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Bullying, Participation in Violence, Suicidal Ideation, and Behavior Among African American Youth

Kierystan LorQuoyea Johnson
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Walden University

College of Health Sciences and Public Policy

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Bullying, Participation in Violence, Suicidal Ideation, and Behavior Among African

American Youth

by

Kierystan L. Johnson

MPH, Capella University, 2015

BS, Florida State University, 2013

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Health

Walden University

May 2022

Abstract

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among adolescent, teens, and young adults. Suicidal ideation is a predictor of suicide attempts. Guided by the integrated motivational-volitional model and social cognitive theory, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey data were used to investigate whether traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in physically violent behavior (independent variables) were associated with suicidal ideation and behavior (dependent variables) among African American high school aged youth controlling for age, gender, physical, and sexual abuse. It was found that experiencing traditional bullying increased suicidal ideation significantly, as there is an 82% increase in likelihood. There was also an increase in the likelihood of suicidal ideation resulting from cyberbullying (87%). There was a 39% increase in the likelihood of suicidal ideation when engaging in physically violent behavior. There was a nearly 85% increase in suicidal behavior for those who experienced traditional bullying. There was also a nearly 82% increase in suicidal behavior for those who participated in physically violent behavior. However, a decrease of 16% likelihood of suicidal behavior resulting from cyberbullying was found. Determining how these disparities may impact the prevalence of suicidal ideation and behaviors among the youth population could inform efforts for prevention and contribute to the development of new intervention strategies and programs that could reduce the likelihood of suicidal ideation and behavior among the youth and improve their lives and the lives of their families and communities.

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Dedication

I dedicate this research in memory of my grandmother, Lorata F. Franklin (1/21/1940-09/28/2021). Thank you for being one of my top supporters and biggest motivators. I have always looked up to you and your grace is unmatched. I apologize for not finishing this dissertation before you made your transition. I promise to continue to make you proud as I carry on your legacy. I miss you sorely and I love you always.

I dedicate this research to my daughter, McKennah. You are another source of my motivation. The many all-nighters you have pulled with me, since undergraduate, were not in vain. It is important for me to not only verbally emphasize the importance of achieving an education, but to role model it for you. Remember, to always be opened to learning and discovery, as you will continue to gain knowledge over your lifetime. I love you truly!

I dedicate this research to victims of bullying. Know that you matter. Know that you have purpose. Know that your journey is important, and it should not end too soon. I will continue to fight with and for you.

Finally, I dedicate this research in memory of the youth who have succumbed to suicide. I hope that your soul has found the peace you deserved on Earth.

Acknowledgments

I would like to begin by sending my sincerest appreciation to my Chair, Dr. Peter Anderson. Thank you for your guidance, your instruction, and your patience. This research has been one of the most difficult academic tasks, I have had, and I truly appreciate you for walking with me. Thank you for reassuring me when I felt I could not pass certain obstacles.

Acknowledgements of gratitude to my committee members Dr. Michael Dunn and Dr. JaMuir Robinson their feedback and guidance throughout this research. Additionally, thank you to Dr. Zin Htway, who assisted me with methodology and data analysis. Thank you all for your contributions to the completion of my research.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Suicide among adolescents and teens is a public health concern. For the United States, suicide is the 10th leading cause of death and the second leading cause of death among adolescents, teens, and young adults (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2018; Spates & Slatton, 2017; Ziaei et al., 2017). The prevalence of suicide is higher among Black youth when compared to their White counterparts (Forte, et al., 2018). According to the Foundation for Suicide Prevention (2019), Black students report the highest rate of suicide attempts (9.8%) compared to White students (6.1%). According to Lindsey et al. (2019), Black adolescents had positive linear trends in terms of suicide attempts for both boys and girls. Furthermore, according to Forte et al. (2018), Black minority groups were shown to have a heightened risk for developing mental health problems, along with more risk factors associated with suicide attempts. Since youth suicides are occurring at rapid rates, comprehensive efforts are necessary to address this public health issue.

Bullying among adolescents and teens has been attributed to long-lasting adverse psychological effects with public health consequences. Teenage victims of bullying are more prone to suffering with mental health disorders, low self-esteem, and feelings of isolation (Lai & Kao, 2018). Among the student population, Black minority and male students are a greater risk of experiencing bullying behaviors. These bullying behaviors include but are not limited to being threatened, assaulted, having belongings damaged, stolen, or forcefully removed, and being verbally put down (Lai & Kao, 2018). Poor

mental health can heighten risk of suicide, and youth without mental illness may have suicidal ideation due to factors that disrupt their quality of life such as bullying (Greydanus, 2017). Although physical bullying is more prevalent among male youth, emotional bullying is more prevalent among female youth (Kim et al., 2018; Sampasa-Kanyinga et al., 2017).

For this study, I investigated the presence of both traditional and cyberbullying among African American youth in grades 9-12. I tested whether bullying (both traditional and cyberbullying) and participation in violent behavior are associated with suicidal ideation and behaviors among African American high school aged youth. For this study, participation in violent behaviors includes being in a physical fight within the past 12 months. Cyberbullying involves being bullied through forms of social media (Wolke et al., 2017). Traditional bullying occurs without the use of media, in this case, on school property. Suicidal ideations are thoughts of suicide and planning for suicide (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2020). Suicidal behaviors or attempts are non-lethal, self-directed, and potentially injurious behavior with the intent to die (NIMH, 2020). Therefore, understanding if these disparities are present in suicidal ideation and behavior, and if changes have occurred over time could inform prevention efforts and contribute to the development of new intervention programs that reduce the likelihood of suicide in this age group.

Findings of this research could be used to further identify potential risk factors of suicidality among a historically, underserved population. This chapter includes an introduction, problem statement, nature of the study, research questions and hypotheses,

research objectives, purpose of the study, theoretical framework, operational definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance, and a summary.

Background

Prior research has been conducted to find correlations between various factors and suicidal behavior. Prevalence of cyber-bullying was 13.5% and traditional bullying was slightly lower at 13.4% (Roberts et al., Axas, Nesdaole, and Repetti, 2016). The researchers also found that cyber-bullying victims were more susceptible to suicidal ideation, sexual abuse, physical abuse, and higher rates of inpatient admissions (Roberts et al., Axas, Nesdaole, and Repetti, 2016). Of female youth admitted to the inpatient crisis department, two-thirds had a history of being a victim of cyber-bullying (Roberts et al., Axas, Nesdaole, and Repetti, 2016). The researchers emphasized the need for more strategies toward suicide prevention and intervention. Kodish and colleagues (2016) addressed both cyberbullying and traditional bullying and the effects on the prevalence of suicidal ideation and behaviors. The researchers found that verbal bullying was associated with suicidal attempts (Kodish et al., 2016). Students who were victimized and those who were bullies showed increased levels of depression, psychological distress, and suicidal ideation when compared to students of other populations (Le et al., 2017). Quality of mental health was lower among those involved in bullying, both victims and perpetrators, compared to students without involvement in bullying behaviors (Le et al., 2017). Chronic bullying was strongly linked to poor mental health for both males and females (Le et al., 2017). However, Vietnamese girls were more sensitive to involvement in long-term bullying, compared to low level bullying among boys (Le et al., 2017).

I attempted to fill a gap in research by addressing suicidal ideation and behaviors among African American youth nationwide, by assessing if there was an association with suicidal ideation and behaviors, bullying, and participation in physically violent behaviors. While researchers have conducted studies that have considered bullying and suicide, none have studied combinations of these variables in a study. In the present research, I investigated if there is an association between suicidal ideation and behaviors and bullying (both traditional and cyberbullying). Physically violent behavior was also a factor in terms of associations between suicidal ideation and behaviors. This research will lead to increased knowledge for public health professionals regarding implications of bullying behaviors, and correlations between these behaviors and heightened risk of suicidal ideation and behaviors. This research could help with identifying at-risk youth to improve prevention and intervention strategies among public health professionals.

Problem Statement

Suicide is the second leading cause of mortality among youth (Spates & Slatton, 2017; Ziaei et al, 2017). The rate of suicide attempts has increased among the African American population (Foundation for Suicide Prevention, 2019). According to the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Black students had the highest rate of suicide attempts at 9.8%, when compared to White students at 6.1%. White youth had a higher incidence of suicide compared to Black youth (Forte et al., 2018). According to Forte et al. (2018), higher rates of suicidal ideation, thinking about suicide, or having the desire to take one's life exist among ethnic minorities.

Increased prevalence of this public health problem makes the present research necessary. The purpose of the present study was to advance knowledge among public health professionals regarding bullying, participation in violence, and suicidal ideation and behaviors among African American youth. This could be critical for developing evidence-based interventions and prevention strategies.

Purpose of the Study

I used a correlational cross-sectional quantitative analysis of secondary survey data. Independent variables of this study are being a victim of bullying (both traditional bullying and cyberbullying) and being a participant in a physical altercation within the past 12 months of the study. The dependent variables are presence of suicidal ideation (making suicidal plans) and suicidal behavior (failed suicide attempts). Covariates are age, gender, physical, and sexual abuse.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

RQ1: What is the association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged, African American youth when controlling for age, gender and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₁: There is no association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a1}: There is an association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ2: What is the association between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, physical, and sexual abuse?

H₀₂: There is no association between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a2}: There is an association between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ3: What is the association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₃: There is no association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a3}: There is an association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ4: What is the association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₄: There is no association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a4}: There is an association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ5: What is the association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₅: There is no association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a5}: There is an association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ6: What is the association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₆: There is no association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a6}: There is an association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks for this study were the integrated motivational-volitional (IMV) model and social cognitive theory. The IMV model, created by Rory O'Connor, can be used to identify why people die of suicide, factoring in psychological, biological, cultural, and environmental contributors that play a role in suicidal ideation and behaviors. This theory is relevant to the present study as it involves group factors and events (premotivational), ideation formation (motivational), and the action (volitional). The theory includes testable hypotheses, which could lead to opportunities for improved intervention and prevention strategies. For the purpose of this study, the IMV model can be applied to the variables. The premotivational phase would be bullying (both traditional and cyberbullying). In this case, bullying would be considered an event that could contribute to moving into the motivational and volitional stages. Suicidal ideation is part of the motivational phase because ideations consist of suicidal thoughts and planning. The final phase is the volitional phase. This is when the person decides to move forward with the action. Suicidal behavior falls under the volitional phase because the individual acts out a behavior.

In evaluating the relationship between bullying, participation in violent behaviors, and suicidal ideation and behaviors, another suitable theory is the social cognitive theory. The social cognitive theory, developed by Albert Bandura, is an interpersonal level

theory that involves interactions between people, their behaviors, and their environments (LaMorte, 2019). A person who may be chronically bullied may feel that ending his or her life will be the most viable solution to resolving the bullying. Self-efficacy is confidence in one's ability to perform a particular behavior. If a victim of bullying seeks relief, the victim may begin making a suicide plan or attempt. Collective efficacy is believing that performing an action will bring a desired change. Experiencing bullying can be a traumatic experience, and the individual may want the bullying to end. To find a way out, the individual may begin having suicidal thoughts and attempts. During the ideation phase, the individual begins to set goals, hoping for a better outcome.

Nature of the Study

I used a correlational cross-sectional quantitative analysis of secondary survey data. According to Setia (2016), cross-sectional studies involve estimating the prevalence of an outcome. This is an appropriate design for the present research because, I was able to test if there is a correlation between the independent variables and dependent variables of the study. Independent variables in this study are being a victim of bullying (both traditional bullying and cyberbullying) and participating in a physical altercation within the past 12 months. The dependent variables are presence of suicidal ideation (making suicidal plans) and suicidal behavior. Covariates are age, gender, and history of physical or sexual abuse. Using the High School YRBSS, a general sample of high school aged youth will be studied. According to the CDC (2019), approximately 15,000 US high school students participated in the 2017 YRBSS. 13.4% of students were Black (CDC, 2019).

Definitions

The following terms are defined to ensure understanding.

Cyberbullying: Intentional, repetitive, and continuous bullying perpetrated via electronic devices (Hong et al., 2016; Llorent et al., 2016; Wolke et al., 2017).

Physically violent behavior: Violent behavior which includes any physical assault, with or without weapons (University of Kentucky, 2020).

Suicidal behavior: Referred to as suicide attempt by the CDC. A suicide attempt is when someone harms themselves with the intent to end their life, but they do not die as a result of their actions (CDC, 2019) A deliberate, self-inflicted action that could cause a person to die.

Suicidal ideation: Wanting to take one's life or thinking about suicide. Ideations can be active in terms of thinking about suicide as well as having a plan, or passive in terms of thinking of suicide without a plan (Purse, 2020).

Traditional bullying: Any unwanted aggressive behaviors by another youth or group of youths, who are not siblings or current dating partners, that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated (CDC, 2019)

Assumptions

Confidentiality was explained to participants prior to commencement of the survey. Students were also given an extra paper to conceal their responses as a means to ensure privacy. All data in the dissertation were self-reported. It was assumed that each

participant answered the questionnaire truthfully. I assumed that participants identified as African American.

Scope and Delimitations

All participants in this study are African American male and female high school youth. This study is not representative of all US high school youth. For this study, middle school youth were not included. White, Hispanic, and Asian youth were not included in the study. The African American youth population was chosen for the study because there was a limited amount of research dedicated to the population regarding the chosen topic. A similar study dedicated to American youth of all races would be beneficial to increase the ability to identify at-risk populations and address intervention needs of youth populations.

Limitations

One limitation with the present study was that there was not enough time dedicated to conduct a longitudinal study, due to time constraints and limited resources. Another potential barrier to the present study is that secondary data were used. Data collection methods are done according to the discretion of primary collectors. I have to trust that participants understood the questions as they were responding. Fights that did not occur off campus may not have been accounted for. Also, in regard to physically violent behavior, it is unknown if weapons were used during fights.

Significance

The purpose of this study is to identify if there was a relationship between suicidal ideation and behaviors among African American high school aged youth who have

experienced bullying and participated in physically violent behaviors. This study could provide insights regarding the impact of traditional bullying and cyberbullying, as well as participation in physically violent behavior, in terms of incidence of suicidal ideation and behaviors among the population. Insights from this study could help in terms of further identifying at-risk youth. Identifying how these factors are associated could lead to preventative intervention strategies for public health professionals and schools.

Historically, the African American population has been underserved and the least healthy ethnic group in the nation (Noonan et al., 2016).

This study will contribute to social change by identifying African American high school aged youth who experience bullying as well as those who also participate in physically violent behavior and may experience suicidal ideation and behaviors. I investigated whether youth who have been victims of bullying have been likely to experience suicidal ideation and behaviors. I tested if those victims of bullying who have also engaged in physically violent behavior on or off school property were more or less likely to experience suicidal ideation and behavior. Understanding how these disparities, experiencing cyberbullying, traditional bullying, and participating in physically violent behaviors, may impact prevalence of suicidal ideation and behaviors among the high school aged, African American population could inform prevention efforts and contribute to the development of new intervention strategies and programs that could reduce the likelihood of suicidal ideation and behavior among this population.

Summary

In this study, I aimed to identify if there were correlations between incidences of suicidal ideation and behaviors among African American high school aged youth who experience bullying and those who also participate in physically violent behavior.

Although there is previous research regarding suicidal ideation and behaviors among youth, none have studied a combination of the variables in this study.

Chapter 2 includes a comprehensive review of literature regarding suicidal ideation and behaviors among youth, bullying behaviors (traditional and cyberbullying), and prevalence of physically violent behavior.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Suicide among youth and young adults is a growing public health concern. In the US, suicide is the 10th leading cause of death and the second leading cause of death among youth and young adults (CDC, 2018; Spates & Slatton, 2017; Ziaei et al., 2017). Prevalence of suicide is higher among Black youth when compared to their White counterparts (Forte et al., 2018). Bullying among adolescents and teens has been attributed to long-lasting adverse psychological effects with public health consequences. Black minority and male students are a greater risk of experiencing bullying behaviors. These bullying behaviors include but are not limited to being threatened, assaulted, having belongings damaged, stolen, or forcefully removed, and being verbally put down (Lai & Kao, 2018). Youth without mental illness may experience suicidal ideation, due to added factors that disrupt their quality of life such as bullying (Greydanus, 2017). For this study, I examined the presence of both traditional and cyberbullying among African American youth in grades 9-12. I tested whether bullying and participation in violent behaviors are associated with suicidal ideation and behaviors among African American high school aged youth. Findings of this research could be used to further identify potential risk factors involving suicidality among a historically underserved population. Previous research exists regarding suicidal ideation and behaviors among youth, as well as bullying and suicide. However, none have studied the combination of variables in this study.

Bullying exists in all communities, including developed and developing countries (Al-Raqqad et al., 2017). There is empirical research regarding the impact of bullying. Bullying behavior is a serious problem in schools that affects adolescents and youth. About 23% of public schools have received complaints that bullying is occurring weekly, and in some cases, even daily (Hong et al., 2016). Nationwide, 28% of youth ages 12-18 report being the victim of bullying (Hong et al., 2016). Bullying is associated with suicidal ideation, diminished self-confidence, physical harm, and psychological distress (Hager & Leadbeater, 2016). Bullying is a silent public health problem. Bullying leads to young people becoming insecure and causes physical injuries, somatization, and other long-term effects such as headaches and mental problems (Rivara et al., 2016).

When considering the effect of bullying behaviors on suicidal ideation, there are some environmental factors which can lessen the risk of suicide. Positive parental interactions can offset the negative impacts of bullying. For example, participation in family dinners has a positive impact on mental health of those experiencing cyberbullying (Elgar et al., 2014). More parental involvement correlated negatively with cyberbullying. When parental monitoring of youth online activities occurred, there was a decrease in terms of the likelihood that youth were victims of chronic cyberbullying (Hong et al., 2016). Bar-Zomar and Klomek (2018) said sibling dynamics play a role in bullying victimization. Adolescents who were involved in sibling bullying were 2.3 times more likely to be victims of school bullying when compared to those not involved in sibling bullying (Bar-Zomar & Klomek, 2018).

Another topic to consider when investigating suicidality are nonspecific risk factors. Some of these factors include prevalence of familial suicide history, presence of mental illness, history of abuse, abuse of substances, prior suicide attempts, and being bullied (CDC, 2019). Price and Khubchandani (2017) said among Latina adolescents, there are higher rates of mental health problems, substance abuse, and parental and peer conflicts. For the purpose of this study, I considered factors such as traditional bullying, cyberbullying, history of sexual or physical abuse, age, and participation in violent behaviors.

Statistically, the high prevalence of bullying in schools is associated with poor health outcomes for the youth victims. Children who experience chronic bullying have high adiposity compared with those who have not been bullied (Baldwin et al., 2016). Baldwin et al. (2016) said bullied children had a higher body mass index and were at higher risk of becoming overweight compared to their nonbullied counterparts. The purpose of the present study is to increase knowledge among public health professionals regarding bullying, participation in violence, and suicidal ideation and behaviors among African American youth. This knowledge could be critical in terms of devising evidence-based interventions.

This literature review covers the impact of bullying and participating in violent behaviors on suicidal ideation and behavioral outcomes. I address traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and correlations between bullying and suicidal ideation. I also address the IMV model and social cognitive theory in order to understand behavioral inclinations

leading to suicidal behavior and ideations. I also address school-based violence and prevalence, as well as short- and long-term effects of physical and sexual abuse.

According to Klonsky et al. (2016), one reason for limited success in terms of reducing suicide is inadequate knowledge, more specifically when understanding suicidal thoughts and thoughts that lead to suicidal attempts. An analysis and synthesis of articles will lead to understanding the need for the present study in order to address a gap in research.

Literature Search Strategy

Keywords used to search for articles were *suicidal ideation, suicide, African American youth, youth exposure to violence, youth participation in violence, suicide prevention, suicide intervention, LGBTQ, youth LGBTQ, mental health, cyberbullying, traditional bullying, black mental health, African American suicide rates, suicide rates among African American youth, rising rate of suicide among African American youth, bullying and mental health, suicidal ideation and attempts, suicidal attempts, and suicidal thoughts*. ProQuest, PsycInfo, and MEDLINE were searched using the Walden University Library. All sources were peer-reviewed. Most articles were published between 2015 to 2019; however, there were articles from earlier when information was relevant and there were not recent articles available regarding the topic. I had some difficulty accessing useful and updated articles due to requirements involving obtaining a membership or paying for access. However, there was enough information available from articles included in this literature review.

Theoretical Foundation

IMV Model

The IMV model of suicidal behavior, is a three-part model that describes the biopsychological context in which suicidal ideation and behavior may emerge, the factors that lead to the emergence of suicidal ideation, and the factors which lead to the transition from ideations to attempts. The parts are broken into the pre-motivational phase, the motivational phase, and the volitional phase.

The development of the IMV model was rooted in the foundation of empirical theoretical perspectives. The interpersonal theory of suicide (IPT), developed by Thomas Joiner (2005), gives an algorithm of how the process from suicidal ideation to the behavior, or action, is a continuous process. Another theory which is a part of the guiding framework of the IVM model is the theory of planned. Through this theory, suicide would be the result of the strongest immediate motivation to go through with the behavior.

For the purpose of my study, the IMV model can be applied to my variables. The pre-motivational phase would be the bullying (traditional and cyberbullying). Since traditional and cyberbullying could be factors leading up to the motivational and volitional phases, it would be appropriate to associate them with the pre-motivational stage. Suicidal ideation would fall under the motivational category. Suicidal ideations are considered motivational, because this is the planning phase, when the person may feel motivated to commit suicide. Then, finally the volitional phase, when the actions has been taken, is when the individual exhibits the suicidal behavior.

Social Cognitive Theory

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the social cognitive theory, created by Albert Bandura, is an interpersonal level theory that highlights the interaction between people, their behaviors, and their environments (LaMorte, 2019). The relationship between bullying (traditional and cyberbullying), participation in violent behaviors, and suicidal ideation and behaviors, another suitable theory would be the social cognitive theory. There are subsets that better explain the flow of the theory. Those subsets are outcome expectations, self-efficacy, collective efficacy, self-regulation, facilitation/behavioral capability, observational learning, incentive motivation, and moral disengagement. The theory applies to the study, as the transition in the theory aligns with the transition individuals go through to suicidal ideation and behavior.

To begin, outcome expectations are the beliefs an individual holds about the likelihood and value of a consequences resulting from a behavioral decision. For example, a person who may be chronically bullied, may feel that ending his or her life will be the most viable solution to resolving the bullying. This feeling may lead to suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior. Self-efficacy is another factor in the social cognitive theory. This is confidence in one's ability to perform a particular behavior. If a bullied individual is seeking relief, the person may begin making a suicide plan. Following through with the behavior is potentially seen as relief. Collective efficacy is believing that performing an action will bring a desired change. After many years of chronic bullying, be it cyberbullying or traditional bullying, the individual may want the bullying to end. In order to find a way out, the individual may begin having suicidal

thoughts and may even attempt. In this case, the desired behavior would be to end the bullying, and this may be through suicide. Facilitation and behavioral capability are another subset of the theory. During the ideation phase, the individual begins to set goals, hoping for a better outcome (relief from bullying).

Although, the theoretical framework for the study is supported by the IVM model and the social cognitive theory, Klonsky and May's three-step theory is also useful in understanding suicidal ideation and behaviors. Klonsky and May's theory was derived from the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide. In Klonsky and May's theory it was theorized that a combination of pain and hopelessness increased the desire of suicide. This is pain exceeds connectedness, which researchers theorized increased the risk of suicidal ideation and behaviors (Klonsky et al., 2016). In this theory, the development of suicidal ideation and the progression from ideation to action (attempts) could be explained as a specific process with specific predictors (Klonsky et al., 2016). What differentiates the three-step theory from other theories is this theory offered a separate explanation for the development of ideations and the progression from ideations to attempts. Suicide capacity is measured using the Acquired Capability for Suicide Scale (Klonsky & May, 2016). Per Klonsky and May (2016), suicide capacity is the capability to commit suicide, measured by history of suicidal ideation and attempts. This theory is also applicable to the present study, examining if there is an association between bullying and participation in violent behaviors, while controlling for age, gender, and history of sexual or physical abuse. After suffering from chronic bullying, whether it be traditional or cyberbullying, a victim may feel pain and hopelessness. This pain and hopelessness could lead to suicidal

ideation. Connectedness was another step in the theory. This is, how connected the individual is to one's common environment (Klonsky & May, 2016). This environment includes one's job, role, family, and friends. The level of connectedness one has with these factors, could determine their investment in living. The ideations may lead to attempts, if the individual has the capability to make a suicide attempt or has a strong desire for ending their life, they will be in the final phase of progression (Klonsky & May, 2016).

Literature Related to Key Variables and Concepts

Traditional bullying is bullying that takes place directly. This can be face to face physical and emotional bullying. Traditional bullying mainly involves verbal taunting, physical aggression, and ridicule. Few research studies have been conducted to investigate the co-occurrence of traditional and cyberbullying. It can be agreed, however that both forms of bullying have caused psychological distress to the victim, independently (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2015). According to Llorent et al. (2016), minorities are more vulnerable to being involved in traditional bullying than the majority group population. Being a victim of bullying, as a youth, changes behavior and though brain imaging, chronic bullying can lead to physical changes in the brain (Rivara & Menestrel, 2016).

The modern society has become more diverse, leading to people of different backgrounds interacting in classrooms and the virtual world (Salmon, Turner, Fortier, and Afifi, 2018). It is in the context that the recent studies have expanded the scope of investigations into the traditional bullying to examine the aggressive behaviors that

humiliate the victims based on race, sexual orientation, gender, culture, and appearance and shape (Salmon et.al., 2018). Accordingly, Salmon, et al. (2018) reported different forms of victimization among adolescents. The number of bullying reports remained characteristically higher among grades 8-12 compared to those in lower grades. Also, gender was a factor in which girls reported more than six types of victimization compared to boys at three types. Researchers Salmon et al. (2018) endorsed that different factors could predict bullying as a health issue challenge, health professionals and policymakers in the different domains should design interventions that consider the social, cultural, and economic dynamics (Salmon, et. al., 2018).

In a study by Sánchez et al. (2016), the researchers reported that direct bullying has remained a public health issue. The researchers sought to unearth the experiences that students undergo in the traditional bullying context as well as cyber teasing based on socio-demographic inclinations, Sánchez et al. (2016) confirmed the existence of intersecting outcomes concerning the factors leading to risks which have direct relationships to both cyber teasing and traditional bullying. About 62.2% of the study's respondents reported having been negatively affected by traditional bullying, while about 52.7% had experienced cyber-teasing. The former was higher in girls while the latter was higher among boys. Also, in the study the researchers focused on the gender aspects of bullying trends, which makes it relevant in my study. According to Rivara and Menestrel (2016), bullying changes behavior and may adversely affect the physical body. The implications are severe to the extent that they affect the brain. Rivara and Menestrel (2016) pointed out the evidence of physical changes in the brain. The findings by Rivara

and Menestrel (2016) are a depiction of the extent of bullying which warrants the present study that seeks to find out how the effects of bullying are expressed among different socio-cultural groups with a critical focus on African Americans.

Also, Llorent et al. (2016) undertook a study that examined how the minority (ethnic and sexual orientation) are affected by bullying compared to their counterparts. According to Llorent et al. (2016) minorities experience socio-economic difficulties, which predispose them to instances of bullying and cyberbullying. In the study, Llorent et al. (2016), the researchers reported that the minorities in terms of sex and gender are more involved in both traditional bullying and cyberbullying, mainly as victims. Even though the study by Llorent et al. (2016) focused on the educational domain and inferred the need for policymakers to put in place policies that promote educational development for all students, it is relevant to the current research because it relates to disparity issues that relate to sexual, cultural, and ethnic diversity which may relate to the African American youth. For instance, Llorent et al. (2016) established that being a minority predicted higher cases of victimization and thus, such knowledge could be used in designing interventions aimed at addressing the psychosocial issues associated with bullying.

Bullying is a health issue that has a detrimental effect not only on the victims but also the perpetrators (Hornor, 2018). Bullying among children is described as a pediatric health care problem. Hornor (2018) reported that the concerned pediatric nurses should incorporate measures to identify, prevent, and intervene in their practice. Current health care practitioners, such as nurses, practice in a diverse society and should be privy to the

various health issues and how they affect various groups disproportionately (Hornor, 2018). Such knowledge is crucial in tailoring approaches for person-centered interventions and engaging family members to address the problem both for the victims and perpetrators (Hornor, 2018).

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is defined as intentional, repetitive, and continuous bullying perpetrated through electronic devices (Hong et al., 2016; Llorent et al., 2016, Wolke et al., 2017). Cyberbullying involves sending or posting messages, through various platforms such as text messaging, picture, or video postings, that result in shaming, hurting, or making the victim feel powerless (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2014). 25 percent of Western countries' teenagers have experienced cyberbullying (Cho et al., 2017). Like with traditional bullying, victims of cyberbullying may have difficulty defending him or herself against the bully, resulting in a disproportionate disadvantage (Llorent et al. 2016). Many victims of cyber-bullying are also traditionally bullied (Wolke, Lee, & Guy, 2017). The researchers identified the juvenile age group as more prone to cyberbullying (Cho, et al. 2017). According to Llorent, et al. (2016), minorities are more vulnerable to be involved in cyberbullying than the majority group population.

Cyberbullying is quite complex. According to Alhajii et al. (2019), 90% of adolescents report going online daily, and 70% of those reported using at least two social media platforms. With constant online and media interactions on common platforms, one may not readily identify the interactions as bullying. In fact, according to Waasdorp and Bradshaw (2015) it was reported that the youth victims of cyberbullying thought the

perpetrator of the bullying was a friend. More specifically, the negative interactions were challenging to comprehend, because the bullying would occur on a shared social media site, indicating that the victim and perpetrator were within the same social network. Adolescents who are experiencing depressive symptoms tend to use the internet as a coping mechanism, creating an alternative reality (Alhajii et al., 2019). Unfortunately, the use of the internet as an outlet raises the risk for exposure to cyberbullying (Alhajii et al., 2019).

Cyberbullying can lead to detrimental outcomes for both the bully and the victim. For example, 20 percent of the students who were victims of cyberbullying reported carrying a weapon and over 33 percent of those victims reported engaging in a physical altercation (Alhajii et al., 2019). Cyberbullying can lead to feelings of isolation and helplessness, which increases the risk of suicidal ideation (Alhajii et al., 2019). Suicidal ideations were more likely to be reported among female cyberbullying victims, when compared to those who did not experience cyberbullying (Alhajii et al., 2019). Further research is crucial in order to identify those at-risk youth populations. This would allow practitioners to develop anti-bullying tools and improve user safety of the tools already in place (Alhajii et al., 2019).

Impact of Bullying

The aggressive relationship between the perpetrator and the victim is the result of a disproportionate balance of power (Alavi et al., 2017; Goldbach et al., 2018; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). Specific conditions are used to determine whether “aggressive” behavior is considered bullying. These conditions are that the behavior is intentional,

repetitive, and there is an imbalance of power (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). Bullying is more prevalent among adolescents in educational settings (Alavi et al., 2017).

Bullying victimization is disproportionate among student groups. Ethnic minorities are at a greater risk of being a bullying victim, when compared to their peers (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). Empirical studies have been conducted to compare bullying prevalence across genders, age groups, and population size of the school (Llorent et al., 2016).

Peer victimization is identified as a contributor of suicide (Karlson et al., 2014; Stewart et al., 2018). Cyber-bullying has been found to be associated with depression, anxiety, stress, self-esteem, and behavioral issues among the youth who are victims (Wolke et al., 2017). Llorent et al (2016) found that being a minority increases the likelihood of cyberbullying. Youth victims of bullying, in any form, are significantly affected and it leads to maladjustment to school life and poor behavioral health (Cho et al., 2017). The youth age group are more vulnerable to suicide, when compared to adults.

In the study by Stewart et al (2018), the researchers sought to find how peer victimization is linked to suicidal thoughts and behaviors among youth. More specifically, the researchers wanted to address three related issues. The researchers addressed how peer victimization contributes to certain forms of suicidal thoughts and behavior, such as suicide planning or suicidal attempts for example. The researchers addressed disentangling the effects of bullying on suicide outcome. The researchers also addressed the effects of bullying on suicidal thoughts and behavior.

The researchers related the framework of their study to the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide due to the repeated negative experiences that may lead to serious consequences, such as suicidal ideation and behaviors. The researchers found peer victimization was not associated with suicidal ideation after controlling for age, depression, and anxiety (Stewart et al., 2018). Researchers, Cohen & Kendall (2015) examined peer victimization among a sample of youth who were in treatment for anxiety disorders. The researchers noted that peer victimization was associated with symptoms of social anxiety due to the youth internalizing their problems (Cohen & Kendall, 2015). However, in the study, the researchers used cross-sectional data and questions regarding stability and causality were not considered (Cohen & Kendall, 2015). There was not measure used to examine self-reported rates of victimization, because there was no restricted time given, such as 'in the last month' (Cohen & Kendal, 2015). For my study, the questionnaire gave a specified period of time, in which the respondents considered when self-reporting.

Prevalence of School-Based Violence

According to Price and Khubchandani (2017), violence is a risk factor for potential suicide. School violence is defined as violence occurring on school campus, including traveling to or from school, or a school-sponsored event (Lester et al., 2017). Regular exposure to school violence undermines the student's educational progress and negatively impacts their development (Lester et al., 2017). Lester, et al (2017) categorizes bullying as a subset of peer violence. According to Kann et al (2018) 23.6% of students surveyed nationwide had been in a physical altercation, at least one time within the past

12 months. More physical altercations were reported among male students (30%), than female students (17.2%), in the United States (Redfield et al., 2018).

For the purpose of this study, participation in violent behaviors is also taken into consideration. Following a familiar trend, peer aggression may lead to negative consequences (Butler-Barnes et al., 2015). Bullying in both traditional and cyber forms could be considered aggressive behaviors by peers. Assuming this, there are likely to be adverse consequences, as the previous study suggested. These adverse consequences raise the risk of suicidal ideation and behaviors within the youth population (Butler-Barnes, et al., 2015)

In a recent study based in Korea, the researchers examined the predictability of cyberbullying among adolescent youth, when the aggressiveness (school violence) is present (Cho et al., 2017). Chronic exposure to peer aggression has many prevalent, adverse consequences. The inability to cope with peer aggression is a result of poor emotional regulation and adjustment difficulties (Sugimura et al., 2014). Some children handle peer violence by seeking advice from someone in authority, such as a teacher (Sugimura et al., 2014). Some students choose to handle this aggression independently. Either way can help solve conflicts and improve peer relationship, which in the long term reduces depressive symptoms (Sugimura et al., 2014). These essential coping skills are beneficial when developed during elementary age. During this early stage of development, children develop problem solving skills and begin seeking advice, which decreases susceptibility of depressive symptoms, over time (Sugimura et al., 2014). Another coping technique is using humor or ignoring the perpetrator. This coping

behavior has both negative and positive effects. Children who use laughing behavior to cope with a stressful situation, such as chronic bullying, can buffer their feelings and emotions concerning the stressful event (Sugimura et al., 2014). In a study by Rosiek et al. (2016), youth who experience chronic bullying, are at an increased risk of stress and anxiety, due to high exposures to such stressful situations. According to Rosiek et al. (2016), critical and chronic stressors lead some individuals to be more vulnerable to the influences of adverse life events. Those stressors are often risk factors for suicide. In the case of bullied youth, there may be different ways the youth cope with that negative experience. Some may find coping difficult which as a result may lead to suicidal ideation and behaviors. For this present study, it is important to assess and identify those youth who are at risk for suicide, in order to develop targeted prevention strategies for the population.

Mental Health Disparities among African American Populations

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among African American youth (Salami et al, 2015). Early exposure to bullying behavior has been a predictor for future suicidal behavior (Shain, 2016). Racial disparity in mental health service utilization exists among Black youth (Assari & Caldwell, 2017). Racial discrimination contributes to a plethora of mental health problems, including heightened negative psychological stress, hypervigilance, and increased participation in risky behaviors (Assari et al. 2017). According to Assari et al (2018) Blacks are disproportionately, negatively impacted by the education system, housing market, labor market, and police. Black youth are less apt to using mental health services when compared to their White counterparts.

Socioeconomic status (SES) has been considered a predictive factor for mental health status (Assari et al, 2018). Those in the Black population who have a higher SES tend to have higher health gains (Assari et al, 2018).

Another factor that affects African American mental health is stigma. In an empirical study, researchers found that nearly 7.5 million African Americans were living with undiagnosed mental illness (Ward & Heidrich, 2009). Although the prevalence of mental health problems is high, the utilization of mental health services is low among the African American population (Ward & Heidrich, 2009). The researchers associated the low utilization of health services with beliefs about mental illness (Ward & Heidrich, 2009). Researchers have reported African Americans may not seek formal help when experiencing suicidal ideation (Salami et al., 2015). Salami et al (2015) sought to find an interaction between suicidal impulsivity and identifying reasons for living. The researchers defined suicide as an impulsive act, and those who have difficulty controlling their aggressive impulses have been associate with a higher rate of suicide attempts (Salami et al., 2015).

Being bullied is associated with mental health problems, suicidal behavior, and ideations among youth (John, et. al, 2018). Researchers, Assari et al (2018), conducted a study to address the presence of depressive symptoms among Black youth and how socioeconomic status is associated. The researchers found that in predominantly White areas there was a higher average of depressive symptoms among Black youth. The researchers also found an interaction between place of residence and socioeconomic status on depressive symptoms. It was also found that parental education was protective

against depressive symptoms, among Black households. This coupled with the knowledge that education generates less income for Blacks and those with higher education are more likely to stay poor when compared to Whites demonstrates a disparity in and of itself (Assari et al. 2018). With these additional disparities, suicidal ideation and behaviors are heightened among the African American population, especially when mental health services were not utilized. In the research by Assari et al (2018), there was a disproportionately smaller population of Black residents versus White residence. There was data from only two states used in the study, which was not representative of the entire United States. For the present study, the data will come from the Nationwide, Youth Risk Behavior survey, which includes populations from around the nation.

Control Variables: Age, Gender, History of Abuse

Age

Younger children were more likely to use problem-focused strategies when it comes to coping with bullying, when compared to older youth (Sesar & Simic, 2016). In fact, when presented with images of indirect bullying, girls aged 15 years gave a response indicating they would cope as if the bullying does not affect them, and it seemed as if they would be in denial about the bullying (Sesar & Simic, 2016). That is quite different from younger youth, who would cope by seeking support socially or from an adult. Another important factor to note, is that Shain (2016) found that when children as young as eight years old are exposed to bullying behaviors, it raises the risk of suicidal actions later in life. Death by suicide is less common among children, although there are documented suicide deaths among youth ages 5-8 (Cha et al., 2018). Deaths by suicide

are more prevalent among teens ages 15-19. Suicidal ideations are rarer among youth ages 10 and under, but ideations are prevalent among the population of youth ages 12-17 (Cha et al., 2018). Understanding that the age of the victim may influence the severity of the bullying and how the victim may cope with the bullying, is why age is controlled for in the present study.

Victimization and Gender Differences

When it comes to bullying, in all forms, there are differences among genders. Suicidal behavioral differences begin to form among genders after age 11 (Cha et al., 2018). Female youth display suicidal ideation earlier, as compared to their male counterparts (Gunn & Goldstein, 2017; Cha, et. al, 2018). Gender is an important aspect to consider among the teens and adolescents. During this period of time, social experiences lead to developmental outcomes (Gunn & Goldstein, 2017). Across the young lifespan, male and females socialize with a variety of influences, such as parents, teachers, and peers. Sometimes these interactions establish gender-specific messages, such as strengths and weaknesses, goals, and morality (Gunn & Goldstein, 2017). According to Redfield et al (2018), there was a higher prevalence of cyberbullying among high school aged female students (19.7%) as compared to their male counterparts (9.9%). In the same study, it was noted that the incidence of traditional bullying, on school property in that case, was also higher among high school aged female students at 22.3%, when compared to male students at 15.6% (Redfield et. al., 2018).

When comparing suicidal risk among genders, researchers have received mixed findings. In some cases, there appears to be a greater risk of suicide among boys who are

victims of bullying and others have found that girls who are victims are at a higher suicidal risk (Gunn & Goldstein, 2017). Using the Nationwide YRBSS, Redfield et al (2018) found that the prevalence of planning suicide was higher among female youth (17.1%), than male youth (9.7%). The prevalence of attempting suicide was also higher among female youth at 9.3 percent, when compared to their male peers at 5.1 percent. According to Gunn and Goldstein (2017), perceived deterioration to social relationships has been theorized to be one of the most important factors in suicide among youth. There are many differences in psychological stress by gender as well. Young females tend to have stronger emotional reactions to social stimuli and have higher levels of depression, compared their male counterparts (Gunn & Goldstein, 2017). Girls perceive aggression to be more hurtful, hostile, and damaging to their social relationships, when compared to their male counterparts. Female youth also tend to internalize their aggression, whereas male youth tend to externalize their aggression. When it comes to reporting bullying, there are also differences among genders. For example, Waasdorp and Bradshaw (2015) found that girls were more likely to report being the victim of cyberbullying and verbal bullying. Boys were more likely to be victims of and report physical bullying (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2015). In the present study, I controlled for gender. Gender could influence suicidal ideation and behaviors.

Physical and Sexual Abuse

Childhood trauma can lead to immediate, short-term, and long-lasting effects for the victim. Wagner (2016) studied the impact of adverse childhood experiences and how this could lead to suicide ideations and attempts through adulthood. According to Jones

(2021), 12 of every 100,000 Black young adult, age 18-24, died from suicide in 2020.

Although, the adult population will not be the focus for this research study, it is important to note the potential long-term effects these experiences could have the childhood victim, even as an adult.

For the purpose of this study, I controlled for history of abuse. In this case, physical abuse and sexual abuse will be controlled for. Researchers, Martin, et al (2016), sought to test the association between child abuse and past suicide attempts among those who reported suffering ideations. The researchers had secondary objectives, which were used to assess health and social outcomes that may have been associated with attempts: (a) the association between child abuse and suicide attempts, (b) differential associations with suicide attempts depending on the presence of past child abuse. Using secondary data from the Canadian Community Health Survey, the researchers found that having suicidal ideation does not always lead to suicide attempts.

In an article by Wang et al (2018), the researchers conducted a study to explore the occurrence and impact of childhood trauma among a Chinese sample of youth. Using the self-reports of 555 university students, the occurrence and effects of childhood trauma exposure was assessed. Martin et al (2016) said participants who had a history of childhood trauma showed more depression, anxiety, lower levels of social support. Information is important when thinking about additional factors which may increase the risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

Summary and Conclusion

There are many potential factors that could contribute to suicidal ideation and behaviors among adolescents, and I address these factors. This comprehensive review of literature included information about suicide and bullying among youth.

It was evident that victims as well as perpetrators are adversely affected by bullying. I addressed common concepts that relate to suicide and bullying and information that can be used for future investigations. The review entailed a comprehensive analysis and synthesis of peer-reviewed articles. I also addressed the IMV model and social cognitive theory.

Bullying has adverse effects on victims and perpetrators. It was evident that social, demographic, cultural, ethnic, age, and economic factors are predictors of bullying behavior (Rivara & Menestrel, 2016; Sánchez et al., 2016).

I reviewed different forms of bullying, their impact, and relationship with wellbeing. I discussed bullying in terms of traditional bullying, cyberbullying, suicidal behavior and ideations, impact of victimization, and prevalence in schools. I reviewed studies about the negative impact on victims as they cope with bullying behavior. Furthermore, the review underscored the fundamentals of social, demographic, and cultural factors related to bullying among young people in schools. However, the literature review is limited because there are no articles involving the effects of this combination of variables on the African American high school aged population.

I addressed implications of bullying on the health and wellbeing of victims and perpetrators and proposed interventions that target high-risk individuals and groups. The

gap in the literature is lack of specific research on African American youth and how they are impacted by bullying. This formed the basis for understanding bullying, participation in violence, suicidal ideation, and behaviors among African American youth and was crucial for the formulation of research hypotheses and questions. In Chapter 3, methods used for conducting research are discussed.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Suicide among youth is a public health concern. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among adolescents, youth, teenagers, and young adults (Spates & Slatton, 2017; Ziaei et al., 2017). Historically, suicide among African American youth populations is lower compared to their White counterparts. According to Jones (2022), in 2014, the suicide rate among Black individuals was about 25% lower than that of White individuals. However, this trend has changed. Suicide is growing among United States, African American youth population (Forte et al., 2018). As mentioned in Chapter 1, the purpose of this research is to test relationships between youth exposure to bullying and violence and whether these factors impact suicidal ideation and behaviors among African American youth. Using the theoretical framework of the IMV model and social cognitive theory, I researched African American youth to see if being a victim of bullying, as well as participating in violent behaviors has an impact on prevalence of suicidal ideation and behaviors.

Methods and procedures, including the research design, sample population, and research questions are explained in this chapter. Furthermore, this chapter includes the research design and rationale, population, sampling procedures, theoretical framework, instrumentation, threats to validity, and ethical procedures. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of data analysis strategies.

Research Design and Rationale

This research involved using a correlational cross-sectional quantitative analysis of secondary survey data. According to Setia (2016), cross-sectional studies involve estimating the prevalence of outcomes. This is an appropriate design for the present research because I was able to see if there was a correlational relationship between the independent variables, traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in physically violent behavior and the dependent variables, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior. For the purpose of this study, data from Black participants who have experienced suicidal ideation and behaviors were selected from the population of high school aged, African American youth. Independent variables of this study are being a victim of bullying (both traditional bullying and cyberbullying) and being a participant in a physical altercation within the past 12 months. Dependent variables are presence of suicidal ideation (making suicidal plans) and suicidal behavior (failed suicide attempts). Covariates are age, gender, and history of physical or sexual abuse.

Methodology

Participants

Data I used were from the 2019 High School YRBSS. In the survey, there is a general sample of United States high school aged youth. The 2019 High School YRBSS collects demographic information from participants. The survey also contains information about risky health behaviors which teenagers may engage in. There were 14,956 surveys administered. I focused on African American youth. In the survey, 13.4% of the population were Black (CDC, 2018). Using data from the YRBSS survey, I tested to see

if traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in violent behaviors predict suicidal ideation and behaviors among this population.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

Each of the research questions were addressed using secondary data collected by the 2019 High School YRBSS. The YRBSS is a survey focused on health behaviors among the nation's public high school students. The purpose of the nationwide High School YRBSS is to monitor health risk behaviors which may turn into trends in adulthood (CDC, 2019). Thirty-nine US states, three tribal governments, and three US territories participated in the survey. The survey is a paper and pencil-based questionnaire administered in schools. The survey is voluntary and anonymous. Instead of simple random sampling, the YRBS is based on a two-stage cluster probability sampling method. This means that during the first round of selection, a random sample of public high schools was selected to participate in the survey. Then using those selected schools, a random sample of classrooms was chosen to participate. Each student in those chosen classes was invited to participate. YRBSS data were obtained from the CDC. Data are readily available to the public.

For this study, my inclusion criteria included those who attend a high school, high school student (9th-12th grades), female and male, identify as African American, or Black, experienced suicidal ideation, experienced suicidal behavior, may or may not have participated in a physical altercation within the past 12 months of the survey, may or may not have experienced physical abuse, and those who may or may not have experienced

sexual abuse. For this research, my exclusion criteria included middle school students and students who do not identify as African American, or Black.

Examining secondary data allowed me the opportunity to conduct research in a timely manner. Using secondary data gave me the opportunity to get a good representative sample of my target population. This allowed me to have a sufficient sample for statistical analysis. Using the YRBSS data, I performed an analysis to answer the research questions.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

In the present study, the High School YRBSS was used. The YRBSS was developed in 1990 to track the health behaviors which contribute to social problems, disabilities, and death among youth in the US. Over the years, the YRBSS has collected data from over 4.4 million high school students among national, state, territorial, and tribal governments. The survey is conducted every 2 years and observes the prevalence of health behaviors and allows researchers to assess trends among those health behaviors (CDC, 2018). The survey is facilitated by state and county health departments and departments of education, among most public high schools (CDC, 2018).

One concern about participant responses is the reliability of self-reporting. To increase validity and reliability from the participants, the survey is introduced to the youth as confidential and anonymity. There have been methodological studies which tested the reliability of the 1991 and 1999 questionnaire (CDC, 2018). The CDC has conducted two tests (1992 & 2000) to ensure the reliability of the national Youth Risk Behavior Study questionnaire (CDC, 2013). There has not been a study conducted to test

the validity of each of the self-reported behaviors on the questionnaire. In a literature review conducted by the CDC in 2003, the researchers determined that the validity of self-reports was not equally affected by situational and cognitive factors across behaviors (CDC, 2013).

The YRBSS produces a representative sample of United States youth in grades 9-12, using a three-stage, cluster sample design (CDC, 2013). PCSample is used to select the sample. According to the CDC (2013), the three stages of sampling are: primary sampling methods (PSUs) are selected using probability proportional to enrollment sizes of the schools. A subset of schools, from a list of public and private schools in the PSU are selected using three large schools and one school. These schools are drawn with probability to school enrollment size. One or two entire classes from each school is selected from each of grades 9-12. There is a weight applied to each participant response to compensate for nonresponse and to adjust for the distribution of students regarding race/ethnicity, grade, sex, and gender. To account for oversampling of Hispanic and Black students, a weight is applied, since the rate of White students has significantly decreased. National YRBSS data sets are public data, and per the CDC (2018), “there is no charge for the data nor is permission needed to download or use the data” (p. ##?).

Data Analysis Plan

The National YRBSS data is available in in two file formats: Access and ASCII. This data can be converted into SAS and SPSS datasets. I converted the data and use IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 software to perform the analysis. Using this software, I ran a binary logistics regression analysis to test the how the predictor variables (bullying

and participation in violent behaviors) predict the level of change in the outcome variable (suicidal ideation and behaviors).

RQ1: What is the association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged, African American youth when controlling for age, gender and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₁: There is no association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a1}: There is an association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ2: What is the association between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, physical, and sexual abuse?

H₀₂: There is no association between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a2}: There is an association between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ3: What is the association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₃: There is no association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a3}: There is an association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ4: What is the association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₄: There is no association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a4}: There is an association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ5: What is the association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₅: There is no association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a5}: There is an association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ6: What is the association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₆: There is no association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a6}: There is an association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

Threats to Validity

There are potential threats to validity, both internally and externally. A potential threat to external validity is through the generalization of the results. Addressing this threat is necessary to be sure that the analysis, results, and conclusion of the research are generalizable to a larger sect of the targeted population. To address this, one could ensure that the sample includes a representation of the population (Generalizability, 2006).

Experimenter bias is also a concern. I was sure to keep personal thoughts regarding the subject matter out of the study, to prevent experimenter biases.

An internal threat to consider is that the data used was obtained by other researchers. A researcher must trust that the data will be thorough and accurate. History is another internal threat to validity. The results may be caused by events or experiences that may impact the participant's responses. There is a risk that there may be dishonest or skipped questions, since the data obtained was solely based on voluntary self-reports.

Ethical Procedures

In order to move forward with gaining access to the data, I obtained approval from the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB). The survey data was obtained from participants, after the participants were informed of their rights and privacy. This information was printed on the questionnaire of the survey. The survey was voluntary, and participants had the right to skip questions, if desired. Once obtained, I kept the data secured on my personal laptop. I did not share the data with anyone who is not authorized to view the information. Once analysis was completed, I followed recommendations by the Youth Risk Behavior Survey Coordinator, or an appropriate representative regarding destroying the data, after use.

This research deals with a vulnerable population and a sensitive topic. According to Ketefian (2016), the Department of Health and Human Services identifies children and minors within the vulnerable group's category. Since the population for this research study are high school aged youth, I handled the data of a vulnerable population. Therefore, it is important to consider the ethical concerns that may arise. It is important to

ensure that the results of this research will not cause harm to the participants. Participant confidentiality and privacy are maintained since the participant's demographical information was anonymously reported. Per the information from the questionnaire distributed to participants, the participants were reminded the survey is voluntary and that if they are not comfortable answering a question, the question could be left blank.

Summary

My goal was to outline methods of research used to answer the research questions. Participants, sampling procedures, threats to validity, data analysis plan, instrumentation, and ethical procedures were discussed. This present study involved using a correlational cross-sectional quantitative design in order to see if there were correlations between suicidal ideation and behaviors, bullying, and physically violent behavior among the high school aged, African American youth population. Evaluating these risks using secondary data from the 2017 High School YRBSS will lead to information that could help assist in terms of identifying high risk populations and development of prevention and intervention tools. I addressed gaps in knowledge concerning youth exposure to bullying and their participation in violence and whether these factors impact suicidal ideation and behaviors among African American youth. This correlational cross-sectional quantitative study is useful for identifying youth who may be at risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors. In Chapter 4, results of the research are provided using the methodology introduced in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Chapter 4 includes results of this quantitative epidemiological study using secondary data. The purpose of this study was to test relationships between youth exposure to bullying and violence and whether these relationships impact suicidal ideation and behaviors among high school aged, African American youth. I structured this study to analyze whether bullying and participation in physically violent behavior were predictors of suicidal ideation or behavior among African American high school aged youth. I also controlled for grade level (9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th), gender (male or female), and physical and sexual abuse. I addressed the following six research questions:

RQ1: What is the association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged, African American youth when controlling for age, gender and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₁: There is no association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a1}: There is an association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ2: What is the association between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, physical, and sexual abuse?

H₀₂: There is no association between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a2}: There is an association between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ3: What is the association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₃: There is an association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a3}: There is an association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ4: What is the association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₄: There is no association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a4}: There is an association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ5: What is the association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₅: There is no association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a5}: There is an association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ6: What is the association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₆: There is no association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a6}: There is an association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse. In this chapter, I explain the data analysis process and interpret data. This chapter includes the

data collection process and results, which include descriptive and inferential statistics for variables in the study, as well as a summary. Research questions were answered using the binary logistic regression method. Results of this study include insights regarding correlational relationships between bullying and participation in physically violent behavior and suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior.

Data Collection

When approval was received from Walden University IRB, I gained access to YRBSS survey data. The approval number for this study is 05-17-21-0665278. Data were formatted and labeled in accordance with the data analysis plan described in Chapter 3 to ensure consistency. With the assistance of a methodologist, I was able to download the dataset and analyze data using SPSS. It took 4 weeks for me to schedule an appointment for assistance with downloading data.

6885 of respondents were female and 6641 were male. In terms of race, there were 2040 Black or African American respondents, 145 American Indian respondents, 618 Asian respondents, 69 Native American respondents, 6668 White respondents, 1009 respondents who identified as Hispanic/Latino, 2029 who identified as multiracial Hispanic/Latino, and 661 who identified as multiracial Non-Hispanic/Latino. In terms of grade level, there were 3637 9th graders, 3717 10th graders, 3322 11th graders, and 2850 12th graders.

Results

In this cross-sectional correlational study, males were set as baseline. For the analysis of each research question, the reference category was changed to first. All

variables used in this study were recoded to dichotomous variables and labeled according to their subject matter to help with feasibility of analysis. For this study, q17 (During the past 12 months, how many times were you in a physical fight) was recoded as A=0 and B, C, D, E, F, G, and H= 1. Q28 was recoded as A=0 and B, C, D, and E= 1. The following variables initially anticipated to be included, were ultimately omitted, since this researcher realized the variables used answered whether an incident occurred, and that it might be redundant to include how often an incident may have occurred. Q18 (During the past 12 months, how many times were you in a physical fight on school property), and q26 (During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide?). For this study, the covariates age was represented by q3, gender was represented by q2, sexual abuse was represented by q20 and q21, and physical abuse was represented by q22.

RQ1

RQ1: What is the association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged, African American youth when controlling for age, gender and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₁: There is no association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a1}: There is an association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to investigate if traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in physically violent behavior are factors that predict if an African American youth would experience suicidal ideation or suicidal behavior. The possible predictor variable was traditional bullying. The Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit was not significant ($p > .05$) indicating the model is correctly specified (see Table 3). Additionally, the -2 log Likelihood = 945.666 and the Nagelkerke R squared = .176 (see Table 2). The model resulted in the independent variable, traditional bullying, was found to be significant ($p < .05$). Controlling for grade, gender, and physical or sexual abuse, the predictor variable, traditional bullying, in the logistic regression analysis was found to contribute to the model. The unstandardized $B = [1.52]$, $SE = [.185]$, $Wald = [68.386]$, $p < .001$. Per Table 4, the estimated odds ratio favored a positive relationship of a nearly 360.8% increase ($Exp(B) = [4.608]$, 95% $CI [3.208, 6.618]$). Therefore, there was a 361% increase in suicidal ideation for those who experience traditional bullying.

Table 1

Case Processing Summary

Unweighted Cases ^a		N	Percent
Selected Cases	Included in Analysis	1328	65.1
	Missing Cases	712	34.9
	Total	2040	100.0
Unselected Cases		0	.0
Total		2040	100.0

a. If weight is in effect, see classification table for the total number of cases.

Table 2*Model Summary*

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	945.666 ^a	.098	.176

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 20 because maximum iterations has been reached. Final solution cannot be found.

Table 3*Hosmer and Lemeshow Test*

Step	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	10.849	8	.210

Table 4*Variables in the Equation*

Step		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
1 ^a	Bullying at school	1.363	.200	46.611	1	.000	3.907	2.642	5.778
	Grade			2.314	4	.678			
	Grade(1)	-.283	.225	1.572	1	.210	.754	.485	1.173
	Grade(2)	-.195	.234	.695	1	.405	.823	.521	1.301
	Grade(3)	-.329	.248	1.750	1	.186	.720	.442	1.171
	Grade(4)	-40192.97	.000		1	1.000	.000	.000	.
		21.288	0						
	Gender(1)	-.856	.178	23.017	1	.000	.425	.300	.603
	Sexual violence(1)	1.253	.277	20.480	1	.000	3.499	2.034	6.020
	Physical dating violence(1)	1.241	.285	19.000	1	.000	3.458	1.979	6.040
	Sexual dating violence(1)	-1.180	.447	6.958	1	.008	.307	.128	.738

Constant	-1.735	.182	91.070	1	.000	.176
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RQ2

RQ2: What is the association between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, physical, and sexual abuse?

H₀2: There is no association between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_a2: There is an association between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to investigate if traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in physically violent behavior are factors that predict if an African American youth would experience suicidal ideation or suicidal behavior. The possible predictor variable was cyberbullying (electronic bullying). The Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit was not significant ($p > .05$) indicating the model is correctly specified (see Table 7). Additionally, see the $-2 \log \text{Likelihood} = 1011.595$ and the Nagelkerke R squared = .099 (see Table 6). The model resulted in the IV, electronic bullying, was found to be significant ($p < .05$). Controlling for grade, gender, and physical or sexual abuse, the predictor variable, electronic bullying, in the logistic regression analysis was found to contribute to the model. Per Table 8, the unstandardized

$B = [1.743]$, $SE = [.228]$, $Wald = [58.486]$, $p < .000$. The estimated odds ratio favored a positive relationship of nearly 471.6% increase ($Exp(B) = [5.716]$, 95% CI [3.657, 8.936]). Therefore, there was a 472% increase in suicidal ideation for those who experience cyberbullying.

Table 5

<i>Case Processing Summary</i>			
Unweighted Cases ^a		N	Percent
Selected Cases	Included in Analysis	1331	65.2
	Missing Cases	709	34.8
	Total	2040	100.0
Unselected Cases		0	.0
Total		2040	100.0

a. If weight is in effect, see classification table for the total number of cases.

Table 6

<i>Model Summary</i>			
Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	1011.595 ^a	.056	.099

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Table 7

<i>Hosmer and Lemeshow Test</i>			
Step	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	13.776	8	.088

Table 8

Variables in the Equation

		B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a	Electronic bullying(1)	1.743	.228	58.486	1	.000	5.716	3.657	8.936
	Grade			5.639	4	.228			
	Grade(1)	-.357	.225	2.503	1	.114	.700	.450	1.089
	Grade(2)	-.304	.234	1.680	1	.195	.738	.466	1.168
	Grade(3)	-.575	.253	5.181	1	.023	.563	.343	.923
	Grade(4)	-21.828	40192.970	.000	1	1.000	.000	.000	.
	Gender(1)	-.754	.179	17.667	1	.000	.471	.331	.669
	Sexual violence(1)	1.326	.284	21.802	1	.000	3.764	2.158	6.566
	Physical dating violence(1)	1.257	.290	18.753	1	.000	3.515	1.990	6.209
	Sexual dating violence(1)	-1.296	.462	7.884	1	.005	.274	.111	.676
	Constant	-1.651	.178	85.729	1	.000	.192		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Grade, Gender, Sexual violence, Physical dating violence, Sexual dating violence.

RQ3

RQ3: What is the association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₃: There is no association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a3}: There is an association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to investigate if traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in physically violent behavior are factors that predict if an African American youth would experience suicidal ideation or suicidal behavior. The possible predictor variable was participation in physically violent behavior. The Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit was not significant ($p > .05$) indicating the model is correctly specified (see Table 11). Additionally, see the -2 log Likelihood = 955.801 and the Nagelkerke R squared = .129 (Table 10). The model resulted in the IV, participation in physically violent behavior, was found not to be significant ($p > .05$). Controlling for grade, gender, and physical or sexual abuse, the predictor variable, participation in physically violent behavior, in the logistic regression analysis was found to contribute to the model. In Table 12, the unstandardized $B = [.104]$, $SE = [.183]$, $Wald = [.320]$, $p > .001$. The estimated odds ratio favored a positive relationship with a nearly 10.9% increase ($Exp(B) = [1.109]$, 95% CI $[.774, 1.589]$). Therefore, there was an 11% increase in suicidal ideation for those who participate in physically violent behavior.

Table 9

<i>Case Processing Summary</i>			
Unweighted Cases ^a		N	Percent
Selected Cases	Included in Analysis	1284	62.9
	Missing Cases	756	37.1
	Total	2040	100.0
Unselected Cases		0	.0
Total		2040	100.0

a. If weight is in effect, see classification table for the total number of cases.

Table 10

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	955.801 ^a	.072	.129

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 20 because maximum iterations has been reached. Final solution cannot be found.

Table 11

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Step	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	5.786	8	.671

Table 12

Variables in the Equation

Step	Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
1 ^a	Were in a physical fight(1)	.104	.183	.320	1	.572	1.109	.774	1.589
	Grade			5.248	4	.263			
	Grade(1)	-.327	.223	2.147	1	.143	.721	.466	1.117
	Grade(2)	-.340	.231	2.162	1	.141	.712	.452	1.120
	Grade(3)	-.541	.249	4.718	1	.030	.582	.357	.949
	Grade(4)	-	40192.97	.000	1	1.000	.000	.000	.
		20.891	0						
	Gender(1)	-.825	.180	20.997	1	.000	.438	.308	.624
	Sexual violence(1)	1.453	.283	26.350	1	.000	4.278	2.456	7.451

Physical dating violence(1)	1.382	.290	22.653	1	.000	3.984	2.255	7.038
Sexual dating violence(1)	-.977	.474	4.242	1	.039	.377	.149	.954
Constant	-1.449	.180	65.072	1	.000	.235		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Grade, Gender, Sexual violence, Physical dating violence, Sexual dating violence.

RQ4

RQ4: What is the association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₄: There is no association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a4}: There is an association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to investigate if traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in physically violent behavior are factors that predict if an African American youth would experience suicidal behavior. The possible predictor variables were traditional bullying. The Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit was not significant ($p > .05$) indicating the model is correctly specified (Table 15).

Additionally, see the -2 log Likelihood = 700.097 and the Nagelkerke R squared = .195 (see Table 14). The model resulted the IV, traditional bullying, was found to be

significant ($p < .05$). Controlling for grade, gender, and physical or sexual abuse, the predictor variable, traditional bullying, in the logistic regression analysis was found to contribute to the model. The unstandardized $B = [1.502]$, $SE = [.221]$, $Wald = [46.142]$, $p < .001$. The estimated odds ratio favored a positive relationship of a 349.2% increase ($Exp(B) = [4.492]$, 95% CI [2.912, 6.930]). Therefore, there was a 349% increase in suicidal behavior for those who experience traditional bullying.

Table 13

Case Processing Summary

Unweighted Cases ^a		N	Percent
Selected Cases	Included in Analysis	1067	52.3
	Missing Cases	973	47.7
	Total	2040	100.0
Unselected Cases		0	.0
Total		2040	100.0

a. If weight is in effect, see classification table for the total number of cases.

Table 14

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	700.097 ^a	.105	.195

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Table 15

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Step	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	9.872	8	.274

Table 16*Variables in the Equation*

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a	Bullying at school(1)	1.502	.221	46.142	1	.000	4.492	2.912	6.930
	Grade			7.425	3	.060			
	Grade(1)	.246	.253	.950	1	.330	1.279	.780	2.100
	Grade(2)	-.520	.298	3.030	1	.082	.595	.331	1.068
	Grade(3)	-.193	.296	.426	1	.514	.824	.462	1.472
	Gender(1)	-.604	.206	8.587	1	.003	.547	.365	.819
	Sexual violence(1)	1.551	.304	26.040	1	.000	4.717	2.600	8.560
	Physical dating violence(1)	.793	.330	5.786	1	.016	2.210	1.158	4.217
	Sexual dating violence(1)	-.632	.494	1.637	1	.201	.531	.202	1.400
	Constant	-2.196	.220	99.421	1	.000	.111		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Grade, Gender, Sexual violence, Physical dating violence, Sexual dating violence.

RQ5

RQ5: What is the association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₅: There is no association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a5}: There is an association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to investigate if traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in physically violent behavior are factors that predict if an African American youth would experience suicidal behavior. The possible predictor variables were cyberbullying. The Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit was not significant ($p > .05$) indicating the model is correctly specified (Table 19). Additionally, see the $-2 \log \text{Likelihood} = 721.002$ and the Nagelkerke R squared = .181 (Table 18). The model resulted in the IV, cyberbullying (electronic bullying) was found to be significant ($p < .05$). Controlling for grade, gender, and physical or sexual abuse, the predictor variable, electronic bullying, in the logistic regression analysis was found to contribute to the model. In Table 20, the unstandardized $B = [-1.429]$, $SE = [.259]$, $Wald = [30.367]$, and $p < .000$. The estimated odds ratio favored a negative relationship with a 76% decrease ($Exp(B) = [.240]$, 95% CI, [.114, .398]). Therefore, there was a 76% decrease in suicidal behavior for those who experience cyberbullying.

Table 17

<i>Case Processing Summary</i>			
Unweighted Cases ^a		N	Percent
Selected Cases	Included in Analysis	1072	52.5
	Missing Cases	968	47.5
	Total	2040	100.0
Unselected Cases		0	.0
Total		2040	100.0

a. If weight is in effect, see classification table for the total number of cases.

Table 18

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	721.002 ^a	.097	.181

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Table 19

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Step	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	2.579	8	.958

Table 20

Variables in the Equation

Step		B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
1 ^a	Electronic bullying(1)	-1.429	.259	30.367	1	.000	.240	.144	.398
	Grade			11.246	3	.010			
	Grade(1)	.181	.249	.530	1	.466	1.198	.736	1.950
	Grade(2)	-.624	.291	4.604	1	.032	.536	.303	.947
	Grade(3)	-.514	.298	2.983	1	.084	.598	.334	1.072
	Gender(1)	-.495	.204	5.884	1	.015	.609	.408	.909
	Sexual violence(1)	1.750	.299	34.160	1	.000	5.755	3.200	10.349
	Physical dating violence(1)	.783	.327	5.744	1	.017	2.189	1.153	4.154

Sexual dating violence(1)	-.502	.477	1.110	1	.292	.605	.238	1.541
Constant	-.578	.297	3.797	1	.051	.561		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Grade, Gender, Sexual violence, Physical dating violence, Sexual dating violence.

RQ6

RQ6: What is the association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₆: There is no association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a6}: There is an association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to investigate if traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in physically violent behavior are factors that predict if an African American youth would experience suicidal ideation or suicidal behavior. The possible predictor variable was participation in physically violent behavior or engaging in a physical altercation. The Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit was not significant ($p > .05$) indicating the model is correctly specified (Table 23). Additionally, see the -2 log Likelihood = 1011.595 and the Nagelkerke R squared = .099 (see Table 22). The model resulted the IV participation in physically violent behavior, was found to

not be significant ($p > .05$). Controlling for grade, gender, and physical or sexual abuse, the predictor variable, participation in physically violent behavior, in the logistic regression analysis was found to contribute to the model. In Table 24, the unstandardized $B = [1.362]$, $SE = [.526]$, $Wald = [6.701]$, and $p < .010$. The estimated odds ratio favored a positive relationship with a [27.5%] increase ($Exp(B) = [3.906]$, 291% CI [1.392, 10.958]). Therefore, there was a 290.6% or 291% increase in suicidal behavior for those who participate in physically violent behavior.

Table 21

Case Processing Summary

		N	Percent
Unweighted Cases ^a			
<i>Selected Cases</i>	Included in Analysis	1042	51.1
	Missing Cases	998	48.9
	Total	2040	100.0
Unselected Cases		0	.0
Total		2040	100.0

a. If weight is in effect, see classification table for the total number of cases.

Table 22

Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	697.895 ^a	.086	.162

Table 23

Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Step	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	5.905	8	.658

Table 24*Variables in the Equation*

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for	
							Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a			11.320	7	.125			
Were in a physical fight								
Were in a physical fight(1)	.166	.290	.327	1	.567	1.180	.669	2.081
Were in a physical fight(2)	.638	.328	3.784	1	.052	1.893	.995	3.600
Were in a physical fight(3)	.687	.472	2.118	1	.146	1.987	.788	5.011
Were in a physical fight(4)	.823	1.088	.573	1	.449	2.278	.270	19.207
Were in a physical fight(5)	.931	.960	.940	1	.332	2.536	.387	16.637
Were in a physical fight(6)	-19.778	26984.683	.000	1	.999	.000	.000	.
Were in a physical fight(7)	1.362	.526	6.701	1	.010	3.906	1.392	10.958
Grade			11.572	3	.009			
Grade(1)	.097	.249	.151	1	.697	1.102	.676	1.796
Grade(2)	-.712	.292	5.922	1	.015	.491	.277	.871
Grade(3)	-.591	.306	3.728	1	.054	.554	.304	1.009
Gender(1)	-.775	.219	12.540	1	.000	.461	.300	.708
Sexual violence(1)	1.725	.314	30.176	1	.000	5.614	3.033	10.390
Physical dating violence(1)	.721	.342	4.453	1	.035	2.056	1.053	4.015
Sexual dating violence(1)	-.269	.504	.285	1	.593	.764	.284	2.053
Constant	-1.840	.211	75.814	1	.000	.159		

Summary

In Chapter 4, six research questions were answered involving suicidal ideation and behavior related to traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in physically violent behavior. I displayed results of this cross-sectional quantitative study using binary logistic regression. Independent variables tested in the study were traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in physically violent behavior. The dependent variables of the study were suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior. Age, gender, physical, and sexual abuse were controlled for in this study. Using YRBSS data, I analyzed variables to assess for correlations between suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior.

There was a positive correlation between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior. There was also a positive correlation between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation. By contrast, there was a negative correlation between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior. There was a noticeable but not statistically significant increase in the likelihood of suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior when considering participation in physically violent behavior. In Chapter 5, I include a more in-depth explanation of findings, as well as limitations of the study, recommendations, and implications of social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

I was motivated by the need for public health professionals to address suicide among high school, African American youth. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth and the rates of attempts among the African American population have increased at a higher rate compared to their White counterparts (Forte et al., 2018). Minority populations have a higher rate of suicidal ideation, behaviors, and attempts (Forte et al., 2018). In this study, traditional bullying is bullying that occurs face-to-face bullying. Cyberbullying involves bullying through social media platforms, such as texting, Instagram, and Snapchat. Participation in physically violent behavior means being in a physical altercation on or off school property within 12 months prior to data collection. Suicidal ideation are thoughts and plans for suicide. Suicidal behavior is nonlethal, self-directed, and potentially injurious behavior with the intent to die.

For this study, I conducted a correlational cross-sectional quantitative analysis of secondary survey data. I used the 2019 YRBSS data. This was an appropriate design for the present research because it gives an opportunity to analyze if there is a correlation between traditional bullying, cyberbullying, participation in physically violent behavior, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior. Independent variables of this study were traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in physically violent behavior. Dependent variables were suicidal ideation (making suicidal plans) and suicidal behavior (failed suicide attempts). Covariates were age, gender, and history of physical or sexual abuse. I dichotomized independent and dependent variables into yes = 1 and no = 2

responses and used binary logistic regression to analyze data. There were six research questions:

RQ1: What is the association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged, African American youth when controlling for age, gender and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₁: There is no association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a1}: There is an association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ2: What is the association between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, physical, and sexual abuse?

H₀₂: There is no association between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a2}: There is an association between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ3: What is the association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₃: There is no association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a3}: There is an association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal ideation among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ4: What is the association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₄: There is no association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a4}: There is an association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ5: What is the association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₅: There is no association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a5}: There is an association between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

RQ6: What is the association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse?

H₀₆: There is no association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

H_{a6}: There is an association between participation in physically violent behavior on and off school property and suicidal behavior among high school aged African American youth when controlling for age, gender, and physical and sexual abuse.

Interpretation of the Findings

The study's purpose was to see if there was an association between being a victim of traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in physically violent behavior and suicidal ideation and behaviors, among African American high school aged youth.

Traditional bullying was tested for an association with suicidal ideation. Based on the results, traditional bullying and suicidal ideation were statistically significant and there was a 360% increase. So, there was a 360% increased likelihood that traditional bullying

would result in suicidal ideation among the African American youth population.

Traditional bullying also resulted in a positive correlation in suicidal behavior. In fact, there was an 349% increase. Based on the findings, African American high school aged youth who were subjected to traditional bullying were at a higher prevalence for suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior.

When considering cyberbullying, a positive correlation was found between cyberbullying and suicidal ideation. There was a 472% increase in the likelihood of suicidal ideation because of cyberbullying. However, a negative relationship was found between cyberbullying and suicidal behavior. A 76% decrease in the likelihood of suicidal behavior was the result of cyberbullying. Based on the results, there was a high likelihood that an African American, high school aged youth who is subjected to cyberbullying will experience suicidal ideation. Yet, there was a decrease in likelihood that cyberbullying will result in suicidal behavior.

African American high school aged youth who participated in physically violent behavior were more likely to experience suicidal ideation. Based on the results, those youth who engaged in physically violent behavior had a positive correlation with suicidal ideation. There was a smaller increase, compared to cyberbullying and traditional bullying. There was a 349% increased likelihood between engagement in physically violent behavior and suicidal ideation. There was a 291% increased likelihood in the relationship between engagement in physically violent behavior and suicidal behavior.

For RQ1, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there was an association between traditional bullying and suicidal ideation among high school aged, African American youth controlling for age, gender, physical, and sexual abuse.

For RQ2, the null hypothesis was rejected. There was an association between cyberbullying (excluding traditional bullying) and suicidal ideation among high school aged, African American youth, controlling for age, gender, physical, and sexual abuse.

For RQ3, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there was an association between participation in physically violent behavior (on and off school property) and suicidal ideation among high school aged, African American youth, controlling for age, gender, physical, and sexual abuse.

For RQ4, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there was an association between traditional bullying (excluding cyberbullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged, African American youth, controlling for age, gender, physical, and sexual abuse.

For RQ5, the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, there was no association between cyberbullying (excluding traditional bullying) and suicidal behavior among high school aged, African American youth, controlling for age, gender, physical, and sexual abuse.

For RQ6, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there was an association between participation in physically violent behavior (on and off school property) and suicidal behavior among high school aged, African American youth, controlling for age, gender, physical, and sexual abuse.

Overall, the findings of this research supported most of the empirical research that were included in Chapter 2 of this study, regarding the adverse results of bullying on African American youth. Both traditional and cyberbullying resulted in psychological distress for the victim and there was an association with suicidal ideation and behaviors (Butler-Barnes et al., 2015; Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2015; & John et. al., 2018; De Oliveira Pimentel et al., 2020). From the results, it can be interpreted that youth who were bullied, both traditionally bullied and cyberbullied, had an increased prevalence of suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior. Participation in physically violent behavior did not show to be statistically significant. However, a strong correlation between students who engaged in physically violent behavior and both suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior was found in the present results.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations to my study, which could have impacted the results. The first limitation of the study is that I used a cross-sectional design. Using this method of design can limit the ability to draw causal relationships. Another limitation is the use of self-reported data. Self-reports can lead to recollection discrepancies and reporting bias. Some of the more sensitive variables regarding suicide, being a victim of bullying, experiencing sexual or physical violence, may lead to feelings of embarrassment, which could have impacted the level of honesty of the respondent. Another limitation, relevant to my study, the cultural and environmental factors also play a role in the outcomes of bullying victims. Some of those cultural and environmental factors include parental involvement, religious beliefs, family connectedness, and socioeconomic status. For this

present study, those factors were not researched, as it could have prolonged and complicated the study, and the dataset did not have variables to support the research. It is imperative to understand those factors are still potential contributors to suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Finally, time constraints were a limitation. There was not enough time or resources available to conduct a study of a larger magnitude. A study such as this would benefit from being conducted as a longitudinal study to observe how the respondents' responses evolve over a longer period of years.

Recommendations

To improve the generalizability of this study, it would be beneficial for future researchers to conduct a similar study using a longitudinal design. For a study including a population that is continuously growing and evolving, due to environmental factors, hormonal factors, physical factors, and so on, it would be useful for future researchers to understand that suicidal ideation and behaviors can arise due to a number of potential factors, not limited to being a victim of bullying or participated in physically violent behavior.

It will benefit future researchers to assess if a participant has a history of suicidal ideation and behaviors. Knowing a participant's history, would give a future researcher an understanding of whether solely experiencing bullying may lead to these thoughts or behaviors. According to Mars et al (2019), a predictor of future suicide attempts is previously engaging in non-suicidal self-harm or prior experience with suicidal ideation. Considering history of suicidal ideation and attempts among the population would give more insight regarding identifying at-risk populations.

Relevant to my study, the cultural and environmental factors also play a role in the outcomes of bullying victims. Some of those cultural and environmental factors include parental involvement, religious beliefs, family connectedness, and socioeconomic status. For the present study, those factors were not researched, as this would have prolonged and complicated the study, and the prospective dataset does not have variables to support the research. It is imperative to understand those factors are still potential contributors to suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Future researchers could analyze this combination of variables (traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in physically violent behavior) in addition to variables not included in the study, which may contribute to suicidal ideation and behavior within the population.

This research is focusing on the African American, high school age youth population. As a result, this research is generalizable among the selected population. It would be a good idea for future researchers to test the variables from this study among other populations and age groups. This will ultimately make future results more generalizable.

Implications

The social implications associated with this study can impact a multitude of stakeholders. Public health professionals, schools, families, therapeutic services, and policy makers should continue to be educated on the risk factors associated with suicidal ideation and behaviors. From a public health perspective, early intervention and preventative methods could be improved as populations at higher risk for suicide are being more readily identified. Local communities should be continuously educated and

informed about appropriate approaches necessary to apply evidence-based practices when addressing the increased public health concern, suicide among the youth population. The present research contributes to the gap of research, as it gives analysis of how traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in physically violent behavior may contribute to a high school aged, African American youth's experience with suicidal ideation or behavior. Understanding how these disparities, being a victim of cyberbullying, traditional bullying, or engaging in physically violent behavior, may influence the occurrence of suicidal ideation and behaviors among the African American youth population could contribute to new or improved methods of prevention and intervention. In turn, this could result in a reduction of suicidal ideation and behavior among this population.

Conclusion

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if there was a correlation between experiencing bullying, both traditional and cyberbullying, participation in physically violent behavior, and suicidal ideation and behaviors, among African American high school aged youth. Prior studies have been conducted regarding suicidal ideation, suicidal behavior, and bullying. However, none of the empirical studies were conducted includes the combination of variables, included in the present study. The National Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey data was used to answer the six research questions. For the research questions, the null hypothesis was rejected for five of the six research questions. Traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and participation in physically violent behavior were correlated with suicidal ideation. Traditional bullying

and physically violent behavior were positively correlated with suicidal behavior.

However, there was a negative trend in cyberbullying and suicidal behavior.

Evaluating the variables in this study is vital in efforts to inform successful implementation of public health interventions regarding suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior among African American youth. Public health professionals should inform communities about the adverse consequences of bullying and participation in physically violent behavior. As previously explained, suicide is a growing public health concern among the African American youth population. The increased prevalence of cyberbullying and traditional bullying must also be addressed to increase prevention and intervention efforts to combat suicide among the youth population. It is the responsibility of public health professionals, as well as other related specialists, to protect the well-being of the public, especially the youth, through transparency and consistent research efforts.

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