

2020

## Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying and School Policy Enforcement

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Walden University  
2020

Abstract

Teachers' Perceptions on Bullying and School Bullying Policy Enforcement

by

Angelena Elizabeth Clagon

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

August 2020

## Abstract

Bullying has grown attention since the Columbine High School shooting; in April, 1999. Throughout the years, there has been an increase in aggressive behaviors including via the Internet across school districts in the United States. There was a gap in the literature regarding whether bullying related school policies are enforced during school hours. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of middle school teachers about bullying. This study was steered by Husserl's phenomenological theory. Five middle school teachers were interviewed to gather information regarding their experiences with and perceptions of bullying based on behaviors and school policy issues. Teachers' perceptions and whether or not school policies were enforced will determine how this study will progress in its findings. Also, research questions will bring and give more knowledge and awareness to this problem. Teachers' and their perceptions will help gather information to prevent bullying. Four major themes emerged from the data: (a.) essential training in defining bullying, (b) physical and verbal behaviors, (c) school policy for managing bullying, and (d) total support from parents and school. This research may stimulate positive social change by ensuring that school policies will be enforced throughout school systems so that students will trust the school environment and experience a safer learning institution.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this project to my late mother, Mrs. Odessa Louise Norman Williams. I only wish she could have seen me at my best. I know if she is looking down from heaven, she will be so proud and happy that I never forgot what she taught me and my other siblings. Don't Give Up.

## Acknowledgments

I, Angelena Clagon foremost acknowledge God's presence with me while I was working on this project. I prayed that I would find a solution in preventing bullying. Also, I acknowledge my sisters, Gloria, Nyla, and especially Eldorado. She granted me her expertise in succeeding wherever there is a will, there will be a way. Thank you for helping me earn this trophy and to keep on holding up the light.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction to Study**

Educational institutions are a fragment of our society that play a significant role in students' protection and academic progress. As in Normone, Jones, and Spell (2015) argues that bullying has tarnished the outlooks of schools obtaining a safe environment and interferes with academic progress and progress attendance. When school policies are not enforced, students are not safe. School bullying can take place on and off campus, school bus or a child simply trying to enjoy the internet. Teachers have a central role in the management and prevention of bullying within school and are in turn involved in the implementation of anti-bullying interventions (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008). Their perceptions of bullying behaviors can be vital to this phenomenon of bullying and school's environment. In 2014, 53 school-related death resulted in 11 suicides, 41 homicides, and one intermediation death occurring in the United States (Zhang, Musu-Gillette, & Qudekerk, 2016). Bullying is the most prevalent and aggressive form of behavior resulting in violence in schools today. If these bullying behaviors are left unchecked, can lead to more serious forms of violence (Juvonen & Graham, 2014). Many adolescents who have been victimized are at risk of developing internalizing problems and can be genetically vulnerable to these problems (Juvonen; & Graham, 2014). What is unclear, is whether school policies are being enforced at these middle schools. Teachers spend a lot of time with students during school hours and may be the determining source for helping to prevent bullying effectively and school policy enforcement. Exploring and investigating teachers' perceptions of school policies will determine whether protective features of the school environment such as anti-bullying classroom policies are being enforced. Consequently, an essential aspect of school

violence prevention, enforcing school policies is the identification and implementation of interventions and strategies designed to prevent or should reduce bullying in schools (Lund, Blake, Ewing, & Banks, 2012).

### **Problem Statement**

Bullying occurs in schools across the country. Unless the right measures are identified such as prevention/intervention programs being implemented to stop this problem, bullying can continue to have a devastating effect on the quality of education (Bradshaw, 2013). Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger, and Lumpkin, (2014), define bullying as "...unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time." (p. 7). This is why teachers' perceptions are greatly needed and to determine if school policies were being enforced. There are different types of bullying behaviors. This include a repeated act of (a) verbal abuse (such as name-calling, teasing, or showing offensive posters); (b) physical abuse (kicking, hitting, punching, or pulling someone's hair); or (c) relational or social abuse, (sexual harassment, homophobia, racial discrimination; (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, & Johnson, 2015; Dane, Marini, Volk, & Vaillancourt; 2017; Olweus, 1993; Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann, & Jugert, 2006). In addition to traditional bullying, students can also be cyberbullied. Cyberbullying can occur either online or via mobile phone (Department of Education, 2015).

Research shows that students who are bullied are more likely to struggle in school and skip class or stop going to school (Curry, Mayberry, & Chenneville, 2012). Cornell, Gregory, Huang, and Fan, (2013) found that prevalence of teasing and bullying predicts high school dropout rates,

while (Townsend, Fisher, Chikobvn, Lombard, and King, 2008) claims that bullying can lead to fear of school, absenteeism, and lack of academic progress, which in turn are precursors to dropping out of school. Reports indicate that victims of bullying are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, become depressed, and are at higher risk of suicide (Department of Education, 2015; Valdebenito, Ttofi, & Eisner, 2001). “More than one out of every five (20.8%) students report being bullied” (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015, p. 1). Cornell and Mehta (2011) claim that middle schools carry the highest rates of bullying from all other grade levels. Bully Statistics (2013) reports that among high school students, 15.5% are cyberbullied and 20.2% are bullied on school property. This data demonstrates the extent of bullying and the negative impacts of bullying. Therefore, more research is needed to understand whether current school policies are inadequate, or if they are simply not being enforced.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore whether existing school policies on bullying are inadequate, or if there exists a failure to enforce the policies that have already been established. Teachers, who are tasked with observing, controlling, and reporting bullying, play an important role in our understanding of why bullying happens and continues to occur. Little research exists to provide teachers’ perspectives on the bullying problem. Therefore, I chose to do a qualitative phenomenology study on teachers’ perceptions and whether or not school policies were being enforced. To address this gap in the literature, this study employed this qualitative approach to determine teachers’ perspectives on the bullying problem and offer possible suggestions for reducing the problem.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

RQ1- How do teachers describe their experiences in addressing bullying behaviors at the middle school level?

RQ2: Do teachers believe existing bullying policies are sufficient to create a safe learning environment for middle school-age students?

RQ3: How can renewed emphasis upon the enforcement of existing bullying policies result in a positive social change?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study defined bullying and bring awareness to bullying among students, teachers, and school personnel. This study was conducted to identify the factors that allow bullying to continue by interviewing teachers regarding their perspectives on bullying. The results of this study offer insights as to whether existing school policies are inadequate, or whether they are simply not being enforced. Researchers, teachers, school districts, school officials, parents, and students could all benefit from the study. The schools that participated in the study will get firsthand knowledge of the significance of bullying as a problem for students through some filters (age, grade, gender, race, and bullying type: physical, verbal, relational/social, sexual, and cyber). Therefore, the significance of this study is related to teachers' perspectives on how educators deal with bullying in their school. The information gained from teachers' perceptions and whether or not school policies were being enforced will offer more knowledge and insights to bullying and result in recommendations relevant to bullying policy and enforcement.

## Study Background

Background studies are significant in providing past information relevancy on a variety of studies. Especially, on this study bullying, teachers' perceptions of bullying, and effective prevention and intervention programs and strategies. It sheds so much light on what can and needs to be done in studies; to bring awareness as more knowledge unfolds. Authors such as the following:

- Espelage, Polanin, and Low (2014) provided teacher and staff perceptions of school environment as predictors of student aggression, victimization, and willingness to intervene in bullying situations. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 29(3), 287.  
doi:10.1037/spq0000072
- Bosworth and Judkins, (2014) provided how do teachers respond to school bullying and examines self-reported intervention strategy use, moderator effects, and concurrent use of multiple strategies. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.07.004>
- Yoon, Sulkowski, and Bauman (2016) provided information on teachers' responses to bullying incidents in relations to the effects of teachers' characteristics and contexts. *Journal of School Violence*. doi:10.1080/15388220.2014.963592
- Veenstra, Lindenberg, Huitsing, Sainio, and Salmivalli (2014) provided information on role of teachers' in relations between anti-bullying attitudes, efficacy, and efforts to reduce bullying. doi:10.1037/a0036110
- Bradshaw, Waasdorp, O'Brennan, and Gulemetova, (2013) provided information on teachers' and education support professional perspectives on bullying and prevention.

- Bear, Yang, Pell, and Gaskins (2014). Provided information on validation of a brief measure of teachers' perceptions of school climate: Relations to student achievement and suspensions. *Learning Environments Research*, 17(3), 339-354.  
doi:10.1177/0734282914545748
- Oldenburg et. al. (2015) provided information on teacher characteristics and peer victimization in elementary schools: A classroom-level perspective. How to stop bullying in Schools: An evidence-based guide to interventions that works. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 43(1), 33-44. doi: 10.1007/s10802-013-9847-4
- Goryl, Neilsen-Hewett, and Sweller, (2013) provided information on Teachers' education, teaching experience, and bullying policies: Links with early childhood teachers' perceptions and attitudes to bullying. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 38(2), doi:10.1080/03004430.2014.973871?src=
- O'Brennan, Waasdorp, and Bradshaw (2014) provided information on Strengthening bullying prevention through school staff connectedness. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 106(3), 870. doi:10.1037/a0035957
- Duy (2013) provided information on Teachers' attitudes toward different types of bullying and victimization in Turkey, *Psychology in the Schools*, 50(10), 987-1002.  
doi:.1002/pits.21729

### **Definitions**

Each term associated with this study is defined in this section.

Bully – An individual who intentionally cause embarrassment, pain, or discomfort to others

Rose, Slaten & Preat (2017), (Orpinas and Horne, 2006).



Bullying –Patchin, (2016; Williams, 2007).

Bystanders– part of the peer group of bullies and victims who may or may not intervene during episodes of bullying (Borsky, McDonnell, Rimal, & Turner, 2016; Hazler, 1996).

Cyberbullying – use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others (Baldry, Farrington, & Sorrentino, 2017; Belsey, 2004).

Direct bullying – interactions between bullies and victims that are open attacks (Klomek, 2016; Olweus, 1993).

Indirect bullying – isolation and intentional social exclusion (Kanetsuna, 2016). (O’Moore & Minton, 2004).

Physical bullying – any physical interaction between the bully and the victim Crick, 1996; Henriksen, Rayce, Melkevik, Due, & Holstein, 2016

Relational bullying – emotional or psychological bullying, also considered exclusionary or social bullying. May include the behaviors of ignoring, isolating, excluding, shunning, and making others feel unwelcome (JAMA, 2001; Stuart, & Hand, 2016).

Sexual bullying – behavior that is based on a person’s sexuality or gender characteristics (American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 2001; Goodenow, Watson, Adjei, Homma, & Saewyc, 2016).

Verbal bullying – any name-calling, threats, teasing, spreading rumors, racial slurs, cruel criticism, and blackmailing other students (JAMA, 2001).

Victim – individuals who feel embarrassment, pain, or discomfort from imbalances in social status, special need, or sexual identity (Kodish; 2016; Orpinas & Horne, 2006).

### **Limitations, Assumptions, and Delimitations**

Perceptions of teachers may be limited in providing their views and lived experiences built on their feelings and involvements. Participants may not want to share all or some of what they have perceived due to school reputation, policies, and their enforcement. There was an assumption that teachers' perceptions contributed awareness to all school board of educators, in all grade levels, to other middle schools, for recommendations to alleviate school bullying. Another assumption was that every teacher would answer inquiries ethically. There was an assumption that teachers would provide whatever necessary to help with the research questions from the study.

Delimitations included that; there is very little research carried out on teacher's perceptions of bullying interventions and the types of bullying these interventions (see Ttofi & Ferrington, 2012). When considering the findings, the limitations of purposeful sampling must be kept in mind. Questions may be discovered to be unhelpful in soliciting the expertise of participants.

### **Research Overview**

School bullying, often referred to as peer victimization or harassment, involving aggressive behaviors to different degrees of intensity (Goryl et al. 2013). Teachers' perceptions and school policy enforcement helps to determine how often these degrees of victimization and harassment are happening at their schools. Also, to determine if school policies have been enforced to prevent these behaviors from harassing or victimizing other students. Once established, a review of strategies and policies to prevent anti-bullying tactics at all grade levels provides more knowledge and insight of how to implement newer strategies and policies; to ensure that the school system is complying with the state bullying law. Also, to ensure students are safe while

enforcing the school policies and there are enough measures of prevention/intervention programs at these schools.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Events surrounding the Columbine school shooting in 1999, Virginia Tech shooting in 2007, and the Sandy Hook Elementary school massacre in 2012, caused so much uproar in the United States, communities, society, and environmental status; that bullying became the focus of attention here in the United States. Despite a dramatic increase in public awareness and anti-bullying legislation nationwide, the prevalence of bullying is still one of the most on-going pressing issues facing our nation's youth (Allen, 2010). What bullying does as peer victimization, and violent behaviors becomes part of the norm; it permeates in everyday social interactions among school adolescents in schools at all grade levels (Graham, 2016; Orpinas & Home 2006). Brank, Hoetger and Hazen (2012); that the effects of bullying on the bully and the victim can be wide-reaching, impacting schoolwork, familial and peer relationships, psychological well-being, and physical health. While Ilolla, Lempinen, Huttunen, Ristkari, and Sourander (2015, p. 1) claims that "Being a bully or both a bully and victim were most strongly associated with conduct problems while being a victim was associated with somatic symptoms and peer problems." (Sigurdson, Undheim, Wallander, Lydersen and Sund; 2015) echoes adolescents are being traumatized by the effects of bullying, leaving them academically stagnant, unable to cope, showing signs of low-self-esteem, a sense of anxiety, depression, suicidal/attempts and mental problems. Bullying affects individuals across ethnicity, gender, grade, and socioeconomic status, whether they live in urban, suburban, or rural communities (Schmutz, Stearns, & Glennie, 2016). Bullying can have severe effects during the school years and into adulthood (Hemphill, Tolit & Herrenkohl 2014, Sigurdson, Wallander, & Sund, 2014, Wolfe, & Lereya, 2015). Olweus

was one of the first pioneers on bullying during the late 1900s, began a study on bullying; and defines bullying as an act of being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to harmful actions on the part of one or more other students. The U. S. Department of Education, (2015) today defines “Bullying among children is commonly defined as intentional, repeated hurtful acts, words, or other behavior, such as name-calling, threatening and shunning committed by one or more children against another” (p.1). Bullying not only occurs in all geographic regions and all types of schools, but it is also via the internet called Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is typically sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature to obtain boys and girls vulnerability (Slonje, Smith, & Frisé, 2013). A gap in the study will show that exploring teachers’ perceptions of bullying and school policy enforcement will determine whether or not school policies are being enforced. This gap in the study can be very helpful because teachers play a key role in identifying signs of victimization, as well as a violation. This is why they are regarded as a decisive factor not only to discover the phenomenon of bullying but also to create appropriate conditions, encouraging students not to remain silent when faced with bullying (Hinduja, 2016; Smith & Shu, 2000). Teachers’ perceptions and whether or not school policies are being enforced will bring so much knowledge and insight on how to prevent the bullying problem.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study was based on phenomenology, founded by Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl (1989). Phenomenology is based on the assumption that the only one to describe another person’s lived experience is the individual himself/herself (Merleau-Ponty,

1962). Phenomenology seeks to describe psychological structures. Descriptive and Interpretive are the two most common types of phenomenology: descriptive phenomenology focuses on representing what we know (what teachers observe regarding bullying identification and enforcement) while interpretive phenomenology focuses on defining and interpreting human experiences (how teachers understand bullying among students as they have experienced it and policy enforcement in their schools). The goal of this phenomenological framework is to provide knowledge and guidance from teachers' perceptions on bullying experiences to offer insights as to whether existing school policies are inadequate, or whether they are simply not being enforced. Husserl's phenomenology theory demonstrates what can be discovered through reflection on "subjective acts and their objective correlation" (Creswell, 2013, p.77). It allows us to see the only thing that we know for certain is that which appears before us in our consciousness, which guarantees its objectivity.

Teachers' perceptions and perspectives are based on what they have observed or what they experienced. Their perceptions of bullying, policy enforcement, or the need to develop prevention/intervention programs will help guide policy recommendations. This theoretical framework is an attempt to describe and understand these intentional experiences and observations of teachers. It is teachers who are charged with identifying bullying in their schools and bringing it to the attention of school administrators.

## **Literature Review**

### **History of Bullying and School Violence**

Before the 1980s, bullying wasn't considered just a problem and viewed as a part of growing up. However, after different school events, many schools reported deaths, suicides, mental

conditions, and violence; bullying was seen as a serious problem that needed lots of attention.

Research studies suggest many types of behaviors can be classified as bullying summarized as follows:

Verbal: the student is called mean names or teased in a hurtful way.

Rumors: the student is the target of false rumors or lies.

Exclusion: the student is left out on purpose or completely ignored.

Sexual: the student is bullied with words or gestures having a sexual meaning.

Racial: the student's race is the focus of the bullying, people of color, LGBT students. Physical: the student is hit, kicked, or pushed.

Threat: the student is threatened or forced to do things against his or her will.

Cyber: the student is bullied via a mobile phone or another electronic device.

Damage: the student has personal property stolen or damaged (Finkelhor, Shattuck, Turner, & Hamby, 2016; Perlus, Brooks-Russell, Wang, & Iannotti, 2014; Rodriguez, Vue, & Palma, 2016).

Olweus (1993) was the first pioneer to conduct large-scale bullying (mobbing) study; he was not the first to use the term "mobbing" to describe children's behavior. During the late 1960s and 1970s researcher Peter-Paul Heinemann (1972) originally used the word mobbing (mobbing) as a part of the media debate regarding the ganging-up of students against peers in schools.

Heinemann proposed the need to label violence that occurs in Swedish schools and chose to adopt the word "mobbing" (Swedish translation "mobbing") for opening discussion with an accurate description of what was going on (Heinemann, 1972). Mobbing is characterized by violence initiated by a group against any that are considered different from the norm (Heinemann, 1973). Mobbing, as it refers to the English equivalent of bullying, was further

distinguished as a dichotomous phenomenon of either collective mobbing or organized mobbing (Nielsen & Stigendal, 1973). Both types of mobbing refer to groups of children ganging up on peers. Collective mobbing relates to bullying peers as the situation directs. An example of collective mobbing includes a group of students aggravating other classmates, in an attempt to initiate a physical altercation. Organized mobbing entails a social component. Organized mobbing can be characterized by a peer group of students (a team or clique) who physically terrorize another student.

Pikas (1975) followed the work of Nielson and Stigendal, 1973), by adding to the definition of mobbing. The identification of collective mobbing, while substantiated by one study (Kivisto, 1977), was dispelled by another (Olweus, 1978). Olweus argued that mobbing is not the norm and that individual bullying was the more significant phenomenon. Although Olweus' findings point away from mobbing as a general practice, he did advise further study of organized mobbing by saying "it is reasonable to expect that bullying by several peers is more unpleasant and possibly more detrimental to the victim" (Olweus, 1993, p. 9). Olweus' findings changed the language of the field and initiated the future focus of the study of inappropriate and violent peer interactions.

Research moved from the study of mobbing as the field standard for the examination of (individual) bullying as the focus. The term mobbing to describe interactions between students, and the balance of power that is sometimes evident, was not supported by the research that Olweus was conducting. Olweus began using another term known as bullying. He defined bullying through descriptive means based on his research findings. This difference was evident as Heinemann's choice to use mobbing was fueled by society's popular use of the term. Olweus'



definition of bullying was derived specifically from the data presented. Researchers around the globe have taken what Olweus began and furthered study in the area of bullying. In some cases, the research in other countries regarding bullying-like behavior is as robust, albeit independent, as detailed by the work of Morita, Soeda, Soeda, and Taki (1999). In Japan, bullying research has been conducted since the late 1980s (Kanetsuna, Smith, & Morita, 2006). The term bullying does not have an exact translation in Japan; therefore, the term “ijma” is used as it is close in translation (Morita, 1996). Through the work of Olweus and subsequent researchers, bullying is now the primary term used as opposed to the term mobbing, in English speaking countries. In other countries, the close equivalent word is used to describe all things that fall under the bullying umbrella.

### **History of Defining Bullying**

The importance of terminology needs to have a clear knowledge and understanding when attempting to define a phenomenon. For instance, bullying in clearly identifying it. Olweus conducted two countrywide assessments, one in Norway and the other in Sweden, to determine the prevalence of bullying in both countries. Olweus’ studies helped determine specific contexts in which bullying behavior occurred. At the conclusion of the studies, Olweus was able to look at some common themes from the data regarding how bullying occurs. Thus Olweus defined bullying and victimization in this way: “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 went on to elaborate on the term “negative actions” as it was used in his definition. “Negative actions” refers to any attempt to intentionally injure or cause discomfort to another. Threats, taunts, teasing, calling names, hitting, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining

an individual from physically protecting oneself against attack are all forms of negative actions. There are also non-physical and wordless forms of effects including making faces, dirty gestures, refusing to comply with one's wishes or intentional group exclusion. Olweus was able to refine the definition of bullying through the data he collected. To streamline the definitions of bullying, the emphasis was placed on the adverse actions being carried out repeatedly and over a period. Olweus contended that repeated negative interactions are an indicator of a chronic problem with bullying. Bullies and victims can be individuals or groups. It was concluded that, in school settings, victims are overwhelmingly individual students, while the bullies are groups of two or three students. Another aspect of bullying is the issue of power. Olweus (1993) concluded that bullying occurs when there is an imbalance of power. Olweus explained an imbalance of power as an asymmetric power relationship. This asymmetric relationship is shown when a student exposed to adverse actions has difficulty defending him/herself from a student or a group of student harassment.

While not included in the book, the area of social status (particularly in the school setting) should be considered. It is reasonable to believe that some popular students bully those students who are less popular. Tattum and Tattum (1992) defined bullying as a conscientious choice on the part of the bully. Furthermore, bullies desire to hurt others or, at the very least, put others in a stressful state. Power imbalance remains a familiar aspect of the bullying/victim dynamic. Bullying as a tool of oppression over less powerful persons (physically or psychologically) is the crux of the interactions between bullies and victims (Farrington 1993). Australian researcher Ken Rigby (1996, 2002) introduced the concept of malign and non-malign bullying. Malign bullying consists of the bully not only being aware of his/her actions but also getting a sense of enjoyment

in making the victim(s) feel powerless and oppressed. As a consolidation of previous definitions, malign bullying consists of seven elements:

1. the bullies desire to cause harm,
2. bullying behavior manifested into action,
3. bullying behavior resulting in the hurting of others,
4. bullying behavior as a power imbalance,
5. victims being bullied without provocation,
6. bullies repeating their behavior over a victim for a repeated over time, and
7. enjoyment by the bully in oppressing or hurting the weaker victim.

Rigby (2001) developed a formula for the identification of maligned bullying as the following:

Bullying involves a desire to hurt + hurtful action + a power imbalance + (typically) repetition + an unjust use of power + evident enjoyment by the aggressor and a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim. (p. 11)

Non-malign bullying differs slightly from malign bullying. The significant difference between maligned and non-maligned bullying is the intent. The bully does not desire to hurt the victim. More accurately, the bully is unaware of the effects that his/her actions may have on a victim. Non-maligned bullying is tantamount to playful teasing as opposed to outright harassment. Although considered less harmful, it should not be ignored or marginalized. It can be difficult for teachers, parents, and even peers to differentiate between teasing and non-maligned bullying. Distinguishing between non-maligned bullying and teasing can be difficult. Since teasing is sometimes done among friends and peers to establish

relationships, it can be misconstrued as bullying. The intent determines whether the behavior is maligned bullying, non-maligned bullying, or playful teasing. If teasing is playful and done as a part of the group dynamic, it is not considered harassment. If playful teasing became hurtful to the person being teased, while unbeknownst to the perpetrator and done consistently over a period, then it has become non-maligned bullying. Teasing others with the intention of causing distress is maligned bullying.

### **Assessing Definitions of Bullying Behaviors**

Since the initial work of Olweus and Heinemann, there have been some studies that have been conducted to further the discussion on the definition of bullying. Research has been undertaken to develop a more concise explanation as to what constitutes bullying. While some studies have been conducted to enhance the previous analysis, other studies bring novel concepts to the field of study. Coloroso (2003) furthered the idea of power imbalance by identifying specific contexts in which inequalities of power can be seen. In his book, *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*, Coloroso assigns the shortcomings to the areas of:

- Age (older students bullying younger students)
- Physical stature (bigger or stronger students bullying weaker students)
- Cognitive ability (smarter students bullying students with less cognitive ability)
- Social, economic status (richer students bullying weaker students).

Coloroso (2003) showed the comparisons across the four groups how different factors are related to different groups of bullies. Specifically, teachers may have influences on bullying only for their physical stature. Parents may have essential or constant control relating to bullying for

the age group. The most important and consentant factors across all different groups were prior bullying victimization pertaining to students bullying other students with less cognitive ability.

Agreement on a definition is the first step in dealing with the problem of bullying. Once a definition is established, there arises another problem when researching and assessing bullying, with the issue of bullying type to be decided. Bullying assessment relating to the basic definition of bullying can give valuable information regarding the extent to which bullying occurs. Its dynamics can determine its definition based on a continuum (teasing bullying continuum), categorical (role identification), type (traditional bullying vs. cyberbullying), or through theoretical models (phenomenological) for evaluation (Caldwell, 2013; Coloroso, 2003). Distinguishing between the definition of the three is paramount in providing the appropriate intervention. Researchers through the years in the area of bullying have been introduced to identify better definitions of what bullying entails such as:

### **Types of Bullying**

The importance of identifying types of bullying is almost equal to defining bullying. When more precise information can be collected regarding bullying, successful intervention can occur.

Bullying types include:

- physical
- verbal
- relational
- direct
- indirect
- sexual

- Bystanders
- Bully/victims
- Grade-levels
- Cyber/internet

**Physical bullying:** Traditionally, physical bullying is the form of bullying that most people consider common. Physical bullying is characterized by physical interaction between the bully and the victim (Crick, 1996; Dane et. al.2017). Physical interaction can include hitting, kicking, slapping, pinching, biting, poking and choking (Crick & Bigbee, 1998). Physical bullying also can include the destruction of personal belongings. It is believed that physical bullying is the most common type of bullying in schools. Most of the bullying that is shown in popular culture is physical bullying since it is the most obvious type of bullying. Physical bullying is easy to identify, usually making known to most students in school who is being bullied. Younger students engage in less physical bullying than older students and, as the students get older, the physical interactions can become more aggressive and violent.

**Verbal bullying:** is a form of bullying the does not include physical interaction but can be just as harming. The Journal of the American Medical Association JAMAL, 2001; Serra-Negra et. al. 2017, describes verbal bullying as usually including name-calling or threats. Verbal harassment can also include teasing, spreading rumors, racial slurs, fierce criticism, and blackmailing other students. Verbal harassment is meant to cause distress and embarrassment. Verbal harassment can take place in person, over the phone, and in an e-mail. The nature of verbal harassment makes it the most natural form of bullying to be overlooked.

**Relational bullying:** Relational bullying is probably the most underrated form of harassment and is overlooked (Dane et. al. 2017). Relational bullying can also be known as emotional or psychological bullying (JAMA, 2001; Pereira & Lavoie, 2017) or exclusionary or social bullying. Ignoring, isolating, excluding, shunning, and making others feel unwelcome are all elements of relational bullying. Relational bullying is less visible and requires a keen sense of observation to detect. In the case of younger students, relational bullying is when people do not allow someone else to play with them. As students become older, relational bullying can become a more sinister act. Emotional distress is closely associated with relational bullying (Hawker, 1998). In recent years, relational bullying has garnered more attention in the United States via books and movies. Unfortunately, most of the focus on relational bullying has been connected to female interactions. Social bullying is considered the worst form of harassment from individuals who identify themselves as victims (Crochick & Crochick, 2017; Sharp, 1995). The recent movie “Mean Girls” (2004; <http://www.imdb.com/2007>) highlights the various ways in which high school students (particularly female) use bullying as a way to operate in the social context of school. The main character must maneuver her way between two social groups in school, the *outcasts and the plastics* (what the popular girls are referred to based on their stiff and fake personality traits). The plastics use some deceitful, harmful, and mean actions to get what they want or, worse, to make other students the butt of their jokes. The movie is a fictional portrayal of female social systems in high school; however, it is based on the book by Rosalind Wiseman called “Queen Bees and Wannabes” (2003), which is an examination of the extent to which girls are bullied, bullies, or pressured into bullying others. Although the movie (or the book) did not end with a violent act against anyone, it helps paint the picture and dispels the idea that bullying

is simply a “boys will be boys” thing and shows what could be going on in schools among peers that could lead to violence.

**Direct bullying:** Olweus (1993) and (2016) explained direct bullying as interactions between bullies and victims that are “relatively open attacks.” Direct bullying is easily recognized, which can add a feeling of embarrassment for victims. The public nature of the attacks can result in more obvious signs of abuse. Most of the verbal and physical bullying behaviors fall into the category of direct bullying (Farrell & Volk, 2017; Harris & Petrie, 2003; O’Moore & Minton, 2004). Some specific bullying behaviors that can be considered direct bullying include (a) hitting and pushing, (b) name calling and taunting, (c) threatening gestures, (d) stealing or hiding others’ property, and € any other physically or verbally overt acts of intimidation and oppression.

**Indirect bullying:** The opposite of direct bullying is indirect bullying. Less subtle, indirect bullying is equally, if not more severe than direct bullying. Indirect bullying is seen in the form of isolation and intentional social exclusion. O’Moore and Minton (2004) and Reijntjes et. al. (2016) noted that indirect bullying can be more covert and is specifically designed to create uncomfortable social situations for those who are victims. Social relationships are manipulated and result in making others dislike, mistrust, or socially isolate others. Some typical behaviors associated with indirect bullying include (a) influencing others to taunt, tease, and criticize; (b) purposefully spreading rumors or excluding others from social situations; (c) making anonymous threats via phone or technological means; and (d) writing or disseminating false information about others.

**Sexual bullying:** Increasingly, schools have to deal with the issue of sexual harassment among students. The problem with sexual harassment is not limited to female students, as some



may believe. Sexual harassment is behavior that is based on a person's sexuality or gender characteristics. Students who are sexual bullies can be either boys or girls, and the bullying can be carried out directly or indirectly. Sexual bullying based on a person's sexual preference usually pertains to bullying that is homophobic. Unwanted words and actions describe sexual bullying (American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 2001; Gross, 2017). Some behaviors that are associated with sexual harassment include: (a) sexual jokes, taunts, and comments; (b) teasing or spreading rumors regarding sexual orientation or sexual activities; (c) unwarranted sexual, physical contact; and (d) unwanted sexual displays.

**Bystanders:** Have been ignored in the bully/victim dynamic; however, increasingly more researchers recognize the effects and influence that bystanders can have as part of the peer group of bullies and victims (Byers, 2016; Hazler, 1996). Harris and Petrie (2003) reported that students who identify themselves as bystanders feel one of two ways relative to their experiences with bullies. Bystanders feel guilty for watching bullying and not intervening (Newman, Horne, & Bartolomucci, 2000; Pozzoli, Gini, & Thomberg, 2017) or they feel apathetic as it is “none of their business” to get involved on behalf of victims. Further, Lambe, Hudson, Craig, and Pepler; (2017) and Orpinas and Horne (2006); suggested that bystanders can be characterized into two broad groups, either part of the problem or part of the solution. Bystanders who are part of the problem may encourage bullying or watch bullying happen as entertainment, essentially condoning the situation (Lambe et. al.2017; Slaby, Wilson-Brewer, & Dash, 1994. Bystanders who are part of the solution find ways to diffuse the situation or intervene on behalf of the victim.

**Bully/victims:** Olweus (1994) found that 17% of children in schools who characterized themselves as victims also characterized themselves as bullies to other children. Several studies highlight a circumstantial element regarding students being both bully and victim based on being around certain peers (Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992; Pouwels, Scholte, Van Noorden, & Nielsen, 2016; Snell, MacKenzie, & Frey, 2001; Tobin & Irvin, 1996; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995).

**Grade level bullying:** The consensus is that, at different grade levels, bullying varies in occurrence, type, and intensity in an integrated fashion (Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Harris & Petrie, 2000; Olweus, 1993). What we know today is that bullying influence can impact all grade levels from middle schools to high schools. Bullying has been identified as early as preschool (Pepler & Cummings, 2017; Pynoos & Nader, 1988). There are difficulties associated with assessing bullying in early years based on knowledge level and understanding. Pynoos and Nader (1988) and Galand and Tolmatchef, (2016) highlighted some common feelings and behaviors for students in preschool through second grade that could be used to determine if bullying is occurring. These bullying responses include: (a) fearfulness, (b) confusion, (c) verbalization problems related to bothering behavior, and (d) clinginess.

Students in third through fifth grade respond to bullying in different ways, as they are better able to verbalize if bullying is happening. Some of the feelings or behaviors that upper elementary students exhibit includes: (a) guiltiness; (b) inability to sleep; (c) inconsistency, recklessness, or aggression; and (d) safety concerns. More often than not, elementary bullying is identified as teasing behavior (Khosropour & Walsh, 2001; Lacey, Cornell & Konold, 2017). Students in grades six through eight typically have the most experience with bullying. Research

has shown that students in middle school bully others (Blake, Zhou, Kwok, & Benz, 2016; Hoover & Oliver, 1995). During the middle school years, the differences in how students identify themselves begin to emerge. Bullies, victims, bully-victims, and bystanders and their respective roles become apparent in middle school where social interaction and belonging to social groups mean the most. It is essential that bullying intervention is considered a priority in high schools because students are less likely to report bullying (Gregory, 2016; Petrie & Harris, 2003). In the absence of reporting harassment, some students turn to violence to handle their problems with bullies. Increasingly high-profile instances of school violence (particularly shootings) have assessed bullying at the high school level a necessary focus for school administration. Gender differences in bullying and how that predicts bullying types are seen during high school.

### **Assessing Related Theories to Bullying**

Along with the well-established theoretical frameworks used to evaluate bullying, there are some newer theories developed by researchers to further the study of bullying and victimization and the prevalence of both. For instance, according to Orpinas and Horne; (2006) and Banduras' (2005) social cognitive theory constructs such as family members, peers, and media influences, (television) are related to children's' development of aggression why student bullying. These constructs of aggression can include friends, school, and communities. The social cognitive theory constructs may help to understand why children act like they do, how they learn to imitate negative or violent behaviors, modeled by others, displayed from what they have seen and heard. In their book, "Bullying in American Schools," authors Espelage and Swearer (2004) used a social-ecological theory to assess bullying in schools. Espelage and

Swearer based their use of the social-ecological theory on an ecological systems theory developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979). The social-ecological theory attempts to explain how students identify themselves in a social construct (bully, bully-victim, the victim, or bystander) as related to an ecological construct (culture, community, school/peers, and family) (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). Plaford (2006) applied a cognitive-emotional approach to understanding bullies and victims and explaining bullying behavior. Plaford (2006) used brain development as the crux of the theory to describe bullying behavior as a function of what and how students have learned.

**Cyberbullying.** The latest research in and around bullying have identified a new form of harassment. Technological advances have created broader opportunities to bully and to bully anonymously. Technology has created the introduction of cyberbullying. Belsey (2004) and Kim, Georgiades, Corneau, Vitoroulis, and Boyle (2016) defined bullying as:

The use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal Web sites, an abusive online private polling Web sites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. (p. 9)

The conditions in which cyberbullying occurs are the same as any other bullying. The ubiquitous nature of technology has allowed bullying to become more inclusive. Cyberbullying has quickly become the method of choice for students because of the seeming anonymity of cyberspace. There are multiple types of cyberbullying, but they are dependent on the kind of technology that is available to the bully. Cell phones, computers, text messages, and instant messenger services allow for bullies to share their bullying behavior with others. While not physically direct bullying, cyberbullying takes

the form of relational and indirect bullying. Cyberbullying could include the spreading of rumors or incriminating information to large groups of students instantly. Social exclusion can also be applied in cyberspace, as students may not want to “add” them victims as friends and tell others not to do so on social networking sites. Cyberbullying can become a more damaging bullying method in that students can assume the identity of a victim and create a different social relationship with others. A recent newspaper article (Maag, 2007) highlights the danger of cyberbullying. The article tells the story of a 13-year old girl who committed suicide based on interactions (first flirty, next malicious), with a 16-year old boy on the social network Myspace.com. The death of a 13-year old girl is sad enough; however, it became more troubling when it was discovered that the 16-year old boy was a fictitious creation of a rival girl’s mother.

Olweus (1994) found that 17% of children in schools who characterized themselves as victims also portray themselves as bullies to other children. Several studies highlight a circumstantial element regarding students being both bully and victim based on being around certain peers (Blake, Kwok, and Zhou, 2017; Patterson, Reid, and Dishion, 1992; Snell, MacKensie, & Frey, 2001; Tobin & Irvin, 1996; Walker, Colvin and Ramsey, 1995).

### **Assessing Social and Personal Influences of Bullying**

There are several factors which may have contributed or increased risk of childhood bullying. For instance, the family, peers, media, communities, and educational context.

**Family influence:** Characteristics such as low parental involvement and practices, low levels of parental guidance and structure, social, economic stature, low family cohesion, dysfunctional

family environment, and high levels of conflict have all been associated with increased risk of childhood bullying (Neilsen-Hewett, Bussey, & Fritzpatrick, 2017).

**Peers influence:** Social status, mutual friendships, and attitudes. Peers who are not necessarily friends with the student may become engaged in bullying or become bystander. Students who are rejected by peers tend to participate in class activities less often than those who enjoy peer acceptance (Wentzel & Muenks, 2016).

**Media influence:** Computer games, television programs, movies, reporting tactics. Risky information and communications technology (ICT) use, moral disengagement, depression, social norms, and traditional bullying perpetration are the main predictors of cyberbullying perpetration; while risky ICT use and traditional bullying victimization are the major contributors of cyberbullying victimization (Chen, Ho, & Lwin, 2016). In the case of new and social media, this same pressure could influence the various platforms to provide guidelines regarding uploaded content related to a mass shooting. Viewing acts of aggression in real life or the media. These different factors jointly influence one's present internal state—a person's thoughts, and emotions (Anderson, Barlett, Coyne, & Saleem 2017).

**Communities influence:** Low-income housing, crime and family dysfunction, and educational context, classroom bullying, preschool climate, quality of teachers, child relationships with peers and teachers, and teacher management strategies (Neilsen-Hewitt, Bussy, & Fritzpatrick, 2017). Teachers' perceptions can determine some of these influences while observing their students.

### **Assessing Race, Ethnic Groups, Religion, LGBT, Students with Disabilities**

When children are perceived as being different, they are not considered to be in a supportive environment such as a school institution (Stopbullying.gov, 2014-2015). Racial and Ethnic groups may be at a higher risk of being bullied. Youth that are lesbian, homosexual, gay, bisexual, or transgender are perceived as (LGBT), are at an increased risk of being bullied (Stopbullying.gov, 2014-2014). Children with disabilities, such as physical, developmental, intellectual, emotional, social skill challenges, and sensory disabilities; may increase the risk of bullying. Religious differences, for example, Muslim girls who wear hijabs (head scarves) Sikh boys who wear patka or dastar (turbans), and Jewish boys who wear yarmulkes report being targeted for being bullied just because of these visible symbols of their religion. Research has explored little research has been done on these bullying behaviors (Stopbullying.gov, 2014-2015).

### **Assessing Teachers' Perceptions**

Assessing what teachers' have perceived and observed during school hours, down the hallways, classroom and lunchrooms can be a positive observance; and can be used and accessible in school settings as a means of sharing information. This is where their perceptions come into focus. The closely knitted relationship that most teachers share has always resulted in the passing of valuable information from one teacher to the next. Informal meetings in hallways and break rooms have to lead to teachers sharing what they know about students who are bullies and victims. When bullying becomes a chronic problem, teachers who have documented the incidents can make a compelling case regarding the severity of the problem thus, initiating more formal means of dealing with bullying. Teacher perceptions can also include the use of

behavioral assessment tools (Fisher, Cassidy, & Mitchell, 2017). The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is a resource that develops tools and leads many activities that help teachers and school administrators to understand and effectively prevent school violence.

Research by the CDC helps teachers and schools' officials to know how big a problem school violence is, what are the factors that increase or decrease the likelihood of school violence, and what prevention strategies work. The CDC also uses the latest knowledge to develop tools and resources that help state and local education agencies and schools create safe places for students to learn. CDC monitors risk behaviors, such as violence, that contribute to the leading causes of death among youth in the United States. CDC administers a nationwide survey every two years in public and private high schools so investigators can examine behaviors related to fighting, weapon carrying, bullying, dating and sexual violence, and suicide. This will help teachers, as ways of measuring students' behavior. While CDC is not specifically for identifying bullies or victims, they both can provide evidence about students who may be susceptible to be a bully or victim through observations of behavior. As formal measures, behavior assessment tools are known to have strengthened evidence of suspected cases of victimization.

### **Accessing Video Monitoring**

Video monitoring can also be access to student bullying. For instance, the use of technology where videos can see what is there when you are not can make a big difference. Especially, down the hallways, bathrooms and out of sight places around schools that cannot be vividly seen by the naked eye. Video monitoring surveillance can be widely used in public schools to monitor student movement and detect bullying and illegal activity. Kruger 2010; Rasjauskas, 2005, posits



that videotaping of students' behaviors can be an effective method of management and an intervention strategy if school staff view it regularly.

### **Accessing Suicides**

High (2012) posits that a new definition of bullying has emerged called bullycide. This happens when the student feels that bullying and its behaviors are detrimental to her/him, the victim and no longer want to live. The stress and devastation from harassment become unbearable. Bullycide is defined as a person who commits suicide because of no longer wanting to deal with being bullied, has led the victim to death. Many of these victims have reached their last moments from the trauma of being bullied (Wallace, 2011). A lot of these bullying cases are not reported.

## Summary and Conclusions

This study's focus has been that of teachers' perceptions of bullying and whether or not school policy is being enforced. There are little studies known about Teachers' perceptions at these middle school concerning bullying. However, because of this lack of knowledge, a gap in the study leads to whether or not school policies are adequate or if they are being enforced appropriately at these grade levels. This may be one of the best tools that schools have for decreasing the problems associated with bullying behavior is to explore teachers' perceptions of bullying to gain their knowledge of the bullying phenomenon. Teachers' lived experiences of bullying behaviors and awareness; witness acts of bullying during school environments. Engaging a qualitative method of inquiry to explore and investigate this matter using a phenomenological approach, explaining what teachers know, are aware of, what they have experienced in association and contacts with bullying, and if school policies are being enforced. Teachers' perceptions and whether or not school policies are being enforced will be a tremendous step in the right direction to know and find to address this phenomenon. There is a general concern that bullying behavior is abhorrent must be addressed and stopped if possible.

There is also a concern that bullying behavior is characterized by imbalances of power. The issue of how to decrease bullying and make children and adolescents understand that bullying is something that should be discouraged is where the real struggle lies. The global community has done little to make bullying less desirable. Politics, popular culture, entertainment, employment, and a host of other areas sometimes present bullying as something to be frowned upon, yet at other times applauded. The messages sent to students are unclear and contradictory. Bullying in schools can be said to be influenced by bullying everywhere else. The field of bullying research,

as it relates to children and adolescents, has seen exponential growth in the last 25 years. Attempts to be proactive against bullying and the negative behavioral consequences been associated with bullying have led to the development of assessment tools, intervention strategies, and more studies. One of the problems that may arise from being proactive is the lack of uniformity and, by relations, and comparability. Doing something is better than doing nothing, is the philosophy that is taken. While there are some commonalities that exist among assessment instruments and interventions, the best route to take to reduce bullying in schools is difficult to ascertain.

The foundation has been laid to begin developing prevention/intervention strategies through exploring teachers' perceptions and whether or not school policies are being enforced. By implementing and enforcing school bullying policies the creation of more encompassing and less school bullying will be now possible.

### **Chapter 3: Research Method**

This study used a qualitative interpretive method of research and a phenomenological design. Therefore, to gain more profound insights into the problem of bullying from middle school teachers. Qualitative research enables researchers to generate ideas to acquire solutions (Creswell, 2013; Misha, Scarecello, People, Mishna, & Wiener, 2005). A magnificent feature of the qualitative research is that its exploratory nature will explain and address the meaning of how individuals or groups interpret their experiences and the meaning ascribed to a social or human problem such as bullying (Creswell, 2007; 2013). Teachers' perceptions and school policy enforcement will address and determine these meanings. This study employed five teachers.

These teachers were the target population selected from teaching in a small county school district in North Carolina.

**Research Design and Rationale** The phenomenology was the design chosen for this study. It is a qualitative design approach developed by Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl (1989). Husserl “explains how a person (teachers) can have a conscious awareness of phenomena as it occurs”. This phenomenology approach helped in exploring each teachers’ perceptions of bullying from their own lived experience. This assisted me in gaining more knowledge on what each teacher perceived during the times they experienced each of these bullying episodes. Even though I could use other qualitative designs for this study which are listed here. For example, the grounded theory is a qualitative design developed by Glaser and Strauss (1960). Its purpose is to generate data that will generate a theory. Hays and Wood (2011) posited that “the purpose of a ground theory approach is to generate data that is based or grounded in participant experiences and perspectives with the ultimate goal of theory development” (p. 288). Therefore, the grounded theory is about seeking the answers to why a phenomenon occurs, and once that is done, your next step is to develop a theory based on that finding. The grounded theory just was not quite right for this study. I felt it was inappropriate for this study because the focus of this study was to discover the nature of the phenomena as it occurs without seeking out a theory to explain it.

The case study is a qualitative design that methodology provides researchers to study difficult or complex phenomena within their contexts. When the approach is applied correctly, it becomes a valuable method for researchers to develop theory, evaluate programs, and develop interventions at institutions. The researcher has to provide the feedback associated with these

conditions. Again, I felt the case study is inappropriate for this study because the researcher purpose is to explore this phenomenon, not to be biased influencing teachers' responses.

I used two methods of data collection consisting of (a) semi-structured interviews, (b) questionnaire. First, data collection consisted of a semi-structured interview of open-ended questions with five teachers, who have taught over a twenty-year period as they described bullying activities within their everyday schools' environment. This provided insight about students bullying behaviors during everyday school hours. These teachers described the meaning of their lived experiences of the phenomenon they each shared. The data analysis method consisted of significant horizontalizing statements, determining the meaning of the statements, and describing the experiences (see Creswell, 2013; 2007; Moustakas, 1994) of bullying activities during normal school hours. Also, meanings or themes formulated from significant statements will be grouped based on commonality (Creswell, 2013; 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Textural and structural descriptions combined can describe the essence of the experience of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Another method of collecting data was from questionnaires for additional information to examine the frequency, types of bullying violations, and school policy management methods. Each of these data collection methods provided and added more understanding of bullying behaviors during normal school hours.

However, as I have understood from much reading, I believed Husserl's (1989) design approach was better suited for this study. Particularly, concerning individuals (teachers) who are interested in shared experiences and explaining the essences of their experiences (Creswell, 2007).

### **Role of Researcher**

As the role of a researcher, assumed the role of the “human instrument” (Creswell, 2013, 2009; Lincoln, & Guba, 1985) for the research study, the human-as-instrument allows for interactions between researcher and participants with the goal to better understand human behavior and the human experience.” Schreiber and Asner-Self (2011) defined instrument as “anything (people or object) used to collect data” (p. 126). As the instrument of the qualitative study the researcher “allows for interactions between researcher and participants with the goal to better understand human behavior and the human experience” (p. 46).

I understand a good researcher ask probing questions, then listens, then thinks, then asks more probing questions to gain deeper levels of rapporting (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I will take precautionary measures to ensure that personal biases will not emerge or interfere with the data collection and data analysis. Qualitative studies use a questioning format for educational research, which allows “probing, follow-up, and clarification” (McMillan, 2012), p. 168).

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Location and Participants**

The location for this research was in the state of North Carolina, located in the Southeastern part of the United States. The participants for the study consisted of five teachers from Washington County area. Each participant had to agree to volunteer to tell their observant stories of student bullying during everyday school hours. To ensure confidentiality of participants in the study, their specific age, gender, and race were not identified. The participants chosen were those who have 20 -30 years’ experience of teaching at a middle school level. Including present day educators consisting of schoolteachers who worked consistently throughout or during the school

year. Four teachers taught over the 30-year period and had retired. The fifth teacher taught 20 years and was still teaching full-time.

### **Justification of Participant Selection**

In this study, I collected in depth rich interview responses from past to present teachers' perceptions of bullying and whether or not school policy was enforced. All participant teachers at this middle school helped to give more insight and understanding in depth as to why bullying behaviors may still exist. When I met with the principal at the Middle School; she sent out the invitation letters, only five teachers responded. I decided these five teachers would start the study. However, later in the study I found out of these five participants saturated ended. Once saturation ended, I did not seek to find more participants. I asked these participants the interview questions to fill out the questionnaire to note their responses. After reviewing the questionnaire, their answers were pretty much the same. As the sole student researcher for this qualitative study. I used an audio recorder to record the interview. I analyzed the collected data to identify codes and themes from their responses to find a comparison.

### **Sampling and Instrumentation**

The sample size was five teachers which have taught over a 20-30-year period including present day educators using purposeful sampling. Johnson and Christensen (2012) defined purposeful sampling as “a nonrandom sampling technique in which the researcher solicits persons with specific characteristics to participate in a research study” (p. 231). For this study, purposeful sampling was used to select participants consisted of criterion. Each participant met the inclusion criteria of experiencing the phenomenon of bullying and its behaviors. By using purposeful sampling, the “researcher will select individuals because they [are] particularly

informative about the topic” (McMillan, 2012, p. 105). This ensures that “participants were “information rich” concerning the purposes of the study “suitable for detailed research (Gall; et. al., 2007, p.178; Patton, 2015). The researcher, as the primary human instrument guided the study. An abundance of data to analyze, maintained, and organized, and will rely on memos as a method to “read through the text, make margin notes, and form initial codes” (Creswell, 2007, p. 157).

### **Data collection**

Data collected consisted of two methods: (a) a questionnaire, and (b) semi-structured interviews

### **Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is “a written document containing statements or questions . . . to obtain subject perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, values, and perspectives, and other traits.” (McMillan, 2012, p. 154). The researcher administered a questionnaire (see Appendix C) to each of the participants consisting of six questions. The researcher constructed the questionnaire to align with the research questions because there is little research on teachers’ perceptions study and no existing questionnaire meeting the criteria for the study in prior academic.

Participants have an opportunity to ask questions, review, read, and sign the informed consent form if they are interested in the study. Once the consent forms were signed, the researcher began the process of data collecting. The researcher utilized data collection methods for this study to gain insight of bullying, from the perspective of Teachers’ Perceptions of bullying in a Middle School in North Carolina by means of administering a questionnaire to each of the participant, and semi-structured interviews. The researcher utilized semi-structured interviews



with 14 open-ended questions. Open-ended questions allowed each participant to elaborate their feelings more freely regarding the phenomenon of the study.

### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

The method of interviewing individual participants consisted of a semi-structured interview with 14 open-ended questions (see Appendix B). Gall et al. 2007, Creswell, 2013, 2009) defined semi-structured interview as “. . . The interviewer asked a series of structured questions and then probes more deeply with open-ended questions to gain additional information” (p. 653). Individual interviews will be audio taped using a recorder to capture lived experiences of the participants. During the interview, two audio recorders were used as a precautionary measure in case technical difficulties may occur. Open-ended questions allowed each participant to elaborate their feelings more freely regarding the phenomenon of the study. Qualitative studies use this questioning format for educational research, which allowed “probing, follow-up, and clarification” for this study. (McMillian, 2012, p. 168).

For clarity, a peer educator who is knowledgeable of bullying behaviors can help to review the open-ended questions. The research committee reviewed the open-ended questions and questionnaire. The reviewing of the interview questions did occur before submission to IRB, and the sampling of interview questions did occur after IRB approval.

Researcher can adjust interview questions if needed. Five teachers volunteered were interviewed individually to collect data via audio recording. The interviews took place at the selected location between researcher and the interviewee. The researcher or a professional transcriptionist transcribed each of the participant’s audio interviews verbatim. Once the

transcription completed, researcher followed-up by reviewing the audio and transcription interviews at least three to five times for clearness and accuracy.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

For this study, I used QSR NVivo program software to analyze the data collected to find themes in relation to the research questions. Participant interviews was conducted, the data was analyzed, coded, text was used to identify key themes to answer research questions. After the initial transcription, I will review each interview multiple times and playback recordings to check for errors and accuracy. Member checking was used to ensure accuracy of the transcript.

The themes were determined patterns was found and connections among the themes to support the research questions. Creswell (2013) recommends using NVivo codes to link specific words to code labels during the coding process. Themes can be formulated from the codes and clusters of themes and grouped based on commonalities. However, there may be instances when themes may not connect with another theme, suggesting further research for the unconnected theme or themes. “NVivo coding is more direct and specific than other coding methods and represents the heart of qualitative data analysis” Creswell, 2013, (p. 184). Throughout this process, a memo was used to assist with documenting new thoughts and remembering prior information. Highlighted statements were used relating to the participants’ experiences; using color schemes to distinguish the different categories.

### **Research Questions**

The following are examples of the open-ended interview questions:

1. Describe bullying behaviors that you have observed while at school
2. How do you respond to bullying behaviors at school?

3. What is the reaction of a student who is bullied?
4. How do you respond when a student(s) displays aggressive behavior towards another student?
5. Describe the support you received from parents after the student has been reported for bullying?
6. What support do you receive from other school administrators? Explain.
7. What support would be helpful from the parents of bullies?
8. What do you believe happens when you notice that bullying is not being reported? Explain.
9. What management method(s) is/are the most and least effective to prevent student bullying? (rewarding, video-monitoring, parent support, discipline referral) Explain.
10. What type of training do teachers like yourself need to respond, intervene, and prevent bullying?
11. What does impact student bullying activities can have on bully victims?
12. Describe your feelings of students who bully other students when you observe it?
13. Why do you feel that students use the school to bully other students?
14. What suggestions do you have to stop bullying at your school

### **Concerns About Validity and Trustworthiness**

#### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness establishes the quality, rigor, and confidence in research. (Holloway & Gavin, 2016; Schwandt (2007) defines trustworthiness as “quality of an investigation and its

findings. As researcher, I have to devise a set of criteria to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research. The four criteria to establish trustworthiness of the study included: (a) credibility, (b) dependability, (c) transferability and (d) confirmability (Ravith & Carl, 2016; Shaw, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Throughout the study, the researcher can maintain trustworthiness by employing methods such as triangulation, member checking, and audit trail to ensure a trustworthy study.

### **Credibility**

Credibility as the researcher, I had to establish credibility with triangulation, prolong engagement, member checking, and peer review (Ravith et. al. 2016; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Prolonged engagement is defined as “the investment of sufficient time to . . . Learn the culture . . . And build trust” (Lincoln & Guba, p. 1985, p. 301). To establish trust before beginning the study, the researcher will have to review literature on bullying behaviors, teachers’ perceptions, and school policies enforcement. Allowing for the opportunity to learn about the phenomenon of how teachers’ perceptions can contribute to the study. Particularly, giving participants a voice to their concerns. Also, allowing the participants to speak more freely during each of their respective interviews. The various methods of data collection ensured trustworthiness of the study through triangulation (Creswell, 2013, 2009; McMillian, 2012). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that trust could be obtained with triangulation using “different data collection modes” (p. 306). The researcher can triangulate the research with a plethora of “rich data” (Houghton; et.al. 2013) after being collected from the participants’ responses to questionnaires, and from semi-structured individual interviews. The process of member checking will confirm the participants’ responses for accuracy (Creswell, 2013: 2009; Ravith and Carl, 2016; Creswell, 2013; 2009,

Schreiber and Asner-Self, 2011; and Schwandt, 2007). The member checking allowed participants to verify their comments. Verification of each participant's transcription from the interview ensures accuracy by checking using reviewing, correcting, and sharing feedback of collected data to gain accurate interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2007, 2013; Gall et al., 2007). Researcher can consult with two fellow academic peers with knowledge of the phenomenon and research procedures. The peer review can consist of advice and expertise to review findings for accuracy and to confirm that specific guidelines were followed (Creswell, 2007; Pyrczak, 2008).

### **Dependability**

Dependability “ensures that the research process was logical, traceable, and documented” (Holloway & Galvin, 2016; Schwandt, 2007). As researcher I can gain dependability through an audit trail documenting procedure used in data collection methods, in-depth record keeping, and details of data analysis (Gall et al., 2007). Another aspect that the researcher can use to increase dependability consisted of memos or note taking as a means to document the setting and tone observed during the individual interviews not captured via audio recording while interacting with the participant. The researcher can maintains memos or notes during the research to record dates, times, settings, expressions, and reactions to refer to during each stage of the research and after the research. As researcher, I can stay abreast of the research progress with a daily examination of memos. The researcher as the human instrument with an abundance of data to analyze, maintain, and organize, can rely on memos as a method to “read through the text, make margin notes, and form initial codes” (Creswell, 2007, p. 157) for important details.

### **Transferability**

Transferability planned research design included concrete procedures had to obtain data. Thus, the researcher needs to present ample rich “thick” descriptions throughout the study from the responses of the questionnaire, individual interviews, regarding the phenomenon (Shaw, 2013; Houghton et al. 2013). However, the basis of transferring the context of this study will be for the context of another study is contingent on whether “thick description” (Houghton et al. 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) from data collection is comparable to the respective study. Participants will be totally involved during the meetings and interviews, which were observed through body language, specific details, and tone of voice. The passionate details of the stories will be captured from the verbatim responses.

### **Confirmability**

The researcher has to establish the accuracy of the research with an audit trail and data triangulation to avoid bias (Houghton, 2013; Creswell, 2009; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). As the human instrument, personal feelings and opinions of the phenomenon will reveal information as not to inflict bias within the research findings (Creswell, 2013; 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As researcher, I can increase confirmability with triangulation by collecting data via interviews, questionnaire, to gain evidence of results. During the study, the participant can provide detailed interviews that described accounts of experiences and completed questionnaires with responses to observations and occurrences of the phenomenon. Another method I can use to establish confirmability is an audit trail. An audit trail consists of procedures, method collections, and data analysis used to recheck content and results of the study (Houghton, et al. 2013). I can maintain

notes of events, times, and thoughts throughout the research. As the research progresses, I can refer to previous notes as well as documenting new thoughts and ideas as they emerged.

### **Triangulation**

Triangulation ensured that integrity was established (Wilson, Onwuegbuzie, & Manning, 2016; Schwandt, 2007) by “cross-checking” the validity of findings using multiple sources (Pyrzczak, 2008). To safeguard the study, the researcher can use a methodological triangulation to validate for trustworthiness. Two methods will be used to triangulate the study included: (a) semi-structured interviews, and (b) questionnaire. With this understanding the researcher will use the information from two data collection methods and “themes were established based on converging several sources of data from participants, then this process of [triangulation] will be added to the validity of the study.” (Creswell, 2013, 2009).

### **Ethical Considerations**

The safety, respect, and integrity of participants are of the utmost importance while involved in this research study (Ravith & Carl, 2016). Every safety measure will be taken to protect participants, which will not compromise for the benefit of results. First, for the safety and ethical treatment of the participants were given and received a written informed consent letter detailing the purpose of the research. Each participant will sign a written informed consent form before participating in the research. The informed consent form detailed pertinent information will include (a) purpose of the research, (b) data collection methods, (c) risk and benefits, (d) confidentiality of participants, and volunteer agreement information. Security and confidentiality of participants and data will be a crucial factor for the study. Each participant will be reassured

that responses will be confidential. Pseudonyms will be used to mask identities of participants, students, and any individuals involved in the study of privacy.

The following safeguards was used to protect the participant's rights:

1) Participants will be advised IN WRITING of the voluntary nature of their participation and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. They will also be advised that at any time during the process they could decline to answer any question.

2) The research objectives will be delineated IN WRITING and articulated to the participants.

3) A WRITTEN consent form will be obtained from each participant (DHHS Title 45, Sec. 46.111(a)(4).

4) The participants were informed IN WRITING of all data collection methods and activities.

5) Provisions will be made for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the participant's (DDHS Title 45, Sec .111(a)6.

### **Summary**

This study sought to explain Teachers' perceptions of bullying and whether or not school bullying policies are being enforced. The data was collected from research questions, semi-interviews, and questionnaire. The data analysis will be coded using the NVivo software to analyze themes and patterns found in comparison from each participant's answers from the questionnaire. All participants will be asked to sign a consent form to ensure their safety. Researcher was sole instrument for this research. Therefore this research must be trustworthy, dependable, credible, valid, unbiased, confidential, and resourceful.



## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe bullying behaviors during teachers' perceptions and whether or not school policies were being enforced at the Middle School. The research addressed the settings, teachers' perceptions, whether or not school policies had been enforced, data collection and analysis, trustworthiness strategies. Themes are introduced through the five teachers' perceptions and results of the study at its final stage. The data were generated through teachers' interviews using an audio recorder for accuracy.

During the transcription process, data were typed into a Word document, hand-analyzed, and saved on a password protected laptop and backed-up on a password protected hard drive.

### **Data collection**

#### **Research Setting**

The context of this research was in Roper, North Carolina. The study attempted to use participants who are still teaching; and those that have taught over 20-30 years.

#### **Demographics**

The population was five teachers. I originally hoped to secure participants from varying ethnicities, but responses did not allow for wide variety as I have hoped. This middle school district is approximately 60% Caucasian, 25% Black African Americans, and 15% of Hispanics. Each participant will be assigned a pseudonym to mask the identities throughout the study. As researcher, I administered a questionnaire and interviewed each teacher. Also, to list a pseudonym demographic or descriptive information for speculation purposes as far as gender,

age range, years of teaching experience. Some teachers were older, and some were younger. They were participant teachers of different background and lived normally in different vicinities.

### **Data collection**

The plan I used to guide the interviews and fill out the questionnaire came about through the principal at Washington County Union School. She signed and dated a consent letter form to help me get teachers I needed for this study. The principal sent out the invitation letter I brought to her; addressed to all teachers who would like to participate in my study. Five teachers responded. All interviews and questionnaires were scheduled to last 20-30 minutes. At the beginning of the interview and questionnaire, I set up an audio tape recorder, a consent form that needed to be read and signed before the interview could begin. I gave each participant the fourteen questions so they would have some knowledge what to expect in answering their interview questions. I guided all questions in the direction necessary to acquire well rounded answers from each participant, if they began to speak off the topic. I prompted and probed as I interviewed each participant while keeping the conversation situational. I administered a questionnaire to each teacher who participated in the study. I administered the questionnaire via paper and pencil to each participant. The questionnaire (see Appendix C) consisted of bullying and its behaviors I kept a file on each person's questionnaire with their name on it to clarify who they were. During data collection, I identified participants on the audio recording device perfectly, because the advantage of living in a small town, people know who you are, and I knew all of them even their voices. Still, I took precautions by renaming them with different names. After the interview, I emailed each teacher and thanked them, and I will send them a copy of this dissertation upon completion. No real follow-up was needed. Member checks were coordinated

to verify interpretations after data collection and analysis. All data was transcribed by the researcher and emailed to my computer to be password protected. I used Microsoft word to keep track of all transcriptions. I listed each teacher pseudonym name and then the interview questions in a column. I transcribed verbatim data onto a Word document. I printed the transcriptions and began to hand-copy the data creating diagrams of codes as they emerged. I used the codes as they emerged. I used the codes to identify categories which were used to form themes. I stored the Word document on a password-protected computer.

### **Coding procedure**

Once I completed the transcriptions on each individual teacher, I coded the data and categorized the codes. I applied a lean, open coding strategy where 20-30 codes per interview were assigned during the first read (see Creswell, 2012). I noticed that I was receiving fewer codes as I reach the last interview producing lesser codes, so I knew that I reached a data reduction. I reached saturation. I applied the codes, looking for common words or phrases, in vivo codes, which represented causes, consequences, attitudes, strategies, characters, problems, solutions, gender, race, socioeconomic status, academic success, academic failure, as well as other things not said. I applied new codes and aggregated the codes to form categories and subcategories and created a framework of related themes. Finally, I compared the themes to the extant literature and developed a descriptive narrative that answered the guiding research questions for this study.

All questionnaires came up with the same exact answers.

## Evidence of Trustworthiness

### Trustworthiness

It is imperative to discuss steps taken during data collection and analysis that help improve the credibility and reliability of results. This study incorporated several techniques to that end. Qualitative studies especially must be diligent to ensure data and interpretations are as close to reality as possible, as there is no statistical base or numerical data from which to draw. I was careful to consider member checking, voice and crisis of representation, triangulation, and reliability.

**Member checks.** As another tool to help increase credibility, each participant received a summary of the interview to check for accuracy. They were asked to provide feedback on my interpretations of their words. All five participants indicated that my interpretations of their respective interviews were correct, and no revisions needed to be made. This technique ensures that the interpretation of the researcher is in line with the thoughts of the participant (Merriam, 2009). Failure to check with participants could introduce serious bias, as the researcher would have free reign on how to interpret the data.

**Voice.** Schwandt (2007) noted that voice is a concern for qualitative inquiries and should be considered when analyzing and discussing data collection. The concern for the writer is if he or she can accurately describe an experience by another person without inserting his or her own biases. This can be difficult as researchers try to organize information, analyze it, and then tell the story of someone else's experience. To help minimize this effect and provide more accurate descriptions rather than a formal, authoritative voice, I drew on what Denzin and Lincoln (2011) refer to as reflexivity. This conscious effort to critically analyze myself as the researcher and

storyteller hopefully allowed for a more truthful representation of teacher perceptions.

**Triangulation.** A common technique in qualitative studies is triangulation, the use of three different data collection tools. I incorporated journals, interviews, and questionnaire as part of data collection triangulation. Periodically, I read, studied, and observed each participant's response to the interview questions and the questionnaire concerning the data being collected and whether or not they supported one another. This process helped ensure that data are as accurate, or as close to the truth, as possible, thereby possibly increasing the credibility of the study (Merriam, 2009).

## Results

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe and understand the phenomenon of student bullying within the environment of students attending a middle school as perceived by teachers. A phenomenological design was employed for the study to support the purpose and methodology of this study. The focus was to analyze data from selected participants (teachers) within the education arena as they described the shared meaning of their lived experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). During this process, data was generated, gathered, and recorded to gain a broader understanding of teachers' perceptions of bullying at the elementary school level. The data was generated through teacher interviews using an audio recorder for accuracy.

During the transcription process, data was typed into a Word document, hand-analyzed, and saved on a password protected laptop and backed-up on a password protected hard drive. Three research question were incorporated in my findings.

RQ1: How do teachers describe their experiences in addressing behaviors at the middle school?

RQ2: Do teachers believe existing policies are sufficient to create a safe learning environment?

RQ3: How can renewed emphasis upon the enforcement of existing bullying policies result in a positive social change?

The analyzed data was collected from a semi-structured interview and six questionnaires. Five teachers participated in the study. As I carefully analyzed the transcribed interviews and questionnaires four major themes emerged from the data. (1) Essential training in defining bullying (2) physical, and verbal behaviors (3) School policy for managing bullying. (4) Total support from parents and school.

Theme 1: Essential training in Defining bullying. Teachers' perceptions are very important for bullying intervention/prevention programs. The first theme was based on responses from interview questions which resulted in there were concerns from their perceptions that the definition of bullying was not quite recognizable as it should have been to them. As I read over the transcripts, I immediately came to the conclusion teachers interviewed did not seem to know exactly how to define bullying. I witnessed from the reading over the transcript that teachers interviewed did not know whether or not if students were bullying or just playing around with one another. Especially, if the victim kept quiet. The knowledgeable insight of one knowing what was seen in action was not as understandable in defining bullying during perceptions. The National Council of Teachers of English (2017), defines bullying as "any repeated behavior that intended to harm another person." Shoving, hitting, name-calling, kicking, spitting and poking at another student. Bullying is also defined by a

power imbalance causing physical harm, and verbal abuses to be in control over someone else to hurt their feelings, or to embarrass them. Teachers must learn how to define and recognize many varieties of bullying behaviors to take immediate, appropriate actions when any form of bullying happens between students. Teachers needs to define and be familiar with all types of bullying behaviors, to encourage students to speak out and write about their own experiences, and to clarify their values on bullying. Teachers must also be educators on defining, preventing and reporting all bullying episodes to school administrations

For example: (See Table 1)

Question 10: “What type of training do teacher like yourself need to respond, intervene, and prevent bullying?”

2<sup>nd</sup> Teacher, Nyla: Well we need to know that bullying comes in all forms. Students comes from different cultures, how they talk, dress, and react.

3<sup>rd</sup> Teacher, Meghan: Well at first, we need to recognize if a child is being bullied and once, they recognize that policies needs to be set in place and those policies needs to be enforced by the administration etc.

4<sup>th</sup> Teacher, Angie: Recognizing certain things as bullying because some people will say Oh! They just teasing but if a child perceives it is a negative way it could be bullying.

5<sup>th</sup> Teacher, James: What is classified as bullying. What behaviors that could be a form of bullying.

**Theme 2:** Physical verbal, and cyber bullying behavior. Teachers’ perceptions of bullying believed seen was physical, verbal, picking, pulling and spitting (see Table 2). Physical and

Verbal bullying are more aggressive acts. Teachers perceived that these forms of bullying are most predominant at middle schools. Verbal bullying can be that of name-calling, teasing, saying mean things to other students, and spreading rumors. Physical bullying is another aggressive act teacher have perceived as pushing, hitting, tripping, kicking, and shoving other students. Cyber bullying wasn't perceived and is of a technological nature.

*Percentage of Teachers Who Experienced or witnessed or were aware of Physical, Verbal, and Cyber Bullying Behaviors at Middle School*

Bullying Behaviors	Percentage of Teachers
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Physical	50%
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Verbal	37%
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*Teachers describing bullying behaviors observing physical and verbal behaviors while at school*

Teacher 1 stated: Bullying children, picking at other children because they are different and some pertaining to the clothes, they wear

Teacher 3 stated: Most of it I observed student teasing each other. Sometimes they tease each other about other students what they have on and mainly because of low self-esteem

Teacher 4 stated: Well this is my 21<sup>st</sup> year of teaching and I observed quite a lot of bullying behaviors; and a lot of students decides to pick on students clothing, those that are less fortunate, and their hair. If their uniform wasn't matching (not brand named) students would



pick on those kinds of things. Also, those that are failing academically, they tend to pick on them on that.

Teacher 5 stated: Well, I have observed several behaviors that students asking other students for things that they are not willing to give to them, but they still try to take it.

**Theme 3:** School policy for managing bullying

Some teachers' felt that school policy would be enforced once sent to the school administrator; either by strict warnings or being expelled in and out of school. Especially, if consistent bullying episodes could not be corrected after informing parents between teacher and parent.

*Table 2*

*Teachers' Explanations on School's Policy for Addressing and Reporting Bullying*

Teacher 1 stated: As being one of the Administrators at school, I would observe to see what they are doing then I would see if they are doing something that is not proper. If they were not behaving themselves in a proper manner, they would eventually be kicked out of school.

Teacher 3 stated: Meghan: Just make sure we have policies enforced and that we have support of parents. Everybody working together as a team making sure bullying doesn't exist.

Teacher 4: Angie stated: We nick that right in the bud right away if he/she witness it. If it is not reported to us most of the time students don't do this in front of teachers. If it is reported to us, then we have to investigate and hand it over to school Administrator.
<b>Theme 4:</b> Total support from Parents and School
Table 3
<i>Teachers Explanations on School Support of Parents and Administrators</i>
Teacher 2 stated: Usually when a student is reported for bullying most parents will say not my child. I know they did not do it. Most time I sat down first and whatever they did not put in conversation I will put in there. Then the parents here their side and then my side they calm down a little and then we can get something settled.
Teacher 3 stated: Well if they are completely honest most parents know that their child is doing or do not have aggressive behaviors or not doing what they should be doing. Sometimes they may be supportive and sometimes they are not supportive
Teacher 4 stated: The support varies. Sometimes the parents do not want to believe their child is a bully. Sometimes we get support and sometimes we lack support from parents.
Teacher 5 stated: Usually when I contact the parents, they are supportive, because most of the students have parents that I have built relationships with and they try to deal with it along with me and also, they deal with the individual student.

Patterns and relations were pretty much the same. Several patterns emerged within the data that all teachers agreed on reporting issues to parents and school administrators. Patterns included bullying episodes being reported to parents and/or school administrators face-to-face.

The data revealed relationships with high levels of confidence that once reported to school administrators, actions would be taken. Patterns also detailed how once reported, a better parent and student relationship emerged. Relational patterns emerged within the data. Five teachers recounted their lived experiences of their perceptions of student bullying behaviors. Detailed descriptions of patterns and relations were found throughout the data coding and analysis from each teacher concerning what was perceived associated with high levels of confidence while teaching at the middle school. All felt they performed within guidelines known from school bullying policies and enforcement, whenever a bullying episode emerged. Patterns and relations also, showed how these teachers did everything they could to stop escalation problems. Relational confident in the data showed how each teacher dealt with bullying episodes with the parents or the student.

### **Summary**

As researcher, I was very satisfied with what I learned in my findings. I confirmed each teacher met the inclusion criteria for the study. As I listened to each of the five teachers' perceptions, I felt comfortable in their profession because they stood out. "Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying and School Enforcement Policy at a small middle school, I believe do their best to stop bullying if they see it. It is getting to know more about it through seminars and training that some of the smaller school institutions miss out on. It was during their lived experience of what they knew (the phenomenological methodology) while they were being interviewed. Also, to hear that the school's policies were being enforced was also a great concern for this study.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The analysis of this phenomenology study touched my heart in a way because it addressed the research questions I posited, and it addressed my topic on teachers' perceptions of bullying and policy enforcement information. Five teachers were interviewed during this phenomenological study because saturation had ended. They were given anonymous names to protect their privacy. Data was placed in QSR NVivo software and used to examine the data. The interviews were transcribed manually constantly and immediately after the interviews were completed. Constant reviewing of the data allowed me to label interviews quotes that resulted in codes. The 14 research questions are in Appendix B Data Analysis and findings for this phenomenological study are described in the following sections.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

The teachers' perceptions of bullying were generally accurate; only if and how some bullying episodes are played out. Especially, if the behaviors were and became aggressive. The real question is what happens when students are victimized or hurting by bullies? This was one reason why teachers' perceptions were so important, because if their misconceptions or lack of knowledge of what is going on around them are misconstrued; it can cause a person to commit suicide or drop out of school? The fourteen interview questions were addressed by these teachers showed me they were aware of this fact. They did notice and saw things down the hallways, cafeteria, and classrooms; how students intertwined with each other. What they observed, what they know, can prevent lots of bullying episodes from occurring, if it is recorded and shared with other teachers. This is my findings after the data collection, and data analysis, the coding and

transcribing the material. I find that teachers at this middle school need more training into the concept of defining bullying behaviors, what to look for, what is classified as bullying behaviors, and what is the types of behaviors that can and need to be recognized. I am now aware that school policies have been set up in the school and will be enforced by school administrators. Once school administrator receives the bullying information from the teachers; the process of meeting with the students and finding out what is going on with them begun. The results of the student bullying punishment will be that of being expelled from school, or if it continues the student will not be allowed to report back to the middle school unless otherwise something changes, such as written communications from other resources.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Even though this was a small-scale study with five participants: at a small-scale middle school. I feel the limitations did not impede the study's success or outcome. However, I still would have liked to see a major scale study using over 40 participants to see how greatly the impact would have been for this study. I'm also aware that in many of the counties in North Carolina there are smaller middle schools. While I was transcribing my interviews material, I could see the major lack in their perceptions was that of knowing the true definition of bullying, what bullying entails and how to actually define it from students, just playing with each other. Even with a small-scale study as this one is, the need to know is very important. Someone's life could be at stake. A potential limitation had been the small sample population size of only five teachers. In fact, I reached saturation at the fifth interview and chose not to continue. I believe the study awareness of findings should help other schools to receive more training on bullying and its behaviors.

### **Recommendations**

Suggestions from this finding is that school administrators should pull out the bullying policy and use illustrations, if need be to explain all that is needed to know and learn about what actually is bullying, what to look for during bullying episodes down hallways and classroom settings. Perhaps demonstrations and illustrations will prove useful; both for teachers' benefits; and for parents as well. This way these listed details on bullying and its behaviors will be out in the open for all plain eyes to see. Also, to learn illustrative examples and strategies preventing bullying behaviors as reminders such as on types of bullying. I believe it would benefit considerably students and teachers posted around school's hallways.

### **Implications**

Because I attended this middle school, I understand how the surrounding area school's daily operation work. Even at small-scale schools. The different counties are not so far from each other. I know a lot of middle schools always strive to be on top of situations from listening to parents, teachers, and students. Most of them work together while working with well-liked parents, teachers, school administrators and communities. These school systems have been through major turnarounds, but they have always strived in remaining successful in school functioning. Once this study is revealed to the public, I am hoping its awareness and insight will bring about the social change improvements to prevent or implement more changes in teachers' perceptions and school policy enforcement.

### **Conclusion**

As I look at the problem statement, the purpose statement and findings from teachers' perceptions of bullying on whether or not school policies were being enforced helped me achieve

my goal. The study itself, the interviews, the data collection, and data analysis drawn from each teacher helped me to realize how vital important it was for teachers to have a full understanding on the effects of bullying and the necessary skills to recognize, respond, intervene, and report bullying situations. As I listen to them, in the interviews and saw their confidence in their profession wanting to reduce bullying, improve students achievement, to help students that were being bullied, their answers were mesmerizing to me, because I actually didn't know what to expect. The data from the interviews were coded, and when relational themes and patterns began to be emerged, I was ecstatic. It was as if I went in with questions and I came out with answers so necessarily needed for my study. I am now aware from interviewing the five teachers, where their unawareness lies with bullying. This was not understanding or knowing how to define bullying when seen. I am so happy that the problem can not only be corrected but prevented. This study's findings justified the implication of the problem, placing an importance on the lack of identifying bullying aggressive behaviors and anti-bullying strategies that can be incorporated daily to reduce these aggressive behaviors.

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## Appendix A: Letter to Participants

**Research Study Topic:** Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying and School Policy Enforcement

**Research Team:** Angelena Clagon, Criminal Justice Doctoral Candidate

Dr. Marisa Bryant, Chair

Dr. Jennifer Grimes Committee Member

Name of Teacher

Date: June 4, 2019

Address

Dear Mr./Mrs.

I am currently a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I am piloting dissertation research on Teachers' Perception of Bullying and School Policy Enforcement. I believe your perceptions can either allow me to know whether or not school policies concerning bullying were enforced while you taught at your school. Your perceptions through my research can prevent futurist bullying behaviors from existing in many of schools here and surrounding counties. During my research, I have found that it is little research information on teachers' perception of bully and school policy enforcement. What studies I have found, there is a gap in which further studies such as this one, could bring about more profound prevention and intervention programs to help with this study phenomenon. This research will provide considerable insight into this problem. Your support in conducting this much-needed research is essential and bring about the social change it needs to successfully prevent this phenomenon from reoccurring. I am trying to interview twelve teachers to get their responses from a questionnaire that I have enlisted.

## Appendix B: The Interview Process

The interviews will be at a location of my choosing in which you will be notified. All interviews will be done between 3-4 pm or 5-6 pm whatever is convenient on the same day. What all participants in this study will need to know concerning the interview:

1. The interview should take about 30 minutes for the participants to answer all questions.
2. The participants will be given the interview guide to follow along.
3. The interview will be recorded on a digital audio recorder.
4. This interview is voluntary. Therefore the participants can stop participating in the process.
5. There are no right or wrong questions.
6. The participants will have the opportunity to read my notes to make sure that I interpret your responses correctly.
7. After the interview is complete, the participants will be able free to ask questions.

### **Additional Information**

There will be no cost for contributing to the study. It is anticipated that the information obtained in this study will benefit other high schools, elementary, preschool around all surrounding counties to prevent/stop all bullying behaviors.

### **Privacy and Confidentially**

Through the completion of the research study, the contributor's name will be disclosed. All records that are obtained with the participant name will be kept confidential and will not be shared publicly. However, the Institutional Review Board (a commission that evaluates and

approves research scholarships), federal government monitoring organizations, and auditing divisions of Walden University may check or duplicate your records for quality assertion and data investigation. These records may have private info. All data taken from this research study will be stored in a computer with the admission of a password and hand documents will be stored in a lock safe. Once the outcome of the study is published, the contributor's name will still be disclosed.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, teacher of \_\_\_\_\_ school

I grant permission for my name to be used for this research project conducted by Angelena Clagon

I DO NOT grant permission for my name to be used for this research project conducted by Angelena Clagon

\_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Signature

Date

Angelena Clagon

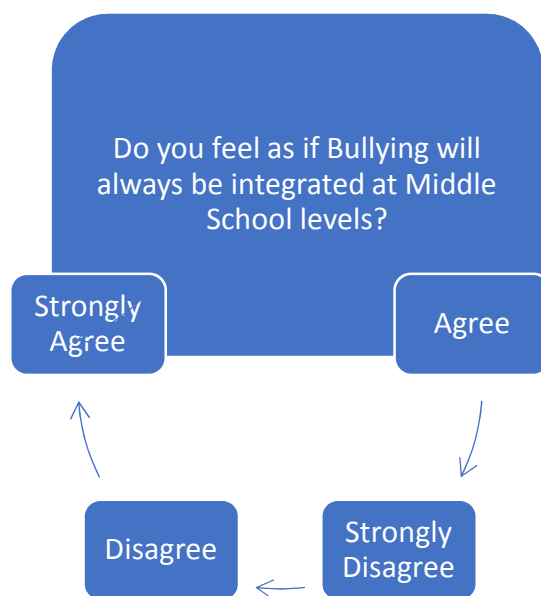
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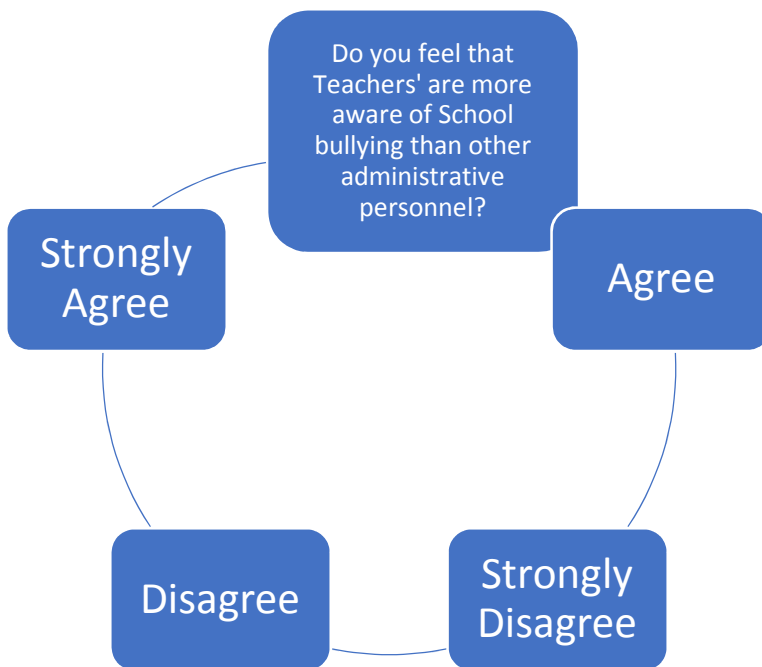
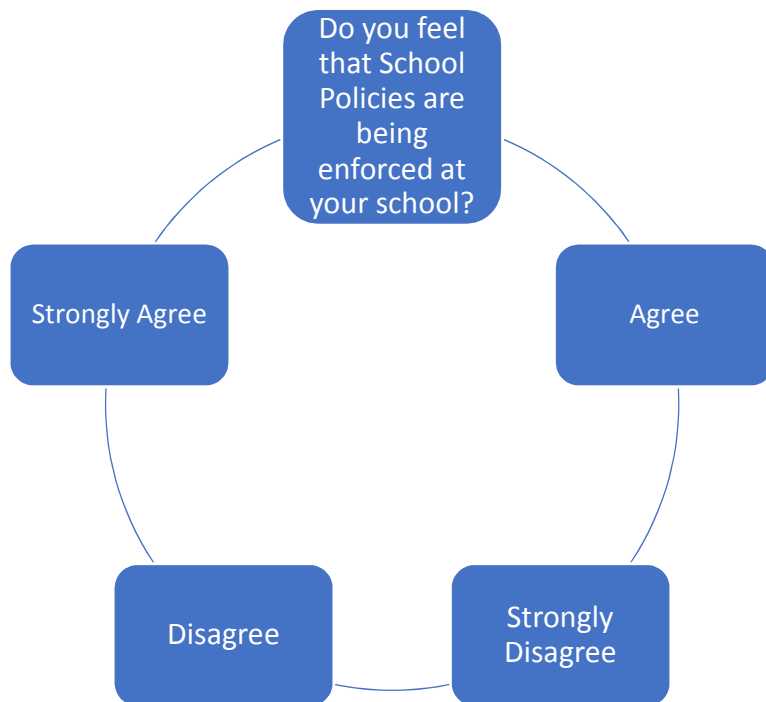
Researcher Name/Signature

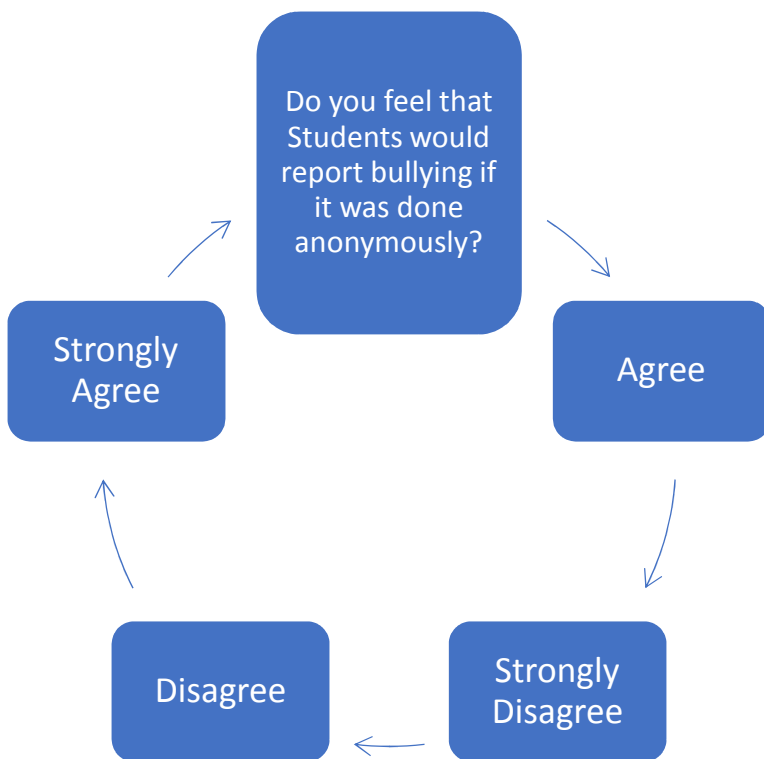
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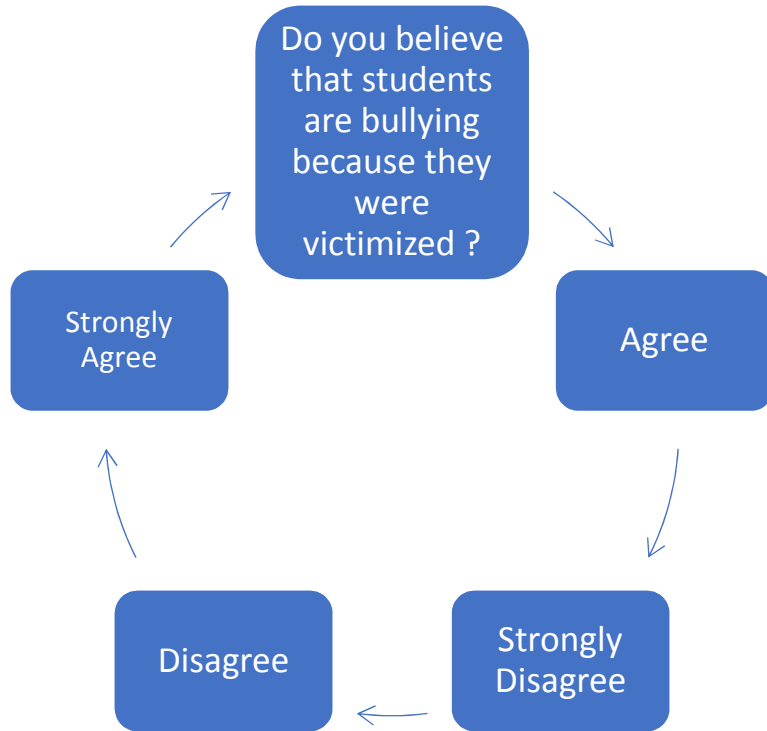
Thanks for your time.

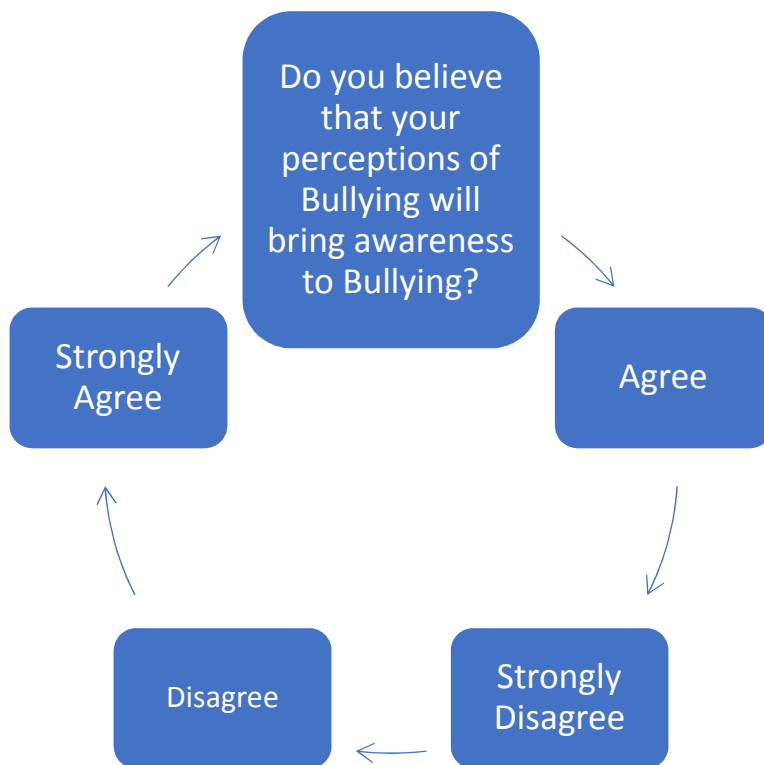
## Appendix C: The Questionnaire



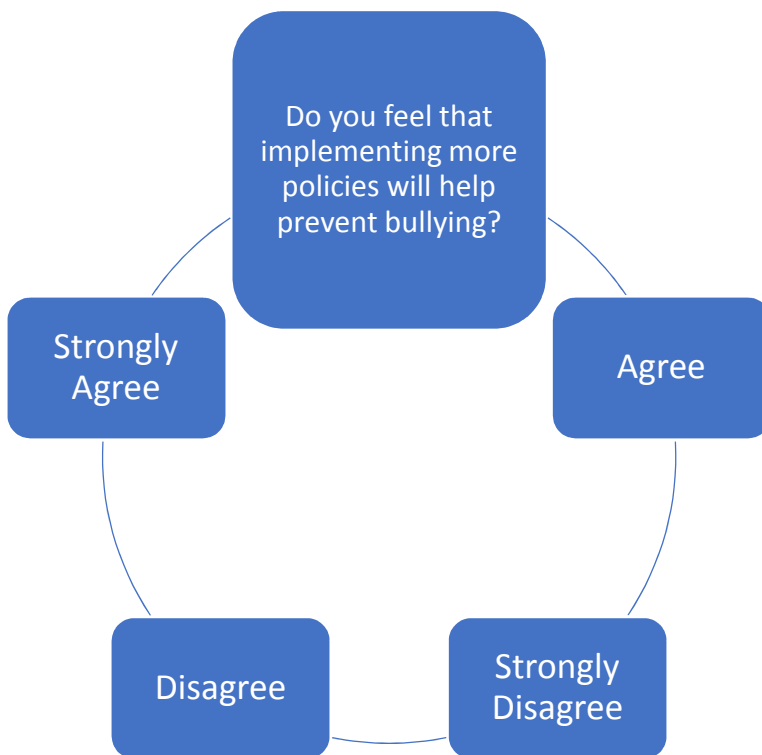
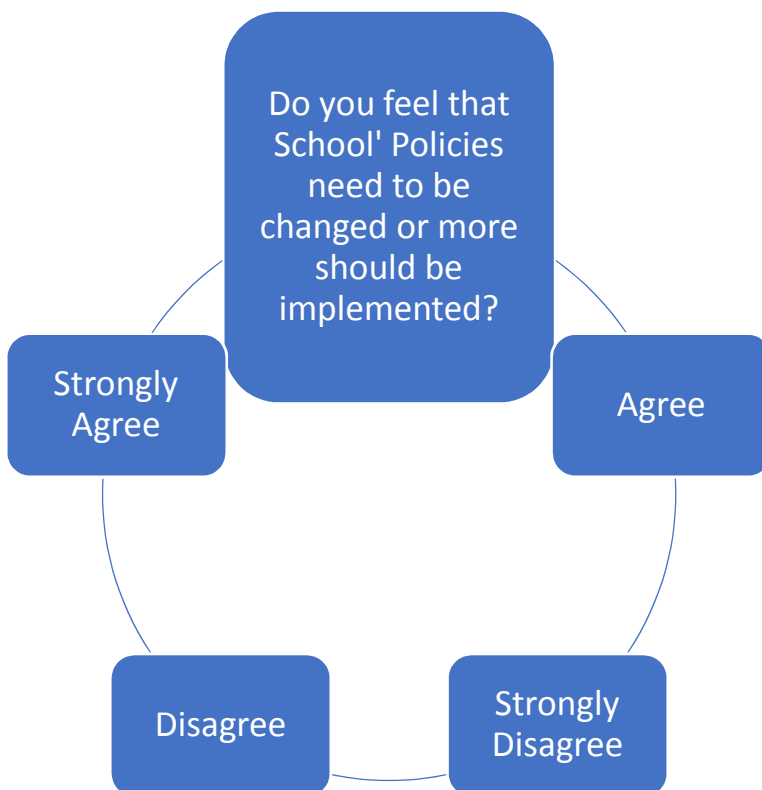


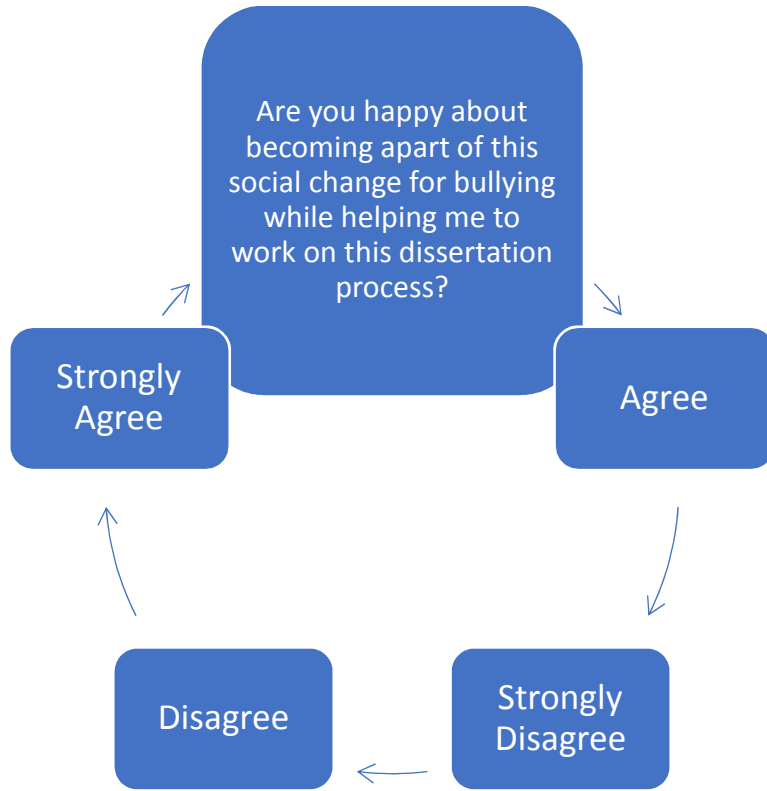












## Interviewees Transcripts

Interviewer: I am interviewing John on March 11, 2019. Hello John, are you ready.

Interviewee: Yes, I'm ready.

Question 1- John Describe bullying behaviors that you have observed while at school?

John: Bullying children, picking at other children because they are different and some pertaining to the clothes they wear.

Question 2: How do you respond to bullying behaviors at school?

John: As being one of the Administrators at school, I would observe to see what they are doing then I would see if they are doing something that is not proper. If they were not behaving themselves in a proper manner they would eventually be kicked out of school.

Question 3: What is the reaction of a student who is bullied?

John: Seems to be relieved that someone had stepped in when someone has eliminated situation.

Question 4: How do you respond when a student(s) displays aggressive behavior towards another student?

John: First of all, I don't like it and then I try to stand between the student to deviate the situation instead of elevating the situation. A lot of time I have to talk with the teachers to let them know what the student is doing is not right and there will be consequences with their continuance behaviors.

Question 5: Describe the support you received from parents after the student has been reported for bullying?

John: Normally I have to do is to contact the parents let them know on that particular day I have talked with their child and to let them know they were bullying other students. Also, we need to

have that child do something different instead of picking on other students and then again, they can receive consequences for their continuance bullying.

Question 6: What support do you receive from other school administrators? Explain

John: As an Administrator, we try to work as a team so other administrators need to know about it as well.

Question 7: What support would be helpful from the parents of bullies?

John: They need more resources on what they can do in order to teach their child about the effects of bullying because if there is none it could be more consequences in later years.

Question 8: What do you believe happens when you notice that bullying is not being reported? Explain.

John: The person who is being bullied can say I am a King Kid and I'm going to do this until something happens. Normally a person who's being bullied they are weakling and the other person can gain power over them for different reasons.

Question 9: What management method(s) is/are the most or least effective to prevent student bullying? (rewarding, video-monitoring, parent support, discipline referral) Explain

John: The most effective way to attack it head on and the teacher can write up a referral and if something happens on a bus, it has cameras. They can report things and we can review it at a later time. If it occurs on a bus, then you have a way for parents to see it.

Question 10: What type of training do teachers like yourself need to respond, intervene, and prevent bullying?

John: Doing the opening day of schoolteachers can use and come up with strategies they can use in the classroom to prevent bullying.

Question 11: What does impact student bullying activities can have on bully victims?

John: Have to do with whether they can find out that bullying has stopped or about to stop. They can feel better themselves if not then the person bullying others can think they can do something better.

Question 12: Describe your feelings of students who bully other students when you observe it?

John: I don't like it, for one thing. It let me know I can do something about it because if that bullied child keeps being bullied then he/she will have low self-esteem and either go down or keep rising up if you do something about that situation. Their self-esteem will go up.

Question 13: Why do you feel that students use the school to bully other students?

John: Most of the time they want to show off in front of classmates. They want to let other students know they are in charge and this is what is going to happen. A lot of time the bullying will escalate, but once their ego has been inflated then all they can act like is a normal child.

Question 14: What suggestions do you have to stop bullying at your school

John: Teachers, parents, and communities must be aware of what is going on and they shall have a plan in place that when it does happen consequences can be given to those students that are bullying other students.

Interviewer: I am interviewing Nyla on March 11, 2019. Hello Nyla, are you ready

Interviewee: Yes. I'm ready

Question 1: Describe bullying behaviors that you have observed while at school.

Nyla: As a teacher; bullying is a lot of time like undercover, you don't always see it, but having students most of the day some students will quietly tell you what's going on that will help support your suspicions.

Question 2: How do you respond to bullying behaviors at school?

Nyla: Basically, I try what I try with my students let them know that everybody is concluded, and everybody should be respected. The fact that you are in here together with each other all day long so that you can look out for each other. No one wants to come to school miserable

Question 3: What is the reaction of a student who is bullied?

Nyla: Usually, they are quiet. They kind of isolate themselves from the rest of the kids. Usually, I try to contact them to gain their confidence; to let them know they are important.

Question 4: How do you respond when a student(s) displays aggressive behavior towards another student?

Nyla: First of all, I try to separate them, sit them in different places and that gives them a chance to calm down; and I get a chance to see each person prospective whether I believe it or not.

Question 5: Describe the support you received from parents after the student has been reported for bullying.

Nyla: Usually when a student is reported for bullying most parents will say not my child. I know they did not do it. Most time I sat down first and whatever they didn't put in conversation I will put in there. Then the parents here their side and then my side they calm down a little and then we can get something settled.

Question 6: What support do you receive from other school administrators? Explain.

Nyla: Usually they are very supportive, but they like for us to resolve situations before it gets to them. But usually after I resolve the situation, I always let the principal know before it comes up again.

Question 7: What support would be helpful from parents of bullies?

Nyla: Basically, to let them know they have to talk to their child about self-respect and they are going to meet people that are different, and everybody is different. We have all different experiences but if we sit down at the table and talk, we will find out we are basically alike. Everybody wants to be loved and accepted.

Question 8: What do you believe happens when you notice that bullying is not being reported? Explain.

Nyla: When it is not being reported the student that is bullying thinks him/her is in control of everything and the students that being bullied in school lose interest in school even if they are good students. They start being absent a lot making up sickness.

Question 9: What management method(s) is/are the most and least effective to prevent student bullying? (rewarding, video-monitoring, parent support, discipline referral) Explain.

Nyla: What I try to do is to talk about self-respect and how everyone is important. I try to address it right then.

Question 10: What type of training do teachers like yourself need to respond, intervene, and prevent bullying?

Nyla: Well we need to know that bullying comes in all forms. Students comes from different cultures, how they talk. They can be bullied because of their speech, hair and clothing.

Question 11: What does impact student bullying activities can have on bully victims?

Nyla: Basically, usually with bullying I feel that student themselves could have training workshops and constant resolution. Learn how to solve conflict that comes up and not let it get out of hand like if someone brush against them they can say you pushed me; no, I didn't push you. Know those strategies that will not let things blow up.

Question 12: Describe your feelings of students who bully other students when you observe it?

Nyla: Usually if they are not secure, they have issues. I had a student of age and much bigger than the other students. Once she saw I respected her as much as the other ones she stopped being insecure about herself.

Question 13: Why do you feel that students use the school to bully other students?

Nyla: Well that is their audience. They see things on television, and they come to school to have someone to practice on. A lot of times a bully can find a few people to follow

Question 14: What suggestions do you have to stop bullying at your school

Nyla: Just to focus on self-respect, self-worth. Everybody has something to offer. Also, to teach students about conflict resolution, and they will have different opinions, but it doesn't have to result into name-calling and teasing people.

Interviewer: I am interviewing Meghan on March 11, 2019. Meghan are you read.

Interviewee: Yes, I'm ready.

Question 1: Meghan Describe bullying that you have observed while at school?

Meghan: Most of it I observed student teasing each other. Sometimes they tease each other about other students what they have on and mainly because of low self-esteem.

Question 2: How do you respond to bullying behaviors at school?

Meghan: Well I respond by talking with students; why are you bullying this child? why are you teasing this child? We will go from there.

Question 3: What is the reaction of a student who is bullied?



Meghan: Well most of the time they get angry or very passive and shy away from things like that or pretend it may not be happening; but most of the time they get angry and wants to be treated fairly.

Question 4: How do you respond when a student(s) displays aggressive behavior towards another student?

Meghan: Well first deciding exactly what is going on. Why are you being so aggressive towards this student. Have this student done something to you or is it something related to your family background, or something that happened this morning or last night and you just brought it to school. Sometimes just finding out what's going on with a child is the best or first resort.

Question 5: Describe the support you received from parents after the student has been reported for bullying.

Meghan: Well if they are completely honest most parents know that their child is doing or don't have aggressive behaviors or not doing what they should be doing. Sometimes they may be supportive and sometimes they are not supportive.

Question 6: What support do you receive from other school administrators? Explain.

Meghan: Well since there is a policy set forth, they pretty much have to pretty much follow that policy of bullying. They usually sit down and discuss what is going on and they go from there.

Question 7: What support would be helpful from parents of bullies?

Meghan: One's understanding is why my child is bullying other students? Finding out if there is something going on at home that is causing him/her to tease or taunt another child. It would be very helpful to the parents to talk with their child. Kids do not misbehave or bully someone without a cause.

Question 8: What do you believe happens when you notice that bullying is not being reported? Explain.

Meghan: Most cases if not reported then it continues on and that child continues to be victimized by a bully unless someone say something or intervene on that child behalf.

Question 9: What management method(s) is/are the most and least effective to prevent student bullying? (rewarding, video-monitoring, parent support, discipline referral) Explain.

Meghan: Well again I think the policy should be put in place on as far as how to manage bullying and also being enforced. Also, I think that guidance counselor should be involved as far as talking to a child; and seeing what going on. I think the child needs a support system with parents, guidance counselor, teachers, and administrators to see what is going on.

Question 10: What type of training do teachers like yourself need to respond, intervene, and prevent bullying?

Meghan: Well at first, we need to recognize if a child is being bullied and once they recognize that policies needs to be set in place and those policies needs to be enforced by the administrators. I think its just a matter that everyone is working together to support students from the one that is doing the bullying.

Question 11: What does impact student bullying activities can have on bully victims?

Meghan: Not quite sure of what is being asked. Again, if it is not settled that victim may not want to come to school. They don't want to come to school and be harassed every time they come to school; and they knowing they are not causing the problem. So that is going to cause that child to not like coming to school, not want to be at school, and just shy away from things

Question 12: Describe your feelings of students who bully other students when you observe it?

Meghan: Well when I see that happens, I intervene quickly. As once being a child myself, we are all different and I can't judge you and you can't judge me because I'm different from you. So anytime I see it happening it bothers me because we are all individuals and we should all accept individuals' differences.

Question 13: Why do you feel that students use the school to bully other students?

Meghan: Well they are not just using the school; they are using the internet and social media to bully other students. As to why they are using the school, I really don't know.

Question 14: What suggestions do you have to stop bullying at your school

Meghan: Just make sure we have policies enforced and that we have support of parents.

Everybody working together as a team making sure bullying doesn't exist.

Interviewer: I am interviewing Angie on April 2019, Are you ready Angie

Interviewee: Yes I'm ready.

Question 1: Angie describe bullying behaviors that you have observed while at school

Angie: Well this is my 21<sup>st</sup> year of teaching and I observed quite a lot of bullying behaviors; and a lot of students decides to pick on students clothing, those that are less fortunate, and their hair.

If their uniform wasn't matching (not brand named) students would pick on those kinds of things. Also, those that are failing academically, they tend to pick on them on that.

Question 2: How do you respond to bullying behaviors at school?

Angie: First we address it in class and then if we see another incident, we contact the parent.

Then we have to refer it to the school counselor so they can reflect on those behaviors; and hopefully change them.

Question 3: What is the reaction of a student who is bullied:

Angie: Sometimes they decide to join the bullying and most of the time they decide to strike back; but most time they tend to become most withdrawn.

Question 4: How do you respond when a student(s) displays aggressive behavior towards another student?

Angie: We nick that right in the bud right away if he/she witness it. If it is not reported to us most of the time students don't do this in front of teachers. If it is reported to us then we have to investigate and hand it over to the Administration.

Question 5: Describe the support you received from parents after the student has been reported for bullying.

Angie: The support varies. Sometimes the parents don't want to believe their child is a bully. Sometimes we get support and sometimes we lack support from parents.

Question 6: What support do you receive from other school administrators? Explain.

Angie: Our administrators are supportive of what we see and what we support so support is top-notch in my mind.

Question 7: What support would be helpful from parents of bullies?

Angie: To actually know we wouldn't accuse their child of bullying. We wait and see if it's a pattern before we we actually report it as actually its bullying. So, we would actually like them to be supportive.

Question 8: What do you believe happens when you notice that bullying is not being reported? Explain.

Angie: The problem just escalates.

Question 9: What management method(s) is/are the most and least effective to prevent student bullying? (rewarding, video-monitoring, parent support, discipline referral) Explain.

Angie: The most effective I see is handling it right then and addressing the issue going through the process we have here at WCMS; and of course, least effective is thinking it is going away because it won't.

Question 10: What type of training do teachers like yourself need to respond, intervene, and prevent bullying?

Angie: Recognizing certain things as bullying because some people will say oh, they just teasing but if a child perceive it in a negative way it could be bullying.

Question 11: What does impact student bullying activities can have on bully victims?

Angie: I think they can be withdrawn, or they can decide to join them, or they can end up striking back.

Question 12: Describe your feelings of students who bully other students when you observe it?

Angie: It makes me angry.

Question 13: Why do you feel that students use the school to bully other students?

Angie: Because this is where they spend the majority of their day and I feel like kids bully because they sense inferiority themselves.

Question 14: What suggestions do you have to stop bullying at your school

Angie: I feel that we should stop what the strength of bullying has allowed them to feel empowerment.

Interviewer: I am interviewing James dating April 2019. James are you ready?

Interviewee: Yes, I'm ready.

Question 1: James describe bullying behaviors as you experienced while in school.

James: Well, I have observed several behaviors that students asking other students for things that they are not willing to give to them, but they still try to take it.

Question 2: How do you respond to bullying behaviors at school?

Janes: Well I try to address it because I don't feel it is appropriate and I talk with the student both victim and bully because there are other situations involved that could not be bullying, so I try to talk with students first.

Question 3: What is the reaction of a student who is bullied?

James: There are several reactions that I have observed even with that. Sometimes students don't react to it. I don't know whether they consider it as bullying or what; but they just don't react and they don't ask for help or anything,

Question 4: How do you respond when a student(s) displays aggressive behavior towards another student?

James: Now when I see aggressive behavior, I quickly address that. First of all I work with special population students and sometimes they have situations and circumstances they can't help and I have to address that with the student as well because sometimes it is because of their behavior problems they do have.

Question 5: Describe the support you received from parents after the student has been reported for bullying.

James: Usually when I contact the parents, they are supportive, because most of the students have parents that I have built relationships with and they try to deal with it along with me and also, they deal with the individual student.

Question 6: What support do you receive from other school administrators? Explain.

James: Well usually other school administrators address those same situations too. Usually they try to find out more information about it. They do address it. They just don't let it happen. They address the information and find out more information about it.

Question 7: What support would be helpful from parents of bullies?

James: First of all, I think the parents should be knowledgeable of the situation; and should see information concerning what the situation is and how it occurred, and how we can correct the situation and do whatever is feasible in that power of addressing it.

Question 8: What do you believe happens when you notice that bullying is not being reported? Explain.

James: Usually it continues if it's not reported. Students may not realize it's a bullying behavior even though victims may not, but we need to address it. A lot of time they just avoid it.

Question 9: What management method(s) is/are the most and least effective to prevent student bullying? (rewarding, video-monitoring, parent support, discipline referral) Explain.

James: First of all, parents support has been my most effective because of the relationship I have built with the parent and usually the student. I am able to deal with that behavior with both the student and the victim.

Question 10: What type of training do teachers like yourself need to respond, intervene, and prevent bullying?

James: What is classified as bullying. What behaviors that could be a form of bullying.

Question 11: What does impact student bullying activities can have on bully victims?

James: Sometimes it is isolation that students don't want to be involved in activities. Sometimes you don't know or not aware of this. You are wondering what the problem is. Most of the time its isolation why they don't want to be inclusive with things in classroom

Question 12: Describe your feelings of students who bully other students when you observe it?

James: I don't feel well about it; because I know the types of students I deal with; they don't understand that is a form of bullying and it can impact them and the other students.

Question 13: Why do you feel that students use the school to bully other students?

James: Sometimes it's a way to show they may be in control or showing they're able to impact other students. Sometimes it just a way of getting attention too.

Question 14: What suggestions do you have to stop bullying at your school

James: First of all being knowledgeable of the situation, being informed, having the assistance of school administrators, others including the parents when the situation of bullying occur, I think.