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Evaluating the Effects of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program on Middle School Bullying

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

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EdS, Kennesaw State University, 2007

MA, Western Carolina University, 1994

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

This project study addressed the problem of bullying, victimization, and the awareness of these activities at a public suburban middle school in Northwest Georgia. The study school implemented the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) in 2009, yet had not evaluated the program to identify whether or not it met its goals after 1 year of implementation. Using a quasiexperimental, goal-free program evaluation, the research questions explored whether or not the OBPP succeeded in reducing the student reported rates of bullying and victimization while also increasing awareness of such activities. A Mann Whitney U test was utilized for analysis due to violations of normality and homoscedasticity in the data. The quantitative sequence consisted of descriptive analyses of archived student data from the pre- and postimplementation (N = 346 and 137, respectively) Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ) administration. Results indicated an increase, though not statistically significant, in student reporting of victimization and awareness and a statistically significant increase in rates of bullying. Results in the evaluation report supported continued OBPP implementation with anticipation that implementing more than 1 year should yield a decrease in student reported rates of bullying and victimization and increase in awareness of what constitutes these activities. The project study could lead to positive social change by increasing awareness of bullying in the learning community and reducing the number of reported incidents of bullying and victimization.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

The growing prevalence of bullying and bullying behaviors in K-12 schools in the United States interferes with the provision of a safe and nonviolent environment for students. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics show that almost half of all middle school students report being bullied during the school year (DeVoe & Bauer, 2010). Nearly 30% of students in Grades 6–10 in the United States have reportedly been involved in bullying (as a victim, bully or both) on a moderate or even frequent basis (Nansel et al., 2001). These high bullying rates are compounded by the elevated potential for subsequent involvement on the part of those who bully in such negative activities as incarceration, suicide, gang membership and drug abuse (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010; Cornell & Mehta, 2011; Pergolizzi et al., 2009). Victims of bullying have an increased tendency to suffer from emotional and/or social difficulties such as low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, and suicidal ideation (Cornell & Mehta, 2011; Due, Damsgaard, Lund, & Holstein, 2009; Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt, & Hymel, 2010; Vaillancourt et al., 2008).

Many of the behaviors now classified as bullying were dismissed by adults and other observers in the not-so-distant past as typical adolescent activities, and were therefore overlooked or endured at the unfortunate expense of those who were victimized (McNamee & Mercurio, 2008; Vaillancourt et al. 2010; Young et al., 2009). At the time of this study, however, educators, parents, researchers, and legislators recognized the detrimental effects that bullying had on the students and the learning environment,

including damage to the school culture and climate, student isolation, physical harm, and absenteeism (Limber & Small, 2003). Since then, multiple researchers have acknowledged the urgent need to address this dilemma through the implementation of bullying prevention programs (Cornell & Meta, 2011, DeVoe & Bauer, 2010).

This doctoral project study analyzed archival data to examine the efficacy of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP). It reviewed OBPP's degree of effectiveness in regard to significant changes noted between pre- and posttest results of the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ; Olweus, 1996) following a year of implementing OBPP at a middle school located in Northwest Georgia. Included in this section are definitions, a rationale of the problem and its significance, the primary research question, a review of the current literature, and discussion of the study implications based on anticipated findings of the data collection and analysis.

Definition of the Problem

This study was conducted in a county school district located 30 minutes outside of Atlanta, GA. This rapidly growing community consisted of approximately 136,655 residents and 33 public schools spanning grades K-12 (20 elementary, eight middle and five high schools). The majority of the county was urbanized at the time of the study; however, a small portion still remained relatively rural. Three-fourths of the county's population was Caucasian (78.4%), and the remainder included African American (14.2%), Hispanic or Latino (4.3%), those claiming two or more races (1.2%), Asian (1.0%), and other not identified (0.6%) ("City-data," n.d., para.4). The study specifically assessed an antibullying program at a middle school that was one of the oldest existing

middle schools in the district and was situated in the southern portion of the county. This school was a Title I-classified school with approximately 550 students (14.7:1 student-teacher ratio) at the time of the study, with approximately 37% of students receiving free or reduced-price lunches ("SchoolDigger," n.d., para. 2).

In 2009, the board of education in this county requested that each of its educational facilities put into practice a policy or protocol for addressing bullying and its associated behaviors. In response to this request, the OBVQ was administered schoolwide at a middle school to gather preliminary information on the prevalence of bullying behaviors, attitudes, and associated activities in the school environment. The OBVQ results showed more frequent initial indications of bullying behaviors than the national average, indicating that immediate action was required.

These results established an urgent need for the local administration to respond, leading to the formation of a bullying committee comprised of school staff, administration, parents, and community members. This committee convened for the purpose of reviewing the data and deciding upon further action. Following the examination of various instruments designed to reduce bullying at the middle school level, the committee determined that a whole-school approach would be the most appropriate and opted to implement the OBPP. Implementation began with a two-day training for the committee members who then redelivered this information to the school staff (over the course of 10 hours and multiple sessions) with the intent of introducing the program to the learning community the following school year. The beginning of this initiative occurred in anticipation of state amendments to the existing bullying legislation.

Rationale

Comprehensive examinations of the phenomenon of bullying have occurred overseas for the past few decades (Milsom & Gallo, 2006). Acknowledgment of bullying as a nationally recognized crisis in the United States, however, has occurred only recently (Gulemetova, Drury, & Bradshaw, 2011). Antibullying legislation for the state of Georgia was ratified in 1999 (O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.4); however, this law was amended in 2010 due to multiple reports indicating the severity and prevalence of bullying (Dinkes, Kemp, & Baum, 2009; Nansel et al., 2001; Nolle, Guerino, & Dinkes, 2007). This amendment extended the existing definition of bullying and mandated reporting of bullying offenses (Georgia Department of Education, Rev. ed., 2011).

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

A survey of more than 43,000 high school students conducted in Los Angeles showed that 50% of students in this age group had engaged in bullying behaviors such as physical harm, verbal torment, and defamation via social media within the past year (Josephson Institute Center for Youth Ethics, 2010). Nearly half (47%) of the 43,000 students surveyed stated they were also victims of bullying within that same period of time. Although this reported rate of bullying in the above-mentioned study is high, it is not unusual for educators and school staff to underestimate the number of bullying incidents when surveyed in comparison to students' estimate. This disparity is more likely to occur with events that occur during times of transition when little to no adult supervision is present (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007; Marshall, Varjas, Meyers, Graybill, & Skoczylas, 2009).

This differentiation in reported rates of bullying between students and school staff is not as prevalent in elementary schools due to the more overt or physical displays of aggression typically witnessed at this developmental level (Lamb, Pepler, & Craig, 2009). In middle and high school however, the reported rates of bullying between students and school staff begin to increasingly diverge as bullying behaviors shift to more covert or relational actions such as isolation from peer groups or humiliation on social media (Holt, Kantor, & Finkelhor, 2009). These findings support a need for additional training on accurate identification of bullying and victimization, especially at the secondary levels. This will assist learning community members at these levels with the implementation of prevention programs and clarify the nature of these behaviors for middle and high school students (Cornell & Mehta, 2011).

Evidence of the Problem From the Professional Literature

During childhood and adolescence, children have traditionally engaged in behaviors referred to as horseplay or rites of passage expected to occur during school age years (McNamee & Mercurio, 2008; Vaillancourt et al., 2010; Young et al., 2009). These activities are sometimes described as a normal course of development for a specific gender, for example, boys engaging in physical fights and girls spreading rumors or making derogatory comments about other students (Conoley, 2008). These behaviors are often regarded as harmless roughhousing or teasing if no participants are hurt or taken advantage of in a purposely destructive manner, as evidenced by students' facial expressions and body posturing (Black & Jackson, 2007). The distinction between playing and bullying occurs when deliberate actions repeatedly cause physical, mental,

verbal, or social harm and there is an uneven distribution of power among the parties involved (Olweus, 2003).

Smokowski and Kopasz (2005) described bullying as the most prevalent form of violence occurring during a child's formative years in schools. School shootings, suicides, and other events resulting from bullying have led educators, researchers, and policy makers to concur that this phenomenon presents a serious and pervasive dilemma in schools and communities all over the world (Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike, & Afen-Akpaida, 2008). Bullying's enveloping nature and potentially detrimental consequences created a strong need for governmental policies addressing bullying behaviors and mandating that schools specifically address these and other aggressive incidents in order to provide for a safe and secure learning environment for all students, as suggested by Espelage and Swearer (2003).

Definitions

The following is a list of special terms commonly associated with the topic of bullying that are used throughout this paper.

Bullying: In 1993, Olweus defined bullying as "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students" (p. 9).

Bullying circle: A conceptual scheme describing the various roles students can take during the act of bullying: bully, victim, or bystander (Olweus & Limber, 2007).

Bully-victims: In 2008, Georgiou and Stavrinides defined bully-victims as "Those who bully others but are victims of bullying themselves" (p. 575).

Bystander: A student who is neither the primary bully nor the victim, and who is in the proximity of bullying actions when they occur. These bystanders can take on various roles ranging from supporters of the bullying or defenders of the victim to simply disengaged onlookers (Olweus & Limber, 2007).

Cyberbullying: This study uses Aleude et al.'s (2008) definition of cyberbullying as "the sending of menacing messages through telephone calls or Email messages. Additionally, youths also create hate-filled web pages about a victim where they include personal information about the victim" (p. 154).

Direct bullying: This study uses Lamb et al.'s (2009) definition of direct bullying as "An overt expression of power and can include physical aggression (e.g. hitting, kicking) and verbal aggression (e.g. insults, racial or sexual harassment, threats)" (p. 356).

Indirect bullying: This study uses Lamb et al.'s (2009) definition of indirect bullying as "The covert manipulation of social relationships to hurt (e.g. gossiping, spreading rumors) or exclude the individual being victimized" (p. 356).

Physical bullying: In 2008, Piotrowski and Hoot defined physical bullying as "Includes physical contact that causes discomfort to another individual" (p. 2).

Positive school culture: This study uses Peterson and Deal's (1998) definition of positive school culture as "A shared sense of what is important, a shared ethos of caring and concern, and a shared commitment to helping students learn" (p. 29).

Relational bullying: In 2004, Crick and Grotpeter defined relational bullying as "Behaviors that are intended to significantly damage another child's friendships or feelings of inclusion by the peer group." (p. 373).

Verbal bullying: In 2007, Ferguson, San Miguel, Kilburn, and Sanchez defined verbal bullying as "Calling names, threatening, taunting, malicious teasing, spreading nasty rumors" (p. 402).

Whole-school approach: In 2008, Mishna used this term whole-school approach to describe bulling prevention programs that involve and are "communicated to the whole community (students, parents, administrators, teachers, and adjunct school staff members such as office personnel, bus drivers, and lunch and playground supervisors)" (p. 331).

Significance

Schools must provide safe and secure environments in which to learn if all students are to obtain a solid foundation of knowledge (Limber & Small, 2003). The presence of bullying has a negative effect on learning environments and interferes with U.S. students' right to a safe school environment (Gulemetova et al., 2011). Examples of the negative classroom effects of bullying include poor attendance by victims (also known as school avoidance), low self-esteem, and a diminished capacity for forming interpersonal relationships with peers (Hughes, Middleton, & Marshall, 2009). Bullies often also experience academic difficulties such as poor grades, lack of focus, and school attendance problems; they also are more likely to have interpersonal struggles such as low self-esteem and confidence that can compromise both the classroom and school environments (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005). Addressing bullying

behaviors has become a priority issue in the United States because of increased recognition of bullying as a series of traumatic events that have significantly impeded the educational right of children to attend school in a safe and violence-free environment, in addition to jeopardizing their health and mental well-being (Aleude et al., 2008).

The significance of bullying as a phenomenon has captured the attention of educators and is also a topic of interest for researchers, social scientists, and lawmakers (Ferguson et al., 2007). When examining research on the effectiveness of school-based bullying prevention programs, it is difficult to surmise a consistent degree of effect (either positive or negative) when trying to compare results from studies conducted in different countries. Many studies have used different instruments for intervention, each with its own definitions of what actions constitute bullying behaviors (Craig & Harel, 2004). Given these conditions, it is not surprising that some reported findings have been inconsistent concerning the efficacy of these programs (Rigby & Slee, 2008). Comparing results from studies conducted in different countries also presents inconsistent findings due to varying interpretations of what exactly constitutes bullying behaviors in different cultures (Nansel & Overpeck, 2003).

These inconsistencies are further compounded when each intervention program may define bullying in a slightly different manner or provide no definition at all, leaving interpretation of the term's meaning entirely open to subjectivity (Nansel & Overpeck, 2003). These differences make it imperative (to both the local and larger educational context) to further substantiate the efficacy of bullying prevention programs by comparing results from studies that implement the same method of intervention with

similar populations (Smith, Ryan, & Cousins, 2007). Mostf bullying prevention programs have some degree of similarity in that their intended outcome is to reduce the prevalence of bullying behaviors and thereby improving the interpersonal relationships within the learning community (Mishna, 2008). The manner in which this intended goal is accomplished, however, varies considerably in terms of targeted audience, training, implementation and manner of intervention (Smith, Pepler, & Rigby, 2004).

Some programs approach intervention from a disciplinary standpoint, focusing more on negative consequences for those who bully; whereas, others are centered on the formation of positive relationships through the teaching and modeling of appropriate interpersonal problem-solving strategies (Smith et al., 2004). Another factor that contributes to inconsistencies when evaluating the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs is the outcome measure (i.e., self-reports, teacher reports, peer nominations, or observations) chosen for each intervention (Smith, Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou, 2004). Self-report questionnaires are the most commonly used form of outcome measure, but their results are not be directly comparable to those obtained using other methods (Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000).

This doctoral study's investigation into the effectiveness of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program at reducing reported rates of bullying and victimization was designed to benefit the study's local educational setting in three ways. First, it was designed to either support or refute the need for continued implementation and funding of this particular program. Second, it was designed to provide the school with a list of specific areas to target in regard to location and type of bullying activity currently occurring.

Third, it was designed to increase the level of awareness in the local learning community regarding identification and prevention of bullying activity, improving the overall culture and climate of the school and community.

Guiding/Research Question

The goal of the OBPP is to improve the interpersonal skills and culture of a learning community. This goal is accomplished by using a comprehensive approach to program implementation and addressing the entire learning community (students, staff, parents, community). The focus is on raising awareness of what constitutes acts of bullying and victimization and how to not only intervene but prevent them from occurring. With that said, in order to evaluate the efficacy of the OBPP, the following research questions were proposed to guide this program evaluation:

- RQ1: Does the OBPP intervention increase the reported rates of student bullying?

  H_o: There is no statistically significant difference in the reported rates of student bullying pre- and postimplementation.

  H_1: There is a statistically significant increase in the reported rates of student bullying pre- and postimplementation.

- RQ2: Does the OBPP intervention increase the reported rates of student victimization?

  H_o: There is no statistically significant difference in the reported rates of student victimization pre- and postimplementation

  H_1: There is a statistically significant increase in the reported rates of student victimization pre- and postimplementation.

- RQ3: Does the OBPP intervention increase the reported rates of student awareness of bullying behaviors?

  H_o: There is no statistically significant difference int reported rates of student awareness of bullying behavior pre- and postimplementation

  H_1: There was a significant increase of reported rates of student awareness of bullying behavior pre- and postimplementation.

I predicted that the reported rates of students who bully other students would initially increase as awareness of what behaviors constitute these aggressive acts increased, as suggested by Baur, Lozano, and Rivera (2007). I also predicted that reported rates of student victimization would also initially increase following a year of program implementation due to a rise in the awareness of what behaviors constituted bullying, as suggested by Baur et al. (2007) and Pergolizzi et al. (2009).

Review of the Literature

Search Methods

The following databases were used to locate research reports: ERIC, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, ProQuest, SAGE, Dissertations & Theses, and Google Scholar. Search terms used to perform a keyword search included: *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP)*, *Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ)*, *bullying*, *bullying patterns*, *bullying effects*, *bullying impact*, *bullying and behaviors*, *bullying and prevention*, *bullying and intervention*, *bullying and prevalence*, *bullying and research*, *Brofenbrenner*, *ecological systems theory*, *bullying and school*, *cyberbullying*, *relational bullying*, *physical bullying*,

gender and bullying, *and bullying and environment*. The use of keywords was continued until the point of saturation was reached and no new articles were located.

Theoretical Foundation

For any given child, there is an amalgamation of ecological factors that have an impact on development; these factors in turn influence exhibited behaviors. According to Brofenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979), these dynamics are internal as well as environmental. They are also bidirectional in that the scope of influence flows in both directions and is dependent upon the relationship between the two. From the immediate microsystem (encompassing physiological, mental, and emotional characteristics inherent to the individual) to the farther-reaching macro system, each environmental structure has either a direct or indirect influence on all of the others in some form or fashion.

Ecological systems theory suggests that bullying behaviors are the influential result of environmental relationships with significant others such as school, community, and family (Leff, 2007). This theory attributes bullying behaviors to multifarious interfaces between an individual and the environments in which they are embedded, as opposed to being an innate personal characteristic (Carney & Nottis, 2008; Coyle, 2008; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Varjas et al., 2008). This perspective suggests that when considering the type of bullying prevention program to implement, programs targeting a whole-school approach are the most effective choices because they target environmental systems at multiple levels, thereby providing for a more comprehensive and positive outcome (Fekkes et al. 2005; Holt et al., 2009; Vreeman & Carroll, 2007).

The rationales that encourage and stop bullying have been attributed by several studies to a perceived gain of social reinforcement or isolation from peers. Vreeman and Carroll (2007) described bullying as a societal cultural experience that is ubiquitous in nature. Fekkes et al. (2005) identified the power of age-level peers in the removal of communal support as an assisting factor in condemning bullying behaviors. Black and Jackson (2007) proposed that children with inadequate social skills and reasoning abilities utilize bullying to attain a level of social ranking. Kyriakides, Kaloyirou, and Lindsey (2006) purported that bullying is a dysfunctional manner by which children and adolescents attempt to obtain what they desire such as social status or attention. Smith et al. (2004) asserted that social and family environments needed to be considered as possible factors that may have actually contributed to the maintenance of bullying behaviors. They suggested that children who exhibited bullying behaviors had a tendency to come from homes that utilized hostility and frequent punishments as the preferred methods of resolving difficulties. This etiology of bullying has also been supported by Carney and Merrell (2001), Glew, Rivara and Feudtner (2000), and Olweus (2003).

Review of the Broader Problem

The phenomenon of bullying has been defined in a variety of ways. This disparity however, could contribute to the variance in prevalence rates and necessitate the extension and enhancement of the definition of bullying in order to reliably assess and compare the construct in addition to establishing validity (Varjas et al., 2008). One of the most widely recognized definitions of bullying is by Olweus, who stated that "A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly over time, to negative actions on the part

of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending him or herself" (Olweus in Hughes et al., 2009, p. 201). This definition encompasses three key elements used to categorize a behavior as bullying: frequency, negative intention behind the action, and an imbalance of power (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007).

The first element of frequency does not equate to a specific numerical value in which bullying behaviors are exhibited; rather, the negative actions are repeated and occur over a period of time as opposed to being a single incidence (Hughes et al., 2009; Lamb et al., 2009). Negative intention or intention to cause harm is the second element with harm being in the form of mental, physical, or social injury (McNamara & McNamara, 1997). Finally, an imbalance of power of one or more individuals over another could be demonstrated in such forms such as cognitive ability, physical stature, or even social ranking (Vaillancourt et al., 2008).

In the past, behaviors that would have fallen under the definition of bullying used in this study were typically overlooked or explained as being a normal occurrence in adolescence (Olweus & Limber, 2000). Under the generally accepted definition of bullying are two subtypes that have been acknowledged by several researchers, direct and indirect bullying (Olweus, 1993; Pergolizzi et al., 2009). Direct bullying has been referred to as a blatant demonstration of observable physical or verbal aggression in the form of punching, kicking, and insults or harassment; while indirect bullying alludes to more concealed actions with the intention to exclude or hurt another (Lamb et al., 2009). Indirect bullying has also been described as relational bullying, under which the term

cyber bullying has come into play with the advancement of technology and invariable use of text messages and social internet sites (Wang, Ianotti, & Nansel, 2009).

To fully comprehend the complexity of the bullying phenomenon, it is critical to be familiar with all of the participants involved (the bully, the victim or bully–victim, and the bystanders) (Cole, Cornell & Sheras, 2006; McNamee & Mercurio, 2008; Olweus & Limber, 2000). McNamee and Mercurio (2008) referred to the dynamics of this interaction as the bullying triangle. Olweus and Limber (2007) described this triad as the bullying circle. Regardless of what configuration is used to describe the exchange among bully, victim, and bystanders, what remains clear is need to acknowledge the complexity of this interaction and the importance of addressing all participants when implementing a bullying prevention program.

Children and adolescents who display bullying behaviors have been described as being deficient in a number of emotional qualities such as social skills, compassion for weaker individuals, and positive problem solving abilities (Aluede et al., 2008; Ferguson et al., 2007). Smokowski and Kopasz (2005) describe similar qualities found among bullies including aggressive problem solving tendencies, a lack of empathy for weaker individuals, and a poor understanding of social nuances. Bullies have also been described as possessing outwardly affirmative social qualities such as being influential and well liked, especially in regard to how they are viewed by their peers (Thunsfor & Cornell, 2008).

Behaviors displayed by bullies have been attributed to a host of familial characteristics that appear to contribute to the likelihood of its prevalence including a

lack of positive and dependable parental involvement, dictatorial parents who utilize more punitive and physical means of correction, and families that do not display acts of tenderness or unity (Carney & Nottis, 2008; Frisen, Jonsson, & Persson, 2007; Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2008; Marshall et al., 2009). This lack of constructive family dynamics tends to perpetuate aggressive inclinations, especially when there is an imbalance of power in favor of the bully (Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Over time, repetition of these aggressive displays may predispose these children to get involved in more violent and even criminal activities (Kelleher et al., 2008).

Victims or adolescents who are targeted for bullying typically stand out in a crowd of peers whether due to physical, mental, or social differences (Aleude et al., 2008; Conoley, 2008; Frisen et al., 2007). Such differences might include being small for their age, being of a different ethnicity, having a disability, not choosing to socialize with others, or lacking in the knowledge of what constitutes appropriate social skills (Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2008). A subset of the victim category is the bully-victim, or those persons who have suffered victimization and in turn have taken out their frustrations on another as a result.

Bully-victims have been found to be at the highest risk for depression, suicidal ideation/attempts, and carrying a weapon to school (Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2007; Liang, Flisher, & Lombarde 2007). Bully-victims differ from those who are just victims of bullying in that they do not exhibit a passive response to their victimization; rather they often incite trouble and then claim self-defense (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). As a result of being bullied, it is common for both victims

and bully-victims to display psychosomatic and physical ailments, acquire a fear of going to school, struggle academically, and possess low self-esteem (Carney & Nottis, 2008; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Kelleher et al., 2008).

Bullying does not typically occur in isolation; there are often multiple spectators who can either inhibit or encourage the actions taking place (Fekkes et al., 2005). Bystanders or witnesses to the bullying behaviors being displayed form the final subset participants of a bullying incident. Due to the social nature of this phenomenon, it is imperative to address all of the key players, not just the aggressors and victims, for the most effective effect (Smith et al., 2004). Without this inclusive approach, bystanders are more likely to perceive intervention efforts as futile and be less likely to intercede, a phenomenon that then perpetuates these aggressive actions (Piotrowski & Hoot, 2008).

Bullying is multifaceted in its appearance and presents itself in many forms, such as the broad categories of displays of aggression, verbal elicitations of hurtful words, cyberbullying and relational displays of exclusion or rumors (Milsom & Gallo, 2006). The labeling of bullying behaviors can be further subdivided into direct (physical and verbal) and indirect (relational) actions (Ferguson et al., 2007). Despite the type of bullying being exhibited, these aggressive behaviors continue to be the most rampant displays of low level violence in learning environments to date and are accompanied by a cavalcade of detrimental consequences for all those involved (Whitted & Dupper, 2005).

In regard to prevalence among gender, both boys and girls display bullying behaviors and are also victims. It has been noted by numerous researchers, however, that males tend to exhibit (and are victims of) more physical or direct forms of bullying, while

females are more prone to exhibit (and be victims of) relational or indirect actions (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Milsom & Gallo, 2006; Wang et al., 2009). Because many of the relational forms of bullying are not as overt as the physical or verbal actions, they may have the tendency to go unnoticed, consequently causing a possible underestimate of bullying events by females (Espelage & Swearer, 2003).

The after effects of bullying behaviors are far-reaching and detrimental to not only those directly involved but also to the learning community (Black & Jackson, 2007; Due et al., 2009; Ng & Tsang, 2008). The victims of bullying endure a substantial amount of suffering, ranging from short-term physical symptoms, long-term mental and emotional harm to even an increased risk for suicidal ideation (Janson & Hazler, 2004; Kim, Leventhal, Koh, Hubbard & Boyce, 2006). Bullies themselves also fall prey to negative consequences as a result of their aggressive behaviors such as depression, suicidal ideation, a lack of social skills, possible substance abuse, gang membership, and even criminal involvement (Black & Jackson, 2007). The degree of subsequent hardship, howeve, has been found to be greatest for bully-victims or those who have been bullied and then in turn exert their frustrations on another victim (Nansel et al., 2001). These negative consequences include, but are not limited to, engaging in criminal behaviors, harboring feelings of aggression and enmity toward others, and the possession of objects intended to cause harm (Cook et al., 2010).

There have been a vast number of underlying dynamics reportedly linked to the onset and/or continuation of bullying behaviors, including, but not limited to, peer encouragement, teacher disregard, familial relations, deficient social skills, and even

community factors (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). School climate has also been suggested as a possible contributing factor to the occurrence of bullying due to its interference with normal learning and development (Swearer et al., 2010). This is evident in the increased rates of absenteeism or school avoidance, low academic achievement, and an overall negative attitude toward school (Lamb et al., 2009). Student perceptions of staff complacency regarding bullying behaviors tend to empower bullies and diminish victims' propensity to report any unfair treatment (Bandyopadhyay, Cornell, & Konold, 2009). A final negative effect that bullying has on school climate is the subsequent erosion of the interpersonal relationships among all stakeholders (Black & Jackson, 2007). Given the devastating result that bullying behaviors have on educational effectiveness, there is a critical need to address these displays of aggression in the form of legislative policies that mandate the implementation of school based violence prevention programs, and more specifically bullying behaviors (Limber & Small, 2003).

Successful intervention programs call for a focus on restructuring the environment, raising awareness, and reducing the forces that promote bullying behaviors (Hirschstein, Edstrom, Frey, Snell, & MacKenzie, 2007; Kyriakides, Kaloyirou, & Lindsey, 2006; Limber, 2011). Because bullying is a social phenomenon (does not occur in isolation from other people), it is imperative to address it using a systemic or whole-school approach (Smith et al., 2004). This type of program acknowledges the social aspect of bullying incidents and therefore targets the involvement of the entire learning community including: students, school staff, parents and the community when trying to prevent such actions from occurring (Mishna, 2008). With that said, the efficacy of such

programs is dependent upon the fidelity with which faculty, administrators, and staff follow through with suggested implementation guidelines and instructions (Coyle, 2008). Components such as inclusive training, awareness education, student empowerment, and ongoing collection of data and dissemination of findings to the learning community also significantly enhance the positive effects of bullying prevention programs (Limber, 2006; Young et al., 2009).

The OBPP, a comprehensive antibullying program developed by Olweus (1993), utilizes a whole-school approach to bullying prevention and was designed to reduce or prevent bullying behaviors as well as improve the interpersonal relationships of a given learning community (Limber, 2011). It is considered to be a whole-school program because it addresses bullying at multiple levels: individual, classroom, school and community. It has been suggested to be effective, prevention programs need to target the entire learning environment (as opposed to only addressing it on a singular level) due to the convolution of bullying behaviors (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007).

The OBPP gathers baseline information from students regarding their exposure to bullying in a particular environment by utilizing an anonymous self-report questionnaire prior to implementation. This survey is also administered at various times following implementation for the purpose of analyzing change in bullying and victimization behaviors, as well as awareness, over time.

Although this manner of investigation has been frequently utilized, researchers have expressed concern regarding its concurrent validity due to its anonymous nature and possible misidentification of bullying behaviors (Lee & Cornell, 2010). For this reason,

the use of multiple measures (such as peer reports, teacher nominations, and observations) has been suggested to assist with the substantiation of results (Cornell & Mehta, 2011). Unfortunately, not all of the studies involving the OBPP utilize the same measures for outcome assessment. This lack of consistency complicates the comparison of results between studies when trying to evaluate the program efficacy of the OBPP. For this reason, it would be beneficial for future research to be conducted utilizing the same outcome measure, namely the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1996).

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) Norway Research

The OBPP was initially evaluated in Norway with approximately 2,500 students (grades fifth through eighth) over the course of two and a half years in the early 1980's (Olweus & Limber 2010). This study has also been referred to as the First Bergen Project Against Bullying. The implementation of this program was in response to a nationwide campaign against bullying, and for this reason it was impossible to randomly assign schools to treatment and control groups. At three different points in time, results of the OBVQ from students of the same age from the same schools were compared. Also referred to as an age-cohort design, scores at one point in time (typically before intervention) are compared to those from same age/grade level peers at another point in time (typically after intervention).

Results from student ratings on the OBVQ indicated a reduction for being bullied (62% from Time 1 to Time 2 and 64% from Time 2 to Time 3), for bullying other students (33% from Time 1 to Time 2 and 52.6% from Time 2 to Time 3), and a

reduction in student reports of other types of antisocial behaviors (stealing, destruction of property, trespassing, etc.). Further investigation and subsequent studies of the OBPP resulted in some adjustments to the program to better suit different cultures. One such adjustment was the increase in responsibility assigned to the Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee due to less available time allocated to staff discussion groups as in Norway. This committee (formed by each school implementing the program) is the group responsible for the training of staff and implementation of the entire program.

Subsequent studies conducted in Norway include the New Bergen Project Against Bullying and the Oslo Project Against Bullying (Olweus, 2005). Both of these studies were carried out by Olweus and members of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Research Team and utilized the age cohort design for comparison of data. Each resulted in marked reductions of reported acts of being bullied for schools that implemented the program as compared to the control schools, which had a relative increase in these behaviors.

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) United States Research

As a result of a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Program, the Institute for Families in Society at the University of South Carolina chose to undergo the first study in the United States that utilized the implementation of the OBPP (Limber, Nation, Tracy, Melton & Flerx, 2004). There was an extensive amount of continual support, training, and consultation that was provided to these schools on the part of Olweus himself and staff associated with his program including on-site training, supplemental materials, coaching, problem solving advice, availability of mental health professionals, and weekly visits from OBPP staff, etc.).

Data were collected from both elementary and middle schools in a primarily rural area of the state. Six districts were selected and then schools within these districts were paired based on similar student and community demographics. The schools in these pairs were then purposively assigned to either the control group or intervention group that received the OBPP. Random assignment of schools was not an option due to reports of logistical and political considerations. Students were asked to complete both the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ) (Olweus, 1996) and a questionnaire (also developed by Olweus) assessing related antisocial behaviors. Analysis of data from these instruments involved a pretest-posttest design and was limited to only the first year of implementation due to the reported inadequacy of implementation during the second year.

The statistically significant results ($p < .01$) included a large reduction (15.7%) in reported rates of bullying others from Time 1 (baseline) to Time 2 (7 months after implementation of the OBPP). Conversely, control schools actually had an increase in reported rates of bulling (11.9%). Other observations included a large reduction in reported rates of isolation on the part of boys but only a slight decrease among girls. The authors suggested that perhaps the OBPP was more effective with physical types of bullying behaviors as opposed to relational bullying. Finally, there was a large decrease for boys in reporting acts of bullying to adults, but only a moderate decrease in this same category for girls. The authors proposed the larger decrease for boys could possibly be due to the actual reduction in the number of bullying incidents.

In Philadelphia, Black and Jackson (2007) investigated the effectiveness of implementing the OBPP with urban youth from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The study was conducted during the course of 4 years in six elementary and middle schools. The assessment methods used to gauge effectiveness with this population were observations conducted by an independent evaluator and results from the OBVQ. The observations were utilized to compute a bullying incident density (BID) score of the number of bullying incidents that occurred per every 100 student hours of observation. Finally, an instrument designed to examine the fidelity of implementation was constructed based on core components identified by Olweus and Limber (2000) and was used to measure conformity to OBPP program implementation.

In regard to changes in the number of bullying incidents, the BID average at baseline was 65 incidents per 100 student hours. There was some fluctuation (both higher and lower) over the course of the 4-year study; however. at the end, the BID had decreased by 45% to 36 incidents per 100 student hours. Reported rates of overall student bullying on the OBVQ (across all schools) increased 5%. Rates from individual schools ranged from an increase of at least 7% to a decrease of more than 10%. The researchers did not find any significant correlation between results on the OBVQ, BID scores, and fidelity to implementation scores.

Bauer et al. (2007) examined the effectiveness of the OBPP in Seattle, WA, by conducting a nonrandomized study with 10 middle schools as part of a system-wide focus on high-risk youth (in addition to a statewide mandate to implement bullying prevention measures). Seven schools chose to implement the OBPP and the other three schools

selected less formal measures to satisfy the bullying prevention requirement. Those that opted for implementation of the OBPP were given consultation by district trainers prior to implementation. Their primary objective was to investigate the effectiveness of the OBPP in regard to reducing the reported rates of student victimization by increasing awareness of what constitutes bullying behaviors.

Results were collected from student responses provided on climate surveys (which included four questions taken directly from the OBVQ regarding physical and relational bullying) and were aggregated by school because surveys lacked identifying information. This survey was administered to all schools (regardless of whether or not they implemented the OBPP or not), which provided for a pre and post implementation measure. The other questions that were also purposively selected for analysis from the climate survey addressed student attitudes toward bullying, their willingness to intercede, and their overall impression of the school environment (outside of bullying).

Results of this study indicated that there was no overall difference in reported rates of victimization (either physical or relational) between the control schools and intervention schools after two years post implementation. However, there were some interesting differences when results were stratified by ethnicity/race. White/non-Hispanic students in the intervention schools were 27.5% less likely to report relational victimization and 36.6% less likely to report relational victimization when compared to white/non-Hispanic students in the control schools. No other differences were noted regarding ethnicity or race. In regard to the willingness to intervene, no difference was found between control schools and comparison schools except when results were

stratified by grade. In this instance, sixth-graders in the intervention schools were more likely to intervene in a bullying incident. Finally, the perception of the school environment (outside of bullying) did not differ between those schools that implemented the OBPP and those that chose less formal measures of bullying prevention.

Implications

The analysis of pre- and posttest results could signify a need for additional staff training (especially for teachers new to the school). Additional student lessons may need to be provided in order to target particular areas of concern as indicated by the post-implementation self-report questionnaire. Results will also need to be shared with the local board of education and learning community in order to disseminate information regarding any changes that may need to occur.

Summary

The implication of bullying behaviors and their detrimental impact on the learning environment have been presented in terms of studies and statistics in support of this topic being a critical endeavor for scholarly research. Legislation has also acknowledged the gravity of these behaviors and has subsequently mandated action on the part of the educational system in the form of policies and/or procedures regarding the reporting and prevention of bullying behaviors. In order to fully comprehend the complexity of these negative behaviors, terms frequently associated with bullying have been defined. The act of bullying has also been defined for the purpose of clarification and distinction from those actions typically referred to as horseplay.

To provide a possible explanation as to why bullying behaviors occur, a theoretical framework was selected. Brofenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) was chosen because it takes into account the nature of environmental influences and their subsequent potential for impact on bullying behaviors. Findings of this investigation provided for the promotion of positive social change for all members of the learning community by examining the efficacy of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. Specifically, this summative program evaluation examined the impact on increasing bullying awareness and decreasing the occurrence of bullying behaviors and victimization at the middle school level.

In subsequent sections, the methodology will be presented, explaining the setting in which this program evaluation took place and the sample from which the population was selected. Instrumentation and materials will be described in detail as well as how the archived data will be analyzed. Finally, assumptions and limitations of the summative, goal free program evaluation will be discussed in addition to the protection of participants' rights.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

Bullying is a significant and widespread problem in the United States at the local and national levels, and has attracted a large volume of research. The goal of this project study was to conduct a summative program evaluation assessing the effect that the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) had on self-reported rates of bullying, victimization, and awareness at a selected middle school in the United States. This goal was accomplished by comparing the pre- and post-implementation results of the Revised Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ; Olweus, 1996) after one year of implementation at a public middle school in Northwest Georgia.

This section of this project study presents a description of the research design and the approach utilized to examine the efficacy of the OBPP. Also included are descriptions of setting and sample, use of the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (Olweus, 1996), methods for data collection and analysis of archived responses. Finally, a consideration of assumptions, limitations, scope, and delimitations will be discussed followed by a description of the precautions taken to protect participants' rights.

Research Design and Approach

This program evaluation used a quasi-experimental repeated measures design that was interpreted with caution because there was no control group. The lack of a control group excluded a classical experimental design from being an appropriate design choice (Creswell, 2008). A correlational design was also not an option because an intervention was implemented (Creswell, 2009). Finally, because this evaluation involved the

examination of the efficacy of a program, a survey was appropriate because the investigation did not involve an examination of trends in a large population (Creswell, 2009).

The type of program evaluation that was utilized was summative and goal-free in nature, which means that it was not guided by the use of evaluation objectives. Instead, the evaluation was designed to measure results in terms of the efficacy of the program that was implemented, as suggested by Spaulding (2013). Because data were not collected and reported back while the program was being implemented, a formative evaluation would not have been an appropriate option. An objective-based program evaluation was not applicable because evaluation criteria were not established by myself as the researcher and by the program creator prior to the commencement of this evaluation. The expertise and participatory program evaluation methods were also not appropriate due to the researcher not functioning as a content expert nor having program participants involved in the evaluation of the program, as cautioned by Spaulding (2008).

The purpose of this program evaluation was to examine the efficacy of the OBPP in regard to its impact on self-reported rates bullying, victimization, and awareness of bullying activity occurring at the study site. This effect was measured by using OBQ assessment results after one year of OBPP implementation, with archived data serving as the basis for providing formative feedback regarding the efficacy of the OBPP. The independent variable was the OBPP intervention; the dependent variables were archived, student-reported rates of bullying, victimization, and awareness of bullying behaviors.

Setting and Sample

The setting for this program evaluation was a public middle school including Grades 6-8 and located in Northwest Georgia. At the time of this study, the school, hereafter referred to as ABC Middle School (pseudonym), was a Title I school with approximately 550 students. Approximately 37% received free or reduced lunches. The ethnic breakdown was: Caucasian (79.64%), African American (16.53%), Hispanic (3.43%), Asian/Pacific (0.20%) and American Indian (0.20%). In regard to gender, the ratio between boys and girls was 54.2% males and 45.8% females ("City-data," n.d., para. 4). The student-teacher ratio was approximately 14.7:1.

The total number of students who participated in the preimplementation assessment conducted in 2010 was 346. This group consisted of the entire population of the school's 6th- and 7th-grade students present the day the assessment was administered. This population was selected due to its potential for continued enrollment in this school the next year while the program was being implemented. This first sample of students comprised the preimplementation data sample because the group had not yet been exposed to the program implementation.

The total number and proportion of students who participated in the postimplementation assessment was substantial smaller due to financial reasons. The financial constraints of the school budget and the amount of monies allotted by the principal made it financially impossible to administer the questionnaire to the entire student population of both grade levels (as was the case in the first sample). Due to these constraints, a random sample of 137 students (68 students in the 7th grade, and 69

students in the 8th grade) was selected to participate in the postimplementation assessment in 2011. All students in this subpopulation were enrolled in the school the previous year when the program was first implemented. Although the postimplementation sample was smaller in number than the preimplementation sample, the entire population of students (consisting of all of those that were present on the day of the administration) were eligible to participate, increasing the likelihood of a true representation of the total population. The archived responses from the 6th and 7th graders of the preimplementation sample were compared to those from the 7th and 8th graders of the postimplementation sample for analysis.

Instrumentation and Materials

During both administrations, students were asked to complete the online version of the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ; Olweus, 1996) in the school's computer lab. The data were then sent to the school administration and myself by Hazledon (publisher of the questionnaire) in the form of a Standard School Report and individual student data. OBQ is an anonymous self-report measure comprised of 40 standard questions and two optional questions that were not selected for this particular evaluation; the standard questions address victimization, attitudes toward bullying, awareness of bullying activity and personal experiences involving bullying. The 1996 OBVQ is a revised and partially expanded version of the earlier Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ) originally published in 1978.

The OBVQ provides a comprehensive description of bullying to assessment-takers prior to their answering any questions so that students have a clear understanding of what is meant by the term. The questionnaire defined the term bullying as follows:

> We say a student is being bullied when another student, or several other students
>
> - say mean and hurtful things or make fun of him or her or call him or her mean and hurtful names
> - completely ignore or exclude him or her from their group of friends or leave him or her out of things on purpose
> - hit, kick, push, shove around or lock him or her inside a room
> - tell lies or spread false rumors about him or her or send mean notes and try to make other students dislike him or her
> - and do other hurtful things like that
>
> When we talk about bullying, these things happen more than just once, and it is difficult for the student being bullied to defend him or herself. We also call it bullying when a student is teased more than just once in a mean and hurtful way. But we do not call it bullying when the teasing is done in a friendly and playful way. Also, it is not bullying when two students of about equal strength or power argue or fight. (Olweus, 1993; Olweus et al., 2007, p.1)

The majority of the response options to these questions are designed to be as specific as possible in regard to when or how often a particular action occurs, thus reducing the subjectivity of terms such as *often* or *frequently* through presentation in a 4 to 6-point Likert-type scale. These ordinal responses enable the participants to be more accurate

with their indications. In addition, the specificity of these response options referring to a particular time period are written in a manner that was thought to be reasonable for a student to remember what had occurred and how often (once or twice, 2 or 3 times per month, about once a week, and several times a week).

Multiple researchers have endorsed the OBVQ instrument's reliability and validity (Bendixen & Olweus, 1999; Genta, Menesini, Fonzi, Costabile, & Smith, 1996; Kyriakides et al., 2006; Olweus, 1996; Olweus, 1997; Solberg & Olweus, 2003). Genta et al. (1996), for example, reported satisfactory test-retest reliability of the OBVQ in an international study involving a sample of more than five thousand students. Olweus (1996) documented evidence of criterion related validity (when compared to the original OBVQ) with items on bullying or being bullied correlating in the 0.40 to 0.60 range.

In regard to bullying and victimization (the two primary concepts measured by the OBVQ), Bendixen and Olweus (1999) reported an indication of construct validity when examining the linear relationship between these concepts and such variables as: low self-worth, despair, hostile and antisocial behaviors. When questions on the OBVQ about victimization (Questions 5-13) and bullying (Questions 25-33) are grouped together for analyses, research results have generated internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.80 or higher according to Solberg and Olweus (2003) and Olweus (1997). Kyriakides et al. (2006) indicated a statistically significant negative relationship between bullying and victimization using the Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = -0.78$, $N = 335$, $p < .001$). When compared to independent peer ratings of bullying and victimizing behaviors, results generated from the OBVQ indicate an overlap in estimate; therefore,

increasing the likeliness of reliable and valid data pertinent to these constructs (Kyriakides et al., 2006). Together, these studies provide support to the OBVQ as being a psychometrically sound instrument that provides reliable and valid results when used to investigate the occurrence of aggressive behaviors, bullying and victimization (Kyriakides et al., 2006).

Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection

Data collection occurred at one public middle school in Northwest Georgia on two separate occasions. To adequately answer the research questions, data from both pre- and postimplementation assessments must be collected. The first collection of data from the preimplementation sample was used as a baseline measure (given prior to program implementation in 2010). The second collection of data from the postimplementation sample was conducted in the fall of the next school year (after one year of implementation of the OBPP in 2011). To account for possible differentiation of results due to maturation, an age-cohort design was used for comparison purposes (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Age-cohort design occurs when the assessment results from one sample are compared to those from a similar sample of the same age or grade level in a subsequent year (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Although the majority of the students from the pre- and postimplementation samples are the same, there is no way to ensure that each sample contained all of the exact same students. The school's computer lab was utilized for completion of the online questionnaires and students from each grade level arrived at predetermined times.

Procedures

Upon arrival, participants were directed to individual computers where the online survey login screens had already been brought up. Following a scripted set of instructions (that were read to the participants by the examiner in addition to being available on the computer), participants were given random alphanumerical logins and passwords, and completed the surveys by reading each question then selecting the appropriate response. The researcher was present during this time to monitor extraneous student discussion, minimize distractions, and be available for student inquiry about the nature of the questions. Students were verbally reminded by the researcher that all responses to these questions remained anonymous and that they should answer as honestly as possible (the researcher had no way to link data to individual students).

Standard School Report

After completion of the questionnaire, individual student data were automatically transmitted to the assessment's scoring system via the password protected Hazledon website. Archived raw data were provided to the researcher by Hazledon Publishers in the form of individual student scores (with no personally identifiable information) as well as in the form of the standard school report typically produced for schools. To gain access to this data, permission was granted by the school system superintendent. This archived raw data will be maintained by the researcher in a secure location and will be available upon request.

The Standard School Report collapsed responses to questions into five categories for simplification and readability: General Information (gender, grade level and

ethnicity), Bullying Problems (prevalence, forms, location, duration, and reporting), Feelings and Attitudes Regarding Bullying (joining in bullying activity and empathy for those being bullied), How Others React to Bullying (interventions by teachers and other adults or peers, school–home contact, conversations with students who bully, and teachers' efforts to counteract bullying), and friends and general (dis)satisfaction with school (number of friends and disliking school). Some of the questions also had sub-questions (a, b, c, etc.) that addressed additional topics falling under the same category.

This report provided detailed information (in tables, graphs, and narrative) regarding the findings that were broken down by grade level and by gender. It should be noted that the graphs displayed in the standard school report were presented in the nearest whole percentage; however the actual data points were graphed to the exact fractional value (Olweus & Limber, 2007).

Analysis

Analysis for both samples was conducted on the composite scores of archived responses to three groups of questions. The selection of these groups of questions was based on their direct relationship to the dependent variables of bullying, victimization and awareness that were examined in this project study (Kyriakides, Kaloyirou, & Lindsay, 2006). Composite scores were created and Cronbach's alpha reliability testing was conducted on the newly created subscales. Cronbach alpha reliability was assessed using George and Mallery's (2010) guidelines on reliability, where alpha values greater than .90 indicate excellent reliability, alpha values greater than .80 indicate good reliability, alpha values greater than .70 indicate acceptable reliability, alpha values greater than .60

indicate questionable reliability, and alpha values less than .60 indicate unacceptable reliability. A new composite score named Victimization was created by calculating the mean of q4, q5, q6, q7, q8, q9, q10, q11, q12, and q12a. Victimization had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .87, suggesting good reliability. A new composite score named Awareness was created by calculating the mean of q1, q3, q19, q20, q21, q23, q36, q37, q38, and q39. Awareness had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .86, suggesting good reliability. A new composite score named Bullying was created by calculating the mean of q24, q25, q26, q27, q28, q29, q30, q31, q32, and q32a. Bullying had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of .86, suggesting good reliability.

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability for Victimization, Awareness, and Bullying

Composite	α	# of items
Victimization	.87	10
Awareness	.86	10
Bullying	.86	10

Prior to conducting the analyses, the assumptions of the independent sample t-test were examined. The main assumptions of the *t* test include normality and homoscedasticity (Stevens, 2009). In an independent *t* test, the assumption of normality requires that the data follow a normal probability distribution. This assumption was assessed using Shapiro-Wilk tests for normality. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk tests showed high significance for the Victimization items ($W = .741$, $p < .001$), the Awareness items ($W = .847$, $p < .001$), and the Bullying items ($W = .511$, $p < .001$). these results

indicate the violations from normality in each of the three items were too extreme to attribute to random variation. Therefore, the assumption of normality was violated.

Table 2

Shapiro-Wilk Tests for Normality

Scale	*W*	*p*
Green	0.51	.001
Blue	0.84	.001
Yellow	0.74	.001

Another main assumption of the independent t-test is homoscedasticity, or constant variance. This assumption requires that the variances in each group must be equal. Levene's test for homogeneity of variance was conducted on each group (2009 & 2011) to determine whether the variances were equal or not. The results were not significant for the Victimization items, $F(1, 439) = 1.33$, $p = .247$. The results of the Awareness items were also not significant, $F(1, 474) = 0.02$, $p = .885$. The Bullying items showed significance at the .05 level, $F(1, 432) = 4.01$, $p = .045$. This indicates that the variances between the two years for the Bullying items were significantly different. The results of the Levene Tests are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Levene Tests for Homogeneity of Variance

Scale	*F*	*p*
Bullying	4.01	.045
Awareness	0.02	.885
Victimization	1.33	.247

Due to the violations of the assumptions, the Mann-Whitney U test was selected to assess the differences in the dependent variables between the two years. The Mann-Whitney U test is the nonparametric equivalent to the independent t-test and the appropriate analysis to compare differences that come from the same population when the dependent variable is ordinal (Leech, Barrett & Morgan, 2005). Unlike linear models based on the normal distribution, the Mann-Whitney test is unaffected by nonlinearity, nonnormality, heteroscedasticity, or even extreme outliers, making it a good alternative to the independent-sample t-test when the assumptions are violated. The preferred method of analysis would have been to conduct a Wilcoxon signed rank test. I could not perform this test due to the inability to match or pair participants from preimplementation sample to those in the postimplementation sample, which is one of the assumptions that must be met to conduct this analysis. Use of the Mann Whitney U will carry with it an understated p value when compared to the one obtained by using the Wilcoxon signed rank.

A univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) or analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) would not have been an appropriate statistical test option for this design because there is only one group. A Chi-square test was ruled out as an option because the data collected was ordinal (as opposed to nominal) and there were no frequency counts collected. Finally, a multiple regression analysis was not selected as a viable statistical test option due to the fact that there was only one independent variable in this study (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010).

Post Hoc Power Analysis

G*Power 3.1.9.2 was used to calculate the power achieved by the analyses. The only statistically significant result was for the Awareness items. The z-statistic was -2.79 and the total sample size used in the analysis was 483. The effect size for a Mann-Whitney test is given by Equation 1 (Fritz, Morris, & Richler, 2012).

$$r = \frac{Z}{\sqrt{N}} \quad (1)$$

The effect size for the Mann-Whitney test was calculated as -0.126. Using a two-tailed test with an alpha of .05, and group sizes of 346 and 137, the post-hoc power for the test was calculated as 0.23.

The post-hoc power statistic is commonly viewed as simply an extension of the p-value, and provides elaboration rather than new information. However, post-hoc power can also be viewed as a prospective measure. Power can be interpreted as the probability of achieving statistical significance with the same effect size (Lenth, 2007). Therefore, a post-hoc power of .23 means that in repeated samples from the same data generating process, an effect size of -0.126 will capture significance approximately 23% of the time.

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope and Delimitations

Assumptions

The first assumption was that that students participating in this program evaluation had a clear understanding of the term *bullying* as was presented and defined in the questionnaire in addition to the weekly class meetings that were held at the school. This assumption was based on an in-depth explanation and definition of the term bullying in the questionnaire. The second assumption was that student responses were accurate in

regard to truthfulness. During the oral presentation of the directions for the questionnaire, students were reminded of the fact that all responses would remain anonymous and were encouraged to be as honest as possible with their responses without fear of retribution or negative consequences. The final assumption was that the staff and members of the school's bullying prevention committee implemented the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program with adherence to the standards and guidelines as set forth in the initial training and administration standards/directions.

Limitations

With the researcher as the program evaluator, a limitation to this proposed evaluation was the potential bias in interpreting the data because she was also an employee at this particular location. However, this situation could have also been an advantage given that the participants were familiar with the researcher, thereby providing for a potentially higher level of comfort and increased chance of honest responses. The researcher was also not an instructor at this school, so there was no undue influence over the students in completion of the questionnaire.

Power was a limitation for this study. This resulted in an increased likelihood of committing type II error. The increase in type II error means that one may erroneously fail to reject the null hypotheses because the results are not statistically significant. The lower power resulted from the use of a statistic that did not consider the overlap between the two samples, Mann-Whitney U test. The two samples could not be matched because no linking information was available. If participants could have been matched from

sample 1 to sample 2, then the preferred method of analysis would have been to conduct the Wilcoxon signed rank test, which would have increased the power.

There was a questionable limitation in regard to the generalization of the results of this evaluation to other public middle school populations. Although this is traditionally not the intent of a program evaluation, it remained a potential limitation for future research regarding the OBPP (Spaulding, 2008). There were several extraneous variables that could have been considered as possible threats to the internal validity when a design does not incorporate the use of a control group and those were: history, maturation and testing (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). Without a control group, it is impossible to conclude with certainty that results were due to the program implementation. In regard to history, it was possible that the effect could have been due to something other than the independent variable, for instance some historical event that occurred in the life of the participants during the study. Maturation referred to an effect that occurred due to the natural course of development and growth of the participants as opposed to that of the independent variable. Lastly, the testing limitation referred to an effect that occurred due to the administration of the baseline measure prior to implementation that could have resulted in an increased awareness or knowledge about bullying.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope or variables in this program evaluation were limited to only those concepts reportedly measured by the OBVQ. They were only representative of the sample of students who participated in this evaluation and were not necessarily applicable to any other school populations.

Evaluation Limitations

Due to the anonymity of the data collected, there was a limitation as to the assistance that could be provided to those who reported being victims on the self-report questionnaire (Cornell & Mehta, 2011). This anonymity also made it impossible to match students from pre- to post-implementation samples. Because the samples from this program evaluation were from only one school, the results were not necessarily generalizable to other sites. It would have been beneficial to replicate this evaluation at multiple locations, including those schools that had not yet implemented a bullying-prevention program so as to compare survey results to a control group that had not yet been exposed to this particular bullying prevention program (Lee & Cornell, 2010). This was a limitation because without the inclusion of a control group, it is impossible to say with certainty that any change in student reported rates of bullying, victimization and awareness are solely due to program implementation.

Protection of Participants' Rights

Individual student consent was not obtained because the administration of the OBVQ was part of the OBPP implementation that was taken on by the school principal as part of standard educational practices and was not initiated for the purpose of research (Lee & Cornell, 2010). In addition, no personally identifying information was collected at any time (therefore, data was unable to be linked to individual participants and sample times), and there was no manipulation of the subjects' behavior. Data were stored securely and no personally identifiable references were made in oral or written reports that could have linked an individual to the evaluation. This research presented no more

than minimal risk (no more than what is encountered in daily life) to participants and involved no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context. Finally, all information regarding the details of this evaluation was submitted for approval to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University in addition to the local Board of Education prior to any data analysis.

Data Analysis Results

Bullying

A Mann Whitney U test was conducted to assess if there were differences in Bullying by time. The results of the Mann Whitney U test were significant, z = -2.79, p = .005. Mean ranks were examined to assess the differences. The mean rank for 2009 was significantly lower than the mean rank for 2011, suggesting that the scores for 2009 were distributed lower on student reported rates of bullying compared to 2011. Results of the Mann Whitney U test are presented in Table 4. Figure 1 presents a box plot of scores for bullying by time.

Table 4

Mann Whitney U Test for Bullying by time

	2009 Mean Rank (n=346)	2011 Mean Rank (n=147)	U	z	p
time	231.76	267.85	20,159.00	-2.79	.005

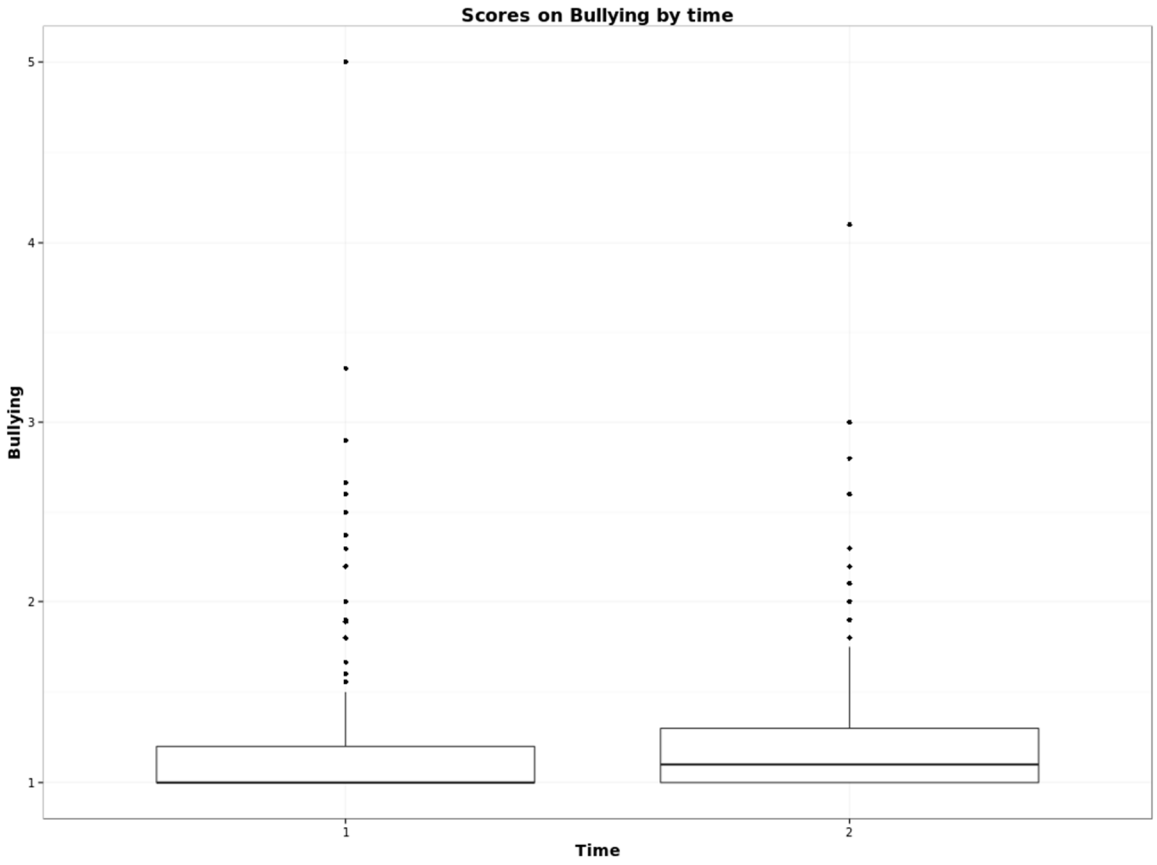

Figure 1. Boxplot for Bullying by time.

Victimization

A Mann Whitney U test was conducted to assess if there were differences in Victimization by time. The results of the Mann Whitney U test were not significant, z = -0.73, p = .465, suggesting that student reported rates of victimization were not significantly different by time. Results of the Mann Whitney U test are presented in Table 5. Figure 2 presents a box plot of scores for Victimization by time.

Table 5

Mann Whitney U Test for Victimization by Time

	2009 Mean Rank (*n*=346)	2011 Mean Rank (*n*=147)	U	*z*	*p*
time	239.11	249.29	22,702.50	-0.73	.465

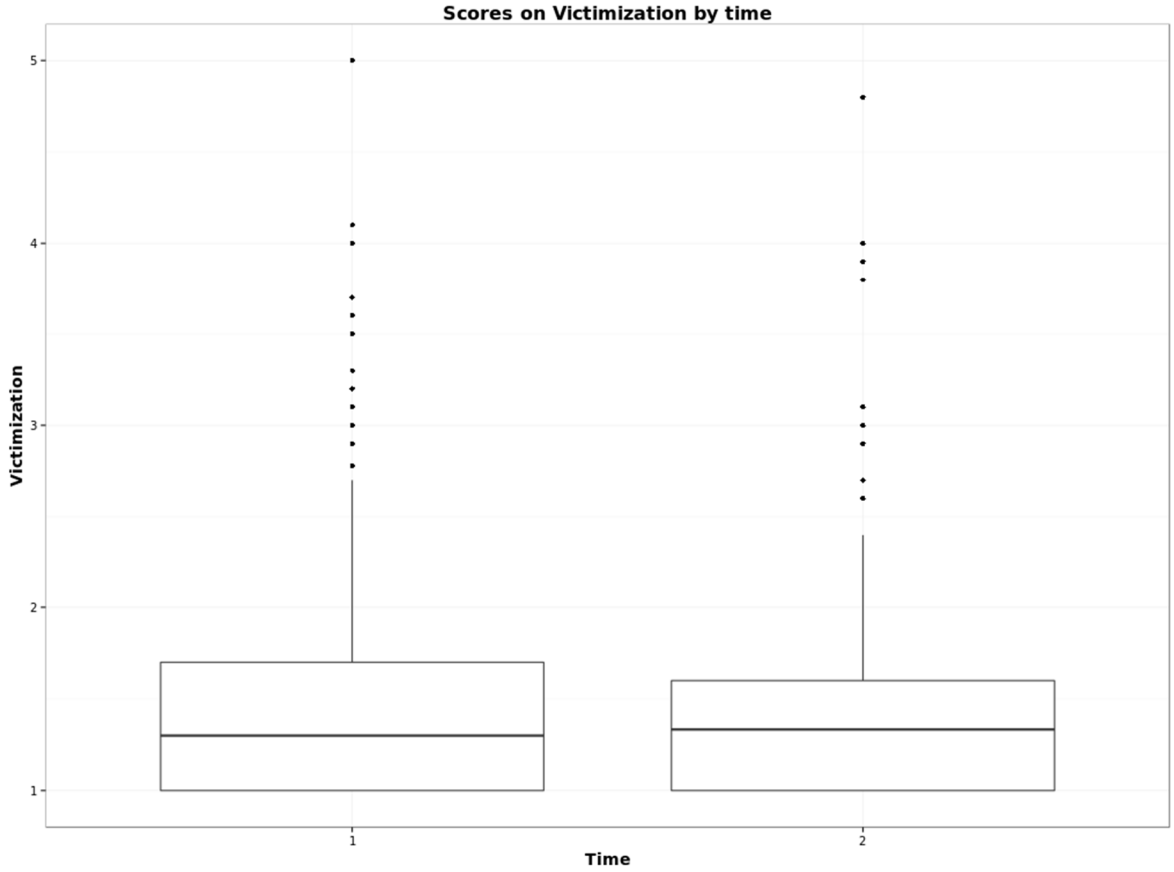

Figure 2. Boxplot for victimization by time.

Awareness

A Mann Whitney U test was conducted to assess if there were differences in Awareness by time. The results of the Mann Whitney U test were not significant, z = -0.12, p = .906, suggesting that student reported rates of awareness were not significantly different by time. Results of the Mann Whitney U test are presented in Table 6. Figure 3 presents a box plot of scores for Awareness by time.

Table 6

Mann Whitney U Test for Awareness by Time 2009

	2009 Mean Rank (n=346)	2011 Mean Rank (n=147)	U	z	p
time	241.74	242.66	23,473.50	-0.12	.906

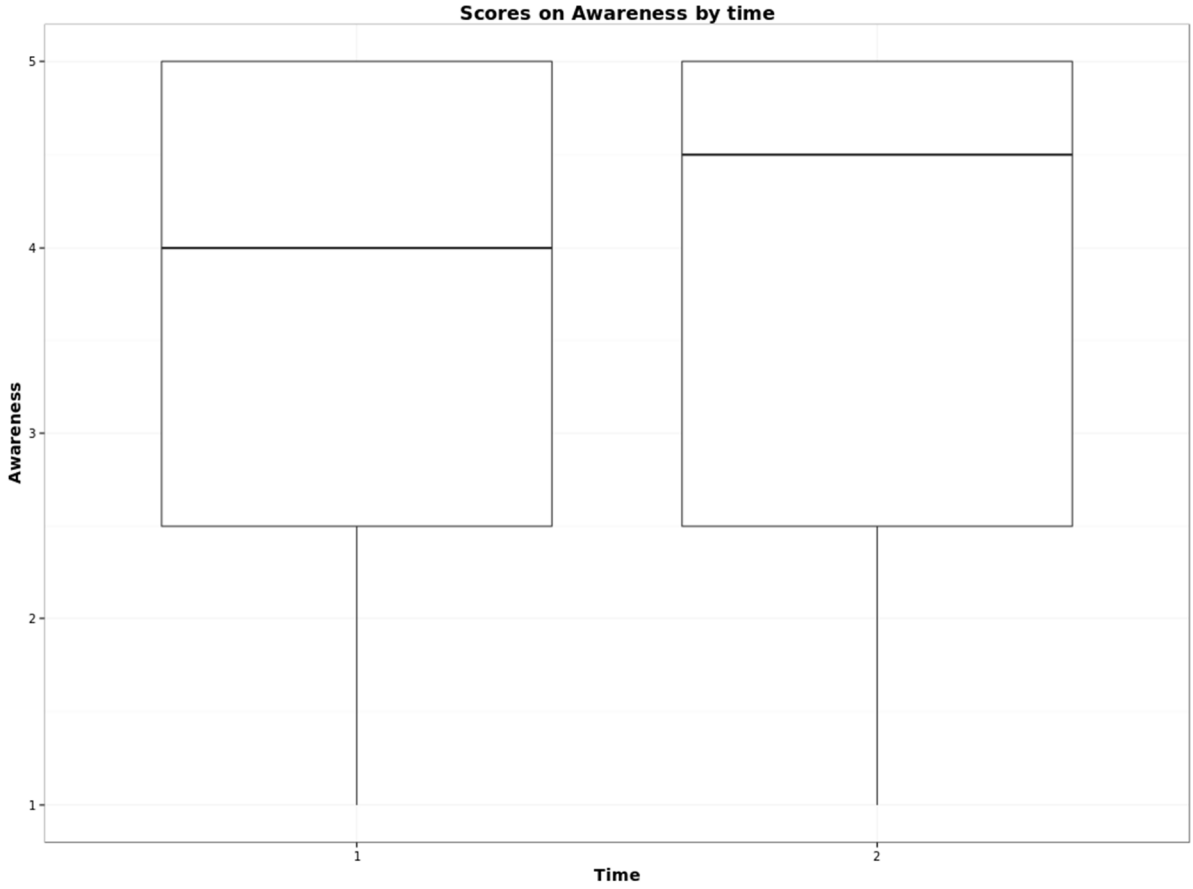

Figure 3. Boxplot for Awareness by time.

Summary

Research providing the foundation for this project study examined the efficacy of the OBPP at affecting reported rates of bullying, victimization and awareness of bullying activity when implemented at a public middle school in Northwest Georgia. The goals of the OBPP were to reduce the reported rates of bullying and victimization, while increasing student, faculty, and community awareness of bullying activity (as measured by results on the OBQ). The outcomes from this program evaluation indicated a significant increase in student self-reported rates of bullying from pre- to

postimplementation samples. The self-reported rates of awareness and victimization showed a slight increase; however the change was not statistically significant change from pre- to postimplementation samples.

As a result of these findings, a summative evaluation report was developed addressing the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria used for selection and the major outcomes. A presentation will also be presented to the stakeholders of the school in which this program was implemented as well as to district level administration to bolster support for continued funding of this program across the district. The anticipation is that continued implementation of the OBPP (for more than one year) would significantly increase student reported rates of awareness of bullying activity. With a rise in reported rates of awareness, it is also anticipated that there would be a reduction of reported rates of bullying and victimization occurrences.

Conclusion

The goal of this program evaluation was to examine the efficacy of the OBPP in regard to its effect on reported rates of bullying, victimization, and awareness. Findings from the data analysis of archived responses to the OBVQ from pre- and postimplementation samples revealed a statistically significant increase in reported rates of bullying. There was a slight increase but no significant change in reported rates of awareness and victimization over time. These findings were used to assist in examining the efficacy of the OBPP after a year of implementation. Subsequent to this analysis, a summative evaluation included in a PowerPoint presentation was developed to present to school and district level stakeholders in support of continued funding for the

implementation OBPP. There was also an evaluation report that will be delivered to the school board and superintendent summarizing in more detail the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria used for selection and the major outcomes. Section three will provide a more detailed discussion of the project itself, necessary resources, implementation and review of literature related to the topic of the selected project.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

This section provides an overview of program evaluations and a rationale for utilizing a summative evaluation report as a means of disseminating results to stakeholders of the learning community. It further discusses using the social-ecological framework as a means of understanding the act of bullying and the components of successful bullying prevention programs. It also reviews the results and recommendations from the summative evaluation report for both archived student responses and group data. Finally, it reviews legislation and laws pertaining to bullying prevention and provides and recommendations as to how these need to be revised in order to provide the most positive impact.

Description and Goals

The initial goal of this project study was to examine the efficacy of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP; Olweus, 1993) through its affect on students' self-reported rates of bullying, victimization, and awareness. This examination was conducted using an analysis of the difference between archived student responses (pre- and postimplementation) of the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ; Olweus, 1996) administered at a middle school located in Northwest Georgia. The primary purpose for conducting this program evaluation was to meet a need to further substantiate the efficacy of bullying prevention programs by comparing results from samples that implement the same method of intervention with similar populations, as suggested by Smith, Ryan, and Cousins (2007).

The secondary goal of this project study was to present the findings of the study's analysis of archived student responses to school and district level stakeholders. I chose to develop a summative evaluation report (Appendix A) whose findings and recommendations will be summarized in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. This PowerPoint presentation was designed to provide stakeholders with an accessible summative report relaying a summary of findings, recommendations for change, areas of focus, and supporting continued OBPP funding and implementation.

Rationale

I chose to develop a summative evaluation report to disseminate the results of my project study that examined of pre-and postimplementation assessment results of the Revised Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ). A formative evaluation would not have been appropriate because data were not reported back to the school as the program was being implemented. Payne (2012) pointed out that when a program is the treatment variable, it is preferable not to report feedback during implementation because it could alter how the program was delivered and therefore potentially compromise the validity of the results.

Review of the Literature

Program Evaluations

Payne (2012) described program evaluations as a means by which suggestions can be made for adjustment and continued improvement for program implementation. Edmondson and Hoover (2008) argued that program evaluations enable researchers to demonstrate program efficacy, the practicality of implementation, and support for

monetary expenditure. The selection of this project approach was an appropriate tool for evaluating the effectiveness of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) in decreasing bullying and victimization while simultaneously increasing awareness. A goal-free model of program evaluation was selected because no evaluation objectives or benchmarks were developed at the inception of this project (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2010). This approach enabled me to focus on the effect of program implementation as opposed to scripting specific objectives that could have influenced the evaluation.

Social-Ecological Framework

Although there has never been a theory that specifically addresses why people engage in bullying behaviors, some researchers have argued that these actions are based in the processing of social information (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009). Swahn et al. (2011) postulated that bullying and the maintenance of bullying behaviors are associated with factors such as societal and familial influences that are present in a child's everyday environment. Rigby (2004) recognized the existence of a comprehensive social network surrounding any act of bullying and emphasized that these acts are sustained by the connection that individuals have within the group. Rigby further suggested that individuals are also influenced by the culture and climate that exists within the learning community. The social-ecological framework acknowledges the communal and reciprocal characteristics of these occurrences and therefore was deemed the most appropriate viewpoint from which to understand the act of bullying (Holt, Raczynski, Frey, Hymel, & Limber, 2013).

The social-ecological framework attributes bullying behaviors to a reciprocal exchange of influence between and among the individual, family, learning community, and society (Smith & Low, 2013). This interpretation and attribution is opposed to conceptions of bullying as an individual personal characteristic that can occur in isolation (Smith & Low, 2013). According to the social-ecological framework, addressing elements in these social contexts is key to effectively addressing the factors that contribute to bullying activity (Mercer, McMcMillen, & DeRosier, 2009). To assist in bullying prevention, Smith and Low (2013) suggested a set of societal skills that should be taught to students designed to enable them to handle these types of encounters more effectively. Social-emotional learning (SEL) programs embody social-ecological framework in their implementation and approach and therefore have been found to be most effective (Hong & Espelage, 2012, Baldry & Farrington, 2007).

Successful Components of Bullying Prevention Programs

Schools should select programs that employ evidenced-based programming to increase the potential positive effect of bullying prevention and reduction measures (Nickerson, Cornell, Smith, & Furlong, 2013). Despite the number of bullying prevention programs currently available, there has been limited and inconsistent research as to their efficacy regarding significant reductions of bullying and victimization behaviors, especially in the United States (Fox, Farrington, & Ttofi, 2012). The majority of extant findings, however, are primarily optimistic, and provide support and justification for continued use of and research on these programs (Baldry & Farrington, 2007).

The common intended purpose of anti-bullying programs is to reduce the occurrence of bullying and victimization, although the manner in which programs are implemented and delivered is extremely diverse (Mishna, 2003). Given this variability, inconsistencies in program efficacy are not unusual, especially considering that each program tends to have its own instrument for outcome assessment and approach to bullying prevention (Pelligrini & Long, 2000). Generally speaking, programs that are school-based have been found to be most effective create a 20-23% reduction of bullying behaviors (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009). School-based programs that target and involve the entire learning community in training and education, also called whole school programs, are the most efficacious (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Due to the varied interpretations of what exactly constitutes the act of bullying, it is critical for any prevention program to have a clear and concise definition of bullying included in implementation (Holt et al., 2013). This common understanding enables a learning community to accurately identify bullying behaviors and avoid confusion or misinterpretation with other potentially similar actions (Beran & Shapiro, 2005).

Intensity and duration were two factors that determined a program's degree of effectiveness when considering program implementation, intensity and duration were two factors that determined a program's degree of effectiveness. Fox, Farrington and Ttofi (2012) found there to be a positive correlation between a program's duration and intensity and its subsequent impact on bullying reduction. In other words, the more contact hours a program provides (between staff and students) for bullying prevention education and the longer the duration of implementation, the higher the rate of efficacy.

Teacher training was another element that had a positive impact on reduction of bullying as well as fidelity of implementation. Holt et al. (2013) found that programs that included extensive training (prior to and during implementation) increased teacher understanding of the detrimental effects of bullying while equipping them with the necessary skills to intervene when needed. This is particularly true when training included opportunities to role-play intervention of situation specific bullying events (Xie, Swift, Cairns, & Cairns, 2002).

The degree to which a program is impactful is often measured by the results of an outcome assessment. These can take several forms such as: observations, interviews, surveys, and self-report measures. Of these instruments, self-report measures have multiple advantages over the other options including ease of use and cost (Orpinas, Horne, & Staniszewski, 2003). They also offer the opportunity to capture the students' perspective on bullying activity which is often more accurate than that of teachers or parents; especially when many bullying activities can be covert in nature (Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Duys, Larson, & Sarvela, 2002). Ideally, questions regarding the frequency of bullying should include a specific amount of time in which these actions are to have occurred (such as within the last week or last month) in order to avoid confusion and misreporting (Orpinas & Horne, 2006). Finally, defining bullying on these self-report measures provides for a common ground from which all participants can frame responses (Orpinas & Horne, 2006).

Taking in to consideration all of the aforementioned elements of a successful bullying prevention program, the OBPP is the only one to encapsulate each component.

The OBPP was the first one to be evaluated in systematic research and has been recognized nationally by the US Department of Juvenile Justice and the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as a "Best Practice" Model Program (Bowllan, 2011; Olweus, 1994). It utilizes a whole-school approach and involves every member of the learning community in training and education. Implementation provides for an intensity of contact hours between students and staff regarding bullying recognition and prevention and a recommended duration of more than one year. Finally, the instrument used for measuring efficacy is a self-report questionnaire completed by students. This questionnaire includes a clear and concise definition of the term "bullying" in addition to time specific questions regarding prevalence of these activities.

Although researchers have found these components to be the most effective at bullying prevention and reduction; ultimately, the degree of success will depend on the planning, preparation, and fidelity of the implementation in addition to the support provided by the local school administration and staff (Hazler & Carney, 2012, Miles & Huberman, 1984, Thakar et al., 2008).

Goals of Project Study

During the planning stages of this project study, there were three main objectives that I set out to accomplish. The first was to present the findings from both the individual data analysis as well as the Standard School Report (group data) in user-friendly terms. The purpose for this objective was to ensure the ease of which information could be redelivered at a future date to other members of the learning community such as parents and other community members. The second was to address specific areas of need based

on both individual and group assessment results. My final objective included the provision of recommendations regarding continued implementation and suggestions for improvement.

Results of Archived Individual Student Data

Analysis of archived student data from the OBQ were analyzed using a Mann Whitney U to determine whether or not there was a significant difference of self-reported rates (on the part of students) regarding bullying, victimization, and awareness between pre- and postimplementation samples. For awareness and victimization, student self-reported rates slightly increased (but not at a significant level) subsequent to 1 year of implementation of the OBPP. As for bullying, there was a statistically significant increase in self-reported rates when archived responses from pre implementation were compared to those of the post implementation sample.

At the inception of this program implementation, the entire learning community was provided with a concrete definition of what constitutes bullying behaviors as opposed to leaving this definition to individual interpretation. Consequently, based on the provision of this definition, students were able to more accurately identify acts of bullying and victimization as well as a process by which these acts could be reported. With that said, it would be reasonable to anticipate an initial increase in reports of bullying (Bradshaw & Waasdorp, 2009; Merrell, Guelder, Ross, & Isava, 2008; Berger, 2007; Hallford, Borntrager, & Davis, 2006; Mishna, 2003).

Hallford, Borntrager, and Davis (2006), concluded there was a positive relationship between awareness of what constitutes the act of bullying and reports of

bullying or victimization on the part of the students. In other words, as student awareness increases, so will the reported rates of bullying (Whitaker, Rosenbluth, Valle, & Sanchez, 2004). This increase in reported rates of bullying is especially true when a program is initially put in place, but should begin to decrease as implementation and education about prevention is continued (Limber, 2004). Whitaker, Rosenbluth, Valle, and Sanchez (2004) also postulated that these changes in attitude and increased awareness occurred more quickly than the actual changes in behavior. Beran and Shapiro (2005) concurred with this inference by explaining that student reports of being bullied or victimized may initially increase as a result of being provided with a commonly held definition of these actions. Finally, Weaver, Brown, Weddle, and Aalsma (2013), explained student reports of bullying and victimization might increase initially due to their feelings of support when disclosing such occurrences to staff members of the learning environment.

The other factor that must be taken in to consideration when analyzing these results is the period of time in which the OBPP was implemented, which in this case was 1 year. Kim, Leventhal, Koh, Hubbard, & Boyce (2006), propose that positive results in older students (middle and high school age) may require a longer period of implementation to produce positive results from pre- to postimplementation. Bowllan (2011), in a review of the OBPP, concurs with this proposal stating that to adequately reduce the prevalence of bullying and victimization at a school-wide level, intervention and implementation of the program needed to occur longer than just 1 year. Finally, Fox, Farrington, and Ttofi (2012) echo the proposals of other researchers by acknowledging

the need for longer periods of implementation to obtain significant and measureable decreases in student reported rates of bullying and victimization.

Results of Archived Group Data

Analysis of archived group data from the School Report indicated a continued need for implementation, education, and training regarding bullying prevention as evidenced by the following results. There was an indication that bullying activity was still present and occurring for some students 2 to 3 times or more in the last couple of months (18.4%) or 2 to 3 times per month for 1 year or more (36.8%). Also, 22.5% of boys and 16.1% of girls indicated that they thought they could join in on bullying another student they didn't like at school. In regard to adults responding to bullying activity (of those students who indicated that they had been bullied), it was reported that only 23.7% of adults in the home made contact with the school to stop the bullying. Likewise, only 33% of students reported that a teacher or other adult at school tried to stop bullying. This is compared to the national average of 43.8%. Although there were some students who responded as having empathy toward those being bullied, continued implementation should increase those percentages. For male respondents, 78% indicated that they felt sorry and wanted to help another student being bullied at school. Female response rate for this same question was 90.6%. Finally, only 11.3% of the students responded that they often or almost always try to put a stop to other students being bullied at school, compared to the national average of 17.2%.

Implementation

Justification for Continued Implementation

Given the introduction of a new program focused on bullying and prevention, identification of these activities on the part of staff, students and the learning community increased. Subsequently, there was also an anticipated increase in student reported rates of bullying. There were several positive indications from the group data as a result of the implementation of the OBPP. There was a decrease in the number of students who responded that they had been bullied several times per week from 9.2% to 6.3%. Of those students who reported in engaging in bullying activity, 50% of them acknowledged that they had been approached or confronted about these activities by a staff member of the school. This is compared to the national average of only 34.4% response rate regarding staff member intervention. These adult intercessions regarding bullying activity also extended in to the homes of students. Students who had admittedly engaged in bullying activity indicated that 31.3% of them had been approached by an adult at home regarding their actions compared to the national average of only 26.8%.

In regard to assisting when students witness other students being bullied, 49.3% of students indicated that they would attempt to assist compared to the national average of 42.3%. Finally, the percentage of students who indicated that they would stand by without action as another student was being bullied was 10.8% as compared to the national average of 19%. Collectively, these results indicate a positive effect as a result of the implementation of a program targeting bullying prevention for this population.

Recommended Areas of Focus

After reviewing the archived responses of student reports, there were three areas that needed to be specifically addressed to improve continued implementation. These areas included the type of bullying that occurs most frequently, the location where the majority of bullying activity takes place, and the difference between reported rates of males versus females.

Indirect bullying was the first area needing to be addressed due to the indication that this occurred more frequently than other types of bullying. This type of bullying often occurs without the immediate notice from adults especially given the increased use of social media and cell phones for these incidents. The intent behind indirect bullying is to damage the social relationship of others in some manner such as through isolation, false rumors and accusations. Results from archived student responses indicated that indirect forms of bullying occurred more frequently than then more direct or overt forms of aggressive activity.

The location of bullying activity was the second aspect that stood as an area requiring specific attention. Bullying was reported to occur most frequently in the classroom when the teacher was not present (42.2%), followed by when the teacher was present (40.4%). Other locations that had high rates of bullying activity included the lunchroom (38.5%) followed by the hallway or stairs (36.7%).

Finally, in regard to rates of reporting between the genders, there were some notable differences that would be worthwhile to focus on. Boys were more likely than girls not to report acts of bullying (44.4% versus 20%). Girls were more likely to report

bullying activity to a teacher of other adult at school (45% versus 22.2%). This trend also reportedly occurred in the home and community in that girls indicated that they were more likely to tell a parent or guardian (50% versus 27.8%) or sibling or friend (65% versus 44.4%) than boys of their same age and/or grade level.

Bullying Legislation and Policies

Due to the critical nature and detrimental effects of bullying activity, legislators and policy makers have agreed that this is a pervasive and global dilemma in both schools and communities (Weaver et al., 2013; Weddle, 2004; Stuart-Cassel & Springer, 2011). Given bullying behavior's propensity for inflicting widespread and sometimes irreparable harm, legislation and policies have been developed to mitigate these damages. Bullying acts have necessitated institutions of learning address these volatile episodes to ensure all students have equal access to a safe and secure educational environment (Swahn et al., 2011). This need is further supported by the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Monroe v. Davis County Board of Education (526 US. 629, 1999), which set a precedent that schools have a legal obligation to safeguard students from aggressive acts.

Despite mandates and measures of safety, these policies need to be more clearly defined and specifically address bullying behaviors (Brown & Aalsma, 2010). Unfortunately, statutes governing bullying behaviors regarding a school's obligatory requirements vary widely from state to state (Weaver et al., 2013). Sometimes, even the mere act of a school posting their antibullying policy may be enough to satisfy their legal obligation and relinquish them from any further liability even though such an act has a minimal effect on preventing bullying (Weddle, 2004). Policies and legislation need to be

mindful of diction and phrase these statutes in terms of requirements as opposed to recommendations (Stuart-Cassel, & Springer, 2011). Additional safeguards needed in these policies would include a clear and concise definition of bullying (including each type), mandated reporting by all school employees, and requirements for implementation and funding of prevention programs (Aalsma & Brown, 2008). Without these additional components, legislation is open to interpretation by each school system, thereby creating an ambiguous gap in understanding and implementation (Brown & Aalsma, 2010).

In addition to the legal obligations, it is the responsibility of the school system and board of education to acknowledge the negative impact bullying has on the learning environment including attendance, academic performance, school ethos, and the mental health of staff and students (MacLeod, 2007). School officials have a responsibility to make a concerted effort to implement programs targeting education and prevention regardless of the content of the existing statute for their state. At the same time, researchers have a responsibility to continue investigations regarding the efficacy of bullying prevention programs. Continued research will enable the transformation of scientific findings in to real-world practice so educators and policy-makers can sanction prevention efforts for a greater social impact (Orpinas, Horne, & Staniszewski, 2003).

The following databases were used to locate research reports: ERIC, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, ProQuest, SAGE, Dissertations & Theses, and Google Scholar. Search terms used to perform a keyword search included: program evaluation, *summative evaluation report of bullying*, *bullying*, *bullying and school*, *bullying and prevention*, *implementation of bullying prevention programs, social ecological framework*, *bullying*

policies, *bullying legislation, Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP)*, *Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ)*, *bullying patterns*, *bullying effects*, *bullying impact*, *bullying and behaviors*, *bullying and intervention*, *bullying and research*, *cyberbullying*, *relational bullying*, *physical bullying*, *and bullying and environment*. The use of keywords was continued until the point of saturation was reached and no pertinent new articles were located.

Project Evaluation

Timetable, Resources, and Existing Supports

Implementation of this project study will require obtaining a specific date, time, and venue for presentation of the summative evaluation report in the form of a PowerPoint presentation with the school- and district-level administration. My anticipated completion of this project study is no later than Fall of 2015, which would provide ample time (assuming university approval of this project study) to present at the October 2015 meeting of school- and district-level administrators. Should completion extend beyond the anticipated date, then presentation would be at the subsequent meeting in November. Resources needed include a location that is designed to hold multiple attendees and possesses the necessary technology to view a PowerPoint presentation along with a microphone for the presenter. Because I was previously employed by this school district for 18 years, I consider my continued professional rapport and contact with school board staff and administrators as an existing resource.

Potential Barriers and Responsibilities

Potential barriers include availability of time to present that is mutually convenient, interest in viewing and hearing the results of summative evaluation report, and financial backing from school- and district-level administration needed to fund continued implementation of the program.

Being the sole presenter of this report, my responsibility includes being an objective and accurate reporter of the results in a manner that will enable the school district to make an educated decision regarding the efficacy and continued use of the OBPP in its schools. There is an inherent responsibility of the school district to ensure that all students are afforded the opportunity to attend a school that is safe and free from bullying. In addition, should the district decide to continue implementation of the OBPP, then the faculty and staff have the responsibility of implementing the program with fidelity in the manner in which it was intended to ensure the most efficacy.

Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

For a school to provide a positive learning environment that enables students to grow and further their knowledge, it must first provide a positive culture and climate that is safe and free from bullying. Because bullying is a social phenomenon and does not occur in isolation, a whole-school approach is necessary in order for a program that targets the reduction of bullying and victimization to be effective.

The examination of archived student responses on the OBQ showed increased student-reported rates of bullying at a statistically significant level after a year of

implementation. Reported rates of awareness and victimization were not statistically significant. With implementation of the OBPP, students (as well as all stakeholders), were provided with an explicit definition of what constitutes the act of bullying in addition to engaging in discussions and viewing presentations on the topic throughout the year. With that said, any rise in awareness would naturally prompt an initial increase of reported rates of bullying and victimization until the practices of prevention became an inherent part of the school's rituals, routines, culture, and climate (Beran & Shapiro, 2005; Weaver et al., 2013;). With continued implementation, all stakeholders of the learning community will have a clarified understanding of what constitutes bullying and be able to distinguish that from those actions typically referred to as horseplay (Hallford, Borntrager, & Davis, 2006). They will also be equipped with the knowledge of not only how to stop it should it occur, but also how to build a safe community that supports and encourages the prevention of such behavior (Limber, 2004).

Far-Reaching

At present, educators, parents, researchers, and legislators recognize the detrimental effects bullying has on the students and the learning environment (such as damage to the school culture and climate, student isolation, physical harm, absenteeism) and acknowledge the urgent need to address this dilemma through the implementation of effective bullying prevention programs (Phillips, 2007). This acknowledgment of bullying as a nationally recognized crisis, however, has only occurred recently as evidenced by a report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2001). Results of this study could provide critical data for future research regarding the efficacy

of the OBPP at reducing the rates of bullying and victimization while also substantiating the importance of a whole school approach when addressing this social dilemma. It could also have a positive effect on legislation and policies governing bullying in regard to specificity of wording and accountability of districts nationwide to not only report statistics but also implement programs for prevention (Weaver et al., 2013; Brown & Aalsma, 2010).

Conclusion

Following an overview of this project study and its purpose, this section contained a review of literature in support of this selection. Although the analysis of archived student responses revealed an initial, yet statistically insignificant increase in bullying and victimization, it also indicated a significant increase in awareness of bullying behaviors that occurred in the school environment following a year of implementation. With continued fidelity to and implementation of the OBPP, it is anticipated that student reported rates of bullying behaviors will gradually decrease as prevention of such acts becomes engrained in the school's culture and climate. It also carries with it positive implications at both the local and national levels including the provision of safe learning environments for all students as well as data to support continued research in this area. Section four will encompass a thorough discussion of my reflections and conclusions of this project study including strengths, limitations, and recommendations.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The final section of this project study first provides a discussion of strengths, limitations, and recommendations for change. Following these subsections will be a reflection on what I have learned about myself as a researcher and what I have learned about scholarship, the project, and leadership. Finally, a conclusion and brief summary will be presented, along with a central message gathered from research and data collected from this project study.

Project Strengths and Limitations

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) is the only bullying prevention program that has more than 20 years of research to support its implementation and findings (Olweus & Limber, 2010). My summative evaluation report of the OBPP implementation at the study site has three major strengths: providing relevant information to a particular school, providing prescriptive recommendations for change and continued implementation, and enabling stakeholders and administration to make an educated decision as to the programs' efficacy and potential for positive impact.

This summative evaluation report reviews the results of data analysis from scores on the Revised Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ) related to student-reported rates of bullying, victimization, and awareness of bullying activity occurring at ABC Middle School (pseudonym). It also reviews the Standard School Report that provided group data and highlights specific areas for change such as locations in school that need better monitoring, how students are most likely to be bullied, how students feel teachers

respond to bullying, and other related school-specific topics. This approach is designed to assist in narrowing the focus, identifying specific needs, and thereby improving implementation and end results. Finally, this information is also prepared for redelivery to the entire learning community of this particular school which would have a positive effect by further reducing both bullying and victimization activity as well as increasing awareness on the part of all stakeholders: parents, students, teachers, staff, administrators, and community.

There are three potential weaknesses that limit this study: the date data was collected, its transferability/relevance to other schools, and lack of interest in continued implementation. The data used for this project study included archived student responses that were collected prior to implementation in 2009 and a year after implementation in 2011. These results may no longer be relevant or applicable to this particular school if bullying and victimization conditions have changed. Because the OBPP was only implemented in one school (no control group was used for this project), it is possible that the results obtained might not be relevant to other middle schools in the district. The final potential limitation of this project study is a potential lack of interest on the part of the school district for continued implementation of the OBPP due to the funding required for assessment and implementation or a change in the program selected by the county or school to prevent bullying activity.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

I have several recommendations for addressing the above limitations in future research. My recommendation for change addressing the first limitation is to use more

recent data from the OBQ. To improve the relevance to other schools, I recommend administering and collecting the results for the OBQ from another middle school in the county that did not implement the OBPP. This data could have been utilized as a control group and would have provided results that were more likely to be generalizable to others schools in the district. Finally, as for lack of interest in continued funding or implementation of the OBPP, I do not feel as though I have any influence over funding, except to demonstrate through the presentation of the summative report that the OBPP was successful at significantly increasing awareness of bullying activity occurring in the school and that creates a positive effect on the school's culture and climate. I predict that continued implementation will decrease the reported rates of bullying and victimization over time.

Scholarship

I was already familiar with the research process (design selection, literature review, APA) itself because I had completed a thesis for my master's degree. This was an advantage for me going in to this project study. Through the process of completing both of these papers, I have learned the value and importance of having knowledgeable and conscientious committee members. As a student, you depend on informative feedback that is provided in a timely manner. This alone has a critical effect on not only the amount of progress that is made, but also the motivation to continue to completion.

As a researcher, I learned that feedback is meant to be constructive and not personal. Although the comments can take the appearance of being critical in nature or seem like a daunting task to address, they really do assist in getting the researcher to

strengthen content while processing the reasoning behind the suggestion. I found this to be especially true with my analysis section. Although I felt that my initial proposal of utilizing and independent t-test was appropriate, the feedback I received prompted me to reassess my selection and opt for a more appropriate analysis. Learning to accept and implement feedback enables the student to grow in scholarship and research.

Project Development and Evaluation

I started this project with a review of topics that were currently being highlighted in the media and those that would have a sufficient amount of available literature for review. Because bullying has obtained national acknowledgement and recognition as an area of critical need for prevention, I felt this was a topic with potential for making a positive social change. I began this project study with the end in mind and found that as my study evolved, there continued to be a vast amount of literature available on this topic.

My clarification and learning about project development and evaluation surfaced when it came time to analyze the data. The first realization was that when data is reported as a group (as opposed to being analyzed individually) it is adequate for general comparison purposes; however, for more detailed analyses, researchers really need to have individual raw data. The second realization was the utility of a control group and how without one, results may not be generalizable to other populations. The assessment could have been administered to a neighboring middle school that did not implement the program; however, it would have been very costly for the school. Finally, it is better to have groups that are equal (or close) in size when it comes to comparison purposes.

Unfortunately, with a change of administration at the school where the data were collected, funding for continued assessment of this program was not as much of a priority, causing a smaller number of students to be sampled after implementation of the program. This made for unequal pre- and postimplementation sample sizes, which contributed to my inability to match subjects between groups.

Leadership and Change

Given the opportunity to amend this project study and do it over again, there are three components that I would alter as a result of my experiences. The first would be to collect and analyze current data (as opposed to archived student responses); so that when results are presented they are still relevant and applicable to the location and stakeholders. In regard to the administration of the questionnaire, it would be helpful to be able to match participants from each sample for comparison purposes. This would also be of great importance for the purpose of following up and providing individual assistance to those who had reported being bullied. The final component that I would change would be the addition of different types of data (as opposed to just the results of the self-report questionnaire). The strength of the study findings would be reinforced by triangulating the data by including an examination of information from multiple sources such as the number of disciplinary write-ups/referrals for bullying, the number of student visits with the school counselor about bullying, or even teacher self-report measures or interviews about their perceptions on bullying at the school. These amendments would provide richer and more comprehensive understanding of scope of bullying and victimization in the learning environment.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

As a scholar, I have come to the conclusion that I have the propensity to be a life-long learner. After I complete this project, I will receive my fifth degree, each of which is in a different area (Speech-Language Pathology, School Psychology, Emotional-Behavioral Disorders, Educational Leadership, and Teacher Leadership). Each one has provided enrichment and scholarship, which have contributed to my acquiring a very well-rounded wealth of knowledge. This broad spectrum of educational experience has enhanced my understanding of the inner workings of the learning environment, which in turn has made me a more seasoned scholar.

This project has prompted me to continue my involvement in the critical area of bullying prevention and to continue investigating other strategies for reducing the occurrence of these aggressive acts. There are three primary factors that I would focus on in future work:

- Increasing program fidelity by improving training and implementation.
- Using a current needs assessment to purposefully select specific areas of need.
- Focusing on increasing stakeholder involvement so that bullying prevention/awareness will become engrained in the school's culture and climate.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

As a practitioner in the field of education and leadership, it has become apparent to me through research and observations that learning environments and interactions students have with one another have changed significantly over time. What used to be

primarily a physical confrontation or altercation among boys has now evolved to a completely new spectrum of bullying activity. Although the external displays of physical aggression are still present, female involvement has increased as well as more covert or relational types of bullying, especially with the use of social media, internet, and cell phones. These additional avenues for bullying have expanded the potential for this type of activity and have made monitoring and prevention even more complicated. With the above mentioned factors in mind, a more comprehensive or whole-school approach is necessary when it comes to effective bullying prevention. When addressing bullying prevention and increasing awareness about these activities, it is best to involve the entire learning community (parents, students, staff, administration, and community members) to increase the potential for change in the rituals and routines of the community.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

As the developer of this project study, the chairperson in charge of bullying prevention implementation at this particular school, and program evaluator, I was able to witness firsthand the magnitude of this undertaking from its inception. The numerous factors and components to be taken into consideration were vast as was the potential for social change. Due to this potential, I felt an ethical and moral responsibility both as an educational practitioner as well as a researcher to ensure that program fidelity was upheld and that results were reported without bias or subjectivity.

In retrospect, what surprised me as I developed this project was the ease with which I was able to present information in a thorough manner that could be easily understood by the audience. After so much literature review and saturation on the topic of

bullying, I felt very prepared and sufficiently knowledgeable to develop the summative report as well as field questions regarding implementation and results. My primary focus was to provide stakeholders with objective results, so they could discern for themselves the efficacy of the program. My secondary focus was to provide specific details regarding areas of need at this particular school. Collectively, this information needed to be user-friendly so that administrators could redeliver to other stakeholders in the community.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Although the summative evaluation report indicated a slight increase in student reported rates of victimization and awareness, it also indicated a statistically significant increase in reported rates of bullying. The recommendations contained within the report suggested continued implementation of the OBPP; with the anticipation that bullying and victimization activity will gradually decrease as expectations of acceptable behavior become more engrained in the school's culture and climate. This shift in focus will have a positive social impact in many ways including the provision of a learning environment that is safe and free from harm, a decrease in absenteeism, a decrease in office and nurse referrals, an increase in grades and class participation, and an improvement in school morale and social interactions just to name a few.

Beyond the local level, there is also a potential for positive social effects or change on a larger scale. Results from this and other summative evaluations of similar bullying prevention programs will enable school districts to better substantiate the efficacy of such programs and provide more specific information regarding the most critical components for positive results. In turn, districts could petition governing bodies

and legislature to provide financial support for implementation of these programs in order to provide safer and bully free environments for learning.

After reflecting on this project in its entirety, the importance of collecting data from multiple sources to provide for a triangulation of evidentiary support became quite evident. Although the use of responses from student self-report measures is an acceptable manner of assessment, it would also be advantageous to further substantiate the results of this data by gathering other sources of information such as discipline reports, referrals to counselor for bullying/victimization activity and even interviews with members of the learning community. This additional data would help to corroborate or refute results from self-report questionnaires and would also strengthen the assessment results.

An additional recommendation or direction for future research on the topic of bullying prevention programs would be the use of a control group for comparison purposes. The control group would ideally be selected from a school that has yet to implement any sort of bullying prevention program. The school for this control group would also need to have similar demographic populations and geographic locations to lessen the likelihood of changes in bullying activity being attributed to some other variable.

Application to the field of education for this project study would be demonstrated by the inclusion of bullying prevention lessons conducted with students on a consistent and continual basis. Ideally, these lessons would be specifically chosen based on a needs assessment of the school (location of bullying occurrences, types of bullying taking place) so that they would be meaningful to the learning community. These groups should

be relatively small in number (one teacher to 15 students) and should be maintained throughout the year so as to create a sense of social connection among its members. Finally, school counselors should be prepared and available to address student concerns regarding bullying on a more personal level as needed.

Conclusion

In Section 4, the significance of the summative evaluation report was explained as being three-fold by providing relevant information regarding bullying activity and awareness to a particular school, prescriptive recommendations for change, and data to support the potential for continued funding. Based on results of this project study and continued implementation of the OBPP, it is reasonable to anticipate a gradual decrease in reported rates of bullying and victimization as levels awareness among the learning community continues to rise. Recommendations for future research in this area included the use of a control group and multiple sources of data to provide for a triangulation of evidentiary support. Finally, there are multiple opportunities for positive social change stemming from this research in addition to having national implications for impact and amendments addressing the issue of bullying prevention and awareness.

Every child has the right to obtain an education in a positive school culture and climate that is free from displays of bullying and victimization. Given an acknowledgement that these unfortunate displays of aggressive behavior are on the rise, so should there be adequate and ample resources to address these concerns. Bullying prevention programs, research, and awareness should be at the forefront of every learning community, educational district and legislative body of government. We need to move

from research to implementation of what has been found to be successful. At the same time, we also need to amend current legislation and policies so that they are specific to bullying activity to effectively combat this harbinger of mental and physical torment, which continues to plague our schools and interfere with the provision of a safe and secure learning environment.

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Appendix A: Summative Evaluation Report

Introduction

When you take in to consideration what is necessary for a healthy and safe learning environment, one of the most salient features is a positive culture and climate among the staff and students. Unfortunately, incidents of bullying and victimization have increasingly begun to interfere with the ability of educators to provide a nontoxic and nonviolent environment for learning. DeVoe and Bauer (2010), found that approximately fifty percent of all students at the middle school level have reported at one time or another being a victim to an incident of bullying while at school. Nansel et al. (2001) reported that students at the secondary level have reported having some involvement in bullying (as a victim, bully or both) on multiple occasions. Many of the behaviors now classified as bullying were previously ignored or overlooked prior to research shedding light on this dilemma (Vaillancourt et al. 2010). Hughes, Middleton, and Miller (2009) suggested that the following are some of the negative consequences of bullying on the learning environment:

Consequences of Bullying on Learning Environment

- damage to the school culture and climate
- student isolation
- physical harm
- absenteeism or school avoidance
- low self-esteem among student body
- a diminished capacity for forming interpersonal relationships with peers

The act of bullying itself is of great concern, but those who bully also have the propensity to engage in other negative undertakings. Pergolizzi et al. (2009) identified the following ancillary activities that bullies have a tendency to engage in:

Associated Activities of Bullies

- use of illegal drugs
- involvement in gang activity
- vandalism
- theft
- incarceration

Those that bully are prone to exhibit more aggressive outward displays of hostility; the victims, however, fall prey to more inner emotional conflict or social isolation (Due, Damsgaard, Lund, & Holstein, 2009). Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, and Gould (2007) reported the following negative consequences that could result from being a victim of bullying:

Negative Consequences Associated with Being a Victim

- depression
- suicidal ideation
- psychosomatic/physical ailments
- absenteeism
- social isolation or withdrawal

Problems Associated with Current Bullying Legislation

Acknowledgment of bullying as a nationally recognized crisis has only occurred recently, as evidenced by a report from Gulemetova, Drury, and Bradshaw (2011), even though comprehensive examination of this phenomenon has occurred overseas for the past few decades (Milsom & Gallo, 2006). Despite the acknowledgement of bullying as a substantial threat to educational environments, there remain gaps in the legislation that govern these actions. These shortcomings in bullying legislation prevent it from being effectively and consistently addressed in a manner that will have the greatest effect. Figure A1 illustrates some of the key issues that need to be amended according to Aalsma and Brown (2008).

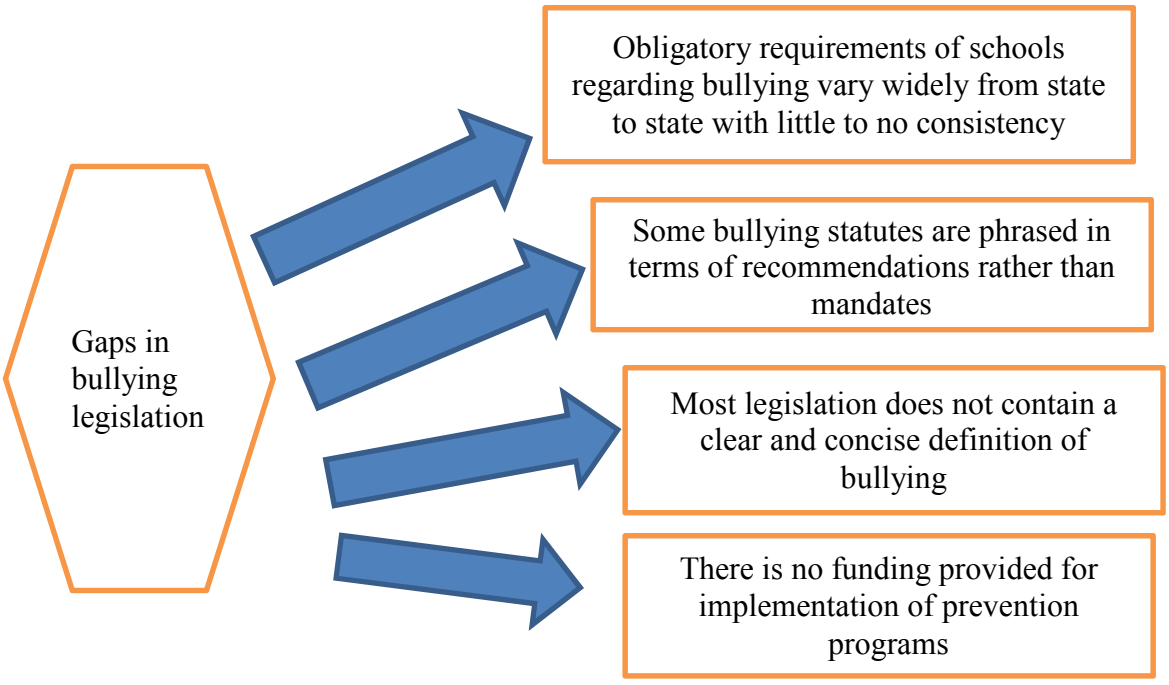

Figure A1. Key issues needing to be amended according to Aalsma, M., & Brown, J. (2008). What is bullying? *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 43, 101-102.

The detrimental effect that these aggressive acts can have on the learning environment has become of great concern to all stakeholders and has ignited an urgent need to address this issue through the implementation of bullying prevention programs (Limber & Small, 2003). All of these programs have some degree of similarity given that their intent is to reduce and ultimately prevent acts of bullying. How these programs are structured varies considerably however (Mishna, 2008). The variance in delivery is primarily centered on the audience being targeted, the delivery of training, and how the intervention is implemented (Smith, Pepler, & Rigby, 2004). For this project, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program or OBPP was selected for implementation. The OBPP utilizes a whole school approach which means the entire learning community (staff, students, parents, and local community) is involved with implementation and intervention. The overarching goal of this program is to reduce (and ultimately prevent) acts of bullying and victimization by improving the interpersonal skills and the culture of the school environment. This is accomplished by:

OBPP Program Characteristics

- providing a clear and concise definition of the term "bullying"
- raising awareness of what constitutes acts of bullying
- forming a school based bullying prevention committee to oversee training and implementation

- providing weekly meetings with teachers and students about specific topics addressing bullying
- collecting baseline information regarding bullying activity and subsequent measures after implementation

Results of Archived Individual Data

Student data from the Revised Olweus Bullying Questionnaire was analyzed in order to determine whether or not there was a significant difference between pre- and postimplementation samples for the constructs of bullying, victimization, and awareness between pre- and postimplementation samples. The following results were obtained:

- For bullying, there was a statistically significant increase in self-reported rates when archived responses from pre implementation were compared to those of the post implementation sample.
- For victimization, student self-reported rates slightly increased; but not at a significant level, subsequent to 1 year of implementation of the OBPP.

Table A1

Mann Whitney U Test for Bullying by Time

	2009 Mean Rank	2011 Mean Rank	U	*z*	*p*
time	231.76	267.85	20,159.00	-2.79	.005

Table A2

Mann Whitney U Test for Victimization by Time

	2009 Mean Rank	2011 Mean Rank	U	*z*	*p*
time	239.11	249.29	22,702.50	-0.73	.465

Table A3

Mann Whitney U Test for Awareness by Time

	2009 Mean Rank	2011 Mean Rank	U	*z*	*p*
time	241.74	242.66	23,473.50	-0.12	.906

Explanation of Results

When the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was initially implemented, the entire local learning community was provided with a very specific definition of what constitutes bullying behaviors: "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students" (Olweus, 1993, p. 9). Beran and Shapiro (2005) postulated that student reports of being bullied or victimized may initially rise when a learning community is provided with a commonly understood definition of these actions. Based on the provision of this definition, students were able to more accurately identify acts of bullying and victimization as well as familiarize themselves with the process by which these acts could be reported. Merrell, Guelder, Ross, and Isava (2008) concurred that it would be reasonable to anticipate an initial increase in student reports of bullying or victimization.

Another contributing factor to an initial rise in reported rates of bullying and victimization is student awareness. As levels of awareness among the learning community increases (with the provision of bullying prevention education and weekly lessons), it is not unusual to also see a rise in reported rates of bullying and victimization (Whitaker, Rosenbluth, Valle, & Sanchez, 2004). This is especially true when a program is initially put in place; however, these rates should begin to decrease as implementation and education about prevention is continued (Limber, 2004). Figure A2 depicts a visual representation of the potential results of implementing a bullying prevention program on awareness, bullying and victimization.

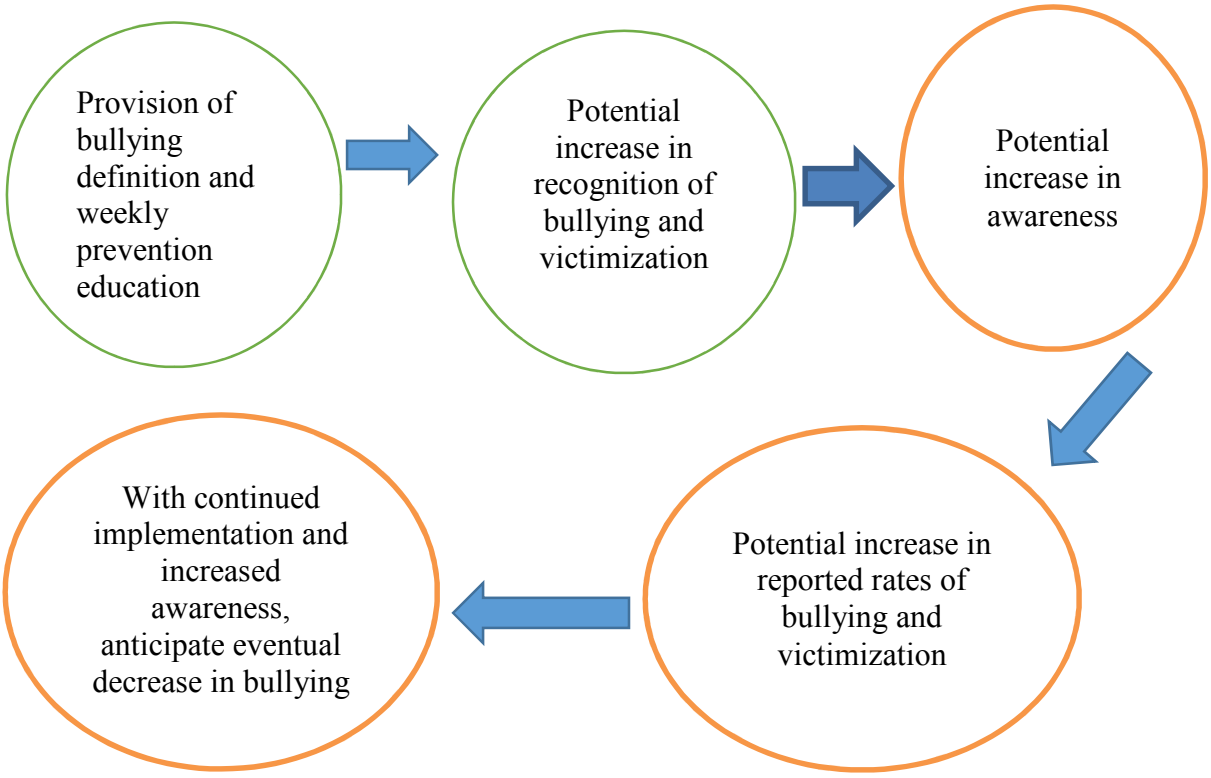

Figure A2. Potential results of bully prevention program implementation.

Figure A3 depicts a visual representation of possible contributing factors to consider when interpreting results. These include such things as amount of time the program has been implemented, students feeling more comfortable with reporting these occurrences, changes in attitude occur before actual changes in action and finally the learning community having a commonly held definition of the term bullying (Whitaker et al., 2004; Weaver, Brown, Weddle, & Aalsma, 2013; Kim, Leventhal, Koh, Hubbard, & Boyce, 2006; Bowllan, 2011;Fox, Farrington, & Ttofi, 2012).

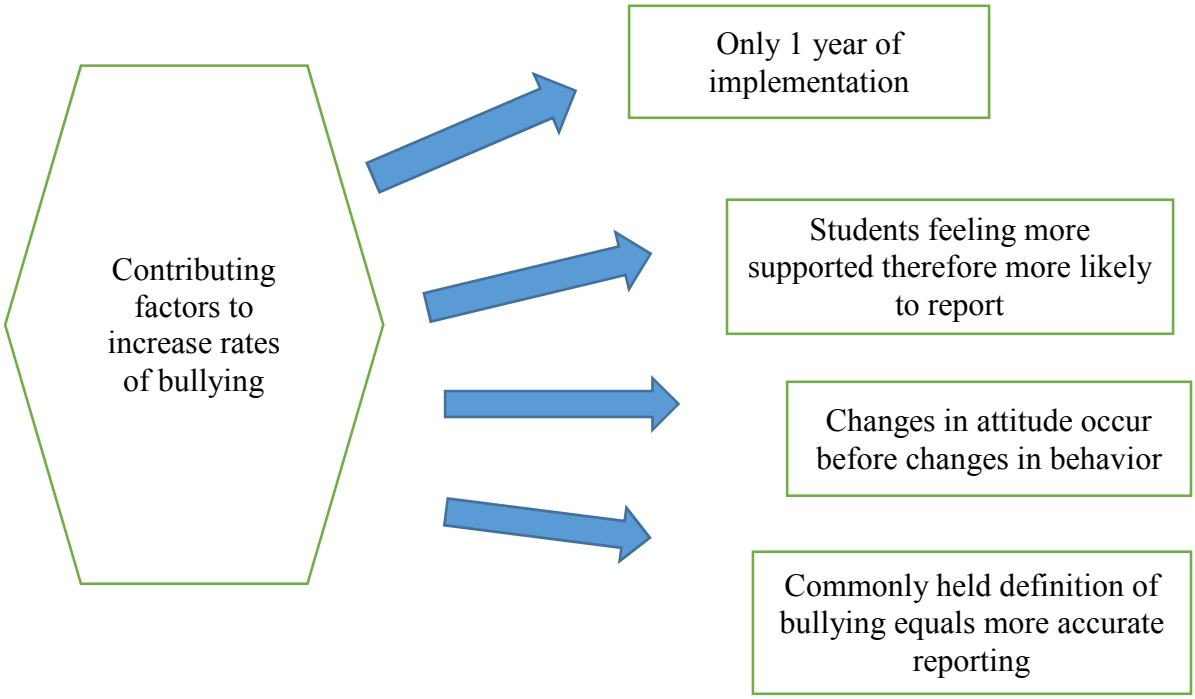

Figure A3. Factors contributing to increased rates of bullying.

Considerations When Interpreting National Data

In the Standard School Report that is provided to every location that administers the Revised Olweus Bullying Questionnaire, group data is reported depicting charts, graphs and tables with percentages displayed by grade level and gender as well as comparison to a national database average. These national database comparison group percentages should be interpreted with the following suggestions as made by Hazledon, the publisher of this questionnaire:

1. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program national comparison group is not a national average but rather representative of a sample taken from schools that have identified a problem with bullying/victimization; therefore, they may be higher than the actual national average.
2. These percentages are representative of schools in the United States and are weighted so that they are similar in terms of gender, grade, age and ethnicity to the school in which they are being compared.
3. The comparison percentage is not to be interpreted as a goal or ideal; but rather as a gauge or an area of focus for any school encountering similar problems.

Considerations When Interpreting Results

When reviewing the percentages associated with the student responses for each question, the school-based bullying prevention committee should also take in to consideration the number of students responding to each question. Some of the questions are based on the responses from the entire sample taking the questionnaire; however,

others are based only on a subset of those who responded in a particular way to a certain question. For instance, those who responded that they had been bullied more than once in the last week, may be prompted to then respond to a subsequent question investigating the location of where the bullying occurred. Those who did not indicate that they had been bullied in the last week would not be prompted to respond to this question. With this in mind, the smaller the number of students responding to a particular question, the greater the likelihood that differences might have occurred by chance. Finally, when comparing results from year to year, it is important to compare to the same grade level (sixth to sixth, seventh to seventh, eighth to eighth, etc.). In doing this, the school-based bullying prevention committee should focus on irregularities or patterns in responses over multiple years.

Results of Archived Group Data

In addition to archived individual student data, there was also an analysis of archived group data from the School Report. Results of this School Report indicated a continued need (after one year of implementation) for education and training regarding bullying prevention as evidenced by the following results presented in Table A4.

Table A4

Questions Indicating Continued Need for Bullying Prevention

Negative Questionnaire Indicators	Student Reported Percentage
Students who indicated that bullying activity still occurring 2-3 times in last couple of months	18.4% (Boys and Girls)
Students who indicated that bullying activity still	36.8% (Boys and Girls)

occurring 2-3 times per month for 1 year or more	
Students who could join in on bullying another student they didn't like at school	22.5% (Boys) 16.1% (Girls)
Students who indicated that adults in the home who made contact with school to stop bullying activity of their child	23.7% (Boys and Girls)
Students who indicated that a teacher or adult at school tried to stop bullying	33% (Boys and Girls)
Students who indicated that they often or almost always try to put a stop to other students being bullied at school	11.3% (Boys and Girls) 17.2% National Average

Sharing Results

When the school based bullying prevention committee has received the Standard School Report, it is important to share this information with the entire learning community. It is recommended that these results should be disseminated in a thoughtful and purposeful manner so as to thoroughly address target areas in a proactive and beneficial approach. Figure A4 provides a scaffold representation of the order in which particular recipients should receive the results.

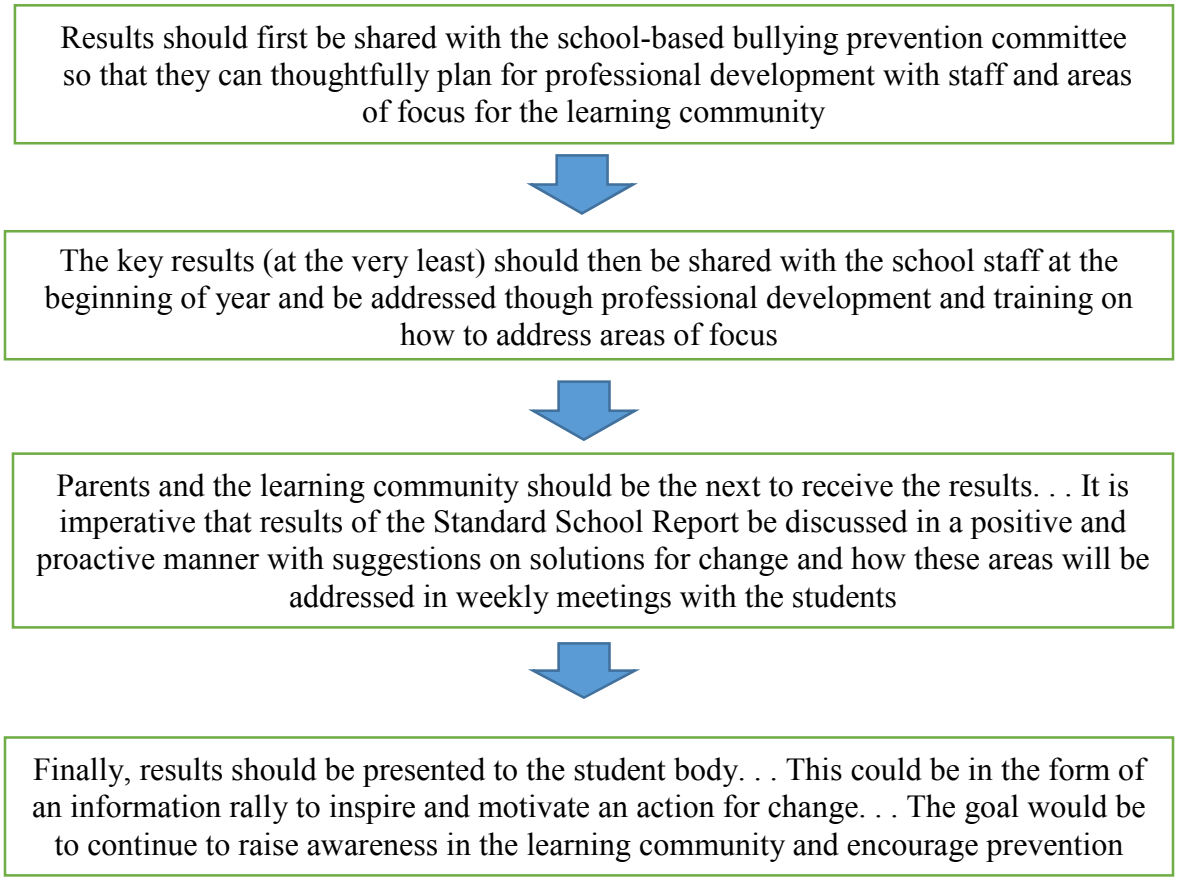

Figure A4. Sharing of results.

Justification for Continued Implementation

Although the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was only implemented for one year, there were numerous positive indicators from the group data that would support justification for continued implementation. Table A5 provides an overview of these positive indicators.

Table A5

Questions Supporting Continued Implementation

Positive Questionnaire Indicators	Student Reported Percentage
Students who indicated that they felt sorry for and wanted to help another student who was being bullied at school	78% Boys 90.6% Girls
Decrease in number of students who had been bullied several times per week	6.3–9.2%
Acknowledgement of being approached or confronted by staff for having bullied someone at school	50% (Boys and Girls) 34.4% National Average
Acknowledgement of being approached or confronted by adult at home for having bullied someone	31.3% (Boys and Girls) 26.8% National Average
Assisting other students when they witness them being bullied	49.3% (Boys and Girls) 42.3% National Average
Stand by and not act if they saw another student being bullied	10.8% (Boys and Girls) 19% National Average

Collectively, these results indicate a positive effect as a result of the implementation of a program targeting bullying prevention for this population.

Recommended Areas of Focus

After reviewing the archived responses of student reports, there were three areas that needed to be addressed to improve continued implementation. These areas include the type of bullying that occurs most frequently, the location where the majority of bullying activity takes place, and the difference between reported rates of males students versus female students.

Type of Bullying Occurring Most Frequently

Of those students who indicated that they had been bullied 2 to 3 times or more in the last month, indirect bullying was the most commonly reported form and occurred more frequently than other types of bullying. Indirect bullying is defined as the following: "The covert manipulation of social relationships to hurt (e.g. gossiping, spreading rumors) or exclude the individual being victimized" (Lamb, Pepler, & Craig, 2009, p. 356). Figure A5 provides a visual representation of factors to consider when dealing with indirect bullying.

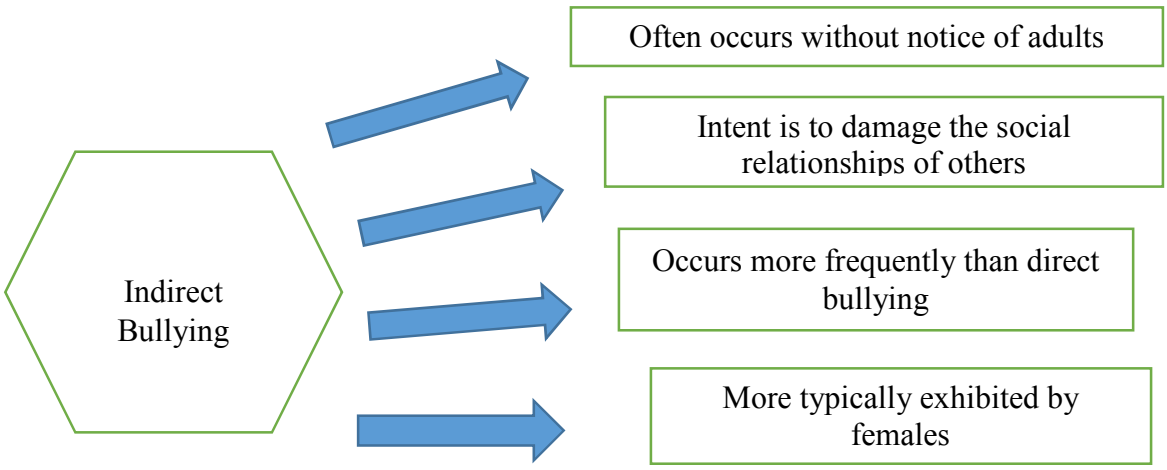

Figure A5. Factors to consider with indirect bullying.

There are several types of behaviors that fall under the category of indirect bullying, including verbal exchanges, exclusion, rumors, and cyber bullying. Table A6 illustrates the student reported rates for each of these in order of occurrence from most frequent to least frequent.

Table A6

Indirect Bullying Behaviors

Type of Indirect Bullying	Student Response Percentage
Exclusion	17%
Verbal	16.3%
Rumors	15.2%
Cyber	4.9%

Location of Bullying Activity

The location of bullying activity was the second aspect that stood out as an area requiring specific attention. Table A7 displays the location and percentage of time bullying activity was reported to have occurred most frequently by those students who indicated that they had been bullied at least once or twice in the last month.

Table A7

Bullying Activity Location

School Location of Bullying Activity	Student Reported Percentage
Classroom with teacher not present	42.2%
Classroom when teacher was present	40.4%
Lunchroom	38.5%
Hallway or stairs	36.7%
School bus	34.9%
Somewhere else in school	27.5%
Gym class	26.6

Gender Differences in Reported Bullying

Finally, in regard to rates of reporting between the genders, there were some notable differences that would be worthwhile to focus on when planning for professional development and prevention training. Table A8 displays the more notable differences from the Standard School Report.

Table A8

Gender Differences in Reporting Rates of Bullying

Question	Boy's Response Percentage	Girl's Response Percentage
More likely to report acts of bullying overall	44.4%	20%
More likely to report acts of bullying to teacher or other adult at school	22.2%	45%
More likely to report acts of bullying to parent of guardian	27.8	50%
More likely to report acts of bullying to sibling or friend	44.4%	65%

Next Steps

Given the recommended areas of focus previously mentioned, the results from this study have provided a direction for the school based bullying prevention committee to consider when looking at continued implementation and future trainings. Table A9 provides an action plan with recommended next steps to be implemented throughout the next school year.

Table A9

Recommended Next Steps

Date	Action	Who's Responsible
July	Bullying prevention committee convenes to review project study results, develop training for teachers, develop weekly lessons for students targeting recommended areas of focus	Bullying prevention committee, school administration
August	Share results of project study with teachers and school staff, provide professional development on recommended areas of focus, get feedback on topics for weekly lessons	Bullying prevention committee, teachers, school staff and administration
August	Assign students to weekly groups with specific teachers, staff, administration	Bullying prevention committee
August	Select representatives (parents, students, community members, staff) from learning community to be on focus group, share results of project study, gather feedback on ideas for presentation to learning community	Bullying prevention committee, learning community focus group
September	Based on feedback from focus group, develop presentation to share with students, parents, local community regarding areas of focus and plans for the year on how they will be addressed	Bullying prevention committee, teachers, school staff and administration
September	Administer baseline assessment – Revised Olweus Bullying Questionnaire	Bullying prevention committee chairperson
September	Present bullying prevention kick off to students/staff/community	Bullying prevention committee
September	Begin weekly meetings with student groups	Teachers, administration, staff
October	Bullying prevention committee reviews results of baseline assessment to results from previous years and makes adjustments to focus of lessons if necessary	Bullying prevention committee
October	Bullying prevention committee meets with community focus group to discuss progress on weekly lessons and plan for next presentation	Bullying prevention committee, community focus group
November	Continue delivery of weekly lessons with students	Teachers, administration, staff
December	Deliver 2nd pep rally type presentation on bullying prevention to students and learning community	Bullying prevention committee
January - March	Continue delivery of weekly lessons with students	Teachers, administration, staff
April	Bullying prevention committee meets with community focus group to discuss progress on weekly lessons and plan for next presentation	Bullying prevention committee, community focus group
May	Deliver last presentation to learning community on bullying, review on progress made throughout the year, celebrations, plans for next year	Bullying prevention committee
June	Administer end of year assessment – Revised Olweus Bullying Questionnaire	Bullying prevention committee chairperson

Conclusion

Although results of this project study indicated a statistically significant increase in reported rates of bullying, the recommendation is to continue implementation of the OBPP. The anticipation is that with time and continued implementation, reports of bullying and victimization will gradually decrease. This will occur as expectations of acceptable behavior become more engrained in the school's culture and climate. This shift in school ethos will have a positive social impact on the learning community. Some of the potential benefits include: a safer and healthier educational environment, a decrease in absenteeism, a decrease in office and nurse referrals, an increase in grades and class participation, and an improvement in school morale and social interactions just to name a few.

Bullying prevention programs, research, and awareness should be at the forefront of every learning community, educational district and legislative body of government. We need to move from research to implementation of what has been found to be successful. At the same time, we also need to amend current legislation and policies so that they are specific to bullying activity to effectively combat this harbinger of mental and physical torment, which continues to plague our schools and interfere with the provision of a safe and secure learning environment.

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SUMMATIVE EVALUATION REPORT OF THE OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM (OBPP)

Presented by
Michelle Kendrick

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION OF RESEARCHER

- Michelle Kendrick, previous Lead Teacher of Special Education and employee of this school system for 18 years
- BS in Speech Language Pathology, MA in School Psychology, EdS in Educational Leadership, and EdD in Teacher Leadership
- Currently employed in North Carolina as Assistant Director of Exceptional Children's Department for Iredell-Statesville Schools

EVIDENCE OF PROBLEM

- National Center for Education Statistics found that almost half of all middle school students reported being bullied during the school year (DeVoe & Bauer, 2010).
- Nearly 30% of students in grades 6 through 10 in the U.S. have reportedly been involved in bullying (as a victim, bully or both) on a moderate or even frequent basis (Nansel et al., 2001).
- Those who bully others are more at risk for incarceration, suicide, gang membership and drug abuse (Cook et al., 2010; Cornell & Mehta, 2011; Pergolizzi et al., 2009).

EVIDENCE OF PROBLEM

- O.C.G.A. 20-2-751.4 was amended in 2010 which extended the existing definition of bullying and made documented reporting of these types of offences mandatory (Georgia Department of Education, Rev. ed., 2011)
- 43,000 high school students were surveyed and 50% of them had engaged in bullying behaviors (such as physical harm, verbal torment and defamation via social media) within the past year (Josephson Institute Center for Youth Ethics, 2010)
- Nearly half (47%) of the 43,000 students surveyed stated that they were also victims of bullying within that same period of time

PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- A bullying committee (comprised of school staff, administration, parents, and community members) was formed
- This committee reviewed various bullying prevention programs and determined that a whole school approach would be the most appropriate
- The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) had the most research in support of its efficacy and results in schools
- The OBPP also had an accompanying measurement tool to assess areas of need and amount of change after implementation

OLWEUS BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM (OBPP)

- Was designed to reduce or prevent bullying behaviors as well as improve interpersonal relationships of a learning community (Limber, 2011)
- Whole-school approach addresses bullying at multiple levels: individual, classroom, school and community
- Has an accompanying questionnaire used to gather baseline information (prior to implementation) from students regarding their exposure to bullying in a particular environment using an anonymous self-report questionnaire
- Questionnaire can be administered at various times following implementation for the purpose of analyzing change in bullying and victimization behaviors, as well as awareness, over time.

REVISED OLWEUS BULLYING QUESTIONNAIRE (OBQ)

- Standardized, validated, multiple choice tool designed to measure aspects of bullying, victimization and awareness
- Completed anonymously with no personally identifiable information collected
- Provides a detailed definition of bullying so students have a clear understanding of how this concept is defined
- Most questions refer to specific time periods (such as past couple of months) so students have a specific reference in mind when reflecting on incidents
- Responses are specific such as, "once a week" so as to avoid subjective terms such as "often" or "sometimes" for example

PROGRAM TRAINING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Committee members received two day training, then redelivered this information to school staff (over the course of ten hours and multiple sessions)
- The intent was to introduce this program to the learning community the following school year by hosting a pep rally to bolster interest and provide information about the program
- A baseline assessment, the Revised Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ) was administered to all students in the form of an online questionnaire that examined self-reported rates of bullying, victimization and awareness
- The school was sent a report (based on group data as opposed to individual responses) summarizing the findings by grade level and gender
- Weekly lessons with small groups of students in every grade level were prepared for the next year and addressed specific areas of need based on results of school report

IMPLEMENTATION

- Each teacher met weekly with the same group of students and discussed topics related to bullying, victimization, and awareness
- Throughout the year, trainers were available to assist with questions and concerns as well as check for fidelity
- The program was implemented for nine months, at the end of which time, the OBQ was administered as a post assessment
- The school was sent a report (based on group data as opposed to individual responses) summarizing the findings by grade level and gender

GOALS OF THE PROJECT STUDY

- Present findings in the form of a summative evaluation report to stakeholders
- Present findings in an objective manner with user friendly language so it could be shared with teachers, parents and learning community at a later date
- Provide information about specific areas of need based on assessment results
- Provide recommendations as to continued implementation and recommend areas for improvement

RESULTS OF INDIVIDUAL DATA ANALYSIS

- Student self-reported rates of bullying significantly increased from pre- to post-assessment
- Student self-reported rates of victimization increased slightly from pre- to post-assessment (not statistically significant)
- Student self-reported rates of awareness increased slightly from pre- to post-assessment (not statistically significant)

RATIONALE FOR RESULTS

- The learning community was provided with a concrete definition of what constitutes bullying behaviors as opposed to being subject to individual interpretation
- The slight rise in awareness enabled students to more accurately identify acts of bullying and victimization as well as a process by which to follow through and report these acts; therefore, initial results could potentially show an increase in reports of bullying and/or victimization
- Hallford, Borntrager, & Davis (2006), concurred that as awareness increased, students are better able to identify more behaviors that fall under the category of bullying.
- Beran and Shapiro (2005) explained that student reports of being bullied may initially increase as a result of gaining a better understanding of bullying

RATIONALE FOR RESULTS

- Weaver et al., (2013), explained that student reports of bullying and/or victimization might increase initially due to their feeling of support in disclosure of such occurrences
- Bowllan (2011), in her review of the OBPP, stated that in order to adequately reduce the prevalence of bullying at a school-wide level, intervention and implementation of the program needed to occur longer than just one year
- Olweus and Limber (2010), propose that positive results in older students (middle and high school age) may require a longer period of implementation (more than one year) in order to produce positive results

RESULTS FROM SCHOOL REPORTS: WHY THERE'S A NEED FOR PREVENTION

- Percentage of students who reported being bullied 2-3 times or more in past couple of months: 18.4% (school) vs 13.7% national average
- Percentage of students who reported being bullied at least 2-3 times per month for one year or more: 36.8%
- Of those students who reported being bullied at school, only 23.7% reported that an adult at home has contacted the school in order to stop the bullying
- When a student is being bullied at school, only 33% of students reported that a teacher or other adult at school has tried to stop the bullying, compared to national average of 43.8%

RESULTS FROM SCHOOL REPORTS: WHY THERE'S A NEED FOR PREVENTION

- 22.5% of boys and 16.1% of girls responded that they thought they could join in on bullying another student they didn't like at school
- Percentage of students who reportedly often or almost always try to put a stop to other students being bullied at school: 11.3% (school) compared to a national average of 17.2%
- Percentage of boys who responded that they feel sorry and want to help another student being bullied at school: 78%
- Percentage of girls who responded that they feel sorry and want to help another student being bullied at school: 90.6%

RESULTS FROM SCHOOL REPORTS: WHY CONTINUE WITH THE OBPP

- Percentage of students who responded that they've been bullied several times/week: 9.2% (pre) vs 6.3% (post)
- Of the students who have bullied others at school, 50% of them reported being spoken to by a teacher or another adult at school about their actions compared to the national average of 34.4%
- Of the students who have bullied others at school, 31.3% of them reported being spoken to by an adult at home about their actions compared to the national average of 26.8%
- Percentage of students who reported that they would try to help a student being bullied at school: 49.3% (school-post) compared to national average of 42.3%

RESULTS FROM SCHOOL REPORTS: WHY CONTINUE WITH THE OBPP

- Percentage of students who reported that they would just watch as someone else their age was being bullied at school: 10.8% vs national average of 19.0%

RESULTS FROM SCHOOL REPORTS: RECOMMENDED AREAS OF FOCUS

- Most frequent types of bullying reported to have occurred 2 to 3 times per month or more: verbal, exclusion, and rumors
- Locations bullying was reported to have occurred most frequently: Hallway/stairs (36.7%), in class with teacher in the room (40.4%), in class with teacher out of the room (42.2%), lunchroom (38.5%), on school bus (34.9%)
- Boys reported to be more likely than girls not to report acts of bullying: boys (44.4%) vs girls (20.0%)
- Girls reported to be more likely to tell a teacher or adult at school that bullying has occurred girls (45%) vs boys (22.2%)

RESULTS FROM SCHOOL REPORTS: RECOMMENDED AREAS OF FOCUS

- Girls reported to be more likely to tell a parent or guardian that bullying has occurred at school girls (50%) vs boys (27.8%)
- Girls reported to be more likely to tell a brother, sister or friend that bullying has occurred at school girls (65%) vs boys (44.4%)

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