established at the .05 level which is the accepted level in the social sciences. Each research question and the method of analysis that was used for each question is discussed below.

Question 1: What influence does teacher gender have on their perception of bullying behavior?

The first research question analyzed the influence of teacher gender on their perception of bullying behavior. In order to ascertain this effect, data from the subjects' responses to questions regarding their perceptions of bullying and their gender were used. This data was gathered by accurately recording and analyzing subjects' responses to questions from the survey. An Independent Samples t-test was used in order to analyze the results of the data collected in response to this question which is consistent with Dr. Henry's research as well. In addition a One Sample t-test was used in order to analyze whether statistical differences exist between the elementary school teachers that were studied by Dr. Henry and the high school teachers that were the subjects of this research study.

Question 2: What influence does teachers' years of experience have on their perception of bullying behavior?

The second research question analyzed the influence of teachers' years of experience on their perception of bullying behavior. In order to ascertain this effect, data from the subjects' responses to questions regarding their perceptions of bullying and their years of experience in education were used. This data was gathered by accurately recording and analyzing subjects' responses to questions from the survey. An ANOVA was used to analyze whether a relationship exists between responses to the survey items and years of experience. The use of ANOVA to analyze the results of this question is also consistent with the methodology employed by Dr. Henry.

Question 3: What influence does a teacher's level of education have on their perception of bullying behavior?

The third research question analyzed the influence of teachers' level of education on their perception of bullying behavior. In order to ascertain this effect, data from the subjects' responses to questions regarding their perceptions of bullying and their level of education were used. This data was gathered by accurately recording and analyzing subjects' responses to questions from the survey. A t-test was used to analyze whether a relationship exists between responses to the survey items and level of education as the subjects reported as having either a bachelors or masters degree, therefore only two distinct levels were surveyed.

Question 4: What influence does chronological age have on teacher's perception of bullying?

The fourth research question analyzed the influence of teachers' age on their perception of bullying behavior. In order to ascertain this effect, data from the subjects' responses to questions regarding their perceptions of bullying and their chronological age were used.

This data was gathered by accurately recording and analyzing subjects' responses to questions from the survey. An ANOVA was used to analyze whether a relationship exists between responses to the survey items and chronological age. The use of ANOVA to analyze the results of this question is also consistent with the methodology employed by Dr. Henry.

Question 5: What influence do differences in teacher's upbringing (urban, suburban or rural) have on their perception of bullying behavior?

The fifth research question analyzed the influence of teachers' upbringing (urban, suburban, or rural) on their perception of bullying behavior. In order to ascertain this effect, data from the subjects' responses to questions regarding their perceptions of bullying and their upbringing were used. This data was gathered by accurately recording and analyzing subjects' responses to questions from the survey. An ANOVA was used to analyze whether a relationship exists between responses to the survey items and teachers' upbringing.

Question 6: What influence does a teacher's own experience with bullying as a child (bully, victim of bullies or both) have on their perception of bullying behavior?

The sixth research question analyzed the influence of teachers' own experience with bullying (bully, bullied or both) on their perception of bullying behavior. In order to ascertain this effect, data from the subjects' responses to questions regarding their perceptions of bullying and their own experiences with bullying were used. This data was gathered by accurately recording and analyzing subjects' responses to questions from the survey. A t-test was used to analyze whether a relationship exists between responses to the survey items and teachers' own experience with bullying, as although the

demographic variable included three possible groups, only two groups were present at the completion of the survey.

In short, this research study analyzed whether specific demographic variables had an influence on teachers' perception of bullying behavior. In addition, a statistical analysis was conducted in order to determine whether differences existed between elementary and high school teachers' perceptions. All analyses were conducted through the use of either ANOVA, Independent Sample T – Test or One Sample T- Test.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This study was designed in order to explore teachers' perception of bullying behavior in a suburban New Jersey high school. The following pages contain information regarding the participants of the study, the descriptive data and the results of the statistical analysis. The descriptive data includes frequencies, valid percentages, means, and standard deviations of the demographic variables that were examined in this study. In order to determine whether demographic differences amongst teachers had a statistically significant influence on teachers' perceptions of bullying behavior, t-tests and ANOVA were employed.

Subjects

The study was conducted in one suburban, ninth through twelfth grade high school in northwest New Jersey. The student population of the school is just over 1000 and the staff consists of approximately 100 predominantly Caucasian teachers. The school is a middle of the road New Jersey high school that is located in Morris County. What is meant by "middle of the road" is that it is not considered urban or rural but is considered a suburban school. The students and their families are not upper class or lower class, they are not affluent nor poor,

but are once again “middle of the road”, in that the community is a purely middle class community.

Using these variables there are 81 high schools throughout the state of New Jersey that are located in GH districts and of those 16 are located in Morris County. As such, this researcher believes that by choosing a high school that is located in a GH district, and thereby controlling the demographics, the study allows for generalization to other schools with those same demographics. A total of 90 surveys were distributed and 49 were returned resulting in a 54% return rate.

Frequency Analysis

Demographic Variables

Forty nine teachers participated in the study. Each of the 7 demographic questions was analyzed by SPSS to determine the number of valid and missing responses as well as the mean response for each of the items. Demographic questions 1 through 6 were coded as 1, 2, 3, as each of them included three possible responses, while demographic question 7 was coded 1, 2,3,4,5, as it included 5 possible responses. Table 2 shows the results of the SPSS analysis of the 7 demographic questions that were included in the survey.

Table 2

Frequency Distribution of Demographic Variables by Mean

Demographic Questions	Valid Responses	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gender	49	1.67	.474
Age	49	1.78	.654
Years of Experience	49	1.55	.738
Level of Education	49	1.59	.497
I would describe the area that I spent my school age years as :	49	2.33	.899
I would describe my own experience with bullying during my school age years as the following	30	2.33	.479
Bullying is a problem in my school	47	3.79	.907

When taking mean scores for demographic questions 1 through 6 on the 3 point coding scale the total mean response was 1.87, while the mean response for demographic question 7 was 3.79. The response of 3.79 indicates that the participants of this survey were mostly in agreement that bullying was a problem in the school that was surveyed. Frequency distributions, including valid percentages, on the demographic variables of gender, age, years of experience and level of education are presented in Table 3 while the demographic variables of upbringing, experience with bullying as a child and opinion as to whether the teacher felt that bullying was a problem in their school are presented in Table 4.

Table 3

Frequency Distribution of Demographic Variables by Percentages

Variable	f	Valid P	:	SD
<u>Gender</u>			1.67	.474
Male	16	32.7		
Female	33	67.3		
<u>Age</u>			1.78	.654
22-38	17	34.7		
39-55	26	53.1		
56+	6	12.2		
<u>Years Experience</u>			1.55	.738
0-11	29	59.2		
12-23	13	26.5		
24+	7	14.3		
<u>Level of Education</u>			1.59	.497
Bachelor's degree	20	40.8		
Master's degree	29	59.2		
Doctoral degree	0	0.0		
<u>Upbringing</u>			2.33	.899
Rural	14	28.6		
Urban	5	10.2		
Suburban	30	61.2		

<u>Experience with Bullying</u>			2.33	.479
Victim	20	66.7		
Both Bully and Victim	10	33.3		
Bully	0	0.0		
<u>Bullying is a problem in my school</u>			3.79	.907
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0		
Disagree	6	12.8		
Neutral	7	14.9		
Agree	25	53.2		
Strongly Agree	9	19.1		

The survey participants included 16 teachers who identified themselves as male (32.7%) and 33 teachers who identified themselves as female (67.3%). There were 17 participants between the ages of 22 – 38 (34.7%), 26 whose ages ranged from 39 – 55 (53.1%) and 6 who identified themselves as being 56 + years old (12.2%). In terms of years of experience, 29 participants reported that they had from 0 -11 years (59.2%), 13 stated that they had been teaching from 12- 23 years (26.5%) and 7 of the respondents indicated that they had been teaching for 24 + years (14.3%). The subjects included 20 with Bachelor’s Degrees (40.8%) and 29 with Master’s Degrees (59.2%) while none of the respondents reported having earned Doctorates. A rural upbringing was reported by 14 of the survey participants (28.6%), while 5 reported as having an urban upbringing (10.2%) and 30 reported as having had a suburban upbringing (61.2%). When asked to

describe their own experience with bullying as a child, 20 respondents reported that they were victims of bullies (40.8%), while 10 reported as having been both a bully and a victim (20.4%) and 19 did not respond to this question at all (38.8%). Finally, on the question that stated “bullying is a problem in my school”, none of the respondents reported as strongly disagreeing with the statement, 6 stated that they disagreed (12.8%), 7 gave a response of neutral (14.9%), 25 said that they agreed (53.2%) and 9 stated that they strongly agreed (19.1%).

About Student Reporting of Bullying

Each of the survey perception questions were also analyzed by SPSS in order to determine the number of valid and missing responses as well as the valid percentage and the mean response on the 4 point Likert scale to each question regarding student reporting of bullying. Table 4 shows the results of the SPSS analysis for student reporting questions.

Table 4

Frequency Distribution of Student Reporting Questions

Question	Valid	Valid P	:	SD
Students report direct (hitting) bullying incidences to me	48	SD 50 D 35.4 A 14.6 SA 0	1.65	.729
Students report direct (kicking) bullying incidences to me	48	SD 52.1 D 39.6 A 8.3 SA 0	1.56	.649
Students report direct (pushing) bullying incidences to me	48	SD 47.9 D 37.5 A 14.6 SA 0	1.67	.724
Students report direct (name calling) bullying incidences to me	48	SD 39.6 D 29.2 A 29.2 SA 2.1	1.94	.885

My students report being threatened by others	48	SD	33.3	1.90	.751
		D	43.8		
		A	22.9		
		SA	0		

When taking the mean scores of all of the questions that involved student reporting of bullying and determining the total mean, this researcher found that the total mean was 1.725 which is rounded to 1.73, showing that teachers responses fall between strongly disagree to disagree when responding to questions as to whether they perceive their students as reporting incidences of bullying to them. This indicates that students tend to not report incidences of bullying to their teachers.

Only 14.6% of the participants indicated that students report direct (hitting) incidences of bullying to them, while 85.4% indicated that they either strongly disagreed or disagreed with that statement. On the question of reporting kicking incidents, only 8.3% indicated that students have reported these incidents to them while 52.1% strongly disagreed and 39.6% disagreed. When responding to the question about pushing, just 14.6% of the respondents said that students report these incidents to them while a total of 85.4% strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. When asked about incidents involving students reporting incidents of ignoring to teachers only 16.4% of the survey participants stated that they agreed with this statement while 46.9% strongly disagreed and 36.7 disagreed with this statement. Only 18.8% of the survey participants agreed with

the statement that students report direct (exclusion) bullying incidences to them, while 50% strongly disagreed and 31.3% disagreed. When asked about students reporting of bullying incidences of name calling, 2.1% strongly agreed, 29.2% agreed, 29.2% disagreed and 39.6% strongly disagreed. When asked whether students report being hit by others only 14.9% agree, while 40.4% disagreed and 44.7% strongly disagreed. Finally, on the question of whether students report being threatened by others, 22.9% agreed while 43.8% disagreed and 33.3% strongly disagreed.

When calculating the mean of these percentages, one finds that only 17.45% of the teachers agreed that students report bullying incidents to them, while they strongly agreed just .3% of the time. In contrast, teachers disagreed with the statements regarding student reporting of bullying 36.73% of the time and strongly disagreed 45.56% of the time.

A further calculation can be done here to separate student reporting of bullying of a physical and non physical nature. When calculating the total mean of student reporting of verbal and non-verbal bullying, one finds the total mean for participants who strongly agree to be .53%, while the mean for those who agree is 21.8%, the mean for those who disagreed was 35.23% and the mean for those who strongly disagreed was 42.45%. In comparison to those totals the means for teachers' responses to the questions involving physical bullying revealed that 0% strongly agreed, 13.1% for those who were in agreement, 38.23% disagreed with the statement involving the reporting of physical bullying and 48.68% for those who strongly disagreed with the statements regarding the reporting of physical bullying.

While only 17.75% of teachers report having been told about bullying, of that percentage, 22.3% report being told about non physical forms of bullying and 13.1% say that they have been told about incidents of physical bullying. It appears that while few students report bullying to their teachers at all, those who do, have a tendency to report verbal and non verbal bullying more frequently than physical bullying.

About Teacher Observation of Bullying

Each of the survey perception questions were also analyzed by SPSS in order to determine the number of valid and missing responses as well as the valid percentage and the mean response on the 4 point Likert scale to each question regarding teacher observation of bullying. The results of the SPSS analysis for teacher observation questions can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

Frequency Distribution of Teacher Observation Questions

Question	Valid	Valid P	:	SD
I observe a stronger students hitting weaker students	49	SD 24.5	2.24	.925
		D 34.7		
		A 32.7		
		SA 8.2		
I observe a specific child repeatedly called names	49	SD 12.2	2.59	.840
		D 26.5		
		A 51.0		
		SA 10.2		
I observe a specific child repeatedly excluded by peers	49	SD 2.0	2.90	.653
		D 20.4		
		A 63.3		
		SA 14.3		
I observe students bullying others by hitting	47	SD 34.0	1.89	.787
		D 44.7		
		A 19.1		
		SA 2.1		
I observe students bullying others by kicking	48	SD 39.6	1.71	.651
		D 50.0		
		A 10.4		
		SA 0		

I observe students bullying others by pushing	48	SD 31.3	2.02	.863
		D 39.6		
		A 25.0		
		SA 4.2		
I observe students bullying others by name calling	48	SD 14.6	2.58	.942
		D 29.2		
		A 39.6		
		SA 16.7		
I observe students bullying others by teasing	48	SD 12.5	2.69	.903
		D 22.9		
		A 39.6		
		SA 16.7		
I observe students bullying others by exclusion or social isolation	48	SD 10.4	2.67	.859
		D 27.1		
		A 47.9		
		SA		
		14.6		

When taking the mean score for all of the questions that involved teachers observing bullying behavior the total mean score was 2.365 which is rounded to 2.37, showing that teachers' responses fall between disagree and agree as to whether they observe bullying

behavior in their school. A further observation that can be made is a comparison of the total mean scores of the perception questions that involve physical bullying as opposed to those measuring teachers' perceptions of verbal or nonverbal bullying behavior. When taking the mean score of only those questions that involve physical bullying it was found that the total mean score of teachers perceptions was 1.965 which is rounded to 1.97, showing that teachers mean response to those questions that involve their perceptions of physical bullying tended to fall between strongly disagree and disagree with a tendency toward disagree, while the total mean for those questions that involved bullying of a non physical nature was 2.686 which is rounded to 2.69, showing that teachers' mean response to those questions that involved verbal or non verbal bullying tended to fall between disagree and agree while tending toward agree.

When looking at the valid percentages for each of the survey items that involved teacher observations of bullying, one finds that although 72.3% of the teachers surveyed felt that bullying is a problem in their school, they do not observe it on as frequent a rate as the 72.3% response to the question of whether bullying is a problem in their school would indicate.

A total of 8.2% of the participants in the survey reported that they observe stronger students hitting weaker students, while 32.7% agreed with that statement, 34.7% disagreed and 24.5% strongly disagreed. When asked whether they observe a specific child repeatedly being called names, 10.2% strongly agreed and 51% agreed, with 26.5% in disagreement while 12.2% strongly disagreed. On the item that asked whether teachers observed a child being repeatedly excluded by their peers 63.3% agreed that they had, 14.3% strongly agreed, 20.4% disagreed and just 2% strongly disagreed. When queried as

to whether they observe students being bullied by hitting, just 2.1% strongly agreed with 19.1% agreeing, while 44.7% disagreed and 34% strongly disagreed. On the next survey item where the survey participants were asked whether they observe bullying that involved students being kicked 10.4% of the respondents agreed with that statement while none of them strongly agreed and 50 % disagreed with 39.6% strongly disagreeing. On the next question, the participants of the study were asked whether they observe bullying that involved pushing and just 4.2% strongly agreed, 25% agreed and 39.6% disagreed with 31.3% strongly disagreeing. When asked about their observations of bullying that involved name calling, 16.7% agreed that they had observed this type of bullying, 39.6% agreed, 29.2% disagreed and just 14.6% strongly disagreed. When asked about teasing and their observations of this type of bullying, 16.7% strongly agree, 39.6% agree, 29.2% disagreed and only 12.5% strongly disagreed. Finally, on the survey item that asked if they observe bullying of the exclusionary or social isolation kind, 14.6% strongly agreed, 47.9% agreed, while 27.1% disagreed and 10.4% strongly disagreed.

When calculating the mean of these percentages, one finds that 36.5% of the teachers agreed that they have observed bullying incidences of various kinds in their school, while they strongly agreed 11.6% of the time. In contrast, survey participants disagreed with the statements regarding teacher observations of bullying 30.5% of the time and strongly disagreed 20% of the time.

A further calculation can be done here to separate teachers' observations of bullying of a physical and non physical nature. When calculating the total mean of teacher observation of verbal and non-verbal bullying, one finds the total mean for participants

who strongly agree to be 14.5 %, while the mean for those who agree is 48.28%, the mean for those who disagreed was 25.22% and the mean for those who strongly disagreed was 10.34%. In comparison to those totals the means for teachers' responses to the questions involving physical bullying revealed that 3.63% strongly agreed, 21.8% were in agreement, 42.25% disagreed with the statement involving the reporting of physical bullying and 32.35% strongly disagreed with the statements regarding their observation of physical bullying.

While 48.1% of the study participants report having observed bullying, of that percentage, 62.78% report having observed non physical forms of bullying and just 38.38% say that they have observed incidents of physical bullying. It appears that while a sizable percentage of the subjects of this study do indeed observe bullying in their school, the majority of the bullying that they do observe is of the non physical type. This may be because as children get older bullying manifests itself in forms that are more verbal and less physical (Bjorkqvist,1994) or it may be that teachers are just not recognizing the physical incidents that they observe as bullying behavior.

It can be seen by this SPSS frequency analysis that while the teachers that were surveyed for this research study felt that bullying was a problem in their school and do indeed observe some of that bullying behavior, few students report bullying to them. It can also be seen by the results of the frequency analysis that the teachers who participated in this study have a tendency to observe bullying of a verbal or nonverbal nature more frequently than they do bullying of a physical nature.

Reliability Analysis

The 17 items that were included in the survey were tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items and an Inter-Item Correlation Matrix was produced. Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items resulted in a coefficient of .865. This is consistent with Dr. Henry's analysis which resulted in a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .87. The coefficient in this case is acceptable because "reliabilities over .7 are often considered adequate" (Haller & Kleine, 2001, p. 358) and the coefficient of .865 easily meets this standard. Therefore, it can be said that the survey, *A Teachers Perception of Bullying*, has a high level of reliability as Cronbach's alpha, which measures internal consistency, shows that the items on the survey are "strongly and positively correlated with the others" (Haller & Kleine 2001, p. 358).

Results

As has been stated earlier this study was designed to examine teachers' perceptions of bullying behavior in a suburban New Jersey high school. The results of the statistical analysis were as follows:

Research Question 1: What influence does teacher gender have on their perception of bullying behavior?

Consistent with Dr. Henry's research, question 1 was analyzed using an independent t-test to determine the effect that teacher gender may have on their perception of bullying behavior and was computed at the .05 level that is accepted in the social sciences. The independent samples t- test was calculated comparing the mean score of male teachers' perception of bullying behavior with female teachers' perceptions of bullying behavior. Using a sample size of 15 for males and 31 for females, as stated above, this researcher

compared the two independent groups. The mean of males was 37.40 with a standard deviation of 7.129 while the mean of females was 33.29 with a standard deviation of 7.372. In this independent samples t-test, $df = 44$, $sig. (2 \text{ tailed}) = .080$ and $t = 1.791$. Using the table for critical values of t (Witte & Witte, p.592) the critical value of t with df equal to 44 is ± 2.021 . This means that because the SPSS value of t falls below the critical value of t, we can say that the difference between male and female perception of bullying is not statistically significant at the .05 level. It can therefore be said that gender had no statistically significant effect on teachers' perception of bullying behavior.

Although, Dr. Henry also found no statistical difference between male and female elementary school teachers, when a one sample t-test is applied to the differences between the male elementary school teachers that Dr. Henry studied and the male high school teachers that were the subjects of this research, a significant difference is found. The mean of males was 37.40 with a standard deviation of 7.129. In this one sample t-test, $df = 14$, $sig. (2 \text{ tailed}) = .048$ and $t = -2.168$. Again using the table for critical values of t (Witte & Witte, p.592), the critical value of t with df equal to 14 is ± 2.145 . This means that because the SPSS value of t is higher than the critical value of t we can say that the difference between male elementary and male high school teachers' perception of bullying is statistically significant at the .05 level. It can be said that male high school teachers' perception of bullying is statistically significantly lower than male elementary school teachers' perception of bullying behavior with a mean difference of -3.99.

When a one sample t-test is applied to the differences between the female elementary school teachers that Dr. Henry studied and the female high school teachers that were the subjects of this research, a significant difference is found. The mean of females was

33.29 with a standard deviation of 7.372. In this one sample t-test, $df = 30$, sig. (2 tailed) = .000 and $t = -6.427$. Again using the table for critical values of t (Witte & Witte, p.592), the critical value of t with df equal to 30 is ± 2.042 . This means that because the SPSS value of t is higher than the critical value of t we can say that the difference between female elementary and female high school teachers' perception of bullying is statistically significant at the .05 level. It can be said that female high school teachers' perception of bullying is statistically significantly lower than female elementary school teachers' perception of bullying behavior with a mean difference of -8.510.

Research Question 2: What influence do teachers' years of experience have on their perception of bullying behavior?

Question 2 was analyzed using a one-way ANOVA comparing teachers perceptions of bullying behavior by years of experience and was computed at the .05 level that is accepted in the social sciences. The dependent variable is teachers' perception of bullying behavior and the independent variable (main effect) is teachers' years of experience. The impact of the main effect of teachers' years of experience on teachers' perception of bullying behavior was not found to be statistically significant with a $p < .749$, degrees of freedom (df) 2, 43 and an F -value of .291, therefore it can be said that teachers' perception of bullying behavior did not vary by years of experience, in other words teachers' years of experience had no statistically significant effect on their perception of bullying behavior.

Research Question 3: What influence does teachers' level of education have on their perception of bullying behavior?

Since survey participants only reported as having bachelor's or master's degrees, level of education was analyzed using an independent t-test to determine the effect that teachers' level of education may have on their perception of bullying behavior and was computed at the .05 level that is accepted in the social sciences. The independent samples t- test was calculated comparing the mean score of teachers who have earned bachelor's degrees perception of bullying behavior with teachers who have earned master's degrees perceptions of bullying behavior. Using a sample size of 18 for bachelor's degrees and 28 for master's degrees, as stated above, this researcher compared the two independent groups. The mean of those with bachelor's degrees was 35.39 with a standard deviation of 7.609 while the mean of teachers with master's degrees was 34.14 with a standard deviation of 7.482. In this independent samples t-test, $df = 44$, sig. (2 tailed) = .587 and $t = .548$ Using the table for critical values of t (Witte & Witte, p.592) the critical value of t with df equal to 44 is ± 2.021 . This means that because the SPSS value of t falls below the critical value of t we can say that the difference between teachers with bachelor's degrees and those with master's degrees perception of bullying is not statistically significant at the .05 level. It can therefore be said that teacher's level of education had no statistically significant effect on teachers' perception of bullying behavior.

Research Question 4: What influence does chronological age have on teachers' perception of bullying?

Question 4 was analyzed using a one-way ANOVA comparing teachers perceptions of bullying behavior by chronological age and was computed at the .05 level that is accepted in the social sciences. The dependent variable is teachers' perception of bullying behavior

and the independent variable (main effect) is teachers' chronological age. The impact of the main effect of teachers' chronological age on teachers' perception of bullying behavior was not found to be statistically significant with a $p < .324$, degrees of freedom (df) 2, 43 and an F-value of 1.157, therefore it can be said that teachers' perception of bullying behavior did not vary with chronological age, in other words teachers' chronological age had no statistically significant effect on their perception of bullying behavior.

Research Question 5: What influence do differences in teachers' upbringing (urban, suburban or rural) have on their perception of bullying behavior?

Question 5 was analyzed using a one-way ANOVA comparing teachers perceptions of bullying behavior by teachers' upbringing (urban, suburban or rural) and was computed at the .05 level that is accepted in the social sciences. The dependent variable is teachers' perception of bullying behavior and the independent variable (main effect) is teachers' upbringing. The impact of the main effect of teachers' upbringing was not found to be statistically significant with a $p < .846$, degrees of freedom (df) 2, 43 and an F-value of .168, therefore it can be said that teachers' perception of bullying behavior did not vary with differences in teachers' upbringing, in other words the area in which a teacher grew up had no statistically significant effect on their perception of bullying behavior.

Research Question 6: What influence does a teachers' own experience with bullying as a child (bully, bullied or both) have on their perception of bullying behavior?

None of the survey participants described themselves as having been bullies and only reported as having either been victims of bullies or as having been both a bully and a victim of bullies. Therefore, teachers' own experience with bullying as a child was

analyzed using an independent t-test to determine the influence that teachers' own experience with bullying as a child may have on their perception of bullying behavior and was computed at the .05 level that is accepted in the social sciences. The independent samples t- test was calculated comparing the mean score for perception of bullying behavior of teachers who described themselves as having been a victim of bullies with teachers who described themselves as having been both a bully and a victim. Using a sample size of 20 for victims of bullies and 8 for those who were both victim and bully, as stated above, this researcher compared two independent groups. The mean of those who described themselves as victims of bullies was 34.70 with a standard deviation of 6.929 while the mean of teachers who described themselves as having been both bully and victim was 38.63 with a standard deviation of 4.307. In this independent samples t- test, $df = 26$, $sig. (2\text{ tailed}) = .150$ and $t = -1.482$. Using the table for critical values of t (Witte & Witte, p. 592) the critical value of t with df equal to 26 is ± 2.056 . This means that because the SPSS value of t falls below the critical value of t we can say that the difference in perception of bullying behavior between teachers who described themselves as bullies and those who described themselves as both bully and victim is not statistically significant at the .05 level. It can therefore be said that teacher's own experience with bullying as a child had no statistically significant effect on teachers' perception of bullying behavior.

In summary, the data that was collected and analyzed in this chapter demonstrated that:

1. Gender did not have a statistically significant influence on teachers' perception of bullying behavior.

2. Teachers' years of experience had no statistically significant influence on their perception of bullying behavior.
3. The level of education that teachers have attained did not have a statistically significant influence on their perception of bullying behavior.
4. Chronological age was not a statistically significant influence on teachers' perception of bullying behavior.
5. Whether teachers' were raised in urban, suburban or rural communities was not a statistically significant influence on their perception of bullying behavior.
6. Teachers' own experience with bullying as a child had no statistically significant influence on their perceptions of bullying behavior
7. A statistically significant difference was found between the elementary school teachers that were examined in Dr. Edwards study and the high school teachers that were the subjects of this study.

Overall, much like the results of Dr. Edwards research, each of the demographic variables that were examined in this research study were found to have no statistically significant influence on teachers' perception of bullying behavior.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

One of the biggest problems that students, teachers and schools must deal with today is that of bullying. According to Garbarino and deLara (2002), “students overwhelmingly report that teachers and other adults on the school grounds do not have any clue about how many actual incidents of physical and emotional violence and harassment occur during the course of a day” (p. 35). Sullivan et al. (2004) defined bullying as “a *negative* and often *aggressive* or *manipulative* act or series of acts by one or more people against another person or people over a period of time. It is *abusive* and is based on an *imbalance of power*” (p. 4-5). Olweus (1993) has said that “A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students” (p. 9). Olweus then defined negative actions as including verbal and physical actions, such as threatening, taunting, teasing and name calling. Olweus (1993) also said that “it is a negative action when someone hits, pushes, kicks, pinches, or restrains another – by physical contact. It is also possible to carry out negative actions without the use of words or physical contact, such as by making faces or dirty gestures, intentionally excluding someone from a group, or refusing to comply with another person’s wishes” (p. 9).

Weinhold (as cited in Garner, 2003) states that “bullying is the most common form of violence in our society” (p. 99). As discussed earlier, there have been a number of

violent incidents in school where students have acted out with severe violence against their classmates in the form of school shootings. Again, as discussed earlier, the one thing that many of the perpetrators of school shootings have in common is the fact that they have been ostracized, picked on, made fun of, and physically abused by their peers. In a word, they had been “bullied”.

Bullying has pervasive effects on its victims. Marr and Field (as cited by Coloroso, 2003, p. xv) share the following poem from the final diary pages of thirteen year old Vijay Singh who was found hanging from a banister railing in his home.

I shall remember forever and will never forget

Monday: my money was taken’

Tuesday: names called

Wednesday: my uniform torn

Thursday: my body pouring with blood

Friday: it’s ended

Saturday: freedom

He was found hanging in his home on Sunday.

Research has also shown that the problem of bullying in school has led to increased absenteeism, lowered academic achievement, suicide, and incidents of severe violence. Henry (2003) has stated that according to Hoover, Oliver, and Hazler (1992), “approximately 77% of all students will become the victim of a bully at some point in his or her educational career” (p. 1). According to Coy (2001) “160,000 students skip school each day because of intimidation by their peers” (p. 3). In addition, students who have been victims of bullies tend

to have a lower rate of achievement than their peers. As Lumsden (2002) has stated, “Students who are targeted by bullies often have difficulty concentrating on their schoolwork” (p. 3).

According to Boulton (1997), sparse research has been done on teachers’ perceptions of bullying. Boulton believes that an increase in teacher awareness will expand their interventions in bullying incidents. Consequently, this research study was undertaken with the foundation that by identifying the demographic variables that influence teachers’ perception of bullying behavior in schools, we can then take appropriate steps to begin to limit, if not eliminate bullying behavior in schools. Leff and Kupersmidt (as cited by Henry, 2003) have stated that teachers play a crucial part in identifying those students who may be considered at risk. For that reason, it is important that we attempt to identify the factors that may contribute to their perception of bullying behavior.

The results of this study contribute to the current literature given that it examines whether teacher demographic characteristics have a statistically significant influence on their perception of bullying behavior, it provides a comparison of elementary school teachers and high school teachers perceptions of bullying behavior, it indicates the need for staff development and training regarding the existence of and recognition of bullying in schools, and the need for student education and school programs so that students will recognize when they are being bullied, and a need for policies to be implemented so that they will have the ability to report it to school staff.

According to Henry (2003), “content validity was established by a panel of expert judges...” (p. 73). The 17 items that were included in the survey were tested for reliability using Cronbach’s alpha based on standardized items and an Inter-Item Correlation Matrix was produced. Cronbach’s alpha based on standardized items resulted

in a coefficient of .865. This is consistent with Dr. Henry's analysis which resulted in a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .87. The coefficient in this case is acceptable because "reliabilities over .7 are often considered adequate" (Haller and Kleine, 2001, p. 358) and the coefficient of .865 easily meets this standard. Therefore, it can be said that the survey, *A Teachers Perception of Bullying*, has a high level of reliability as Cronbach's alpha, which measures internal consistency, shows that the items on the survey are "strongly and positively correlated with the others" (Haller and Kleine 2001, p. 358).

As indicated by Babbie (1990), any response rate above 50% is acceptable for analysis. For this research a total of 90 surveys were distributed and 49 were returned resulting in a 54% return rate, which is above the acceptable limit as stated by Babbie. Consistent with Dr. Henry's research (2003) and with her written approval (Appendix A & B), the *Teachers' Perception of Bullying Questionnaire* was used to gather data for this study. Part I of the survey collected demographic information from the subjects. Specifically, the age, gender, level of education, years of experience, upbringing, the subjects' own experience with bullying as a child, and whether they felt that bullying was a problem in their school, was collected from each of the survey participants. Part II of Dr. Henry's survey (2003) consisted of 17 questions that were designed to collect information on teachers' observations of different types of bullying behavior and teachers' observations of students reporting of such behavior, including both direct and indirect forms of bullying.

The first research question that this study investigated was whether gender had an influence on teacher perception of bullying behavior. Analysis of the statistics using an independent samples t-test showed that gender did not have a significant influence on teacher perception of bullying behavior. However, when a one sample t-test was conducted

comparing the results of elementary school teachers and high school teachers it was found that there is a significant difference between elementary and high school teachers' perception of bullying behavior for both male and female teachers. Based on the results, it can be said that both male and female high school teachers' perception of bullying behavior is statistically significantly lower than male and female elementary school teachers' perception of bullying behavior.

Perhaps high school teachers' perceptions of bullying behavior are statistically significantly lower than elementary school teachers' perceptions because bullying in high school manifests itself in different ways, becoming more verbal and less physical, more often taking the form of rumor spreading and exclusion (Bjorkqvist, 1994). This, in turn may lead to a greater difficulty in teachers' recognition of the behavior as bullying, which points to the need for teacher training on the different forms that bullying may take and the fact that bullying is not always an observable physical behavior.

The second research question that was examined in this study was whether teachers' years of experience in education had an influence of their perception of bullying behavior. This question was analyzed using an ANOVA, which indicated that years of experience had no statistical significance on teachers' perception of bullying behavior. Similar to Dr. Henry's study (2003) more than half of the survey participants had 0-11 years of experience (59.2%), with the next group being 12 – 23 years of experience (26.5%), while those with 24 + years of experience made up the smallest subgroup (14.3%). It is possible that this lack of experience in education may have resulted in the lack of significance for this research question.

The third research question that was studied was whether a teacher's level of education influences their perception of bullying behavior. This question was analyzed using a t-test, as although there were three possible responses to this demographic question, teachers only reported as having bachelor's (40.8%) or master's (59.2%) degrees while none of the survey participants described themselves as having earned doctorates. Again, in this case, the analysis of the data showed that there was no statistical significance associated with a teacher's level of education and their perception of bullying behavior. The lack of significance in this case may be attributable to teachers enrolling in college level courses that do not include discussion of bullying as part of the curriculum, as opposed to professional or staff development courses that may include the recognition of bullying as part of the course. If teachers are unaware of the manifestations of bullying behavior, they may not recognize that the behaviors that they are observing are indeed bullying behavior (exclusion, social isolation, etc.).

The fourth research question that was probed in this study was whether a teacher's chronological age has an influence on their perception of bullying behavior. This question was analyzed through the use of ANOVA and the results revealed that there was no statistical significance associated with teacher's age and their perception of bullying. One possible explanation for this lack of significance is again associated with the fact that the courses that teachers take in pursuit of their bachelor's and master's level teacher preparation programs do not include bullying behavior as a component of the program. If a teacher is not trained to recognize bullying and the many forms that it may take, they can not be expected to recognize the behaviors that they witness their students engaging in as bullying behavior.

Research question number five examined the influence that teachers' upbringing (urban, suburban, and rural) may have on their perception of bullying behavior. This question was analyzed through the use of ANOVA and again the results indicated that there was no statistical significance associated with a teacher's upbringing and their perceptions of bullying behavior. In addition to the previous explanation of teacher preparation programs lack of a bullying component, a possible explanation for this lack of significance is that there is indeed no difference between urban, suburban and rural bullying. Perhaps, in fact, bullying is bullying no matter where or how a person was raised.

The sixth and final research question that was considered was whether a teacher's own experience with bullying as a child (bully, victim or both) had a significant influence on their perception of bullying behavior. In this case, although there were three possible subgroups, teachers only described themselves as being victim (40.8%), or both bully and victim (20.4%), while 38.8% gave no response to this question at all. The high percentage of subjects who did not respond to this question may explain the lack of significance to this research question.

Consistent with Dr. Henry's research (2003) this study attempted to contribute to the field of education by examining teachers' perception of both direct bullying, which is any negative action involving physical contact, as well as indirect bullying, which is defined as negative actions that occur through the use of ignoring, exclusion, social isolation, etc. Further, much of the research that has been conducted on bullying in schools has focused its attention on students who report bullying, but there is a large amount of bullying behavior that goes unreported by its victims.

Consequently, this study was undertaken to determine whether teachers' demographic variables have an influence on their perceptions of bullying behavior of both the physical and non physical variety. More specifically, this study attempted to determine if there were specific types of teachers who recognize bullying on the high school level. Finally, as an outcrop of the study an analysis of the differences between the perceptions of elementary school teachers and high school teachers was conducted as well.

Generalizability

As has been stated earlier, this study was conducted in one suburban, ninth through twelfth grade high school in northwest New Jersey. The student population of the school is just over 1000 and the staff consists of approximately 100 predominantly Caucasian teachers. The school is a middle of the road New Jersey high school that is located in Morris County. What is meant by "middle of the road" is that it is not considered urban or rural but is considered a suburban school. The students and their families are not upper class or lower class, they are not affluent nor poor, but are once again "middle of the road", in that the community is a purely middle class community. The New Jersey Department of Education District Factor Group (DFG) classification system has identified the school as a school in the GH category. According to the New Jersey Department of Education, District Factor Groups are calculated by using the following variables:

1. Percent of adults with no high school diploma
2. Percent of adults with some college education
3. Occupational status
4. Unemployment rate
5. Percent of individuals in poverty

6. Median family income.

Using these variables there are 81 high schools throughout the state of New Jersey that are located in GH districts and of those 16 are located in Morris County. As such, this researcher believes that by choosing a high school that is located in a GH district, and thereby controlling the demographics, the study allows for generalization to other schools with those same demographics.

Recommendations for Policy, Practice and Future Research

Teachers play a key role in determining a schools response to bullying behavior. This study has shown that teachers' demographic variables have no statistically significant influence on their perception of bullying behavior. Yet, bullying continues to be a problem that schools face today.

Although this study has produced results that show there is no statistical significance to the demographic variables that were studied it is clear that bullying is a problem. As stated earlier, 72.3% of the study participants agreed or strongly agreed that bullying is a problem in their school, yet only 17.48% agreed or strongly agreed that students report bullying incidents to them and 48.1% either agreed or strongly agreed that they observe bullying incidents. Once again, bullying is clearly an issue that must be addressed.

It is therefore recommended that schools introduce training for teachers in how to recognize bullying and the many forms that it may take. This training should begin as training for all staff and eventually will be able to be paired down to refresher courses for experienced staff and become a required component of all new teacher induction and orientation programs. In addition, it is recommended that teacher preparation programs incorporate bullying as a component of their bachelor's, master's or alternate route

programs in order to assist teachers in the quest to provide a safe and secure learning environment in their classrooms and ultimately in their schools. Ultimately, without the proper education and training on bullying, teachers may not be capable of determining which behaviors that they witness are actually bullying and which are not.

In addition, it is recommended that schools and school districts implement training for their students so that they too, are able to distinguish between what bullying is and what it is not. It is equally important that systems, such as an anonymous reporting system, be implemented so that students know that help is available, how to get that help and know that they can reach out for that help without the fear of being found out by the bully or bullies and hence deal with the fear of repercussions from that bully or bullies.

Finally, in many schools the response to bullying is a reactive rather than a proactive approach, where the incident is dealt with after it happens. While that is certainly a necessary component of any school discipline program, it is recommended that bullying prevention programs be introduced and become a mainstay in the functioning of all schools whether they are believed to have a problem with bullying or not. This recommendation is supported by the results of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program where it was found that the implementation of the program resulted in a profound decline in bully/victim problems as well as reductions in anti – social behaviors in general and an overall improvement in students' satisfaction with school (Olweus, 2003).

It is imperative that research in the many facets of bullying continues, as bullying results in long lasting negative effects on its victims and on the bullies themselves. Further research can only help in the quest to better understand bullies and their victims and to hopefully limit or eliminate this societal problem.

Consequently, it is recommended that this study be expanded and replicated in a number of different ways. First, the study should be replicated in similar schools as was discussed in the generalizability section. By replicating the study in similar schools, it can be determined whether the results of the current study are indicative of all schools of this type or just the school that was studied in this research. In addition, it is recommended that the study be replicated in schools that are dissimilar to this one. Once again, this will enable researchers to determine if teachers' demographic variables simply had no influence in this school because of the characteristics of the school or if demographic variables manifestly have no influence on teachers' perceptions of bullying regardless of the schools' characteristics.

The study should be replicated in schools that are from different parts of New Jersey and in different parts of the country. It should be expanded to schools with differing socio-economic status, and to schools that are considered urban and those that are considered rural since the survey school is considered a suburban school. The study should also be expanded to include schools that have a different ethnic makeup amongst the faculty and amongst the students, and to schools of differing enrollment figures, both smaller size schools and larger size schools, as any of these issues may have effected the results of this study.

Further, this research was conducted using teachers as the sole subjects of the study, therefore it would be helpful to study the perceptions of counselors, administrators and other school staff as well. Is there a difference between teachers' perceptions and the perceptions of other members of the school faculty and staff?

Additional study and research is necessary to investigate the increased demands and responsibilities on teachers to take the time to report bullying, in light of the fact that this research showed that on the whole bullying continues to go unreported.

It is also necessary to conduct additional research in response to the legislation that has been enacted in various states including New Jersey outlining schools' responsibilities in response to bullying. By conducting this research it will enable educators, legislatures and the public in general to determine whether this legislation has indeed had a significant influence on the bullying problem, or whether schools are merely dealing with this issue because the law says that they should. Is the legislation in and of itself enough to deal with this problem or should schools be doing more?

It is also recommended that further research be conducted regarding teachers' actions after observing bullying incidents. An example of a survey question in this area would be, "What do you do about the bullying incident after it is observed?"

It is important that research be conducted with the victims of bullying, with the bullies themselves and with those victims who turn to acts of severe violence as a result of being victimized as well.

Finally, since 38.8% of the respondents did not respond to the question of teachers' own experience with bullying during their school age years, it is recommended that a fourth item be added to the categorization of the respondents in item # 6 of the survey instrument that was used in this research study, so that the question reads as follows: "I would describe my own experience with bullying during my school age years as the following:

_____ I was a bully

_____ I was a victim of bullies

_____ I was both a bully and a victim of bullies

_____ Not Applicable”

We all play an important part in this issue. Teachers, counselors, administrators, other school staff, parents, victims and the bullies themselves are all important components of the issue. All of the information garnered from the various studies that have been suggested and the suggestion for the revision of item # 6 of the survey will help us to better understand the bullying problem that exists, and hence, to develop the appropriate policies, practices, programs, education and staff development to curtail and hopefully eliminate this problem as it effects our school and our society as a whole.

Conclusion

To this point the research that has been conducted regarding teachers perceptions of bullying has been limited. Barone (1997) believes that one of the reasons for teacher inaction in regards to bullying is that “educators have become desensitized to bullying and do not even see it” (§ 5). Boulton believes that an increase in teacher awareness will expand their interventions in bullying incidents. This research was an attempt to identify the demographic variables that may have had an influence on teachers’ perceptions of bullying behavior at the high school level. The statistical analysis of the data that was gathered has shown that none of the demographic variables that were studied were statistically significant. It is therefore recommended that further research be done in this and in other areas involving bullying. It is also indicated that in order to combat the desensitization of educators toward bullying behavior, we must increase teacher

awareness of bullying, which it is hoped will, in turn, improve their ability to recognize and intervene in incidents of bullying in their schools.

References

- Atlas, R., & Pepler, D. (1998). Observations of bullying in the classroom. *Journal of Educational Research*. Retrieved August 11, 2004, from <http://www.questia.com/pm>
- Babbie, E. (1990). *Survey research methods*. San Francisco: Wadsworth.
- Banks, R. (1997). *Bullying in schools. Eric digest*. Champaign: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.
- Barone, F. J. (1997). Bullying in school: It doesn't have to happen. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 78(1), 80.
- Batsche, G., & Knoff, H. (1994). Bullies and their victims: Understanding a pervasive problem in schools. *School Psychology Review*, 23, 1-12.
- Beane, A. (1999). Fostering a bully free classroom. *Curriculum review*, 39(4).
- Bjorkqvist, K. (1994). Sex differences in physical, verbal, and indirect aggression: A review of recent research. *Sex Roles*, 30, 177-187.
- Boulton, M. (1997). Teachers' views on bullying: Definitions, attitudes and ability to cope. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 67, 223-233.
- Brewster, C., & Railsback, J. (2001). Schoolwide prevention of bullying. By request series: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.
- Bullock, J. R. (2002). Bullying among children. *Childhood education*, 78(i3), 130-134.
- Carney, C., & Merrell, K. (2001). Bullying in schools: Perspectives on understanding and preventing an international problem. *School Psychology International*, 22(3), 364-382.
- Clarke, E., & Kiselica, M. (1997). A systematic counseling approach to the problem of bullying. *Elementary school guidance and counseling*, 31, 1-16.
- Coloroso, B. (2003). *The bully, the bullied and the bystander*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc.
- Coy, D. R. (2001). *Bullying* (No. EDO-CG-01-06). Greensboro: University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
- Dounay, J. (2005). *State anti-bullying statutes*. Retrieved February 24, 2006, from <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/60/41.6041.htm>
- Froschl, M., & Gropper, N. (1999). Fostering friendships, curbing bullying. *Educational Leadership*, 56(8), 72-75.

- Garbarino, J., & deLara, E. (2002). *And words can hurt forever*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Garner, E. (2003). *A study of the perceptions of teachers, counselors, and administrators regarding their knowledge of the social, psychological, and academic effects of student bullying in middle schools in three urban school districts in Texas*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Texas A & M University, Corpus Christi and Kingsville.
- Gibson, W. (2003). *Elementary and middle school teachers' perceptions of bullying*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Georgia State University, Atlanta.
- Graham, P. (1998). *Bullying, stress and effects on health*. Retrieved August 30, 2004, from <http://www.successunlimited.co.uk/stress/health.htm>
- Hailer, E. J., & Kleine, P. F. (2001). *Using educational research: A school administrator's guide*. New York: Longman.
- Harachi, T., Catalano, R., & Hawkins, D. (1999). United States. In P. K. Smith (Ed.), *The nature of school bullying: A cross national perspective* (pp. 279-296). New York: Routledge.
- Hazler, R. (2000). When victims turn aggressor: Factors in the development of deadly school violence. *Professional School Counselor*, 4, 1-12.
- Henry, L. A. (2003). *Teachers' perceptions of bullying among elementary school students*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.
- Hoover, J. H., & Oliver, R. (1996). *The bullying prevention handbook: A guide for principals, teachers, and counselors*. Bloomington MN: National Educational Service.
- Hoover, J. H., Oliver, R., & Hazler, R. J. (1992). Bullying: Perceptions of adolescent victims in the midwestern USA. *School Psychology International*, 13, 5-16.
- A timeline of recent worldwide school shootings*. Retrieved December 30, 2005, from <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0777958.html>
- Ingram, S. (2000). Why bullies behave badly. *Current Health*, 27, 1-3.
- Juvonen, J., & Graham, S. (2001). *Peer harassment in school: The plight of the vulnerable and victimized*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Koki, S. (1999). *Bullying in schools should not be par for the course* (Reports - Descriptive 141). Washington, DC: Pacific Resources for Education and Learning.

- Lumsden, L. (2002). *Preventing bullying. Eric digest* (No. EDO-EA-02-02). Eugene, Oregon: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.
- Marano, H. (1995). Big, bad, bully. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved December 30, 2005, from <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5000336848>
- Nansel, T. R., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R. S., Ruan, W. J., Simmons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, M. (2001). Bullying behaviors among U.S. Youth: Prevalence and association with psychological adjustment, *The Journal of the American Medical Association* 2004, 2094 - 2100.
- Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Olweus, D. (1994). Annotation: Bullying at school: Basic facts and effects of a school based intervention program. *Journal of Child Psychology, 35*, 1171-1190.
- Olweus, D. (2003). A profile of bullying at school. *Educational Leadership, 60*(6), 12 - 17.
- Pellegrini, A. D., Bartini, M., & Brooks, F. (1999). School bullies, victims, and aggressive victims: Factors relating to group affiliation and victimization in early adolescence. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 91*(2), 216-224.
- Remboldt, C. (1998). Making violence unacceptable. *Educational Leadership, 56*(1), 32-39.
- Robinson, L. (2000). Bullying and SDA schools, *Canadian Adventist Teachers Network Journal*.
- Safe Child Program. (1996). *Take a stand: Prevention of bullying and interpersonal violence*. Retrieved December 6, 2005, from www.safechild.org/bullies.htm
- Smith, P. K., & Brain, P. (2000). Bullying in schools: Lessons from two decades. *Aggressive Behavior, 26*, 1-9.
- Starr, L. (2000). Sticks and stones and names can hurt you: De-mythtifying the class bully. *Education World, 3*-6.
- Sullivan, S., Cleary, M., & Sullivan, G. (2004). *Bullying in secondary schools: What it looks like and how to manage it*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Sutton, J., Smith, P., & Swettenham, J. (1999). Social cognition and bullying: Social inadequacy or skilled manipulation. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 17*, 435-450.

Time line of recent shootings in school. Retrieved August 3, 2004, from <http://www.time.com>

Title, B. (1996). *Bully/victim conflict: An overview for educators*. Center City, MN: Hazeldon Foundation.

Viadero, D. (1997) *Bullies beware*. Retrieved December 31, 2005, from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/1997>

Whitney, L., & Smith, P. K. (1993). A survey of the nature and extent of bullying in junior/middle and secondary schools. *Educational Research*, 35(1), 103-106.

Winter, R., & Orecklin, M. (2000). Beware of the crowd. *Time*, 156(8), 1-2.

Witte, R. S., & Witte, J. S. (2004). *Statistics: (7th ed.)*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Appendices

Appendix A
Survey Permission Email

Mr. Purzak,

I have attached a letter giving you permission to use my survey instrument. I have also sent the same letter to your chair. If you need a signed copy of this letter please let me know.

Sincerely,
Lisa H. Edwards

Appendix B
Survey Permission Letter

March 6, 2005

509 Williamsburg Dr.
Dalton, GA 30720

Dear Sirs:

I give Mr. Brian Putzak permission to use my survey instrument as part of his doctoral dissertation. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Lisa Henry Edwards, Ed. D.

706-226-7748

lisaedwards@optilink.us

Appendix C
Instrument For Study

Survey: *A Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying*

The researcher who is conducting this study is a Doctoral student in Educational Leadership, Management and Policy at Seton Hall University. The researcher is conducting a research study that is designed to investigate whether there are demographic variables that effect teachers' perceptions of bullying behavior in a suburban New Jersey high school. The survey is being given to teachers for the purpose of requesting input in the completion of a doctoral dissertation. Your assistance in this study is extremely important. All data will be treated in a professional manner and will be kept strictly confidential. Thank you for your participation and for your assistance in the completion of this study.

PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE SURVEY.

For item 1 – 7 please check only one answer.

1. Gender: Male _____ Female: _____
2. Age: 22-38 _____ 39-55 _____ 56+ _____
3. Years of Experience: 0-11 _____ 12-23 _____ 24+ _____
4. Level of Education: bachelor's degree _____ master's degree _____
doctoral degree _____
5. I would describe the area that I spent my school age years as:
_____ Rural
_____ Urban
_____ Suburban

6. I would describe my own experience with bullying during my school age years as the following:

_____ I was a bully

_____ I was a victim of bullies

_____ I was both a bully and a victim of bullies

PERCEPTIONS OF THE EXISTENCE OF BULLYING IN MY SCHOOL:

7. Bullying is a problem in my school (Please check one answer only)

Strongly disagree _____ Disagree _____ Neutral _____ Strongly agree _____ Agree _____

INSTRUCTIONS: ON A SCALE OF 1 – 4 PLEASE INDICATE THE DEGREE TO WHICH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.

The key for the responses is as follows:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4
1. I observe stronger students hitting weaker students.	1	2	3 4
2. I observe a specific child repeatedly called names.	1	2	3 4
3. I observe a specific child repeatedly excluded by peers.	1	2	3 4
4. Students report direct (hitting) bullying incidences to me.	1	2	3 4
5. Students report direct (kicking) bullying incidences to me.	1	2	3 4
6. Students report direct (pushing) bullying incidences to me.	1	2	3 4
7. Students report indirect (ignoring) bullying incidences to me.	1	2	3 4
8. Students report indirect (exclusion) bullying incidences to me.	1	2	3 4
9. Students report indirect (name calling) bullying incidences to me.	1	2	3 4
10. My students report being hit by others.	1	2	3 4
11. My students report being threatened by others.	1	2	3 4
12. I observe my students bullying others by hitting.	1	2	3 4
13. I observe my students bullying others by kicking.	1	2	3 4

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14. I observe my students bullying others by pushing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. I observe my students bullying others by name-calling. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. I observe my students bullying others by teasing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. I observe my students bullying others by exclusion or social isolation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Lisa A. Henry, Copyright 2003

“Used with the permission of the author”

Appendix D
Letter To Superintendent

Dr. Gary R. Bowen, Superintendent of Schools

28 Bowling Green Parkway
Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey

Dear Dr. Bowen:

I am a student in the Executive Ed.D. Program for Educational Leadership, Management and Policy at Seton Hall University and I am conducting a research study entitled, "A Study of Teacher Demographic Variables and Their Influence on Teachers' Perception of Bullying Behavior in a Suburban New Jersey High School." The study addresses teachers' perception of bullying behavior at the high school level. Should you decide to grant permission to conduct the research at Jefferson Township High School, your teachers will be asked to complete a survey that was developed by Dr. Lisa Anne Henry entitled *A Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying*. The survey should take the participants no more than ten minutes to complete.

I will, of course, take all the necessary steps to insure that anonymity is maintained and I will work within the appropriate parameters to ensure that confidentiality is maintained and that the research is conducted in an ethical manner. All data that is collected will be kept in a locked file cabinet at this researcher's home or work office and there will be no data collected that can specifically identify any of the subjects of the research study. Electronic data will be stored on a flash drive which will be kept in the same locked file cabinet.

Please advise me in a letter on your letterhead if you are willing to allow me to conduct this research at Jefferson Township High School. If you are willing to allow this research to take place at your high school please indicate so in your letter by writing, "I hereby give permission to Brian Purzak to conduct his research study entitled, "A Study of Teacher Demographic Variables and Their Influence on Teachers' Perception of Bullying Behavior in a Suburban New Jersey High School" given Institutional Review Board approval."

I thank you for your assistance in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Brian Purzak

Appendix E
Superintendent Approval letter

Jefferson Township Public Schools
28 Bowling Green Parkway
Lake Hopatcong, New Jersey 07849
(973) 663-5780 FAX (973) 663-2790

*Gary R. Bowen, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools*

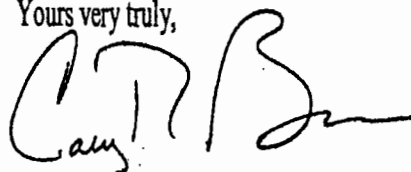
*Dora E. Mylchreest
Business Administrator/
Board Secretary*

June 7, 2005

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I hereby give permission to Brian Purzak to conduct his research study entitled "A Study of Teacher Demographic Variables and Their Influence on Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying Behavior in a Suburban New Jersey High School" given Institutional Review Board approval by the Seton Hall University.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary R. Bowen". The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name "Gary" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Bowen".

Gary R. Bowen, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Appendix F
Principal Approval Letter

JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

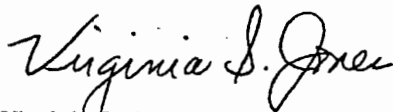
1010 WELDON ROAD • OAK RIDGE, NEW JERSEY 07438

(973) 697-3535 • (973) 398-4704 • FAX (973) 208-8409

DENNIS J. NICK
PRINCIPAL**VIRGINIA S. JONES**
VICE PRINCIPAL
ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP**BRIAN PURZAK**
VICE PRINCIPAL
STUDENT LEADERSHIP**INEZ KRAUS**
DIRECTOR OF STUDENT
PERSONNEL SERVICES

"I hereby give permission to Brian Purzak to conduct his research study entitled,
"A Study of Teacher Demographic Variables and Their Influence on Teachers'
Perception of Bullying Behavior in a Suburban New Jersey High School" given
Institutional Review Board approval."

Sincerely,



Virginia S. Jones
Principal

Appendix G
Researcher Survey Script

RESEARCHER SURVEY SCRIPT

Good afternoon. Thank you for allowing me to take some of your time to ask for your participation in what we consider an important research study.

It is hoped that the results of this study will assist the faculty and administration of your school to develop effective staff training that will help decrease student bullying behavior in your school.

Complete confidentiality will be maintained and there will be nothing that identifies you with the survey that you complete. All data that is collected will be kept under lock and key. Only the researcher and the dissertation committee at Seton Hall University will have access to the data at any time.

We would ask that you take a few minutes of your time to assist with this study by completing the survey. The survey should take you no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Inside this envelope you will find a letter from the researcher as well as the survey itself. Please read the letter in order to determine if you wish to take part in the survey.

If you decide to complete the survey, when you are finished please return your survey to the manila envelope. In order to maintain confidentiality, I am asking that you place the envelope in Mrs. Vollmers' mailbox. Your surveys will be picked up at a later date.

Once again I thank you very much for your assistance with this project.

Appendix H
Participant Letter

Dear Teacher:

I am a student in the Executive Ed.D. Program for Educational Leadership, Management and Policy at Seton Hall University. I am conducting a research study entitled, "A Study of Teacher Demographic Variables and Their Effect on Teachers' Perception of Bullying Behavior in a Suburban New Jersey High School." The study addresses teachers' perception of bullying behavior at the high school level.

Information that is obtained from an analysis of data that is collected from the teachers at Jefferson Township High School may be able to be used to develop effective staff training that will help decrease student bullying behavior. Should you decide to be a participant in this research, you will be asked to complete a survey that was developed by Dr. Lisa Anne Henry entitled *A Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying*. The survey should take you no more than ten minutes to complete. If you do not wish to take part in the study please just dispose of the materials that are in your envelope.

This is a completely voluntary and anonymous survey. Your name will never be linked to any data you provide. All data that is collected will be kept in a locked file cabinet at my home or office and there will be no data collected that can specifically identify any of the subjects of the research study. Electronic data will be stored on a flash drive which will be kept in the same locked file cabinet. Access to the data will be limited to the researcher and the dissertation committee at Seton Hall University.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this research and for assisting the researcher in the accomplishment of this goal.

Sincerely,

Brian Purzak