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Challenges Educators Encounter Implementing Antibullying Programs in Classrooms

Gayla Jones
Walden University

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Challenges Educators Encounter Implementing Antibullying Programs in Classrooms

by

Gayla A. Jones

MA, Webster University, 2014

BS, St. Mary of the Plains College, 1992

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

General Psychology

Walden University

January 2022

Abstract

School bullying is a global issue. Many countries have antibullying programs to help students and teachers during situations that arise in classrooms. Antibullying programs provide a safe and supportive environment for students to learn and grow and teachers play a critical role in this process. Teachers' perspective on the implementation process of antibullying programs in the classroom is limited in the literature. The purpose of this qualitative study is to determine what barriers or challenges teachers face when implementing the school's antibullying program using the lens of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory of development. Two semi structured focus groups consisting of eight middle school teachers were conducted to determine their perceptions, experiences, and factors of the implementation process of antibullying programs in their classroom. Four key themes emerged from the data collected with findings of building strong relationships with students, the need for training and professional development, the lack of awareness of current programs, and lack of consistency from the administration. Teachers also provided recommendations to improve antibullying programs in the school setting. The implementation of teacher recommendations can result in positive social change by developing better methods of handling and preventing cases of bullying in middle schools.

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Dedication

This is dedicated to my dad who left this world before he could witness the completion of this great journey. I know he is proud of me. To my mom, with continued love, guidance, and untiring support cheering me on through this adventure. To all my siblings, who encouraged me to not give up and supported me all along this journey. To Nan and Pop, who both have passed away but continued to support my educational goals and desires and always provided encouraging words in all I did. To Christina, who encouraged me to start this adventure, pushed me during difficult times with untiring and continuous support. To all my friends who encouraged me to never give up, thank you.

To all of you, thank you for the guidance, love, and support throughout this journey. I couldn't have finished it without all of you. Much love.

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A special thank you to the teachers, who participated in this study providing your experiences and the passion to improve your school setting. Without your input, there would not be a dissertation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Bullying is a growing concern within schools across the world (Bradshaw, 2015). Olweus, developed a program in 1983 to address bullying in schools after three adolescent boys died of suicide due to severe bullying (Olweus & Limber, 1983). In the mid-1990s Olweus and Limber began evaluating and implementing the program at Clemson University in South Carolina, United States (Limber et al., 2018). The study involved 18 middle schools, which showed a significant decrease in boys' and girls' reports of bullying others and being bullied (Limber et al., 2018). A similar study was conducted in Philadelphia among 12 elementary schools which yielded substantial reductions in self-reported bullying and adults observing bullying (Hazelden Foundation, 2016).

After the Columbine shooting in Colorado in 1999, bullying has been studied more in-depth, and many antibullying programs have been created (see Cunningham et al., 2016; Goldstein, 2013). Some of these programs include "Don't Laugh at Me" - Operation Respect, The Bully Free® Program (Beane et al., 2008), The Bullying Project Curriculum, Utterly Global - Stand up, Speak out ... End Bullying, Bullying, Ignorance is No Defense, Steps to Respect (Committee for Children, 2001), and The Colorado Trust. My study addressed the barriers and challenges teachers face in the classroom when implementing the antibullying program during bullying situations. The goal was to identify the barriers and challenges from the teachers' perception in the middle schools in central North Carolina.

Potential social implications for the research include providing an avenue for understanding of barriers, challenges, strengths, and weaknesses regarding the antibullying programs discussed from the teacher's point of view. This could allow administrators, counselors, other staff members, parents, and community members to know to assist and address the barriers and challenges to implementing the programs properly.

This chapter introduces this study, including background information of the literature previously researched in this area, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, research questions and the conceptual framework for this study, the nature of the study, definitions related to the importance of this study, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance for this study.

Background

Several researchers describe bullying as a subtype of aggressive behavior which is deliberate and aims to harm and gain power over the victim; bullying occurs repeatedly over time and can include physical, verbal, and social abuse (Barnes et al., 2012; Hornby, 2016; Rosen et al., 2016; Ybarra et al., 2019). As bullying continues to be an ongoing issue in schools today, the following areas of bullying within schools regarding behavior are important: aggression and victimization, school policies, classroom management, interventions and strategies, teachers' roles, and responsibilities, bullying programs, and professional development. These areas represent key components in the research when talking with teachers regarding their perspectives on bullying. Cunningham et al. (2016) conducted a study from one moderate-sized Canadian community incorporating private

and public-school teachers from Pre-K to eighth grades and their limits with implementing antibullying programs. Their study provided key background regarding bullying in school. Letendre et al. (2016) provided information gathered from teachers, staff, and administration about struggles with implementing antibullying programs in an urban school in Connecticut. Focus groups were used to understand the factors that contribute to successful implementation and areas that need to be modified to fit the students, school, and community (Letendre et al., 2016); however, the teacher participants were from the elementary school instead of middle school. Even though bullying is still present, limited research on the implementation process of these programs at the middle school level is limited.

Within the past 5 years, several studies have explored the where, how, and what of bullying and bullying policies. Waters and Mashburn (2017) provided an investigation using surveys of middle school teachers' perceptions of bullying, where bullying occurs in schools, and how to prevent bullying and stress the importance of antibullying policies within the school. Bradshaw (2015) performed a synthesis of information regarding various studies examining the efficacy of bullying prevention programs. Bradshaw reported that the need lies with acceptability, fidelity, and sustainability of the current programs in middle schools. Bradshaw's findings are intended to inform public policy and public health related to preventing bullying which will assist teachers by breaking down the barriers and challenges of implementation. Students reported that aggressive incidents commonly happen in the classroom, the lunchroom, and hallways (Rosen et al., 2016; Ybarra et al., 2019); therefore, teachers may be in the best position to identify the

risk and consequences involving bullying (Rosen et al., 2016). Subsequently, the trends I discovered from the perceptions of middle school teachers in North Carolina could identify ways to improve antibullying programs.

Espelage (2013) discussed why antibullying programs are failing in the United States. She focused on social-emotional learning and how it has adapted around youth behaviors and the prevention of those behaviors. Espelage's work identified one of the many approaches used to understand and then prevent bullying.

Some research revolved around interventions for teachers, schools, and communities and the importance of professional development (see Bradshaw et al., 2013; Brown, 2014; Hornby, 2016; Letendre et al., 2016; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Yoon & Bauman, 2014; Yoon et al. 2016). Many of the strategies were regarding teachers involved in the policies at their school, but they needed more training and understanding of the school policy bullying programs (Bradshaw, 2013; Hornby, 2016; Horton, 2018; Lester & Maldonado, 2013 & 2014; Letendre et al., 2016; Studer & Mynatt, 2015). Other conclusions were a great need for professional development for both teachers and professional staff. The importance of staff development and school policies within the bullying programs helps reduce all types of bullying among middle school students (Bradshaw, 2013; Wojcik & Helka, 2018).

Brown (2014) interviewed teachers in the Southern part of the United States and found 30% were not aware of the school system's bullying policies. Along with that, the policies needed review and to be discussed more often. Further professional development was also needed in that area. Phillips (2014), Uzoma (2019), and Blust (2016) found

similar results in other areas of the country with teachers' perspectives of bullying in the classroom. More professional development and understanding of the school policy was greatly lacking. Lester and Maldonado (2013, 2014) explored and interviewed teachers' perspectives of bullying in the classroom in Florida in 2013 and Tennessee in 2014. The participants believed the antibullying program needed to be updated and that the roles and responsibilities of those involved needed clarification. Additional conclusions were the antibullying program needed to be updated to clarify the role and responsibilities of the teachers and other school stakeholders. This study also indicated a need for a possible educational policy change. Rosen et al. (2016) focused more on teacher perspectives on bullying with peer aggression and victimization. The teachers paid more attention to the physical or verbal part of bullying and were less focused on helping the victim in the bullying situation. Teachers felt students should stand up for themselves to prevent further bullying. If a teacher's belief is the victim is responsible for their behavior toward bullies, then it is less likely that teachers will respond and have empathy during the bullying (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Rosen et al., 2016). Classroom management is a significant factor in reducing bullying and aggression and creates a safe learning environment (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Studer & Mynatt, 2015). Teachers play a major role in classroom management and safety (Yoon & Bauman, 2014; Yoon et al., 2016).

The literature also has research regarding the students' point of view about bullying (e.g., Chalamandaris et al., 2017; Ybarra et al., 2019) in which students provide many strategies of intervention and how they, as students, see the importance of teachers'

roles and responsibilities in reducing bullying (Lester & Maldonado, 2013; Wojcik & Helka, 2018; Yoon et al., 2016).

Much of the background literature discussed is from different points of view, either students or teachers' perception of bullying, or their attitudes about bullying. The importance is the literature provides information about interventions and suggestions; however, the purpose of this study is to learn from the teachers' struggles they have with the antibullying programs and how they can be used in their respective classrooms. The literature doesn't define this point.

Problem Statement

Bullying is a growing concern within schools across the world (Bradshaw, 2015; Ybarra et al., 2019). Teachers can be the key to addressing bullying by implementing antibullying programs as a foundation for students (Ybarra et al., 2019). A study conducted of teachers in Canada exposed some barriers and challenges they are facing concerning effectiveness in implementing antibullying programs including lack of training, difficulty detecting bullying, a lack of time to implement the program, and an inability to successfully sustain programs (Cunningham et al., 2016). It is unexplored how or why barriers and challenges affect the implementation of antibullying programs in middle schools with limited research from the perspective of the teachers (Bradshaw et al., 2013; Brown, 2014; Waters & Mashburn, 2017) which have made the progression of these programs difficult. Most of the research focuses either on student input, data from other countries, or victimization of students; rather than information strictly from teachers' perspectives of barriers and challenges (see Cunningham et al., 2009;

Cunningham et al., 2016; Letendre et al., 2016). Additional research (e.g., Chalamandaris et al., 2017) focused on a specific type of antibullying program concerning its issues with implementation in the school. However, it focused on the student's input of barriers and challenges regarding a specific program rather than the teacher's input. Other research (see Bradshaw et al., 2013; Letendre et al., 2016) provided feedback from all school personnel, staff, teachers, and administration in urban areas implementing antibullying programs and the struggles they face only at their school. One result (e.g., Letendre et al., 2016) was to get the parents more involved in school to understand the teachers' language to provide some leveling of training to the parents. The literature presents a lack of understanding of the barriers and challenges encountered by middle school teachers who use antibullying programs in the classroom setting. There is research around interventions and teachers' attitudes toward bullying and violence within the school to generate strategies; however, it does not address teachers' barriers and challenges to implementation, which is the purpose of this study.

A study by Barnes et al. (2012) based out of Australia focused on the invisible issues in facing interventions using a quantitative study concerning covert bullying within the school and the invisible issues within school policy. Covert bullying, as stated by Barnes et al., relates to behaviors that are nonphysical, subtle, disguised or hidden, but cause emotional distress and damage self-esteem, relationships, and social status. Overt bullying refers to physical punching, direct face-to-face encounters, kicking, teasing, which observers perceive to be aggressive, deliberate, and harmful. From these results, 70% of the participants agreed staff needs more training. Of the 400 teachers or staff who

participated, 30% understood covert bullying or knew how to manage it within the school (Barnes et al., 2012) but the school policies did not address covert bullying, only overt bullying. Furthermore, 10% of the participants felt their strategies were effective in reducing covert bullying (Barnes et al., 2012).

Marshall et al. (2009) provided information about 30 middle school teachers' perceptions, experiences, and in-depth responses to bullying regarding violence in the schools. The results developed a way to analyze teachers' responses to bullying, which was helpful for their school district. But again, this only addressed responding to the bullying and not how to implement the program because of the bullying.

A collection of 20 years of research of what is known and how to progress regarding antibullying programs in schools provided information on research efforts on bullying and victimization in American schools is an overview of major insights gained from 1980 to 2003 (Espelage et al., 2003). Several arguments in this article are examined, including the influence of peer ecology on bullying, assessing school climates where bullying occurs, research from longitudinal and multivariate on bullying, exploring implementation issues of school-wide bullying prevention programs, reviewing laws and policies, and challenging researchers to reach a consensus on bullying research.

There is limited research from the teacher's perspective on the implementation of antibullying programs in general. The understanding of barriers and challenges will assist in minimizing bullying behaviors while providing an opportunity to instill positive outcomes in middle school settings which will need to be further researched.

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of teachers in implementing an antibullying program in the classroom. Continued research regarding barriers and challenges from teachers' standpoint presented from previous research (e.g., Brown, 2014; Lester & Maldonado, 2013, 2014; Uzoma, 2019) needs to be addressed to discover how to effectively implement the programs in each school throughout the United States.

Hirschstein et al. (2007) discussed how using a specific program, called *Steps to Respect*, was used to observe students and teachers trying to implement this bullying program. The research provides insight on teachers' difficulty in implementing the program consistently, and the data is collected from two suburban districts in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. The importance and purpose of this study helped me to define my study of barriers and challenges of implementation of antibullying programs in middle schools.

A qualitative phenomenological method was used to gather experiences from the teachers in various middle schools across central North Carolina, in the United States. This approach involved two focus groups so I could gather the data by using qualitative questions for each focus group discussing barriers and challenges they face trying to implement antibullying programs in their classroom during bullying situations. Based on the research question, a qualitative approach, through focus groups, was the best way to get the most effective feedback and generate responses through the collaboration with peers. Using a qualitative approach outlined interests, recognize strengths, and emphasize

barriers and challenges from a collection of peers collaborating to provide their personal experiences. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the attitudes, opinions, and experiences of bullying social situations. The two focus groups examined the teachers' knowledge to develop ideas within the group's dynamic (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The resolution is to find the barriers and challenges teachers face when implementing antibullying program initiatives in the classroom settings when dealing with bullying situations.

Research Question

RQ1. What are the barriers and challenges teachers experience in implementing antibullying programs in the classroom setting?

Conceptual Framework

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory of development is a framework regarding the risk and protective factors with the involvement of school bullying during childhood and adolescence (Espelage, 2014). The model has also been called the social-ecological model, which focuses on understanding how children's characteristics interact with environmental settings to promote or prevent victimization and perpetration (Espelage, 2014). This framework related to the research study regarding antibullying programs and what challenges the teachers face. An example would be teacher or staff perceptions of the school environment and opportunities for professional development around bullying, school violence, or school climate (Espelage, 2014). This qualitative phenomenological method of inquiry was a design of gaining an understanding of barriers and challenges from the teachers. This social-ecological theory

approach helped me address the risks and protective factors with school bullying in childhood and adolescence (see Espelage, 2014). Yoon and Bauman (2014) discussed another aspect of the social ecology of bullying regarding teacher responses to bullying and their role in improving bullying behaviors. A theory of planned behaviors to understand teachers' actions in bullying incidents. As behaviors are guided by intentions, this theory looked at teacher responses and attitudes to bullying as a predictor of their behavior in response to bullying situations.

Allen (2010) gave an informational review of research exploring issues of classroom management, bullying in the classroom, and teacher practices from a social-ecological perspective. Allen's goal was to see if there is a link between classroom management, bullying, and teacher practices in which she found several connections, but further research needs to be explored. Bullying has a multitude of factors to make it present. One of those factors is classroom management by teachers and responding inappropriately to students' behavior. As stated earlier, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory identified the risk and protective factors with the involvement of school bullying during childhood and adolescence (Espelage, 2014); it would be right to say that if teachers cannot manage students' behavior, then those risk factors for bullying will increase.

Nature of the Study

This qualitative phenomenological research was designed to address the theoretical population of teachers across the country in rural areas teaching middle school academia. However, I used a group of volunteers of eight middle school teachers in

central North Carolina as the population sample target (see Trochim, 2006). The sample

frame is from various middle schools, with up to two participant teachers from each of

the schools for a total of 10 to 14 teachers. If needed, we will use all ten schools in the

district to gather the required data for the study. The schools are in central North

Carolina. The sample included female and male middle school teachers from different

subject areas and of different teaching experience. Recruiting included gaining

permission from the administrators of two NC teacher websites to post on the websites to

obtain participants by presenting the research study as a flyer for teachers to volunteer as

participants. I used a qualitative approach using two focus groups to collect data on

barriers and challenges teachers encounter when implementing the antibullying program

in the classroom as well as the teachers' strengths from the several middle schools across

central North Carolina in the United States. I examined the teachers' perspective of

barriers and challenges to implementing antibullying programs in middle schools. The

research provided an avenue for understanding of barriers, challenges, strengths, and

weaknesses regarding the antibullying programs from the instructor's point of view. This

can provide administrators, counselors, other staff members, parents, and community

members knowledge on how to assist and address the barriers and challenges to proper

implementation of the programs.

   The primary source of data was the responses of the teachers' experiences to the

structured focus group questions I asked. The structured questions were completed in

focus groups with licensed teachers with at least 3 years of teaching experience in the

middle school setting. There were two focus groups containing four middle school

teachers, from the middle schools in central North Carolina. The middle school teachers'

responses to the research questions addressed the barriers and challenges for teachers in

the implementation of antibullying programs within the classroom setting. A list of

additional questions associated with antibullying programs and the struggle of

implementation within the classroom was addressed within the two focus groups for

further data. I used thematic analysis to identify, define, and code the themes into

categories for analysis with some themes linked to supporting quotes.

Secondary sources of data were from data collected and located in *Bullying*

Prevention and Intervention Plan from Public Schools (Pearson, 2012) and data collected

from the schools on bullying.

Definitions

Aggression: Aggressive behaviors show a lack of compassion due to the bully's

inability to recognize emotions; however, they are often proficient at reading and

analyzing the social cues of others and is perceived as an unpremeditated reaction to an

event (Studer & Mynatt, 2015; Ybarra et al., 2019).

Antibullying Program: The Olweus Bullying Prevention, a multilevel,

multicomponent school-based program designed to prevent or reduce bullying in

elementary, middle, and junior high schools (students ages 6 to 15 years old). The

program attempts to restructure the existing school environment to reduce opportunities

and rewards for bullying (Olweus, 1994).

Bullying: A subtype of aggressive behavior, which is deliberate, aim to harm and

gain power over the victim, which can include physical, verbal, and social abuse, and

repeatedly occurs over time (Barnes et al., 2012; Hornby, 2016; Rosen et al., 2016; Olweus, 1994; Ybarra et al., 2019).

Assumptions

The assumptions for this study included that the participants would be honest in responding to the questions of their experiences during the focus groups as they are the only sources of primary data. The next assumption was that the participants have experiences of barriers and challenges of implementing an antibullying program within the classroom. The third assumption was there is an adequate number of participants to describe their experiences with enough detail as data for this study.

Scope and Delimitations

The first delimitation was the participants (teachers) were only those who were middle school teachers and have had bullying in their classroom. No other social group was included in this study. The focus of this study was on a specific population, transferability increased by providing complete details of the methodology implemented in this study. In this aspect, researchers in the future may replicate the method for use within another population.

Limitations

Focus groups have advantages and disadvantages for their use. Ravitch and Carl (2016) provided numerous examples of advantages and disadvantages to use focus groups for this design. One key limitation is the reluctance to share their experience and perspectives in a group format. The structure and grouping of the participants can affect the collection of data. An example is principals or administration who are grouped with

teachers. Participants are less likely to provide their full experiences and hinder the gathering of data.

Additional limitations of this research included recruiting the necessary participants from each of the middle schools for quality focus groups. The goal for this research was 14 total participants; however, a limitation was only eight teachers participated overall. Barriers included all participants were at home during the focus groups due to the global pandemic and the focus groups were facilitated via video conferencing. A barrier could be my not asking the questions in the manner to gain the full data needed for this research, or the limited number of questions prepared for the focus groups. Using the same focus group questions for both groups had the potential to be a barrier due to the inability to adjust the questions for the second group. Personal bias may be a limitation due to self-reporting the experiences of the teacher's encounter. Further, a limitation could be of no updated material from the participating middle schools to incorporate from the 2012 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan Handbook. Finally, the grade levels are limited to sixth through eighth grade teachers.

Significance

This qualitative research filled a gap by focusing on the challenges educators face when implementing an antibullying program in middle schools in North Carolina in the United States. According to Cunningham et al. (2016), the barriers and challenges faced by middle school teachers when implementing antibullying programs are under researched. The results from the data collected may provide insight into teachers' barriers and challenges to assist in overcoming struggles of implementation and sustainability of

the antibullying programs (see Cunningham et al., 2016; Letendre et al., 2016; Lester & Maldonado, 2013). The results may strengthen the comprehension of administrators when establishing professional development for all middle school teachers striving for a safer environment for children by minimizing bullying behaviors to provide positive outcomes. This understanding of barriers and challenges can lead to improving the sustainability of antibullying programs and improving safety and security within school settings (Espelage et al., 2014). The research may lead to opportunities for positive behavior change within children of all ages, enhancing their development and understanding of relationships among people to improve society. Further expanding on the developing interests of community stakeholders and administration to create a climate of improving the school, community, and all those involved can be a key improvement to the implementation of antibullying programs (Espelage et al., 2014).

Gaining vast comprehension of prevention and intervention measures (Milsolm and Gallo 2006), knowledge, and understanding of detecting bullying (Strohmeier and Noam 2012), as well as learning bullying characteristics (Smith and Ananiadou 2003), can assist schools, classrooms, students, parents, and teachers in reducing aggressive behavior in children. This can also play a key role in eliminating the barriers and challenges teachers face in the classroom with implementation.

Summary

Bullying in schools is severe and prevalent (Uzoma, 2019). A gap in the literature remains concerning understanding the barriers and challenges teachers face when implementing an antibullying program in the classroom. The information in this chapter

sets the stage for the current world problem of bullying in schools. As stated throughout this section, the importance is gaining an understanding of the barriers and challenges teachers face and how to use those experiences to benefit and hopefully provide positive social change within the school district central North Carolina. Teachers' perception in relation to their barriers and challenges of implementing the bullying programs in the classroom has not been explored thoroughly. In this study, several middle school teachers' experiences will be analyzed to enhance the literature on this topic. Therefore, a qualitative phenomenological study is used to investigate these perceptions, experiences, barriers, and challenges.

Chapter 2 is comprised of the literature search strategy, conceptual framework, and key concepts and further identifies the gap in the literature and expand the basis for this study. Chapter 3 consists of the methodology and encompasses the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, participant selection, recruitment, and instrumentation, data analysis plan, and ethical procedures. Chapter 4 involves the setting, demographics, data collection and analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and results. Finally, Chapter 5 consists of the interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and conclusion.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Bullying is a growing concern within schools across the world (Bradshaw, 2015; Wojcik and Mondry, 2018; Blust, 2018). Olweus developed a program in 1983 to address bullying in schools after three boys committed suicide. In the 1990s, he continued working on the project to implement and evaluate the program in the United States (The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, 2005). After the Columbine shooting in Colorado in 1999, bullying has been studied more in-depth, and many antibullying programs are in action across the United States (Goldstein, 2013; Sims-Jones, 2017). This study addresses the barriers and challenges teachers face in the classroom during bullying situations when implementing the antibullying program adopted by the school district. The goal was to identify the barriers and challenges from the teachers' perception in the middle schools in central North Carolina. Educators can be the key to addressing bullying by implementing antibullying programs as a foundation for students.

The literature presents a lack of understanding of the barriers and challenges encountered by middle school teachers who use antibullying programs in the classroom setting (Blust, 2016; Cunningham et al., 2016; Dake et al., 2003; Marshall et al., 2009; Sims-Jones, 2017). There is research around interventions and teachers' attitudes toward bullying (see Byers et al., 2016; Yoon and Bauman 2014) and violence within the school to generate strategies; however, the research does not address teacher's barriers and challenges to implementation which is the purpose of this study. The literature provides a wide range of information relating to the definition of bullying (e.g., Salkind 2008), violence and aggression concerning bullying (e.g., Esplage et al., 2014; Gaffney et al.,

2019; Menesini and Salmivalli 2017), students' perspective and input of bullying (e.g., Chalamandaris et al., 2017), victimization of students (e.g., Garandeau et al., 2016), data from other countries (e.g., Cunningham et al.; 2016, Hornby 2016; Horton, 2019), or input from school personnel, staff or administration in urban areas (e.g., Bradshaw et al., 2013; Letendre et al., 2016; Lester and Maldonado, 2013). However, there is limited information on the specifics of barriers and challenges for teachers in the classroom (Blust, 2016; Cunningham et al., 2016; Dake et al., 2003; Marshall et al., 2009; Sims-Jones, 2017). The literature presented in this study is to explain the importance and need to understand the problems associated with bullying in the classroom entirely.

In this literature review I aimed to synthesize the literature on school bullying, the overall view of bullying prevention programs within the world, classroom management as it pertains to bullying, and the importance of teacher training; to see where that stands with teachers' barriers challenges implementing bullying prevention programs. The chapter also includes the conceptual framework I used to guide the study. I define key terms and concepts. Other topics are school policies, victimization and violence, administrators and staff input, and essential tools for successful bullying prevention programs. The chapter begins with an overview of my literature search strategies.

Literature Search Strategies

The research was conducted using the following databases and search engines to conduct the literature search: PsycINFO, PsychARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, PsycEXTRA, SAGE Journals, Science Direct, Google Scholar, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, and SAGE Knowledge. The list of keyword searches were *teacher perceptions,*

bullying, adolescents, middle school, violence, bullying in schools, educators, barriers, challenges, school bullying programs, antibullying programs, phenomenological study, school policies, teachers' barriers and challenges, implementation of bullying programs, ecological systems theory, Bronfenbrenner, and *understanding bullying.* When conducting my literature search, only a few recent articles were found regarding the implementation of antibullying programs or barriers and challenges for teachers. Recent and relevant dissertations from Walden University were used to assist with the literature review along with current research of journal articles that came from the Google Scholar search engine.

From my review of the literature, few researchers have addressed the barriers and challenges of teachers when implementing an antibullying program in the classroom. In the literature review, I explored the problem of bullying programs, the efficacy and efficiency of bullying programs, the policies of schools across the globe, lack of training for teachers, and the unidentified idea of implementing the bullying programs in the classroom and its progress as well as various other problems with bullying prevention programs. Topics also in this literature review are definitions of covert and overt bullying, victimization, antibullying programs, violence, and aggression, students' perception of bullying, teachers' roles and attitudes toward bullying, classroom management regarding bullying, and Administration perspectives of bullying. Also, I examined the conceptual framework for the present study and methods used.

Conceptual Framework

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory of development is a framework regarding the risk and protective factors with the involvement of school bullying during childhood and adolescence (Espelage, 2014). The model has also been called the social-ecological model, which focuses on understanding how children's characteristics interact with environmental settings to promote or prevent victimization and perpetration (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Espelage, 2014). This framework related to my research study regarding antibullying programs and what challenges teachers face. An example would be teacher or staff perceptions of the school environment and opportunities for professional development around bullying, school violence, or school climate (Espelage, 2014). A qualitative phenomenological method of inquiry was used to gain an understanding of barriers and challenges from the teachers in the classroom setting. This social-ecological theory approach helped address the risks and protective factors with school bullying in childhood and adolescence (see Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Espelage, 2014). Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of human development has five levels: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. This model emphasizes the importance of the developing person in his/her environment. Bronfenbrenner was interested in the human development of children within their natural environment, not in controlled or artificial situations (Salkind, 2019). Each of the levels defined is structured to fit within one another. The first level is the microsystem, which reflects the live setting that contains the person. This system also changes throughout the day as settings in our environment change. This level has three dimensions: physical

space and activities, people and their roles, and interaction between the people. The second level is the mesosystem, which focuses on the relationship between the different settings the person is in during different times of development. This system focuses on interrelations among the microsystems.

The third level is the exosystem. This system is a specific set of social structures that do not involve the person but still impact their development by influence or determines what goes on in the microsystem of the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). An example could be the teacher's lounge or grandma's house; it is an indirect impact on their development. The fourth element is the macrosystem. This level consists of all the items from all three levels; additionally, the general philosophy or culture orientation of which the person lives (Salkind, 2019). This system displays the importance of the role in our social world and its influence on us (Salkind, 2019). The final level of this model is described as chronosystem (Espelage, 2014). This system reflects the consistency or change of the person, like life events, and the transformation of the environment, like family structure changes throughout life. Some studies have shown when these life changes occur, and this may result in adverse outcomes in youth like peer aggression (Espelage 2014; Hornby 2016; Huang et al, 2018; Ybarra et al., 2019).

Allen (2010) presented an informational review of research exploring issues of classroom management, bullying in the classroom, and teacher practices from a social-ecological perspective. Her goal was to see if there is a link between classroom management, bullying, and teacher practices in which she found several connections, but further research needs to be explored. Bullying has a multitude of factors to make it

present. One of those factors is classroom management by teachers and responding inappropriately to students' behavior in contributing to adding labels of behavior to students (Wojcik & Mondry, 2018). An application of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory regarding the risk and protective factors with the involvement of school bullying during childhood and adolescence would be to say that if teachers cannot manage students' behavior, then those risk factors for bullying will increase.

Hornby (2016) examined the ecological approach as it refers to bullying interventions in middle schools. He provides examples of strategies and interventions at the teacher level, school level, community level, and society level. From the ecological approach from Bronfenbrenner, and because bullying is impacted by influences of the exosystem, which again indirectly impacts the person's life, effective bullying prevention strategies and interventions are needed at each level of the ecological approach to reducing bullying (Hornby, 2016). Teachers play a significant role in preventing bullying in the classroom. Strategies would include implementation of classroom principles on respectful relationships, which would include rules on unacceptable bullying, modeling relationship skills, and assertive behaviors of nonviolent conflict resolution and learning to be active listeners and effective problem solvers (Hornby, 2016).

To adequately explain and organize the present phenomenological study's findings, a framework that addresses the interaction between environment, experiences, behavior, and both direct and indirect influences was necessary. Further, the data obtained regarding the teachers' barriers and challenges of implementing bullying

programs will add to the development of ecological systems theory due to the sufficient exploration and environment examined.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

In the literature evaluation, I reviewed the available literature dealing with the variations in the definition of bullying and violence and aggression. Additional concepts including students' perception of bullying, teachers' roles, and attitudes toward bullying along with administrations perceptions of bullying in the school, teachers' barriers and challenges within other countries, assessing the various approaches of intervention methods and strategies through the viewpoints of other researchers and finally, addressing bullying prevention as social change.

A study conducted of educators in Canada exposed some barriers and challenges they are facing concerning effectiveness in implementing antibullying programs including a lack of training, an inability to detect if there is bullying, a lack of time allowed to implement the program, and an inability to sustain successfully (Cunningham et al., 2016). It is not known how or why these barriers and challenges affect the implementation of antibullying programs in middle schools, and research from teachers' perspective is limited (Blust, 2016; Bradshaw et al., 2013; Brown, 2014; DeOrnellas & Spurgin, 2017; Sims-Jones, 2017; Waters & Mashburn, 2017), which have made the progression of these programs difficult.

The literature presents a lack of understanding of the barriers and challenges encountered by middle school teachers who use antibullying programs in the classroom setting. There is research around interventions and educators' attitudes toward bullying

and violence within the school to generate strategies; however, it does not address

educator's barriers and challenges to implementation, which is the purpose of this study.

There is limited research from the teacher's perspective on the implementation of

antibullying programs in general. The understanding of barriers and challenges will assist

in minimizing bullying behaviors while providing an opportunity to instill positive

outcomes in middle school settings, which will need to be further researched.

Bullying

In 1982, a significant change took place regarding bullying (Olweus, 1993). Three

adolescent boys in Norway committed suicide due to severe bullying by peers which

began a reaction of the public and began a campaign against bullying/victim problems in

the Norwegian countries (Olweus, 1993). Bullying, as defined by Olweus (1993), is when

a student is exposed repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or

more other students. The meaning of a negative response was as when someone

intentionally inflicts or attempts to inflict injury or discomfort upon another. This is

implied as aggressive behavior (Olweus, 1993). Researchers (e.g., Cornell & Limber,

2015; Hymel & Swearer, 2015; Letendre et al., 2016; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017;

Studer & Mynatt, 2015) provided three characteristics to define bullying since it is a

broad concept and can be controversial within its meaning. These characteristics include

(a) intentional aggression, (b) a power imbalance between aggressor and victim, and (c)

repetition of the aggressive behavior (Olweus, 1993). Another research study describes

bullying as a subtype of aggressive behavior that is a deliberate and repeated act by a

person who has more power than the victim, which includes physical, verbal, and social

abuse (Ybarra et al., 2019). Bullying is a repeated act and has a strong imbalance of power over another person. Rosen et al. (2017) completed a research study of a teachers' perception of student aggressors and victims. The study took a different look at bullying and determined to bully is a subtype of aggressive behavior. It was also stated for the conduct to be considered bullying, conditions must be met: the action aims to harm the victim, the action continues over time, and the bully possesses greater power than the victim. This definition of bullying falls with many researchers and how it can show prevalence in schools.

The state of North Carolina defines bullying behaviors in the General Statutes, Article 29C, under School Violence Prevention, Section 115C-407.15 Bullying and harassing behavior as

> Any pattern of gestures or written, electronic or verbal communications, or any physical act or any threatening communication, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus, and that (1) places a student or school employee in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property; or (2) creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits.

Article 29C also goes on to define a "hostile environment" and what the bullying and harassing behaviors would include but not limited to,

> Acts reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national

origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of the following characteristics. (b) no student or school employee shall be subjected to bullying or harassing behavior by school employees or students. (c) no person shall engage in any act of reprisal or retaliation against a victim, witness, or a person with reliable information about an act of bullying or harassing behavior. (d) a school employee who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior shall report the incident to the appropriate school official. (e) a student or volunteer who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student or school employee has been subject to any act of bullying or harassing behavior should report the incident to the appropriate school official. (2009-212, s. 1; 2009-570, s.39.) *Section 115C-407.17 Prevention of school violence.* Schools shall develop and implement methods and strategies for promoting school environments that are free of bullying or harassing behavior. (2009-212, s. 1; 2009-570, s. 39.)

The struggling concern is if there is a general statue in the state of North Carolina defining the importance of bullying and harassing behavior and stating that each school administrative unit shall adopt a policy prohibiting bullying and harassing behavior as well as implement it in the school; how are students still being bullied in many middle

schools across the state? The goal is to gain that understanding from the teachers' who interact with the students the most.

Violence and Aggression

As stated earlier, bullying is a subcomponent of aggressive behaviors (Rosen et al., 2017), and violence is a subcomponent of aggression; however, a students' perception of aggression is viewed as less severe in some instances than bullying itself (Ybarra et al., 2019). What was considered typical by this group of students was verbal and emotional victimization. A definition of aggression is "just like anger" as posed by a student and bullying as "a deliberate attack" (Ybarra et al. 2019). When discussing aggression, violence, and bullying from students' perspective, bullying is far worse than any aggression towards each other. A typical bully usually will hold a negative opinion of others, has difficulty resolving problems, and the family can be hostile, struggling with poor parenting styles and authoritarian discipline flairs. The bullies who observe these aggressive acts also positively view violence and model their need for power and enjoyment in hurting others (Studer and Mynatt, 2015). Aggressive behaviors also show a lack of compassion due to the bully's inability to recognize emotions; however, they are often proficient at reading and analyzing the social cues of others (Studer and Mynatt, 2015). That specific ability relates to being able to choose the most vulnerable student and have the talent to encourage others to join in the negative behaviors (Studer and Mynatt, 2015). As stated earlier by a student, bullying is "a deliberate attack," which says something about how persuasive bullying is in our classrooms and schools. Menesini and Salmivalli (2017) provided knowledge and interventions with antibullying programs

concerning violence, risk factors, and outcomes of bullying and victimization. This is a literature study of effective interventions in middle schools and conveys essential tools needed for teachers about violence and risk factors.

Students' Perception of Bullying

Ybarra et al. (2019) provided an updated view from students on their version of their definition of bullying and aggression. The students' agreed it was physical, mental, and verbal victimization, an imbalance of power, bias and discrimination, repeated behaviors, lack of fairness, and the level of seriousness characterized as severe. Chalamandaris et al. (2017) provide information from a student's perspective regarding how teachers implement antibullying programs and what challenges they see using a specific antibullying program. This article is helpful but limited since it is from the student's viewpoint and not the teachers; however, it is a starting point of barriers and challenges that could assist teachers with implementation. Students in previous research (Milsom and Gallo, 2006) from a national study in 2001, 30% of the 15,600 students asked reported being bullied. It also reports males are more frequently involved in bullying or being bullied than females, which that statistic has not changed much over the past 20 years (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Ybarra et al., 2019). Students are still experiencing the same types of bullying, both covert and overt (Barnes et al., 2012; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Ybarra et al., 2019), whether in or outside the classroom.

Although the research on the student's perspective provided relevant information on how and why these programs are not being as productive, it does not address the teachers' perceptions of how and why these programs are not implemented well in the

classroom setting. Strohmeier & Noam (2012) report one avenue educators can prevent bullying, in the long run, would be to apply whole school evidenced-based programs that entail the school to engage in a development project to change the practices and culture in the school over time.

Teachers' Role and Attitudes

The role of the educator regarding bullying programs is essential to positive outcomes within the programs (Letendre et al., 2016). The role of teachers and schools is to provide the students with a high quality education, social skills, and helping them succeed (Lester and Maldonado, 2013). The role of the teacher is to work with the administration and counselors collaboratively to develop a plan of action that will yield positive results of decreased bullying (Lester and Maldonado, 2013).

One of the leading roles researched is effectiveness, and skillful classroom management is the most helpful anti-bullying strategy as well as additional training and understanding of how to intervene effectively in a bullying situation (Yoon et al., 2016). Additionally, the teachers' role is to provide sensitive responses to students' social-economic needs was a predictor of bullying situations (Yoon et al., 2016). One big key to the teachers' role and attitude is their personal experiences with bullying situations as a youth. They are more likely to affect their estimation of bullying situations and their responses to the bullies and victims (Yoon et al., 2016).

In other research (Rosen et al., 2017; Yoon & Bauman, 2014), a significant role for teachers needed more knowledge of bullying to be effective. It also went on to say teachers' responses to the bullying situation and behaviors affect the bullying behavior of

the students. A critical role for the teachers in the implementation of the bullying interventions and contribute primarily to the overall school climate (Rosen et al., 2017).

Classroom management (Yoon et al., 2016) plays a role in the effectiveness of bullying interventions and reducing bullying behavior. Allen (2010) researched this specific area of classroom management as it relates to bullying behaviors. Allen (2010) gives an informational review of research exploring issues of classroom management, bullying in the classroom, and teacher practices from a social-ecological perspective. Her goal was to see if there is a link between classroom management, bullying, and teacher practices in which she found several connections, but further research needs to be explored. Bullying has a multitude of factors to make it present. One of those factors is classroom management by teachers and responding inappropriately to students' behavior.

Administration Reflections of Bullying

Bradshaw et al. (2013) provided a nationwide quantitative study of teachers and professional staff of 5000 National Education Association members on their perception of bullying and the need for additional training on bullying and school wide policies. This study concludes that teachers were involved in the policies at their school but needed more training on cyberbullying, bullying related to sexual orientation, gender issues, and racial issues. Other conclusions were that there is also a great need for professional development for both teachers and professional staff. The importance of staff development and school policies within the bullying programs help reduce all types of bullying among middle school students. Brown (2014) provided information in which the

school system's policies needed to be reviewed and discussed more often, and further professional development in the area was a significant problem.

The increased amount of staff connectedness was associated with greater comfort with intervening in bullying situations. Also, having resources about bullying, training on the school's bullying policy, and being involved with bullying prevention efforts significantly improved the area of intervening by staff members (Lindstrom Johnson, 2018; O'Brennan et al., 2014).

An overall view would be to say the perception of bullying by the administration and staff is just as essential and vital to the school climate as the teachers' perception. Collaboratively working together to reduce overall bullying in the school system is imperative (Letendre et al., 2016).

Teachers' Perceptions of Barriers from other Countries

Many other countries, for example, Finland, Turkey, Australia, England, and Canada, have worked to develop and understand how bullying affects their school systems in their countries (Cunningham et al., 2016; Goryl et al., 2013; Hymel et al., 2014; Smith & Ananiadou, 2003; Wojcik & Helka, 2019). There are other countries ahead of the United States regarding bullying in the schools, but the researchers listed above provided the most recent information for this study. Cunningham et al. (2016) provided valuable information from the teachers' perspective on the difficulty of implementing antibullying programs in Canada. The researchers' purpose was to understand the factors limiting the effectiveness of the antibullying programs in middle

schools. This study is similar to the current research to understand the limits of efficiency and evaluate a comparison of those factors to develop social change.

Hymel et al. (2014) focused on the group phenomenon of bullying and the effects in the school environment, family, community, and society. Goryl et al. (2013) focused on the teachers' understanding and attitudes toward bullying in Australia. This study focused on the teachers' view of bullying, and better understood the policy and procedures to help manage to bully. Another study from Australia (Barnes et al., 2012) focused on the different types of bullying being covert and overt bullying. Their challenges were interventions and how to stop both types of bullying in the school system. Part of the issue is not a clear understanding of their school policy, not enough knowledge of the program, not enough knowledge of what bullying is, their personal experiences with bullying as a child, and not knowing when to intervene when bullying happens to their students. The continued research is to gain an understanding of bullying programs and how to provide a positive climate for children.

Students' perceptions (e.g., Ybarra et al., 2019) on school bullying and teachers' perceptions (e.g., Cunningham et al., 2016) collaborated may help determine the effectiveness of these school-based bullying prevention programs in the United States. Numerous research provided interventions strategies and ideas (e.g., Brown, 2014; Letendre et al., 2016; Milson & Gallo, 2005; O'Brennan et al., 2014; Rosen et al., 2017; Studer & Mynatt, 2015; Uzoma, 2019; Ybarra et al., 2019), the list goes on and on. There are also several key components from these researchers about interventions to reduce bullying. The components mentioned often are teachers' lack of knowledge or

understanding of bullying (e.g., Uzoma, 2019; Yoon & Bauman, 2014; Yoon et al., 2016), further training of how to manage bullying situations (e.g., Brown 2014; Bradshaw et al., 2013; Milsom & Gallo, 2003; Uzoma, 2019), calling on family and communities to assist in reducing students' behaviors (DeOrnellas & Spurgin, 2017; Hornby, 2016), changing school environments (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Studer & Mynatt, 2015) and collaboration with staff and administration to help outside the classroom (Letendre et al., 2016).

Summary and Conclusion

The literature review has provided a synthesis of background information of perspectives of bullying from teachers, students, administration and staff members, definitions of bullying and factors related to it, interventions, and the struggle with those interventions not only in the United States but throughout other countries as well and the conceptual framework associated with this study.

Regarding the definition of bullying, the researchers in this study all agreed and reported the same characteristics of imbalance of power, repeated behaviors, and intent to hurt someone else. The interventions suggested to the idea of bullying related to the teachers' lack of knowledge of bullying, lack of professional training, and a need for collaboration of all school personnel, family, and community to change bullying in the school. Although the current study focuses on the teachers' perception of challenges to implementation of these programs, I learned from the literature, the students' perspective is just as vital and important to reduce bullying (Ybarra et al., 2019) and gain a better understanding from the students' view will help to minimize challenges for the teachers.

The present study addressed the gap in the literature of challenges encountered by teachers by generating other aspects and factors that all relate to the teachers' challenges of implementation of programs in the classroom. The elements of gaining additional knowledge of bullying, having further training of professional development throughout the year, classroom management, understanding bullying behaviors and how to intervene, and gaining knowledge of the school policy and antibullying program within the school and how to implement it in the classroom are some of the factors presented. Additional information that is beneficial to the success of the reduction of bullying in middle schools comes from the students themselves. Many programs have been developed and are implemented in schools across the United States and globally. However, continued bullying, especially in the middle school setting, is what this current study addresses.

This study focused on an area in central North Carolina, where bullying continues in middle schools daily. A Bullying Prevention Handbook is provided in the schools, and the school counselor oversees any issues with bullying. When bullying happens in the classroom, the teacher is the first to recognize, stop, and redirect the behavior. Here is where the gap in the literature comes into play in which one article was found out of Canada to find out what limitation's teachers are having to effectively implement the prevention of bullying in the classroom (Cunningham et al., 2016). Chapter 3 offers an extensive deliberation on the type of exploration method used for this study. This exploration will consist of a conceptual tradition of analysis, study sample, and population, the method of data collection and the procedures and instruments, data

management procedures, problems of bias and ethical deliberations, researcher's role, duty, and prejudice, participants' bias, and finally protections for the participants.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Bullying is a growing concern within schools across the world (Bradshaw, 2015). Educators can be the key to addressing bullying by implementing antibullying programs as a foundation for students. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of middle school teachers in North Carolina implementing an antibullying program in the classroom. Continued research regarding barriers and challenges from teachers' standpoint presented from previous research (e.g., Brown, 2014; Lester & Maldonado, 2013, 2014) needs to be addressed to discover how to effectively implement the programs in each school throughout the United States. A study conducted of teachers in Canada exposed some barriers and challenges they are facing about effectiveness in implementing antibullying programs include lack of training, harder to detect if bullying, the time allowed to implement the program, and inability to sustain the program successfully (e.g., Cunningham et al., 2016). It is not known how or why these barriers and challenges affect the implementation of antibullying programs in middle schools, and research from teachers' perspective is limited (Bradshaw et al., 2013; Brown, 2014; Waters & Mashburn, 2017) which has made the progression of these programs difficult. Most of the research has focused either on student input, data from other countries, or victimization of students rather than on teachers' perspectives of barriers and challenges (Cunningham et al., 2009; Cunningham et al., 2016; Letendre et al., 2016).

To address the research problem and answer the research question, I used a qualitative phenomenological method to gather the relevant data and performing data

processing and analysis of themes. The details of the method and the study design are provided in this chapter. This chapter includes a description of the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, methodology, participant selection, instruments, measures of recruitment, participation and data collection, data analysis plan, issues of trustworthiness, ethical procedures, and a summary.

Research Design and Rationale

This study was a qualitative phenomenological study of the barriers and challenges of educators to implement an antibullying program in the classroom. The phenomenon explored was the teachers' perceptions of their challenges and barriers when implementing the antibullying program in middle school classrooms in central North Carolina as well as their recommendations for how to improve the classroom situation, program, and procedures. The research question (RQ1) was as follows:

RQ1. What are the barriers and challenges teachers experience in implementing antibullying programs in the classroom setting?

I determined that the qualitative phenomenological design was the most effective design to answer the research questions. A qualitative phenomenological method was used to explore the experiences of teachers from various middle schools across central North Carolina, in the United States. This approach used two focus groups and I asked qualitative questions for each focus group, discussing barriers and challenges they face trying to implement antibullying programs in their classroom during bullying situations, to collect data. Based on the research question, focus groups provided the most effective feedback. In comparing focus groups and interviews, Nyumba et al. (2018) explained that

interviews are a more direct one-on-one dialogue with the participants, whereas, in focus groups, the researcher is the facilitator of the group discussion and the researcher's role is peripheral role rather than direct. Using a qualitative approach allowed me to identify interests, recognize strengths, and emphasize barriers and challenges from a collection of peers collaborating to provide their personal experiences. In this qualitative phenomenological study I explored the attitudes, opinions, and experiences of teachers regarding implementing an antibullying program in the classroom setting. The two focus groups were used to examine the teachers' knowledge to develop ideas within the group's dynamic (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The purpose is to identify the barriers and challenges faced by teachers in classroom settings when dealing with bullying situations.

I considered a quantitative or mixed methods approach with this study; however, a quantitative study would not have allowed me to explore the personal and unique descriptions of the participants' experiences. A qualitative approach using focus groups was needed to gain a deeper understanding of the teachers' experiences (see Lester and Maldonado, 2013).

A qualitative approach is selected when the data collected involve lived experience, narratives, perceptions, and other observational data that may not be visibly measured (Uzoma, 2019). I selected the qualitative phenomenological design based on the need to explore participants' lived experiences and their perception of those experiences (Burkholder et al., 2016). Phenomenology focuses directly on lived experiences and perception and can deepen the understanding of why people react and respond in particular ways (Burkholder et al., 2016).

In selecting a phenomenological design, the focus is on transcending the individuals' reporting experience into patterns and themes (Burkholder et al., 2016). Phenomenology was the correct design for the current study is due to the importance of inclusive inquiry of the lived experience of the participants using focus groups (see Moustakas, 1994). The research question aligns with the phenomenological design. Phenomenology requires gathering people's perceptions based on their own words (Burkholder et al., 2016).

Ethnography is describing different aspects of a culture and how that culture influences behavior over a prolonged period (Burkholder et al., 2016). Bullying is more about behavior more than a culture; therefore, the ethnographic design was rejected. The case study method involves examining an issue in a specific location and using multiple sources (Burkholder et al., 2016). My study addressed multiple locations and focused on teachers' experiences, so the case study approach was not appropriate. Grounded theory was not appropriate to this study because there was no need to develop a theory, and narrative analysis is inappropriate because there was no need for qualitative data presented in a story (see Burkholder et al., 2016). My study addressed human experience from a small group of participants who are not bound by time or location (see Burkholder et al., 2016). In conclusion, phenomenology was the most appropriate method to examine the experiences of the participants and answer the research question.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is to gather, organize, and analyze perceptions from the participants who experienced the phenomenon (Burkholder et al., 2016). This study's

primary focus was the need to understand from an educators' perspectives, not students', why antibullying programs are not effective in the middle school setting. When reading through the literature, I was surprised to find limited information from the teachers' perspective concerning the implementation of school antibullying programs. My role as the researcher was to explore the effectiveness of bullying programs in middle schools through each participant's lived experiences. My role was the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing the focus groups' data. The data was hand coded per Gibbs and Taylor's (2010) epoche data analysis process and Groenewald's (2004) method of analysis to avoid researcher bias in the collection and analysis of participants' responses from the focus groups.

Additionally, records were kept of the reflections, ideas, and thoughts about possible connections among data and the participants. I conducted a review of responses by the participants and review my conclusions to ensure bracketing of my experience (see Burkholder et al., 2016). Bracketing is important to keep the participants' perceptions intact and the researcher's perceptions separate (Burkholder et al., 2016).

Managing Bias

In any research, some amount of bias will be present. However, one way to eliminate bias is to ensure that none of the research participants are relatives, personal friends, members of the researcher's social network, or individuals who have professional relationships with the researcher (Burkholder et al., 2016). Participants may be prone to change their answers based on the researcher's or colleagues' perceptions of bias. Strategies to prevent researcher bias include avoid leading the participant with facial

expressions or gestures or questions that imply a perspective the researcher may want them to share (Burkholder et al., 2016). Pushing the participants to continue answering when they do not want to or sharing a personal story with the participants is also a way of introducing bias (Burkholder et al., 2016).

Incentives

Participation was voluntary for this study; however, a $10 gift card was offered as a token of appreciation for the participants' time and experiences provided. A further incentive was their valued contribution of lived experiences to provide a better understanding of their challenges in reducing bullying in the middle school setting. Results will be shared with the participants and study site schools after the study is published.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The target population in this research was volunteer middle school educators from Grades 6 through 8 in central North Carolina. The sample frame is from various middle schools, for a total of eight total teachers. The recruitment for participants was limited, having only eight participants. I used schools in central North Carolina to gather the required data for the study.

The sample included female and male middle school teachers from different subject areas and a range of years of service. This study as not dependent on an equal number of male and female participants. Participation criteria included being a middle school teacher with at least 3 years of experience from Grades 6 through 8 who have

experience with bullying in their classroom. Recruitment included emailing the administrators from two websites, NC Teachers United and NC Teachers for Change. A seven-question intake questionnaire was provided in the email for volunteers to be recruited for the study. I split the teachers into two focus groups randomly so no teacher from the same school will be in the same focus group. The focus groups consisted of males and females from different academic disciplines and grade levels.

Instrumentation

Participants were ensured the opportunity to reflect and share their lived experiences of the research topic. Providing this centered on developing and applying pertinent questions to obtain the core of the participant's experience (see Mustakas, 1994). This instrument of open-ended questions (Appendix A) allowed me to vary questions and explore answers to generate rich complex ideas and lived experiences from each participant. The focus group questions were designed to gather data on a personal experience level and seek to understand the barriers and challenges of each participant teacher. As a qualitative study, follow up questions and probe questions are additional tools used to assist the participants in fully sharing their experience as a further collection of relevant data (Ravitch and Carl, 2016).

Content Validity

Content validity is vitally important to ensure the focus group questions will elicit the data necessary to answer the research questions. In conducting the focus group discussions, a focus group protocol (Appendix B) was used along with the audiotape of the focus group discussions to ensure the validity of the data collected. No additional

follow up questions were asked for collection of more relevant data. All the focus group questions and focus group protocol were subjected to an expert review for improved credibility of the focus group composed of my dissertation committee. The review evaluated the focus group protocol, the structure, content, and wording of the items, along with the questions, for the appropriateness of the study. The expert review feedback is the basis for modifications to the focus group questions and focus group protocol. The validity in qualitative research is a process that takes techniques and methods to achieve the goal (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Recruitment

Recruitment included gaining permission from the administrators from two websites, NC Teachers United and NC Teachers for Change to use those websites to elicit volunteers of male and female willing to provide their experiences, barriers, and challenges of implementing antibullying programs in the classroom. When conducting the recruitment process for the participants, the researcher provided a flyer of the study on the two websites for the teachers to volunteer as participants from various middle schools. A seven question intake questionnaire (Appendix A) was provided in an email sent to the volunteers recruited for the study. Exclusion criteria was determined by less than three years of experience teaching middle school and incomplete intake form. Part of the recruitment process, virtual focus groups were needed, was a protocol for the participants to adhere to for confidentiality purposes.

Participation

The participant's identity and the identity of the school was labeled using letters to identify the school and numbers to identify the participants. When conducting the focus group discussions, a focus group protocol was used as a guide. The sampling strategy was a purposeful random sampling of eight participants for this study. This type of sampling strategy was chosen because of the flexible nature, which allows the researcher to purposefully select the participants who have the necessary experiences in relation to the phenomena being explored (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The focus groups had both male and/or female represented from the middle schools.

Data Collection

The researcher facilitated and collected the data at both focus group discussions. Each focus group discussion lasted between one and one and a half hours, depended on the comfortability and willingness of the participants providing their experiences, barriers, and challenges. The researcher presented the questions and had the discussions digitally recorded to maximize engagement during the focus group discussion. As a result of COVID-19, the focus groups were conducted virtually using Google Meet and Doxy.Me. Part of the recruitment process, if virtual focus groups are needed, is a protocol for the participants to adhere to for confidentiality purposes. The researcher recorded the focus group discussions using the same process if in person.

After the focus group questions were complete, and the participants have no other experiences, barriers, or challenges to share, the focus group discussion ended. The researcher thanked all the participants for their time, valued experiences, and willingness

to participate in the study, and provided each participant with a $10 gift card. Reassurance to the participants of their identity and the identity of the school remained unidentifiable by using letters to identify the school and numbers to identify the participants. The researcher may share results with participants to be determined later.

No follow up procedures took place after the focus groups were completed. The saturation of data collected in the focus group discussions was the participants reporting the same types of experiences for the questions presented.

Data Analysis Plan

The research was a qualitative methodology of a phenomenological design. The researcher used an approach based on thematic analysis utilizing semi structured questions related to the research questions to explore the participants' responses. This investigation emphasized the subjective recollection of the lived experiences of barriers and challenges from teachers who are implementing antibullying programs in the classroom. Groenewald (2004) refers to qualitative data analysis as explicit instead of analysis by examining the data as a whole unit instead of breaking into parts. Groenewald (2004) describes five steps for the explicitation process. (1) Examine the data as a whole unit getting participants' perspectives. (2) Extract units of meaning from each participant. (3) Cluster the meanings into themes. (4) Summarize and validate each participant interview and modify it if needed. (5) Extract general and unique themes from all the interviews and make a merged summary from where the themes emerged.

Using Groenewald's (2004) approach, the data was collected in two focus group discussions using semi structured questions related to the research questions for this study

to explore the participants' responses. A focus group protocol (Appendix D) was used as a guide for each focus group. It was digitally voice recorded using an Olympus digital recorder and from the Google Meet platform. Groenewald's second step of obtaining meaning from each participant's experience was to provide valued data of emerging ideas and phrases. Each focus group discussion was transcribed using MAXQDA software, referring to Kuckartz and Radiker (2019) codebook. The researcher read and reread the transcripts to begin the coding process. The researcher analyzed the data referring to the single research question for this study of teachers describing their experiences, challenges, and issues of bullying program implementation using MAXQDA computer software to code the data using Kuckartz and Radiker (2019), Saldana (2016), and Taylor and Gibbs (2010) data analysis process. The third step of Groenewald's approach was to gather the data coding with phrases, words, or emerging ideas representing a meaning or identifying keywords used by the participants related to the questions and research questions. Participants were validated for their experiences expressed. The final step was categorizing emerging themes linked to quotes from the participants (Nyumba et al., 2018 and Rubin & Rubin, 2012). After the first focus group discussion was completed, a preliminary analysis of meaning was extracted to identify themes or new findings that enhanced future observations in the second focus group discussion.

The epoche process steps was used to avoid personal bias and prejudice of the participants' responses in answering the questions (Moustakas, 1994). As humans are the primary instrument of collection for this study, they are particularly prone to some degree of the process. The design of the process is to set aside prejudgments, biases, and any

preconceived ideas about things, to allow for new knowledge, events, things, and people to enter as new.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Trustworthiness, when discussing research, is the ability to be reliable for honest and accurate research. The validity of the research falls in this category. To be transparent with the process, documenting how the themes emerged, and being specific within the coding and interpretation of the analysis of the data makes the research valid and truthful (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

The researcher, as the lone ethnographer, may consult with participants for follow up in a way to validate the findings (Saldana, 2016). A way to check the trustworthiness is to code as the data is transcribed, keep a reflective journal on the research, and check your interpretations with the participants themselves (Saldana, 2016).

Transferability

Transferability or external validity is when the emerging themes are linked back to the participants during the focus group discussions. Participants who engaged in the study were ensured their confidentiality was certain and could share their experiences candidly and without fear of being identified. Dependability of the research with an assurance of the use of a review process, discussions, and observations was documented after each focus group and kept in a research study journal.

Confirmability

Confirmability of the research suggests specific structured reflexivity exercises be conducted throughout the research process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Finally, the data is kept in a protected database and will be discarded after ten years.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical values are a vital part of the foundation of a research study. Within this current study, ethical procedures start with gaining access to the participants. Permission was obtained by the administrators from two websites, NC Teachers United and NC Teachers for Change to use those websites to gain participants. All the participants completed an informed consent (Appendix B) not only as a requirement by the Institutional Review Board but also as protection for the participants. All participants completed a consent form and emailed the researcher "I consent" (Appendix B) from Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to participant in the study. All participants and the middle schools will remain confidential to reduce any discrimination or retaliation. To maintain the privacy of the participants and the schools involved, no names of the participants or the schools were recorded; however, gender, years of experience, and class taught were recorded as needed for the inclusion of the recruitment criteria.

Due to COVID-19, virtual focus groups were conducted using the platform Google Meet or Zoom. A confidentiality protocol was in place to secure participant's information and the data collected during the focus groups. The same consent form (Appendix B) was completed, and the participants emailed researcher "I consent" to participate in the study.

All participants were able to attend at the designated time via GoogleMeet and DoxyMe platforms. Each participant was invited to the platform as part of the participation.

All data was received by the researcher at each focus group. The researcher has kept the data gathered from the focus groups in a secure location, and the researcher has the only access to the data. The data will remain secure for five years, and then data will be destroyed.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to explore the perceptions of teachers' experiences, barriers, and challenges associated with the implementation of bullying programs in the classroom. This section described the approach and procedures that was used in this study. The chapter also presented the methods in the data collection and interpretation, including the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, methodology which includes participant selection, instruments, measures of recruitment, participation and data collection, data analysis plan, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures.

Two focus groups were facilitated by the researcher for data collection recruiting eight middle school teachers. MAXQDA was used to transcribe, code, and analyze the phenomenological data. The findings were validated with numerous sources of data, rich accounts, and transcript review. Chapter 4 presents data analysis and the results of the inquiry.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of middle

school teachers in North Carolina implementing an antibullying program in the

classroom. To enhance my understanding of this phenomena explored by this purpose

and research question, I conducted two focus groups of four participants in each group

for a total of eight participants. All the participants met the requirements of inclusion,

engaging the focus group protocols specified in Chapter 3 (see Appendix C). After

transcribing each focus group with MAXQDA program and reviewed by myself, I began

a thorough analysis of the data, which will be described in detail in the sections in this

chapter. Using Groenewald's (2004) approach for the phenomenological data analysis,

the collective core of the experiences of the participants emerged categories and

subcategories which then developed into multiple themes linked to quotes from the

participants which responded to and answered the research question.

In this chapter, I will present the categories and emergent themes. I will provide

information about the setting, the demographics, the data collection process, and analysis,

discuss the evidence of trustworthiness, and conclude with the results of this study. I will

finalize the chapter with a summary of the answers to my research question and provide a

transition to Chapter 5.

Setting

As described in detail in Chapter 3, I was able to conduct two focus groups

consisting of four teachers in each group from the privacy and security of using a remote

videoconferencing platform, GoogleMeet in a separate room in my home for privacy and

confidentiality for the participant. The participants were also in a private, separate room in their home during the focus group. Both focus groups were recorded from the GoogleMeet platform as well as using Olympus digital recorder. After receiving the informed consent document by email prior to the focus groups, all participants agreed to have the focus group recorded to ensure accuracy of the gathered data, providing me the opportunity to focus on each participant as they shared their experiences. Each participant understood they could withdraw from participation in this study at any time. No participants expressed any discomfort or concern throughout the focus group process.

A circumstance that must be noted is that these focus groups were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic that necessitated a mandatory stay-at-home order throughout the United States, which meant that all participants were at home when the focus groups were conducted. Additionally, because the stay-at-home order affected almost everyone, some participants may have had members of their family in the home during the focus group interviews; however, all the participants were successful in participating in the focus group in private. None of the participants expressed any concerns. The focus groups were conducted without interruption.

Demographics

The participant population for this study were eight middle school teachers located in the central part of North Carolina. Participants included middle school teachers with experience of 5 years and beyond and teaching in a variety of academic classroom settings from three different middle schools in central North Carolina.

To safeguard the privacy of the participants, no names or school names were recorded, however, gender, class taught, and years of experience was recorded to meet the inclusion requirements to participate. Participants consisted of three males and five females all having 5 years plus experience as a middle school teacher. Participants were two Physical Ed teachers, one English Second Language/French teacher, two Drama/Speech, Language Arts teachers, one Art teacher, one Special Education teacher, and one Math teacher. The teachers came from three different middle schools which are in central North Carolina

The eight participants participated in two focus groups consisting of four teachers each. Semi structured questions were addressed during the focus groups and each teachers 'responses were recorded. I asked the first question; however, the teachers just began talking and telling their experiences, so not all the questions needed to be asked as the teachers responded with experiences that associated with the questions.

Data collection was achieved through GoogleMeet videoconferencing for the first focus group and Doxy.Me for the second focus group. The first group lasted 1 hour and 38 minutes and the second focus group lasted 1 hour and 5 minutes. Both focus groups were recorded using GoogleMeet recording function, Doxy.Me recording function, and Olympus digital recorder. No variations in data collection were encountered that was presented in Chapter 3.

There were a few unusual circumstances that occurred during the study. One circumstance developed while trying to gain participants for the study. In Chapter 3, the original plan was to use the school districts email addresses for potential participants. No

teacher responded from the 105 emails sent out. I returned to the IRB for approval to use a different avenue to gain participants. I emailed administrators from two websites, NC Teachers United and NC Teachers for Change to use those websites to gain participants. I was able to obtain eight teachers who responded from these websites to participate in this study.

The other unusual circumstance during this study was the COVID-19 pandemic which restricted individuals to remain at home under stay-at-home orders throughout the United States. Due to this, all the data was collected via teleconference and at times, which resulted in sporadic and momentary time lapse and had to repeat questions or have participant restate their response. Being unable to detect these fluctuations, even when lasting only a few moments, added to the difficulty to accurately discern the words stated by the participant. To verify the accuracy of the participants responses, I restated what I heard from the participants and allowed for clarification from the participant.

Data Analysis

I approached the responsibility of data analysis using Groenewald's (2004) approach for the phenomenological data analysis of examining the whole unit instead of breaking into parts. I began by listening to the audio files of the focus groups three times. I used MAXQDA to transcribe word for word while listening simultaneously to the audio file recordings which allowed for me to correct any errors but also fully hear the teachers 'experiences again. During this process, I engaged in epoche and journaling any assumptions, biases, or added beliefs (Moustakas, 1994). This allowed me to remain aware of the ethical standards and responsibility to the study.

Coding Procedures

This study yielded a large amount of data of numerous experiences. Using the MAXQDA software, I found it easiest to code each of the questions from the two focus groups. After rereading the transcriptions again, I color coded key words and phrases as categories that stuck out from each of the teachers 'experiences under each question asked. I combined liked words or phrases together showing the consistent repetitiveness which transitioned into subcategories.

At this stage, I went to handwritten mapping or a tree diagram of the categories and subcategories. The diagram consisted of the research question at the top, branching into eight categories or branches, which broke into branches of two to three subcategories. This emerged into themes and at times quotes pertaining to those themes. The tree diagram was used to provide a visual for me of the key words and phrases from the teachers 'experiences. The eight categories are what emerged from the semi structured questions asked in the focus groups: Administration, classroom management, counselors, how often, making it better, parents, professional development, and programs. Following Groenewald's (year) method of examining the data as a whole unit instead of breaking it into parts, seeing the participants 'perspective, extracting the units of meaning, clustering the meanings into themes, summarizing the participants experiences to extract general and unique themes from all the participants to make a combined summary of where the themes emerged is presented by developing the tree diagram to show the categories and subcategories. This turned into Table 1.

Themes

The research question for this study asked participants to describe their barriers and challenges when implementing antibullying programs in the classroom by describing their experiences. After reflecting on the teachers 'experiences, four themes emerged that were consistent within both focus groups: (a) relationships are crucial with students, (b) lack of training, (c) lack of consistency from administration, and (d) no programs in place. The components that comprised and encompassed these themes were from the eight categories previously listed.

Theme 1: Relationships are Crucial with Students

This theme was by far the most repeated statement within the experiences the teacher's conveyed was building relationships with the students. All eight teachers agreed that relationships with students is one of the main keys to help reduce bullying whether it is in managing the classroom or outside the classroom. One teacher reported,

"Making those connections, for the students to see the teachers as approachable, acknowledging the students around the campus and in the community make a big difference regarding all the students. Letting the students see the teacher as people and the teacher see the student as people help foster a positive relationship overall."

Many teachers report bullying happening daily, but it also depends on the class, the teacher, and the location of the class for bullying to be often or rare. All the teachers agreed that the Physical Ed (PE) class has the highest amount of bullying going on due to not being a choice for the student, issues with body type and development, and the

comfort level for most kids. This is where building relationships is important but difficult to do at times. One of the PE teachers stated "I deal with bullying by calling the kid out and saying to them, hey, that's not respectful, that's not dignified. We don't do that to people." The other PE teacher was also familiar with bullying, stating "Dealing with the locker room is tough. When I'm not looking, that's when it depends on the definition, and it could be tiny or could be something big and it also depends on the people." These are two key areas in which building relationships with students is highly important and crucial to reduce bullying situations.

Theme 2: Lack of Training

The second most repeated component is training or lack of training when it comes to learning how to manage bullying situations in the classroom and as a bystander. Teachers reported minimal training and two of the eight reported never being trained at all as part of professional development. A teacher expressed "I don't know what the training would be on how to try and help me make a connection with a kid." Another teacher stated, "Know how to be the bystander who steps in effectively. That would be super helpful." Another expressed, "If two kids are bullying each other, I'd like to know that I have something in my toolbox to pull out and use whether they respect me or know me, but I'm just walking down the hall and they are misbehaving." A teacher with over 10 years of experience stated, "It is very difficult to combat it when we aren't really trained to know what to look for."

Teachers reported having programs in the past but with little to no training on how to handle situations or manage events that occur. Without training, teachers expressed having to be creative within their class and create their own version of managing bullying situations. Teachers reported when they would have training or professional development, they could not remember what to do because it's not always consistent year to year with bullying in classrooms. A teacher expressed, "the training needs to be made of realistic situations." While another teacher stated, "It is a judgement call, but I think I could do it." Teachers reported the training, when it would happen, never had follow through or follow up trainings as a continued assistance. Teachers reported that training only happened once. All eight teachers stated wanting more training yearly and more than just one but training that had someone to reference for assistance and follow up trainings to be fully aware and comfortable to address these situations. Classroom management is also a part of this sections and the importance of managing the class relies heavily on training. All the teachers agreed that classroom management involves building relationships and connections, having consistency, being creative within your classroom environment to manage situations, and training to gain skills. Classroom management encompasses all these themes, but the themes must come first to maintain classroom management.

Theme 3: No Programs

The idea of an antibullying program in a school was developed in the effort to prevent bullying situations from turning into mass shootings at schools (citation). All eight teachers reported no current program in place at their school or their perspective is a

lack of awareness of the current program. Teachers reported having to be creative in their individual classrooms on how to handle bullying. However, some teachers also stated they use the counselors heavily for assistance with difficult kids and talk with their colleagues and observe how they may handle a situation. One teacher stated, "I use what's called the six pillars-citizenship, respect, character, and a few others but I incorporate it into my curriculum." Another teacher responded that "Programs are inauthentic. It's more for show and it's like checking a box." Another teacher stated, "They feel very inauthentic, the kids see right through them, and don't feel like we are doing any good. No one is taking it seriously and just checking the box." Six teachers agreed, but the Language Arts teacher stated, "Part of the problem is really administration, teachers, and counselors, I don't think they know what to do. I mean I don't think there is anything out there that really works." A PE teacher stated, "We are trying to reinvent the wheel or use a different slogan that we are trying to do." It was consistent from all the teachers that they rely heavily on the counselors to assist them in the classroom or hallway with a bullying situation. One of the PE teachers stated the counselors are very hands on in the classroom if there is a difficult with students.

Theme 4: Lack of Consistency From Administration

When discussing any issues with administration, the teachers did not hesitate to express their views and concerns which was the inconsistency within the administration regarding bullying programs or assistance helping teachers with the bullying situations. One teacher said, "Administration is addressed about programs or even training and

bringing to their attention certain situations or events of bullying and the administration

don't address it." Another stated, "Its frustrating as a teacher to not be taken seriously

when we are the one who lives with these kids 8 hours a day." Several other teachers

agreed, with one replying, "Again and again we are not supported. At the same time, it's

like what do we do? Let the kids run the show? We need support when we bring these

issues to administrations attention, but we don't." The importance of support from the

administration is a vital part of teacher morale and an understanding from the teachers

that the administration is supportive and will address these concerns and provide relief.

> All the teachers reported on many incidents of inconsistency with administration
>
> turnover and lack of communication within the administration regarding programs
>
> or training follow through. The teachers expressed frustration about the limited
>
> support and relying on colleagues for help and feeling trapped as the teacher
>
> because they still must teach the kid. According to one participant, "the problem
>
> is money. They have money to have the program once and have no follow up
>
> because they can't afford to bring it back in, so I guess you need to find a good
>
> program that don't cost or is cheap."

When there is limited support and backing, the teachers report frustration, burn out, and

low morale.

Discrepant Cases

As a phenomenological exploration of my participants 'lived experiences with the

phenomena that were explored in this study, I recognized the importance and value of

each participant's experience, regardless of the extent of their academic classroom setting. I approached the analysis of all the data with the same epoche, no matter what area of academia the participants 'experiences might have been. Even though the participants were from different fields of academics, the experiences echoed across all participants.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility was stablished in this study through the accurate representation of experiences from each participant being explored. This ensured for full transparency with the process, ensuring the principle of meaning derived from their narratives depicted each participant's unique personal accounts making the data valid and truthful (Ravitch and Carl, 2016). I asked for clarification to fully understand the participant's meaning and verify what they were sharing. At times, I'd ask a follow up question for clarification or say back to them what I heard them saying. Whenever inaccuracies were stated, I immediately had the participant clarify and then I followed up again with verification by repeating what I heard the participant share.

Transferability

The transformation of the participants 'lived experiences into descriptions of rich data emerge into themes and are linked to the participants experiences during the focus groups is achieving transferability. The participants were assured confidentiality, and all shared their experiences candidly and without fear of identification. Random sampling

strengthened my ability to include participants from varied schools, different levels of

experience and academia, yielding data that was representative of a broader impression of

experiences with the phenomena that were explored in this study.

Dependability

I engaged in epoche, self reflection of my assumptions and bias to create an

accurate account of the process throughout the research process. I demonstrated

dependability in my research by maintaining journaling and memo writing. I manually

transcribed the data to ensure accuracy of what the participants shared. I manually coded

the categories and themes using a tree diagram and flowchart to accurately represent the

participants lived experiences.

Confirmability

Confirmability was achieved by the accurate representation of the experiences

explored, the data that was collected, how the data was interpreted, and the presentation

of the findings. It was crucial to maintain an awareness of my biases as the researcher

throughout the process. Continuing with reflexivity by maintaining journals, memos, and

the obligation to use epoche.

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Results

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The research question for this study focused on teachers' experiences of their

challenges and barriers of implementing antibullying programs in the classroom. The

conceptual foundation for this studying is Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory of

development. This is a framework regarding the risk and protective factors with the

involvement of school bullying during childhood and adolescence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979

and Espelage, 2014). The model has also been called the social-ecological model which focuses on understanding how children's characteristics interact with environmental settings to promote or prevent victimization and perpetration (Espelage, 2014). This framework relates to the research study regarding anti-bullying programs and what challenges the teachers face. An example was a teachers' perceptions of the school environment and opportunities for professional development around bullying, school violence, or school climate (Espelage, 2014). Using this qualitative phenomenological method of inquiry, I gained an understanding of barriers and challenges from the teachers. This social-ecological theory approach addressed the risks and protective factors with school bullying in childhood and adolescence from the experiences shared by the participants (Espelage, 2014).

The experiences provided by the eight participants represents a clear understanding from a teachers' perspective the barriers and challenges teachers face with implementation of antibullying programs in the classroom. The categories and themes are interwoven with knowledge that can be expressed in quotes from the participants of their experiences.

Table 1 provides a breakdown of the barriers and challenges from the teachers' experiences provided from the data. These barriers and challenges are the foundation for the four emerging themes.

Table 1

Barriers and Challenges from Participants' Shared Experiences

Categories	Barriers & Challenges
Administration	No consistency. No follow through. No support with parents. No engagement. No community support. Unable to gain info from Elem. teachers. No money for programs.
Classroom Mgmt.	Relationships. Staying engaged. Managing classroom setting. Try to keep positive. Needing tools to prevent bullying. Need buy in from students. Passion. Positive curriculum.
Counselors	Hands on. Relationships. Not enough counselors for the number of students.
How often is Bullying	Depends on class size. It's daily in the hallway. Daily in P.E.
Making it Better	Relationships. Consistency. Focusing on the positive. Passion. Being clear and firm. Driving it home from the beginning. Needs buy in. Need to Care. Involve the kids in development of programs.
Parents	No involvement. Reactions to bullying situations.
Prof. Development	Lack of Training. No follow through with training. No consistency. No support from admin. Needing tools to stop bullying.
Programs	Inauthentic programs. No programs/lack of awareness. Don't know what to do with a program. No support from admin. No follow thru with programs.

Participants shared their experiences of the school environment and building relationships with the students, professional development, classroom management, lack of help and consistency from the administration, and dealing with parents and how to handle bullying situations in their classroom or hallway.

Four themes emerged from the data, but the two big standouts from the experiences shared by the teachers were the need to have relationships with the students and the need for professional development around managing bullying.

One example all the teachers agreed on was the need to build relationships with the students. The French teacher stated, "Making connections with our students is super critical. But also, the students need to see us as approachable in some fashion otherwise those connections don't get made. Acknowledging them around the school and community makes a big difference to our students. By letting them see us as people and we see them as people that really helps foster a positive relationship overall."

All participants reported the need to be creative in their individual classrooms to manage bullying when it arises on any given day. Some teachers reported struggling with that but relied heavily on the counselors and their colleagues to help them out. Participants also agreed that classroom management was vital to managing bullies which goes along with building the positive relationships and proper training to be confident in these areas. Various teachers from both focus groups made the following statements as a need of beneficial information as a teacher. One PE teacher stated, "Training is a major roadblock" in all avenues including "bystander training and for the training to be realistic." Another teacher stated, "Knowing how to be that bystander that steps in effectively would be super helpful." The Language Arts teacher reports, "I'd like to have something in my toolbox to pull out whether they respect me or not or know me or not." Yet another stated, "It's really hard to combat when we aren't really trained to know what to look for in regard to more self-stuff." The special education teacher stated, "I may have training but don't use it that year with my students and then the next year I need it but don't know what to do because I can't remember the training."

Additional data relating to the need for training was shared by the participants of their experiences with the administration and the lack of consistency or support. Participants shared experiences in which they brought concerns to the administration about bullying and weren't taken seriously or they didn't address it with the student or parents. Participants shared their experiences about feeling frustrated and they felt they had to rely on colleagues for help or ideas to address bullying in their classrooms. One teacher stated, "It's frustrating as a teacher to not be taken seriously when asking for assistance when we are the ones who are with these kids eight hours a day." Another reports, "Lack of consistency with the administration makes a big difference in what our bullying program looks like." The science teacher states, "Be trained. Be involved, communicate. Have meetings about it. Talk to the students about it. The more communication and training the better. Have a zero tolerance to bullying but also zero tolerance to kids being mean and nasty in the classroom and to carry a more positive learning environment in general, will get respect to respect others."

Another category that emerged and was touched on briefly by the participants was parents' perspective on bullying in the school and how much they are involved. This concept although single in nature, relates with the category of lack of administration support. Participants reported when addressing bullying situations with the administration for help, the administration may or may not reach out to the parents; and when they do, don't support the teacher and the issue with bullying. The speech and drama teacher reports, "If I the teacher go in and say I just heard from another teacher that these two kids aren't supposed to be together in the same class and they are in the same class, and

it's a disaster. I need them switched. Nothing happens. But, if the parents of one of the kids come in and say the other kid is not supposed to be with my child, I want he/she removed. It's done. Just that fast." French teacher stated, "Parents involvement is critical to any type of program. If you can get the parents engaged in the program and the process, but as far as how they would get that done that really depends on the demographics of the school. It's kind of a catch 22 thing and can be very tricky." Art teacher stated, "Parents have way too much power in some capacities and that's very difficult because it undermines a lot of us professionally." Another teacher stated, "Parents come into the school and complain. Boom! There's a schedule change on the dot. It's frustrating and hurtful to teachers because it's like our admin aren't standing up for us but they are going to please the stakeholders."

One key question that summarized a lot of the data was "what the participants could do to make it better?" Each participant made a statement and provided an experience to what they can do to make schools better, the system better, and reduce bullying. All participants agreed that building good relationships with the students is the number one key. All the teachers participated in providing input. Table 2 links the categories and themes to the quotes listed below.

One teacher report, "I think it's important to be visible often whether the hallway, at assemblies, we need to be visible, so the kids know who we are whether they are on your team or in your class." Another states, "Rather than saying antibullying, we need to say what is the expected behavior? How are we civil to each other? Not you are a bully, and we are going to fix it. But how do we all treat each other civilly? Celebrating

diversity and understand not everyone learns the same way." Another states, "Focusing

on the positive things and making your curriculum for the program a positive outlook on

life." One of the PE teachers stated, "If you drive it home from the beginning, the process

will work better and stay on them from the beginning. You can't be lack and it needs to

be implemented from day 1." Another added, "Involving the kids when coming up with a

program." Another responded, "Would be nice to have the community involved with

bullying stuff because kids are bullied outside the school and in the community as well."

Science teacher responded, "I try to be a good example. I try to demonstrate respect. I'm

clear and firm with the students." A PE teacher stated, "Passion! Passion! Some who

cares about the program and not just adding it to their resume. I think it's important to

call a kid out when they are being a bully. I want to find out what's going on with this

kid." Another commented, "The passion the person (teacher) has to bring it in. Morale

can be turned around if you have a positive attitude and care that they want to be there."

Another commented, "We have to build rapport five days a week and that's what's

missing with remote learning. We don't have the consistency, more difficult to build

trust. Where at school, they know us and know our expectations." Another stated, "Some

type of program in place proactively to teach the teachers how to use it and it's in place in

case something occurs. I'd do a program approach or use a book. The training would be

how do you know the difference between bullying and friendly teasing? How do you

know? How do we make the kids feel ok to report it? How do we make them feel

comfortable to tell us what's going on? Maybe not using the word 'bullying'. Use words

like teased or harassed instead of bullying. It still would need to be reported." Another

commented, "We don't have any programs that I know of. We have had some in the past that only last for a short while and don't have follow through or continued training to know how to implement properly."

Table 2

Quotes/experiences shared relating to the themes

Themes	Quotes/ Experiences
Relationships are critical with students	"It depends on the environment. Positive classroom management is the key."
	"Making those connections, for the students to see the teachers as approachable, acknowledging the students around the campus and in the community make a big difference regarding all the students. Letting the students see the teacher as people and the teacher see the student as people help foster a positive relationship overall."
	"I deal with bullying by calling the kid out and saying to them, hey, that's not respectful, that's not dignified. We don't do that to people."
	"Dealing with the locker room is tough. When I'm not looking, that's when it depends on the definition, and it could be tiny or could be something big and it also depends on the people."
	"We have to build rapport five days a week and that's what's missing with remote learning. We don't have the consistency, more difficult to build trust. Where at school, they know us and know our expectations."
Lack of Training	"It's very difficult to combat it when we aren't really trained to know what to look for."
	"If two kids are bullying, I'd like to know that I have something in my toolbox to pull out and use whether they respect me or know me, whether in my classroom or walking down the hall."
	I don't know what the training would be on how to try and help me make a connection with a kid."
	"Know how to be the bystander who steps in effectively. That would be super helpful".
	"It is very difficult to combat it when we aren't really trained to know what to look for".
	"the training needs to be made of realistic situations ".
	"It's a judgement call but I think I could do it".
	"I may have a training but don't use it that year with my students and then the next year I need it but don't know what to do because I can't remember the training."
Lack of consistency & support from Administration	"Administration pleases the parents instead of supporting or backing us when an issue arises."
	"We get no support when it comes to addressing issues and are not taken seriously."

"Be trained. Be involved. Communicate. Have a meeting about it. Talk to the students about it. The more the communication the better. Have a zero tolerance for bullying."

"Administration is addressed about programs or even training and bringing to their attention certain situations or events of bullying and the administration don't address it."

"Again and again we are not supported. At the same time, it's like what do we do? Let the kids run the show? We need support when we bring these issues to administrations attention, but we don't".

"The problem is money. They have money to have the program once and have no follow up because they can't afford to bring it back in, so I guess you need to find a good program that don't cost or is cheap."

"Lack of consistency with the administration makes a big difference in what our bullying program looks like."

"Parents have way too much power in some capacities and that's very difficult because it undermines a lot of us professionally."

"Parents come into the school and complain. Boom! There's a schedule change on the dot. It's frustrating and hurtful to teachers because it's like our admin aren't standing up for us but they are going to please the stakeholders."

Lack of Programs	"I use what's called the 6 pillars-citizenship, respect, character, and a few others but I incorporate it into my curriculum".

"Programs are inauthentic. It's more for show and it's like checking a box".

"They feel very inauthentic, the kids see right through them ,and don't feel like we are doing any good. No one is taking it seriously and just checking the box".

"Part of the problem is really administration, teachers, and counselors, I don't think they know what to do. I mean I don't think there is anything out there that really works".

"We are trying to reinvent the wheel or use a different slogan that we are trying to do."

"Passion! Passion! Someone who really cares about the program is what's needed".

"Parents involvement is critical to any type of program. If you can get the parents engaged in the program and the process, but as far as how they would get that done that really depends on the demographics of the school. It's kind of a catch 22 thing and can be very tricky."

"Some type of program in place proactively to teach the teachers how to use it and it's in place in case something occurs. I'd do a program approach or use a book. The training would be how do you know the difference between bullying and friendly teasing? How do you know? How do we make the kids feel ok to report it? How do we make them feel comfortable to tell us what's going on? Maybe not using the word 'bullying'. Use words like teased or harassed instead of bullying. It still would need to be reported."

"We don't have any programs that I know of. We have had some in the past that only last for a short while and don't have follow through or continued training to know how to implement properly."

The eight categories intertwine with the core themes to answer the research question of teachers' barriers and challenges implementing antibullying programs in their classroom.

Summary

The research question was designed to gain an understanding through the participants experiences their challenges using antibullying programs in the classroom. The participants' responses generated rich, passionate, and definitive data about their lived experiences with the phenomena. My interpretation of data through the application of Groenewald's approach of analysis yielded four core themes from the eight categories generalized among all participants experiences. Accentuating each participant experience with respect, clarity of information their experiences, and active listening, the participants' descriptions of their experiences enhanced my understanding of their barriers and challenges within the classroom.

In chapter 4, I provided an overview of the setting and conditions of this study. I presented demographics of the participants, detailed my data collection process, and discussed my data analysis. I discussed the evidence of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of this study. In presenting the results, I broke down the data into 8 categories which emerged four themes relating to the research question through my interpretation of the data. Finally, I summarized the answer to the research question that was obtained by my interpretation of the data.

In chapter 5, I reiterate the purpose and nature of the study, interpret my findings through descriptions and referring to the literature in chapter 2 and in the conceptual framework for the study, provide limitations of the study and recommendations for future research. Provide implications of positive social change and describe the impact from this

study and conclude by sharing the soul and importance of this study's data and why it

matters.

Chapter 5: Summary, Interpretations, and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' experiences of their challenges and barriers of implementing antibullying programs in their classroom. To explore this, I completed two focus groups of four teachers each with experience over 3 years and in any academic area to yield a diverse sampling. Their detailed, rich responses to the research question regarding their experiences with the phenomena provided data in which four core themes emerged. The four themes of (a) relationships are critical with students, (b) lack of training, (c) no programs, and (d) lack of consistency from administration helped clarify the basis of their collective experiences.

Each participant shared their experiences and perspectives of barriers and challenges in implementation of antibullying programs. All eight participants agreed that building positive relationships with students is critical in reducing bullying situations in the school setting. This study further revealed essential components from a teachers' perspective how to reduce bullying in a classroom setting. The analysis of the data yielded four core themes that enhance the participants experiences of their barriers and challenges with bullying programs in a school setting.

Interpretation of the Findings

The literature has shown a lack of understanding of barriers and challenges of middle school teachers within the classroom setting (Blust, 2016; Cunningham et al., 2016; Dake et al., 2003; Marshall et al., 2009; Sims-Jones, 2017). Researchers have described interventions (see Byers et al., 2016; Yoon & Bauman 2014) but the literature does not address teachers' barriers and challenges with bullying programs in their

classroom. The gap in the literature confirmed the need for this research as it extends the knowledge of the barriers and challenges teachers face with bullying in and out of the classroom setting and what can be done to make it better for the teacher. These barriers and challenges comprise of all eight participants agreeing they have not had proper training when it comes to bullying situations whether in their room or within the school campus and stated there are no programs within their school to use or implement regarding bullying situations.

Additionally, all eight participants reported they rely heavily on the school counselors for support but lack that support from the administration. The limited specific information of barriers and challenges for teachers in the classroom in the literature (see Blust, 2016; Cunningham et al., 2016; Dake et al., 2003; Marshall et al., 2009; Sims-Jones, 2017) and the data from this study, help to bring the gap of knowledge and understanding together.

Further, mentioned in the literature review, numerous researchers (e.g., Brown, 2014; Letendre et al., 2016; Milson & Gallo, 2005; O'Brennan et al., 2014; Rosen et al., 2017; Studer & Mynatt, 2015; Uzoma, 2019; Ybarra et al., 2019) provided interventions or ideas to reduce bullying. The research studies had similar components that correlate with the themes found in this research study including (a) further training of how to manage bullying situations (Brown 2014; Bradshaw et al., 2013; Milsom & Gallo, 2003; Uzoma, 2019), (b) calling on family and communities to assist in reducing students' behaviors (DeOrnellas & Spurgin, 2017; Hornby, 2016), (c) changing school environments (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Studer & Mynatt, 2015) and (d)

collaboration with staff and administration to help outside the classroom (Letendre et al., 2016).

While the literature presented interventions to reduce bullying, it lacked the research of the barriers and challenges from a teachers' perspective. The results found in my study show the need for relationships with students is a vital component to reduce bullying in the classroom or anywhere on school campus. A participant reported, "Making connections with the students is super critical. But the student also needs to see us as approachable, otherwise those connections don't get made." Another participant stated, "It depends on the environment. Positive classroom management is the key."

The lack of training to fully understand bullying is limited or nonexistent in some middle schools. A participant expressed, "It's very difficult to combat it when we aren't really trained to know what to look for." Another stated, "If two kids are bullying, I'd like to know that I have something in my toolbox to pull out and use whether they respect me or know me, whether in my classroom or walking down the hall."

The lack of consistency and support from the administration is another big key component to reduce bullying throughout the school campus. The previously published literature does not touch on the consistency or support from administration as an issue but more of their view about bullying. This research shows the importance of support and consistency from the administration as a key component in reducing bullying from a teachers' perspective. An English teacher stated, "Administration pleases the parents instead of supporting or backing us when an issue arises." Another teacher stated, "We get no support when it comes to addressing issues and are not taken seriously." A science

teacher replied: "Be trained. Be involved. Communicate. Have a meeting about it. Talk to the students about it. The more the communication the better. Have a zero tolerance for bullying."

Finally, the lack of programs was a key component. Teachers provided information from past programs they have experienced but the lack of awareness of current programs in their respected school was also a big component. However, the literature does not describe any school without a program in place. This component is probably the most important of all. Without a program to follow or be able to assist a teacher during situations connects the reasons for the other themes that emerged. Teachers' perspective was that no programs were in place at the time of this study and furthermore, teachers rely heavily on the counselors to take over in bullying situations. It would seem to say without a program to begin with, these teachers must make a daily judgement call to manage their classroom and rely heavily on one to three counselors for the whole school. The findings show the teachers want the training to gain more classroom management daily as well as have tools to address bullying at any point while on the school campus.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory focuses on risk and protective factors with involvement with school bullying during childhood and adolescents. This theory, also called the social-ecological model, focuses on understanding how children's characteristics interact with environmental settings to promote or prevent victimization and perpetration (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Espelage, 2014). The findings showed great concern from the teachers' perspective of kids who are bullying others could have been

doing it in the elementary grades as well and with not knowing that knowledge leads to

further bullying episodes with a lack of training and understanding on how to help the

student. A few participants stated if they knew more about the child and their behaviors

in elementary school, they could prevent bullying in the middle school and possibly

provide help to the student but also have the support from the administration to not link

certain students together. This represents one of the categories of classroom management

which corresponds with the theme of lack of training.

Summary of Findings

Each of the four themes, were derived from eight categories: administration,

classroom management, counselors at school, how often is bullying, parents' perspective,

professional development, programs, and what to make it better. The experiences

provided by the eight participants represents a clear understanding from a teachers'

perspective the barriers and challenges teachers face with implementation of antibullying

programs in the classroom. The categories and themes are interwoven with knowledge

that can be expressed in quotes from the participants of their experiences.

Table 1 located in chapter 4 provide a breakdown of the barriers and challenges

from the teachers' experiences provided from the data. These barriers and challenges are

the foundation for the four emerging themes. From these categories, four themes

emerged, relationships are critical with students, lack of consistency and support from

administration, lack of training, and no programs available in the school or the teachers

lacking awareness of present programs in the school. Table 2 located in chapter 4 provide

the teachers' experiences of quotes with the desired theme. From the categories, four

themes emerged, relationships are critical with students, lack of consistency and support from administration, lack of training, and no programs available in the school.

Teachers provided recommendations on How to Make it Better from the teachers' perspective with bullying in the middle school. The list below provides those recommendations of quotes and experiences to make the school system better for the kids and teachers.

Participants had the following ideas on how to make things better

We need to be visible, so the kids know who we are whether we have them in class, in the grade or not.

The idea of teachers connecting and being able to help each other in bullying situations.

Focus on the positive things and making the curriculum for the programs a positive outlook on life.

Making and keeping relationships and connections with the students.

Consistency is very important and building on what we have and build upon it instead of starting over with something new and having no follow through.

Start from day 1 and drive the process home without lack.

Involve the students in the building of the program.

Involve the community in the program to ensure consistency in all areas.

Passion! You must care about the program and what you are doing.

Be clear, firm, and realistic with the students.

Limitations of the Study

The nature of data gathering for a qualitative study requires self-report from the participants which may provide information that is unintentional or intentionally biased or influenced by social desires or interactions by pushing the participant to continue to answer or through body language and gestures (Burkholder et al., 2016). The assumption the participants shared their experiences openly and truthfully without reservation of the other participants in the focus group. Additionally, gaining the participants with the school email and with the permission of the superintendent shown to be a disheartened stop to the progress and I had to change the course of obtaining participants by means of social media websites. The limitation also made it to where not all participants were from the same school or school district and the lack of awareness from those participants of programs currently in the school. This was also a difficult challenge as the school year was ending from remote learning due to Covid-19 Pandemic.

The research was also conducted during a world pandemic making the focus groups via remote using Google Meet which seemed to be easier as the participants did not have to leave their homes to travel or worry about childcare if needed. However, with this pandemic, it is impossible to know the limitations which may have resulted. As the focus groups were through Google Meet video conferencing, the difficulty with the technology and the inability to hear and articulate the participants affected the accuracy of the recordings and the transcriptions in minor ways.

The diversity of the participants was limited as majority of participants were Caucasian, however, two were Hispanic decent and the gender of the teachers were five

females and three males. This does not represent the diversity of the state of North Carolina or the student body within the school districts. Although, each participant exceeded in five or more years' experience with majority of them having close to twenty years in the middle school teaching field.

Another limitation to the study was the use of the full MAXQDA program. The program was beneficial for transcribing and exporting the information into excel spreadsheet, however, there was no way to contact for technical support or questions with the program due to the origin being in Germany and not English speaking. The inability to use the program fully resulted in not gaining the accessibility the program had to offer with this research study.

Finally, my inexperience as a qualitative researcher and my individual collection of biases must be noted as a potential limitation. As the participants provided their experiences it was difficult to not be bias and on their side of how they see their classroom and the struggles they endure daily. The struggle as an inexperienced researcher is to not get pulled into the participants' experiences and focus more on the factual understanding of the experiences given.

Recommendations

The data generated in this study provided insight into the barriers and challenges of teachers' implementing antibullying programs in the classroom. This expands the knowledge and understanding of the continuation of bullying in middle schools. As previously stated, the How to Make it Better list provides recommendations to improve the bullying behaviors in the middle schools and additional research exploring bullying

with schools who have set programs with schools that do not, compare teachers' and students' perspective of bullying, completing a quantitative study of the same questions asked to administration then compare the findings with this study, and expanding this research to across the United States and all regions not just in North Carolina, are just some ways to expand on this research.

Implications

Positive Social Change

As with any research, it is impossible to know the positive social change that may result, however, my hope as my ultimate goals is that this will provide understanding to the administration in school districts of the importance of the teachers' perspective of bullying in their classroom and the challenges they face daily. My hope it that this research will also encourage other researchers to continue looking for positive implementations to reduce bullying in all schools across the United States and the world. As a soon to be educator, the positive social change in relation to this study as I pursue education at a higher level is to remember the experiences provided by these middle school teachers and how they continue to strive daily to have positive and creative learning environment as they are there for the student to provide educational foundation. Creating this same type of environment to higher level students, passing on the positivity within the society creates the change to improve the world today.

Conclusion

The understanding of bullying has many variables that can be added to it, violence and aggression, students' perspective of bullying, the many different types of bullying

programs, teachers' role, and attitudes with bullying to name only a few. Much of the literature was devoted to students' perspective of bullying (Ybarra et al., 2019; Chalamandaris et al., 2017; Milsom & Gallo, 2006; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). The purpose of this research was to focus on the teachers' perspective of bullying and implementation of antibullying programs in their classroom. To manage bullying in the school system, it is a collaborative approach with teacher, student, parent, family, administration, faculty, and community. As a teacher stated, "It takes a village to be the most productive."

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Appendix A: Participation Intake Form

PARTICIPATION INTAKE FORM

Please complete the information below completely. Don't leave any questions unanswered, otherwise, your intake form will be disqualified for the research group.

1. Circle   Male/ Female

2. Name   _____

3. Age   _____

4. Name of School   _____

5. Grade teaching   _____

6. Please indicate by putting an "X" indicating how many years of experience

   you have teaching middle school students:

   a.   ____ 1-2 years

   b.   _____ 3-6 years

   c.   _____ 7-12 years

7. Have you experienced bullying in your classroom or school environment?

   Yes   No (please circle)

Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

FACTORS/LIMITATIONS

1. Tell me about your experiences implementing an antibullying program?
   What challenges, if any, do you face?

2. What specific responses do teachers report using when addressing bullying situations in the classroom?

PROGRAMS, ADMINISTRATION, POLICY

3. If counselors are responsible to assist teachers when a bullying situation arises, what are your experiences in the classroom using the programs set in place by the school to be successful?

4. What discussions have been made regarding the antibullying program with faculty and administration within the classroom setting?
   How often are these discussions with faculty?

TRAINING

5. Are you confidently trained with the antibullying program at your school?
   What additional training is needed to feel confident in securing a bullying situation in your classroom?

INTERVENTIONS

6. How difficult is it to intervene in a bullying situation in the classroom and/or outside of classroom setting?
7. What experiences do you have with how bullying in the classroom originates? How is classroom management an issue?

8. How important is including parents in the implementation of an antibullying program? How are they included in this process? If not, why not?

9. What can teachers do to make antibullying programs work better?

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Appendix C: Focus Group Protocol

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

INTRODUCTION AND PROCESS

- Researcher will introduce herself to the participants
- Researcher will explain the role as the facilitator to participants
- Explain role of participants to the study including house rules
- Researcher/Facilitator will introduce the study to participants
- Thank participants for their time and valued experiences
- Remind participants about purpose of the focus group
- Advise participants of time, confidentiality, and consideration of others' thoughts, feelings and experiences
- Remind participants the focus group will be recorded for data use only, notes will be taken by facilitator, and all documents and data will be stored securely.
- Record what participants share
- End on time
- Thank participants again for their valued time and provide with a gift card
- Discuss the summary and publication of the study