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The Lived Experience of School Bus Drivers: Bullying Prevention on School Buses

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Abstract

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MA, Saint Leo University, 2008

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

U.S. school bus drivers witness bullying on their buses on a regular basis but are often not consulted on how to prevent bullying or how to maintain a safe environment. Over 24 million U.S. student passengers ride school buses daily, yet the voices of bus drivers have been inadequately represented in the development of school bullying policies. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine the lived experience of 12 active school bus drivers and their perceptions of bullying on the bus, driver training programs, school antibullying policies, and other mandated procedures developed for bus drivers. The conceptual framework combined Bandura's social learning theory and Bronfenbrenner's social ecological systems model. Data were sorted into 14 themes from semistructured interviews that were coded and analyzed using Moustakas's methodology of bracketing personal opinion, horizonalization, and privileging rich textural description in participants' language. Findings indicated that these bus drivers do feel supported by school administrators, but they lack continuous training, rely on experience over training, are subject to intimidation and threats by students and parents, and seek greater communication with student support groups. Positive social change implications include recommendations to school district administrators to develop driver antibullying training which takes into account all components of passenger safety. Findings support development of administrative policy mandating a direct, ongoing channel of communication between drivers and school administrators to assure antibullying policy implementation fidelity.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my beautiful daughters, Natiera Kiani Raena Crable and Kennedy Morgan Crable. Your strength, intelligence, optimism, and humor continue to motivate me.

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First, I thank my beautiful and caring wife, April R. Crable, for her wisdom, love, and endless encouragement. I look forward to growing old and wrinkly with my soul mate. I love you, babe. I also want to thank my praying mother, Deaconess Crable. Thank you for instilling in me the importance of education and the desire to be a catalyst for positive social change in my community. To my family: I want to thank you for the patience and love you have given me over the years. I also want to thank my friends who have maintained my friendship through the years.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

On July 9, 2013, a 13-year-old boy riding the school bus home from school in the United States was brutally beaten by three older boys for telling a teacher at school earlier that day that one of the older boys was a drug dealer (Daily Mail Reporter, 2013, p. 1). Rather than physically intervening, the bus driver, John Moody, observed the attack from a distance. He did, however, call the authorities, saying, "You got to get somebody here quick, quick, quick; they're about to beat this boy to death over here" (Daily Mail Reporter, 2013, p. 1). Had he intervened, Moody said, he would have placed the boy as well as the other students in jeopardy, as there were no other school supervisors on the bus (p. 1). In a similar account, a 13-year-old female student was left unconscious after her peers attacked her on a bus ride home from school (Daily Mail Reporter, 2012, p. 1). The victim was allegedly targeted by two older girls because it was her first day on the school bus. The bus driver, unable to stop the assault from taking place, transported his passengers to the closest school where he notified school administrators (Daily Mail Reporter, 2012, p. 1). Both of these cases point to feelings of helplessness and inadequacy by the bus drivers during incidents of school bus violence. These are two examples of the global problem of school bus violence, an important public policy challenge.

The United States provides school bus transportation daily to approximately 24 million K-12 students on 480,000 buses annually (American School Bus Council, 2014). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2013), 7.4% of school-based

bullying takes place on the school bus. Students who participated in a survey developed by the BJC School Outreach ranked the school bus second only to the school playground as the location with the highest frequency of bullying incidents (Lang, 2005). School districts across the United States have adopted training and intervention programs to prevent bullying. However, research has shown that community stakeholders, including parents and child protective services, must better address bullying (Finkelhor & Jenkins-Tucker, 2015).

This phenomenological case study methodology was designed to examine the lived experience of school bus drivers. As an extension of the educational environment, the school bus environment and related policies and practices must be as consistently adhered to as policies that are in place in the physical school itself to ensure student safety extends until the student arrives home safely from the riding the school bus. Schools in the United States are required to foster a safe educational environment, one free of peer intimidation, harassment, and physical and emotional abuse as guided by a discipline plan that extends to the bus (Welch & Payne, 2012). However, there remains an absence of exploration on the question of whether antibullying policies related to school bus violence are communicated to drivers in training programs, are being consistently or inconsistently adhered to, and are applied in practice by drivers (Allen, Ashbaker, Heaton, & Parkinson, 2003; deLara, 2008).

Background

Bus drivers have the difficult job of safely transporting students to school each day (deLara, 2008). As such, they are responsible for the welfare of the students before

and after school as well as on their journeys to and from extracurricular activities, such as off-site trips, extracurricular activities after the school day and sporting events (deLara, 2008). Student passengers experience an unsupervised environment with no school official other than the driver, which leaves room for safety risks to both the students and the school bus drivers (deLara, 2008). From a policy standpoint, school bus drivers are charged with creating and maintaining a safe environment on the school bus; however, they rarely are provided adequate training and other support to address challenges such as violence, special-needs students, and distractions (Allen et al., 2003; deLara, 2008). School bus drivers are not generally provided additional school officials to assist in monitoring and supervising the bus while transporting students (Allen et al., 2003; deLara, 2008). Little is known about the bus driver's role in policymaking and strategic planning related to school bus safety, even though the school bus drivers are the first and last people to see students entering and exiting school environments. While there is considerable research on school violence, few researchers have studied school bus violence, public policy, policy development, and implementation of policy with fidelity (Allen et al., 2003; deLara, 2008). Transporting students place school bus drivers in the position of serving as first responders to school bus violence, yet little has been written about this role.

Although some school bus drivers have expressed overall job satisfaction, many have also highlighted that misbehavior from students—including bullying, horseplay, screaming, and fighting—is one of the most challenging aspects of the job (Blasko, 2007; Neal, 2004). The prevalence of this misbehavior is important because approximately 24

million K-12 students ride school buses each school day in the United States, equaling approximately 10 billion student rides annually (National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, 2006). With the higher number of students now riding buses, there is greater risk of increased school bus incidents than in previous years; approximately 10% of school bullying occurs on school buses (U.S. Department of Education, 2012), placing both students and bus drivers are at increased risk. The National Center of Education reported that approximately 28% of 12-18-year-old students stated that they were bullied throughout the school year, with 7% of these students stating that they were the victim of bullying behavior while riding to their destination. Stories in the media also suggest that the types and numbers of bullying instances during the transport of student passengers are increasing (Williamson & Aratani, 2005).

Although school bus violence in the form of bullying has increased, data on trends since 2005 are limited. This lack of literature was a limiting factor in this study, as it is difficult to provide accurate projections and trending data. School bus violence can include fighting, arguing, bullying, and sexual harassment. In deLara's (2008) qualitative study of school bus bullying, students reported experiencing more fear while riding the bus than any other time during the school day. Sexual harassment is a recurrent form of bullying on school buses, and includes inappropriate touching, using sexually explicit language, writing sexually explicit notes, spreading sexually detailed rumors, and older children discussing sexual acts with younger children (Allen et al., 2003). In another study, 39 out of 58 school bus drivers reported that they heard students engaging in sexually explicit conversations or inappropriate jokes; approximately 50% of these

drivers reported having witnessed passengers exhibiting nudity (Allen et al., 2003). Though the literature is outdated concerning the need for school bus driver training and for policy development from a practical standpoint, school administrators have continued to articulate the need for training and a substantive shift in policies and strategies (Allen et al., 2008).

There is limited published research on bus drivers' perspectives and their life experiences relating to school bus safety. There are roughly 550,000 bus drivers in the United States; however, some of the most detailed findings come from a study of just 30 bus drivers by deLara (2008). In this study, bus drivers considered bullying behavior to be a severe challenge on the bus and witnessed physical abuse, verbal bullying, sexual harassment, psychological intimidation, and fighting (deLara, 2008). Of the 30 drivers interviewed, 90% (27) reported that they had observed verbal bullying, 70% (21) had observed psychological intimidation, 20% (6) had noticed sexual harassment, and 20% (6) had observed physical bullying and fights (deLara, 2008).

deLara (2008) found that students are bullied for a variety of reasons, such as having disabilities, less popular clothes, and poor hygiene. According to the bus drivers, students with disabilities, poor children, and neglected children are the groups most targeted by bullies (deLara, 2008). Bus drivers described children that bullied others as students who had learning and emotional disabilities, students in grades 6-8, and those who played sports. Additionally, the bus drivers reported that gender was not a determining factor in the likelihood of a physical altercation on the school bus (deLara, 2008). Understanding the prevalence and patterns of bullying are especially important

because two-thirds of school bus bullying incidents are never reported (National Center for Education, Evaluation and Regional Assistance, 2010.). Older students are least likely to report such incidents (National Center for Education, Evaluation and Regional Assistance, 2010.). Bus drivers can serve as first responders and are potential advocates for children, as they have daily access to parents, legal guardians, school officials, and extended family members that other school staff members do not have.

The National Education Association (as cited in Bradshaw, Waasdorp, O'Brennan, & Gulemetova, 2011) conducted the first nationwide survey on bullying that included responses from 2,900 education support specialists (ESPs) and teachers. This survey is of significant relevance to this dissertation because 470 of the 2,900 respondents (16.2%) were bus drivers. According to Bradshaw et al. (2011) the results of the National Education Association study revealed that, compared to other ESPs:

- school bus drivers notified administrators at a greater rate;
- half of school bus drivers reported witnessing bullying several times a month;
- and school bus drivers found bullying to be a significantly greater problem than the other ESPs in the schools did.

Additionally, students and parents report bullying incidents to bus drivers at a higher rate than other ESPs; school bus drivers are a third more likely to hear about bullying incidents than other surveyed ESPs (Bradshaw et al., 2011). Approximately 80% of drivers reported living within the community where their student transportation route was located. The above mentioned factors cultivated relationships with the students, families, teachers, and school administrators within the neighborhood. The necessity of addressing

bullying while balancing established relationships may possibly increase the bus driver's stress level while performing their job duties and expectations.

Bus drivers are rarely included in the discussions of policy development and student safety and tend to receive minimal training or administrative support when student safety issues arise. Bradshaw et al. (2011) found that only 23% of 470 surveyed bus drivers reported having been included in antibullying prevention initiatives. Some of the bus drivers stated that school administrators were uninterested in the bullying incidents that take place on the bus. According to deLara (2008), 90% of school bus drivers reported that school administrators are only somewhat concerned in knowing about bullying incidents; 70% of bus drivers in this same survey reported that school administrators are slightly concerned about bullying behavior when notified about it by bus drivers. delara (2008) found that school bus drivers were less likely to report bullying incidents as a result of their perception that school leadership was indifferent to the behavior.

Administrative responses to bus drivers' reports vary significantly. The least favorable remarks from the drivers in the deLara (2008) study were about middle and high school administrators; however, the drivers also reported that elementary school principals acted promptly and took action when incidents were reported and that they provided feedback to the drivers. In a study a few years earlier, bus drivers provided a more favorable review of school administrators when they reported incidents of sexual harassment. Allen et al. (2003) found that of the reported incidents of sexual harassment

to school administrators, only 67% of the students who were alleged to have engaged in harassment were disciplined and faced consequences.

This dissertation study was designed to explore how bus drivers perceive interventions that assist in creating a healthy and safe environment for students that is conducive to maximizing fidelity of antibullying policy implementation. It specifically examined school bus violence in the form of bullying; the limited extant research on this topics suggests a need to provide systematic training for bus drivers and hear the lived experiences of bus drivers. The study's focus on bus drivers was to provide an opportunity to gain drivers' perceptions of bullying on the school, to bring awareness of the specific challenges of addressing bullying behaviors, to identify the needs of the bus drivers to help transport students safely, and to develop ways to minimize bullying. I specifically used a phenomenological research modality to elicit professional insight and enhance understanding about the bus drivers' perspectives in relation to bullying, and to create greater understanding of what bus drivers perceive and believe about their experiences. The collected data is intended to contribute to policy enhancement and modifications in the decision-making processes, which may result in decreased school bus violence in the form of school bus bullying. This research may lead to policy outcomes that could create an environment more conducive to learning, raise student quality of life, and increase academic success rates.

Problem Statement

School bus drivers in the U.S. witness bullying on the school bus on a regular basis but are not consulted on how to prevent it or on how to maintain a safe bus

environment (Allen et al., 2003; deLara, 2008). Largely left out of the conversation and decision-making processes, school bus drivers have not consistently been afforded opportunities to provide insight and strategies related to interventions and public policies to address the problem. A National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT, 2012) survey found that only 12.8% of staff had extensive input into the development of their district's bullying/antibullying policy. Bus drivers have identified bullying as the greatest challenge of their job (Blasko, 2007; Neal 2004), yet with limited input into practice and policymaking, often their voices are not represented. The bus drivers are often the only set of formal "eyes and ears" during the time of the official school day. Bus drivers are often left to monitor the behaviors of the students without any support staff. Bus monitors (aides) are usually only present on buses transporting students with special needs or younger elementary school-aged students (Swartz & Reilly, 1995). There is limited information on bus driver training in the United States. Bus drivers have identified a need for additional staff on buses and more training on student behavioral management (Allen et al., 2013).

While school bus drivers enjoy working with students and doing their jobs, many of them have reported that addressing students' behaviors is difficult while transporting them to school and home. Bus drivers reported that lack of training impeded their role in maintaining safety on the buses. School Bus Fleet (2014) conducted a study in which bus drivers reported that they found working with students rewarding, but 41.1% of the respondents stated that managing the students was challenging. Moreover, 50% reported they needed more in-service training on how to manage students in crisis situations. Most

in-service training is dedicated to safe/defensive driving and student management, while only 3% is devoted to issues pertaining to school bus bullying and managing interpersonal difficulties (School Bus Fleet, 2013). Additionally, National Education Association (as cited in Bradshaw et al., 2011) conducted a survey with 499 bus drivers and found that although the majority of them identified their school district has having an antibullying policy, only 56% were provided training on the policy. Slightly over 66% of these bus drivers shared a need for supplementary training to identify and respond to other forms of bullying, such as physical, verbal and cyberbullying; sexting; and bullying based on sexual orientation, disability, race, gender, and religion (Bradshaw et al., 2011).

There is a documented need for antibullying programs in U.S. schools (Bowllan, 2011). Most studies on bullying have been quantitative, with limited research focusing on bus drivers' lived experiences. Qualitative research is an effective research approach used to study the lived experiences of participants (Garrett, 2010; Ocken, 2004; Somerville, & Lambie, 2009). For example, Garrett's (2010) study of the lived experiences of child sexual abusers using phenomenological qualitative research illustrated the depth and variety of data and insight that might be obtained using this methodology with other populations. The current study was designed in part to discover individual bus drivers' lived experiences and to collect their suggestions for policies and programs that might lower the risk of students moving into bullying roles.

The myriad of bullying prevention programs available in the United States have not diminished the prevalence of bullying in the school system—on school buses, especially (Bowllan, 2011; Brown, Low, Smith, & Haggerty, 2011). Minimal research

has included the school bus driver's voice with regard to combating bullying on the school bus. Hence, the goal of this study was to examine the lived experience of the bus driver, utilizing a phenomenological case study methodology.

Purpose of the Study

In this phenomenological case study, I examined bullying behavior on school buses through the lens of 12 school bus drivers' lived experiences, recording their perceptions of antibullying training programs, policies, and procedures developed for school bus drivers. I collected data using interviews with these bus drivers and employed questions designed to gain insight about their lived experiences. Data compiled from qualitative research provided the most comprehensive understanding of the participants' lived experiences and thoughts on school bus antibullying training and policies (Creswell, 2009). The findings can be used by school administrators to enhance policies and their implementation to improve bus drivers' abilities to respond to school bus violence in the form of bullying of student riders.

Examining the lived experience of 12 bus drivers led to a deeper understanding of their general perceptions of their school's antibullying policies and the efficacy of trainings they had experienced. As will be discussed below, the study rested upon Bronfenbrenner's conceptual model of environmental and social systems and Bandura's theoretical framework of role modeling. The results of this study provide much-needed information on whether bus drivers are sufficiently included in antibullying policy discussions and should lead to a review of current driver policies and development of strategies that could improve outcomes on a local and national level.

Research Questions

Research has suggested that school bus drivers should be included in the discussion on developing policy and procedures to address bullying on the school bus. The main research question was: In what ways do school bus drivers perceive that their school's antibullying training and policy enables or precludes their ability to function as supported, prepared, and involved positive role models for student passengers?

Three subquestions were explored through in-depth interviews with 12 bus drivers:

1. What emerges from the data that implies an internal process which bus drivers experience that allows for and contributes to, or prohibits and impedes a sense of support and involvement in the antibullying training programs?
2. What internal process emerges from the data that allows bus drivers to believe whether or not their involvement in policy development is represented in the training curriculum?
3. What emerges from the data that allows bus drivers to confirm or disconfirm their thoughts about the grade levels, gender, and ages of students involved in school bus violence in the form of bullying?

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Bandura's (1977) conceptualization of social learning theory served as the overall theoretical framework for this study. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of social ecological systems served as the study's conceptual framework. Bandura's (1977) theory explains

the self-reported behaviors of school bus drivers as well as how social learning may influence an individual bus driver's perception of antibullying training curricula.

I used Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social ecological systems model to classify the abovementioned dynamics in terms of local human systems. Bandura (1977) provided a way to explore the "how" of the actual behaviors of students and the responses of school bus drivers, and Bronfenbrenner's framework provides information on the "what" of the systemic issues. Bandura addressed the manner in which people learn from one another by means of modeling and imitation. Bronfenbrenner's model facilitates classification of the different ways in which systems (teachers, officials, community, family, and so forth) impact behavior. That is, the perceptions and behaviors within one system positively or negatively affect the perceptions and behaviors of another. As bus drivers perceive students on a bus, their management of students may be directly related to their wider social perceptions of specific students. Bronfenbrenner was especially useful in depicting wider social dimensions in this study that Bandura did not consider, especially since Bandura argued that learned information does not necessarily modify one's behavior.

Bandura's (1977) overarching theory of social learning integrated well with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) conceptualization of social ecological systems. Together, they provided a data-gathering framework for both individual and systemic factors to yield insight on several areas of concern, including both the school bus driver and students' perception of bullying behavior. Using Bandura's (1977) theory to explain bus drivers' perceptions of bystander empathy informed larger systemic issues of environmental systems—for example, how an individual observing bullying and not doing anything

about it contributes to perpetuation of the larger issues. Examining the bus drivers' lived experiences provided insight into not only bus drivers' responses to school bus violence in the form of bullying, but also to school bus policy development.

Since Olweus (1991) conducted the initial extensive study of bullying in Norway (the OBPP), many institutions have successfully duplicated Olweus' school-wide approach. The school-wide tactic that Olweus (1991) used on 2,500 students in Grades 4-7 involved four levels at which bullying prevention practices were to be simultaneously implemented. These four environmental levels—which included the school, individual, classroom, and community levels—are consistent with Bronfenbrenner's conceptual framework (Olweus, 1993).

Although the research has pointed out the increase of bullying on school buses, there is a gap in research that focuses on the perceptions of school bus drivers regarding bullying. In efforts to address the gap in research, this phenomenological case study of 12 school bus drivers used Bandura's theory of social learning within the conceptual framework of Bronfenbrenner's model of social ecological systems to examine the lived experience of bus drivers.

Understanding school bus drivers' perceptions of bullying on the school bus required considering whether strategies in training curricula were feasible to implement with the driver's current responsibilities. Perception is the method of understanding something through a person's world view or experiences. This lens is informed and influenced by the person's experiences in society and their previous bullying or behavioral management training (Robbins & Judge, 2009). Bronfenbrenner's (1979)

social ecological theory proposed that an individual's environment affects his or her growth and development. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), five environmental systems are reflected in an individual's development. The first system is the microsystem. Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated that a person lives within the microsystem. This includes the child's close relationships and interactions within his or her immediate surroundings, such as family, teachers, peers, bus drivers, and other immediate influences in his or her life. Second, the mesosystem is the interactions and relationships that the child has with those in his or her microsystem. The interconnections of these systems are important because there is open communication regarding the individual's development. Third, the exosystem is a network of institutions that does not have any direct connection with the child but does have an indirect effect on the individual's microsystem. Fourth, the macrosystem involves the social norms, values, customs, and laws that influence the individual's environment. Finally, the chronosystem includes environmental events such as divorce, death, natural disasters, or other life-changing events (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). For a model of Bronfenbrenner's theory, refer to Figure 1. I used the systems in Bronfenbrenner's social ecological theory as the conceptual framework to discuss the school bus drivers' perceptions of bullying.

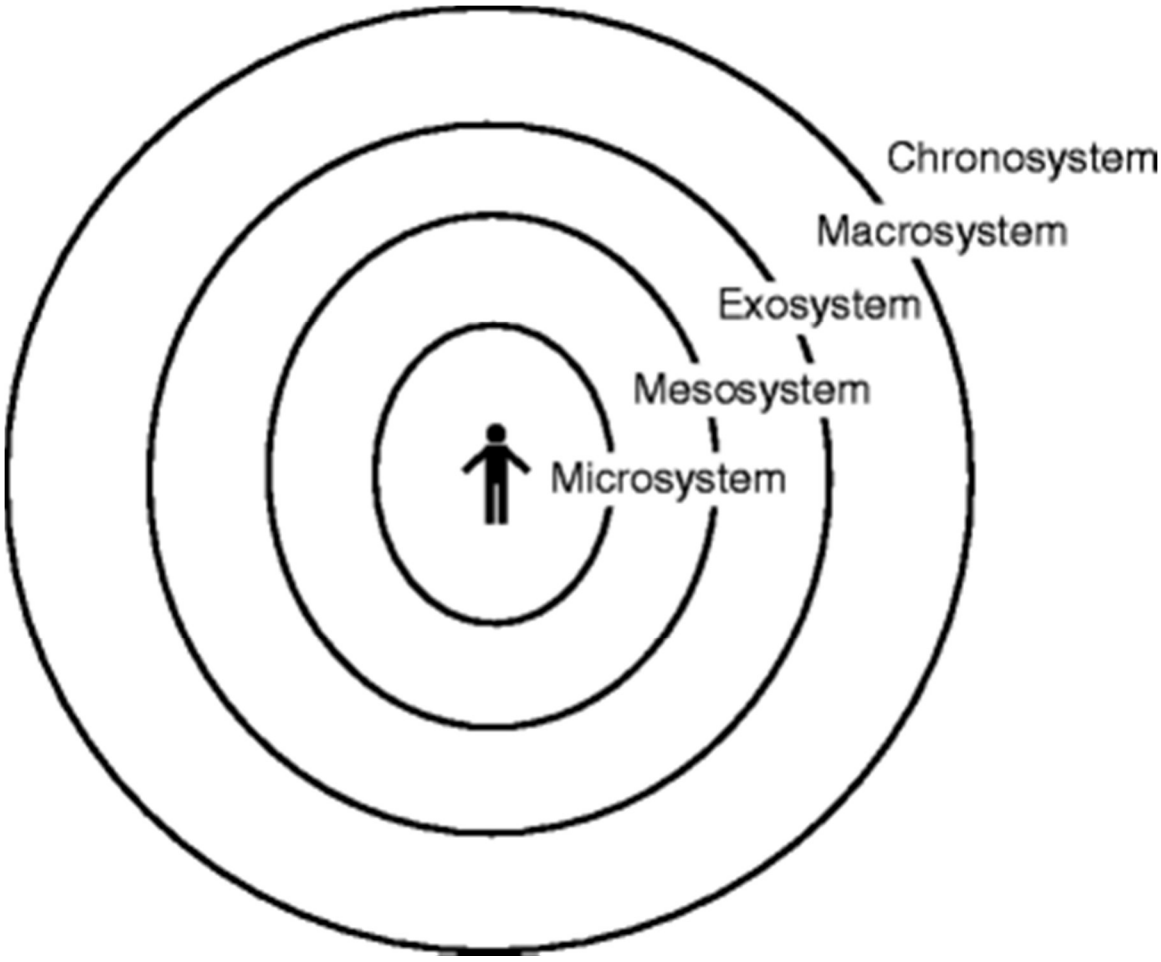

Figure 1. A diagram showing the applied theoretical model of a social ecolological framework for understanding school bus drivers' perspectives on bullying. Based on "Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory" by Asil Ali Ozdogru, *Encyclopedia of Child Behavior Development*, 2011 (New York, NY: Springer), p. 300.

Nature of the Study

I employed a qualitative phenomenological case study methodology to investigate the lived experience of 12 bus drivers. The study was designed to determine what general perceptions, based on Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Bandura (1997), inform the bus drivers' understanding of what constitutes an effective antibullying intervention policy.

The results of this study offer much-needed research on the adequacy of bus drivers' antibullying policy trainings from the perspective of the drivers.

Qualitative research, specifically phenomenological research, has been used in a variety of disciplines such as medicine (Cassidy et al., 2010), social work, and education (Jett & Delgado-Romero, 2009). A phenomenological study attempts to look at the lived experience of a small sample of individuals (6 – 20) who have experienced a similar phenomenon, describing what they have experienced and reducing these experiences down to a description of the essence of that phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Van Manen (1990), who referred to this as "a grasp of the very essence of the thing" (p. 177), described the lived experience in phenomenological research "as the starting point and end point of phenomenological research" (p. 36). The primary goal of phenomenological research, is for the lived experience to morph into "a textual expression of essence" (1990, p. 36). This metamorphosis into textual essence yields to a reflexive reliving and the acquisition of something meaningful. Van Manen (1990) posited that this textual essence can move readers in a powerful way as they operate within their own lived experiences.

Qualitative methods are distinct from traditional quantitative methods of inquiry. Moustakas (1994) identified several commonalities that the qualitative methods share. This includes understanding that traditional quantitative research methods are not as effective as qualitative research methods when studying human experiences. In addition, rather than examining only a portion or part, qualitative research methods seek to focus on the "wholeness of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994). Rather than searching for

explanations and measurements, qualitative phenomenological research searches for meanings and essences of the experience while using both formal and informal interviews to obtain first-person descriptions of that experience. In his list of shared qualities of phenomenological methods of human research, Moustakas also stated that phenomenological researchers consider the data of experience imperative to understanding the human condition and behavior, and that these data are viable evidence for scientific investigation.

The qualitative phenomenological case study methodology was appropriate because I examined the lived experience of 12 school bus drivers. The bus drivers resided in various parts of the country and were members of a bus drivers' Facebook group. Greater detail on the research method appears in Chapter 3.

Definitions

The definitions of terms were primarily derived from educational and psychological resources.

Bullying: A type of behavior whereby an individual or group psychologically or physically exerts power over another individual (Olweus, 1993). Ongoing psychological intimidation, harassment, and abuse over time are fundamental factors of bullying (Batsche & Knoff, 1994).

Bus driver: A person who is responsible for safely transporting students to and from school and activities by school bus (deLara, 2008).

Bus monitor: A person who manages and addresses students' behaviors to maintain safety on the school bus, and who assists bus drivers who transports students with special needs (deLara, 2008).

Bystander: In the context of this study, a student who witnesses mistreatment and does not say or do anything to prevent or stop the mistreatment (Phillips, Linney, & Pack, 2008).

Effective intervention: In the context of this study, a behavioral intervention that results in a recorded reduction of incidences of bullying due to bullying prevention training (Olweus, 1997).

Education support specialists (ESPs): All nonteaching education employees. They comprise more than 40% of the total U.S. K-12 education workforce (Bradshaw et al., 2011).

Perception: How an individual sees the world and is based on his or her background, attitude, personality, frame of reference, and experiences (Ivancevich & Matteson, 2002). Perception is also the way in which individuals organize and interpret sensory impressions to give meaning to their surroundings (Flores, 2014; Robbins & Judge, 2005).

Physical bullying: Hitting and/or kicking others, destroying the property of another person, or making contact with the individual with the intent to cause bodily harm (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008).

School violence: Threats, intimidation, destruction of property, robbery, murder, or crime within a school or school bus environment (Capozzoli & McVey, 2000). School violence can occur as a result of school bullying.

Sexual harassment: Sexual behaviors or actions that are unwanted, uncomfortable, or threatening, such as offensive jokes, gestures, inappropriate touching, displaying pornography, revealing unclothed body parts to other students and passing sexually explicit rumors (Allen et al., 2003).

Verbal bullying: The use of intimidating or lewd gestures, teasing or calling people inappropriate names, excluding individuals from a group, and disrupting and annoying others (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008).

Victim: In the context of this study, the recipient/target of bullying behavior. Someone who does not possess the power to prevent the recurrence of verbal or physical abuse inflicted by one or more perpetrators or aggressors (Olweus, 1993).

Victimization: A victim's experience of being bullied (Cassidy, 2009).

Assumptions and Limitations

The first assumption was that all participants (school bus drivers) would be willing to take part in the study and respond to the questions honestly. The second assumption was that the school bus drivers had witnessed bullying on their school buses. The third assumption was that the bus drivers had previously attended antibullying training programs. I assumed I would be able to remain aware of my own bias regarding the bus drivers' experiences based on my perceptions of the role of bus drivers.

Interviews revealed several minor limitations. Drivers recalled past lived-experiences, which over time may have become distant and inaccurate. Second, the participants were from the same Facebook School Bus Drivers group, which could limit the generalizability of the results. The bus drivers could share the same perspectives based on their online experiences with one another. Finally, it was not anticipated that many drivers had not attended an anti-bullying training program.

Scope and Delimitations

In this study, I concentrated on the personal experiences of 12 current school bus drivers from a school bus drivers' group established on Facebook and their perceptions of school bus bullying. I asked for the bus drivers' participation through the administrator of the Facebook group. As stated previously, the study was phenomenological and not experimental or longitudinal. I collected the data through the use of a demographic form and face-to-face and Skype interviews.

Significance of the Study

A review of the literature suggested that, although significant analysis has been conducted, few studies have focused on the bullying that occurs on school buses (Doll, Murphy, & Song, 2003). The time that students spend on a school bus accounts for an essentially unsupervised part of the day, which increases the risk of bullying behaviors. According to Raskauskas (2005), approximately two bullying incidents take place per day on a school bus ride. I have been unable to locate descriptions of lived experiences and/or perspectives of bus drivers about bullying in the existing research literature.

This study of bus drivers' lived experiences provided a basis for evaluating the bus drivers' perceptions of (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and responses to (Bandura, 1977) the school bus environment. It addressed the need for additional training for school bus drivers on the strategies for effectively handling bullying on school buses. The study provided uniquely relevant information on school bus bullying.

The ultimate objective of the research was to determine whether the views and opinions of the bus drivers are reflected in school antibullying policies. The research design integrated components of both Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Bandura (1977) as a potential scaffold bus drivers to be afforded opportunities to have substantial input into training curricula.

Summary

Few researchers have addressed perceptions of bus drivers on bullying and antibullying training programs for school bus drivers. School bus drivers often witness violence on school buses, yet their voices in public policymaking are often silent. This phenomenological case study examined the lived experience of bullying behavior on school buses through the lens of school bus drivers and their perceptions of antibullying training programs, policies, and procedures developed for school bus drivers. Bandura's (1977) social learning theory and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) conceptual framework of social ecological systems provided the foundation for understanding the bus drivers' perceptions of antibullying policies and procedures. The main research question was: In what ways do school bus drivers perceive that their school's antibullying training and policy enables or precludes their ability to function as supported, prepared, and involved

positive role models for student passengers? A purposeful sample of 12 United States school bus drivers were interviewed, and interview data were analyzed to reveal bus drivers' perceptions of strategies, interventions, training, and policies to address bullying on the school bus.

Chapter 2 presents the strategies for constructing the literature review and discusses prior research on the perceptions of bus drivers on school bus violence in the form of bullying. The chapter begins with an examination of studies focusing on the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. This is followed by current descriptions of bullying and its associated categories, the roles of bus drivers, and bullying prevention programs. The chapter concludes with the implications of past research and its significance for the present study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter provides an exploration of literature on bullying behavior, school bus drivers' perceptions of bullying behavior, and their perceptions of antibullying training programs, policies, and procedures developed for school bus drivers. The literature review informed this study, which was designed to explore the lived experience of bus drivers using a phenomenological case study methodology. The conceptual framework for this study was Brofennbrenner's (1979) model of social ecological systems; Bandura's (1977) social learning theory was used to understand what might constitute an effective antibullying training program. The research question was: In what ways do school bus drivers perceive that their school's antibullying training and policy enables or precludes their ability to function as supported, prepared, and involved positive role models for student passengers? The subquestions focused on the perceptions of school bus drivers regarding their ability to implement mandated policies regarding bullying on the school bus.

This literature review was designed to establish the extent of the involvement of bus drivers in shaping intervention practices and policy development related to school bus violence in the form of bullying. It also provides information on whether scholars have positively influenced the formulation of bullying prevention theories or identified areas where such progress, if any, has been noted. At the outset of the chapter, Bandura (1977) is presented as the theoretical framework and Bronfenbrenner (1979) as the conceptual framework.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature for this review encompasses relevant research from peer-reviewed articles, books, research studies, and databases. Databases accessed through Walden University's library included EBSCOHOST, ProQuest, and PsychInfo, using the following key words, alone and in combination: *bullying*, *bullying prevention*, *key factors of bullying*, *school bus drivers*, *bully prevention*, *perceptions of bullying*, *bus driver's job description*, *bullying research*, *bus driver's training curriculum*, *antibullying training*, *consequences of bullying*, and *health issues of bus drivers*. I also searched for *social learning theory*, *social ecological theory*, *Bandura*, *Brofenbrenner*, and *qualitative research studies.* The School Bus Fleet Facebook page and Facebook were also used to gather information. All information reviewed was published between 1970 and 2014.

Theoretical Foundation

Social Learning Theory

Bandura's (1977) social learning theory states that individuals learn from their experiences and observations. For example, if children grow up in a home where they witnesses domestic violence, the likelihood of being aggressive as an adolescent is high. When applying social learning theory to bullying, the theory suggests that bullying manifests itself as a form of violence within the school environment; some students may be acting out their inner emotional dynamics onto other students. These children, often emotionally disturbed, may be acting out their aggression in a reactive way. They may lack the internal resources to modulate their behavior. Many of these students struggle with academic and learning problems, which further complicate their behavior. Often

described as emotionally immature, these students may struggle with effectively balancing their emotions and behaviors (Bandura, 1977).

Children may also mimic and assume the beliefs of their caregivers and form their moral and reasoning perception capacity accordingly, based on what is witnessed and modeled in the home (Pettit & Bates, 1989). In addition to the parental influence, the relationships that students forge with primary school teachers influence whether they will achieve high grades or behave in a socially acceptable manner (Hamre & Pinata, 2001). The relationships that students forge with their bus driver should be mutually stimulating; hence, inducing a modeling effect is most consistent with Bandura's view of social learning (2001).

Building upon the work of developmental theorists, Bandura's (1977) social learning theoretical framework explains how bullying is learned and functions within schools. Bandura asserted that students observe and emulate the actions of their peers and adults and based this theory on studies of children. Bandura observed behavioral modification using visual exposure theory as its basis and the Bobo doll (Bandura, 1973), finding that children were socially aggressive in their interactions with the Bobo doll after they had watched a video of adults exhibiting the same aggression toward a clown (Bandura, 1973). Adolescents learn socially hostile, bullying, and other destructive behaviors from the things they view on the television, hear on the radio, and see modeled in their neighborhood and at school (Bandura, 1977; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008). The information that people receive through modeled behavior serves as a guide for understanding what behavior is desirable and acceptable in society (Bandura, 1977).

Additionally, people pay attention to and retain the behavioral examples that they perceive as motivating—an insight that could explain the influence of visual and audio entertainment on the larger population (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura (1986) later incorporated a cognitive dynamic into his theory of social learning to account for the influence of the environment on an individual's capacity to learn socially acceptable behaviors. He named this element of social learning theory *social cognitive theory* (SCT). The SCT element is suitable for this research because its basis is behavioral modeling, which may explain how individuals become bullies and how bullies influence their environments. SCT was applied in this study to help explain how bus drivers respond to the bully and the bullying situation. Maturing adolescents determine whether bullying is permissible from family members, media outfits, peers, school staff, and community leaders. Those who witness the behavior may deem it either socially acceptable or unacceptable (Bandura, 1977; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008).

Social Ecological Theory

While Bandura's framework served as the overarching theoretical model to be tested, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) conceptual framework of social ecological systems served as an accompanying interpretive model for factors in a person's societal and physical environment that influence his or her development. In this study, social ecological systems provided insight into the reasons that school bus drivers may experience secondary symptoms of stress including burnout, increased hypertension, and other medical complications (School Bus Fleet, 2014). A breakdown in these environmental systems (e.g., health) is an example of why it was important to explore the

perceptions of school bus drivers as they try to enact interventions on their buses. This study provides findings which may lead to additional strategies and policy to assist bus drivers in maintaining a safe environment for student passengers.

Application of Social Learning and Social Ecological Systems Theories

Researchers have not applied social learning theory within the framework of social ecological systems to bus drivers' perceptions of bullying behavior on school buses and their perceptions of antibullying training programs. Past researchers have, however, applied social cognitive and social ecological theories related to understanding bullying in the schools (Asbeh, 2010; Espelage & Swearer, 2011; Lord, 2014). Although *not* directly related to bus drivers, the examples which follow are helpful in understanding the application of these theories.

Lord (2014) used Bandura's social learning theory to help develop a plan to create a bullying free environment and to provide specific interventions to address the needs of bullies. Lord explained that focusing on the needs of the bully and the school environment aligns well with social learning theory because it explains that behaviors are learned from interacting with others (p. 72). Lord argued that bullying prevention programs should focus on individuals who bully and not on bullying-specific behaviors.

Espelage and Swearer (2011) suggested that Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development has been widely applied to bullying over the years. Church (2011), who used Bronfenbrenner's nested ecological theory as the conceptual framework to examine internal and external factors involved in school violence, found that bullying was the most prominent cause. The lack of positive role models and parental

involvement within the student's home environment were reported by teachers to be contributing factors to the violence in schools. Additionally the teachers reported a need for training to help them manage incidents of bullying (p. 93-94).

Asbeh (2010) adopted social ecological theory to study the phenomenon of school violence in the educational system. Asbeh suggested the theory was not appropriate to address or understand how often bullying occurred, the reasons for the behaviors, or in determining interventions to address the violent behaviors (p. 1). Additionally, Sawyer, Mishna, Pepler, and Wiener (2011) applied Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework (1979) while studying parents' perspectives of bullying. Bullying dynamics often include not only students who are victimized by bullies or children that bully other children, but also communities, parents, and educators. Sawyer et al. (2011) explained that it is essential to consider parents' understanding of bullying when doing research and when developing interventions to address bullying behaviors.

In a related study, Pilkey (2011) used Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social ecological framework, Bandura's social learning theory, and Agnew's strain theory to study the phenomenon of electronic bullying known as cyberbullying in grades 6-8 as well as to determine site-based interventions. Pilkey (2011) discussed these theories in relation to how stakeholders influence children within society (p. 10). Pilkey (2011) reported that, just as the ecological framework shows that different areas of society are related, social change on an individual level can influence change on a local or national level (p. 72).

Overview of Bullying

The literature on school violence, school bullying, school bus bullying, bullying training curricula, laws, and policies to ascertain and conduct and analysis of past and contemporary research. The difficulties endemic to intimidation and harassment in schools is present throughout the world and creates an unsafe learning environment (Gourneau, 2012). Students who engage in bullying behaver and their victims are negatively affected. Bullies are more likely to exhibit poor self-control within the school environment, smoke, drink alcohol, and abuse drugs than their non-bullying peers. Many bullies have also been victims of bullying and continue to be bullied while abusing others (Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike, & Afen, 2008). Bullies often come from homes where the parental figures do not actively participate in all aspects of their school aged children's life. Consequently, children and adolescents who have parents who are either tremendously permissive or overly harsh in their parenting styles have a greater likelihood of verbally or physically abusing other students (Gluck, 2008).

Behavioral and emotional problems such as suicidal tendencies, severe anxiety, depression, self-harming behaviors are associated to a greater degree with the victims of bullying than with students who are not bullied (Bower, 2015; Schnohr & Niclasen, 2006). Additionally, many victims suffer from low self-esteem, poor academic performance, and peer rejection (Vanderbilt & Augustyn, 2010). Bullying victims also have a greater likelihood of getting in trouble. Many victims carry weapons and engage in truancy out of fear (Gluck, 2008). During the 2010-2011 school year, a study of middle

and high school students found that 2% of students skipped class and 2.6% skipped school to avoid being bullied (NCES, 2013).

The foundational examination of the effects of bullying originated in the Scandinavian countries. Olweus's (1993) first comprehensive overview study of bullying in Sweden, which drew from his original research that involved 800 Swedish boys and was published in 1973, was a foundational research study. Based on Olweus's earlier study, Norwegian schools implemented the first extensive intervention scheme, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) in 1983. Confirmation of the positive behavioral effects of the Norwegian antibullying program on victimized middle school students was made by Olweus (1993). In his own later study, for which 150,000 students were recruited, Olweus (1993) found that 15% of the students had experienced problems relating to bullying within the previous 3 months.

Building upon Olweus's foundational research, Milsom and Gallow (2006) reported that among 6,500 students, 20% were regularly bullied. Olweus's (1993) original research continues to be replicated in the United States. A more recent inquiry found that approximately one third (28%) of middle and high school students were verbally or physically abused by a classmate on school property in 2011 (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2012). Nishioka, Coe, Burke, Hanita, and Sprague (2011) reported that verbal insults, teasing, and threatening were the most utilized bullying behaviors in their population sample. Their student sample of 11,000 revealed that more than half (60%) reported being bullied in the in the past 30 days. A survey from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2011) showed that approximately 28%

of middle and high school students were victims of bullying in school between 2010 and 2011.

Bullying victims tend to be insecure, anxious, physically weaker, withdrawn, and suffer from low self-esteem (Jansen, Veenstra, Ormel, Verhulst, & Reijneveld, 2011). Conversely, bullies are likely to have been exposed to aggression and to regularly exhibit aggression and coercion. They tend to perform poorly on academic tasks, are apathetic to students they have bullied, and are more likely to commit a crime than children who do not bully (Jansen et al., 2011). The long-term effects bullying has on children highlight the importance for developing and implementing policy that protects not only children at school but also while being transported on school buses.

Types of Bullying

Olweus (2011) defined bullying as a behavior whereby an individual or group exerts psychological or physical control over another individual. The fundamental factors of bullying are the periodic occurrence of psychological intimidation, harassment, and abuse over time (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Physical bullying involves the intent to cause bodily harm to another by hitting, kicking, and destroying property (Olweus, 1993; Thill, 2011). According to Olweus (2011), an individual is considered bullied when unable to protect oneself from repeated exposure to verbal or physical abuse, rude gestures, or negative physical contact. Bullies dominate their victims by assuming a physically menacing posture that limits the mobility of the victims or harms their person (Olweus, 1993). Boys exhibit a higher propensity for this type of bullying than girls (Beran, 2012). Physical bullying is more easily identifiable because of the proximity required to carry

out this act. Verbal bullying refers to the use of lewd and demeaning words to tease or call a victim inappropriate names in an effort to belittle and dehumanize him or her. Verbal bullying is more difficult to identify because the emotional damage that words cause is not easily detectable (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008).

Cyberbullying is the transmission of harmful messages or images intended to demean and humiliate a peer by using social media such as Facebook, Instagram, or email (Li, 2010; Stopbullying.gov, 2014). Adolescents report physical and verbal bullying as the forms that they most often witness or experience (Brown, 2011). Cyber-bullying similarly involves threats of harm, but it comes with the protection of anonymity for the bully. The secrecy that Internet communications offer emboldens the bully and enables actions that are more malicious (Stopbullying.gov, 2014). Relational bullying, otherwise known as social bullying, is the distortion of a victim's reputation within his or her perceived peer group (Stopbullying.gov, 2014). This type of behavior is characterized by the spread of false or damaging rumors and innuendo (Stopbullying.gov, 2014).

School Bus Bullying

School bus bullying incidents are increasing. Roughly 10% of school bullying incidents take place on the school bus (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The National Center of Education (2011) found that 28% of the student population in the U.S. were bullied during the school day, and 7% were victimized on the school bus. Older students are least likely to report such incidents (National Center for Education, Evaluation and Regional Assistance, n.d.). School bus violence is similar to the occurrences on school grounds. This violence often includes bullying, sexual harassment,

fighting, and arguing. Sexual harassment is the most recurrent form of bullying behavior within behavior within the bus environment (Allen et al., 2003; deLara, 2008). The minimally supervised time riding to and from school is reported by students to be the most fearful interval in the school day (deLara, 2008). Because the number of students riding the buses over the years has increased, the tightly confined space and a lack of supervision has increased the opportunity for children to demonstrate poor behaviors on the bus (Aldo, 2014; deLara, 2008; Krueger, 2010; Raskauskas, 2005). There are usually 24 open seats on an elementary school bus. The seats can fit up to two children, totaling a possible 48 children per bus (NHTSA, 2013). This crowding can cause the bus to be noisy and provide an environment for poor behaviors because of the lack of supervision and confined quarters (Evans, 2014). There are fewer incidents of bullying on the school bus on rides to extracurricular activities when there are teachers, staff, and parents also riding the bus (Evans, 2014).

Effects of Bullying Behavior

In schools worldwide, bullying converts the learning environment into a harmful territory (Lipson, 2001). School shootings, which have increased in recent years, have been studied to determine the backgrounds of the shooters (Bradshaw & O'Brennan, 2008). Two thirds of shooters have been previous victims of bullying (Bradshaw & O'Brennan, 2008). Bullying has many negative ramifications, regardless of the grade level or gender of those involved (Schoen & Schoen, 2010). Bradshaw and O'Brennan (2008) reported that 40% of the student body had been victims or perpetrators of bullying; victims, specifically, had informed administrators and/or staff that they did not

feel secure at school. Additionally, school aged children victimized by verbal and physical abuse tend to have academic challenges. Lickona (2012) studied 2,300 middle school students and found that the grade-point average was significantly lower for students who were bullied compared to their peers who had not been victimized.

Students who bully asserted power over their victims. People who bully others harm their victims to illustrate a power difference (Wilton & Campbell, 2011; Hazler, Miller, Carney, & Green, 2001). The bully will take advantage of the victim's inferiority complex, which manifests as negative psychological and physiological symptoms. This inferiority will ultimately be reflected in the individual's schooling and other behavioral characteristics (Schnohr & Niclasen, 2006). Bullies often target students with disabilities, poor social support, low socioeconomic status, or who identify as LGBTQ (Carrera, DePalma, & Lameiras, 2011). Children who are identified as gifted or appear to be smart often are targets for bullies as well (Hargrove, 2011).

After a certain period of consistent bullying, victims also exhibit symptoms of trauma (Finkelhor, Turner, & Ormond, 2006). Children who have been victimized tend to more strongly exhibit antisocial behaviors and other symptoms of depression than do peers who have not struggled with the same experience (Fuller, Gulbrandson, & Ukasick, 2013). According to Schnohr and Niclasen (2006), problems can be observed in the educational development and behavior of victims, brought about by psychological and physical stress due to victimization. In studying the effects of bullying on students in American schools, Olweus (2007) found that there is a higher likelihood that girls will verbally taunt their peers, whereas boys are most often are physically aggressive to their

peers. Nishina, Juvonen, and Witkow (2005) determined that girls experienced symptoms of anxiety whereas most boys became bullies themselves.

Bullies, particularly male bullies, are likely to be engaged in aberrant activities, for example, theft, burglary, and drug abuse (Aluede et al., 2008). Schnohr and Niclasen (2006) stated that victims are specifically more likely to proceed to health-harming activities such as smoking and drinking. These children are also at high risk of developing other difficulties including eating disorders, depression, suicidal feelings, anxiety (Dake, Price, & Telljoham, 2003; Pontzer, 2010). These behaviors pose dangers not only to the victims but also to their caregivers, and may increase victims' exposure to riskier and more harmful behaviors. Kim, Catalano, Haggerty, and Abbot (2011) stated that as they grow up, bullied children are often exposed to illegal drugs, including marijuana, as well as binge drinking and violence.

As children grow into young adults, involvement with peers is an important component of social survival. McElhaney, Antonishak, and Allen (2008) suggested that positive interaction with peers projects a successful future. Bullying only perpetuates harm for this growing generation, and it impedes children from interacting with others in a positive manner (Dake et al., 2003; McHelhaney et al., 2008).

Victims of bullying contemplate its relentless and consistent effects, distracting them from more productive academic endeavors (deLara, 2008). Truancy levels are significantly higher among bullied students (Carney & Merrell, 2001), and they experience mental and developmental difficulties (NCES, 2013; Schnohr & Niclasen, 2006). Students who are bullied lack self-confidence and have a higher number of social

anxiety symptoms than do students who are not bullied (Carrera et al., 2011; Seals & Young, 2003; StopBullying.gov, 2013). Moreover, the students who are bullied are more likely to be depressed and inflict bodily harm to themselves (Seals & Young, 2003; StopBullying.gov, 2013). Students who are victimized experience feelings of seclusion and rejection from their peer groups (Olweus, 2007, 2011).

Conversely, bullies have a higher social standing among peers (Olweus, 2011). Bullies can have diverse characteristics such as being honor roll students, popular students, athletes, loners, or problem students (Gourneau, 2012). Bullies may also bully others to prove something to their social group (Rudolph, Abaied, Flynn, Sugimura, & Agoston, 2011). Likewise, possessing a low perception of their own self-worth, students who bully are more probable to exhibit behavior that is physically harmful to others because of their own perceptions of low self-worth. Additionally, Aluede et al. (2008) found that students who bully are more probable to explore criminal activity, such as drug dealing, property destruction, and assaultive behaviors such as hitting and pushing (Lehman, 2012; Olweus, 2011).

Students' Perceptions of Bullying

Students may be unclear about the role of the bus driver, which can lead to students to engage in bullying behaviors and to fail to respect the driver as an authority figure on the bus (Aldo, 2014). Students have reported bullying as one of the most important reasons they do not feel safe in school and perceive their teachers as ineffective in preventing bullying (Bellflower, 2010; Boulton et al., 2009). Craig, Pepler, and Atlas (2000) indicated that school employees achieve a positive outcome in less than 20% of

bullying incidents. Consequently, students are unwilling to disclose the victimization that they are forced to endure. Thus, improved administrator cognizance is essential to engendering positive outcomes from bullying prevention programs (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

School staff should consistently conduct and improve training that reinforces a cohesive understanding of bullying prevention policies and definitions (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003). The ability of schools to create a bullying-free and secure atmosphere that is conducive to learning relies upon unimpeded avenues of communication between students and staff (Sadlier, 2011).

Bus Drivers

Qualifications and Duties

The role of the school bus driver not only to transport students to and from school and school activities but to do so safely. Bus drivers, who are often the only people providing supervision during the least supervised period of the school day, take on the role as nurse, friend, protector, role model, and counselor (McMahon, 2014; Sims, 2014). The American School Bus Council (2015) has published a list of criteria to be included in school bus driver instructor training.

- Rules and policies for conducting safe and efficient student transportation
- Instruction in operating school bus equipment
- Proper adjustment and use of the school bus mirror system
- Daily pretrip and posttrip vehicle safety inspections
- Safe driving techniques, including defensive driving skills

- Procedures for loading and unloading passengers
- Procedures for entering and exiting school zones
- Student management
- Accident and emergency procedures, including evacuation and use of emergency equipment
- Basic first-aid procedures
- Safety procedures for railroad crossings
- Guidance in following route instructions and map diagrams
- Appropriate use of electronic communications, if available, including wireless communication and GPS
- Proper refueling procedures
- Laws and rules associated with school activity trips
- Reduced engine idling policies
- Effective communications with staff, students, and parents
- Cultural diversity, including effective communication techniques when language barriers exist
- Proper professional attitude and behavior
- Customer service skills
- Post-trip inspections of the school bus interior to verify that all children have left the bus

- Training on use and securement of passenger safety devices, including safety seats and other equipment (paras. 3-6)

Although charged with the task of addressing bullying behaviors (deLara, 2008), many bus drivers are not equipped to address these behaviors effectively (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). According to Depee (2009), bus drivers' reports of student disciplinary problems on buses are more prevalent than those received during other school activities. While driving, facing the road ahead, bus drivers are also expected to maintain a healthy, safe environment for up to 72 students (Allen et al., 2003).

Bus Drivers and Bullying

Bus drivers are often the first responders to bullying on the bus and are more likely to report bullying incidents than do any other education support specialists (ESPs; Bradshaw et al., 2011). Nearly 98% of teachers and ESPs believe they have a responsibility to intervene in bullying situations (National Education Association, 2010). About 66% of drivers, however, do not notify school administrators about bullying that they observe, although approximately 52% of 550,000 U.S. school bus drivers stated that verbal and physically abusive behavior in a bus environment is a severe difficulty (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Bus drivers usually receive minimal training and feel unsupported by school administrators (deLara, 2008; School Bus Fleet, 2004). deLara (2008) found that the bus drivers believed their communication with administrators was often one-sided and their thoughts or perceptions were not considered. In addition, drivers reported there had been minimal or inconsistent follow-up on disciplinary actions from referrals (deLara, 2008).

Schools have also found it difficult to find bus drivers who can effectively address poor student behavior or maintain appropriate behaviors on the school bus (Depee, 2009). In more recent research, Morrison (2015) reported that the main reason bus drivers quit their job is the lack of support from school administrators. The common complaints from bus drivers were inadequate discipline of students, policies that do not support bus drivers, not being supported when addressing parents complaints, and having to jump through hoops to get schools to discipline students for unsafe behaviors on the bus. Depee (2009) reported that many bus drivers do not effectively address students' poor behavior because school bus drivers have a poor work ethic and lack self-confidence and conscientiousness. However, other research has shown that many bus drivers believe the lack of training and support from the school's administration and parents or guardians is to blame for the students' poor behaviors or bullying behaviors on the bus (deLara, 2008; Evans, 2014; School Bus Fleet, 2004).

Bus drivers were able to identify specific bullying behaviors that were most prominent on the school bus. deLara (2008) reported that bus drivers believe verbal bullying, physical fighting, sexual harassment, and psychological intimidation are significant problems needing to be addressed. The drivers did not view the use of words such as *faggot* or *gay* as a form of sexual harassment (deLara, 2008, pp. 63–64). Research suggests drivers believe that more training and support are needed to better equip them to address bullying while performing their job duties (School Bus Fleet, 2013).

Bus Drivers as Victims

U.S. bus drivers sometimes become victims of bullying while transporting students, and incidents have increased over time (Evans, 2014). This bullying behavior is practiced not only by students, but also by caregivers, legal guardians, and parents. A viral video showed a bus monitor, Karen Klein, being severely bullied by four seventh graders (School Bus Fleet, 2012). A male bus driver in Florida was attacked by an irate parent after she became upset with him for not allowing her son to sit next to his older brother, and she hit the 72-year-old bus driver (School Bus Fleet, 2014).

An exhaustive review of research revealed only one study that addressed bullying of bus drivers. According to deLara (2008), bus drivers may experience aggressive behavior, intimidation, and bullying on the bus while transporting students; still, many bus drivers are apprehensive about reporting the abuse for fear of retaliation (Evans, 2014) and losing their jobs because of not being able to manage the environment on the school bus. Additionally, there may be some shame regarding being bullied by a student. As will be discussed below, although there has been an increase in bullying of bus drivers, bus drivers have also been known to bully students, parents, and legal guardians of students riding on their bus.

Bus Drivers as Bullies

Bus drivers are responsible for maintaining a safe environment when transporting students on the bus. A bus driver who bullies students threatens this environment. There are many examples in the media of bus drivers who have been disciplined or fired for bullying students. For example, a Texas bus driver received a disciplinary infraction for

encouraging students to join him in bullying a sobbing student. The entire incident was captured on the bus surveillance video. Another bus driver was disciplined for stopping the bus and instructing the students to roll up their windows in 90-degree heat because they were being rowdy. He instructed them to sit there until their "brains melted" (Grahan, 2014). Although an inappropriate tactic, the driver was attempting to manage poor behaviors on the bus. Other stories have surfaced in the media with similar incidents of drivers being disciplined or fired because of bullying-like behaviors. Most of these stories were one-time incidents where a bus driver was fired because students reported that the bus driver repeatedly pushed, shoved, hit them with brooms, or would sit on them during their ride (Ginras & Bordonaro 2014).

Although bus drivers who bully is an emerging topic, there appear to be no systematic studies of this behavior. Researchers have addressed teachers who bully (Daniels, 2011; Whitted & Dupper, 2008; Wilkin, 2010; Zerillo, 2010). Often, teachers who bully demonstrate bullying behaviors such as physical and psychological maltreatment. Additionally, Whitted and Dupper (2008) found that 86% of alternative school students reported physical maltreatment, and 88% experienced psychological maltreatment not just from teachers but also from other adults employed by the school. Students who are bullied by teachers experience similar consequences of students bullied by peers such as feelings of isolation, loneliness, fear, depression, and are often truant (Daniels, 2011).

The factors that are believed to contribute to teacher bullying are the same dynamics that bus drivers face on a daily basis. According to Childers (2009), situational

factors that teachers face are lack of support from administration, diverse students, and large class sizes (Twemlow & Fonagy, 2005). These factors may cause burnout, poor decision making, or displaying bullying behaviors similar to the ones demonstrated by the bus drivers (Twemlow & Sacco, 2013).

Health Risks of Bus Drivers

Bus drivers experience health-related issues because of their jobs. In fact, bus drivers may be at a higher risk of hypertension than those in other occupations (Ragland et al., 1987); however, "school transportation workers have been neglected in the occupational stress literature" (Restrepo, 2013, p. 3). The greatest health concerns for bus drivers are high stress and cardiovascular and weight concerns (Atkinson, 2007; Restrepo, 2013). The job often means late-night transportation of students on school field trips, remaining sedentary while driving, poor eating schedules, and a lack of control of work schedules and time schedules (Albright, Winkleby, Ragland, Fisher, & Syme, 1992; Atkinson, 2007). Health concerns or stress-related issues of drivers may affect drivers' capability of doing their jobs effectively or lead to burnout (Restrepo, 2013).

Effectiveness of Bullying Prevention

Bullying prevention programs have, for the most part, been embraced by school administrators. As bullying incidents have increased, there has been a greater recognized need for antibullying education and awareness (Langdon & Preble, 2008; Purugulla, 2011). The fear of repeat bullying discourages victims from reporting cases to adults, indicating the need for schools to devise more effective ways to contain the actions of bullies and alleviate such fear (McNamee & Mercurio, 2008). Rigorous research has been

devoted to initiatives for reducing violence. Every school has a mandate to resolve cases of bullying, and a variety of policies state that schools should be held accountable whenever this responsibility is overlooked (Kevorkian & D'Antona, 2008; Willard, 2007). Appropriate action must be versatile, implemented to the letter, and long-lasting to keep pace with the ever-changing trends of bullying (Bickmore, 2010). Educational institutions are required by federal and state law to address issues related to bullying and must formulate clearly defined strategies for such; however, Flores (2014) found that these policies have not been successful in reducing bullying behavior.

Other studies suggest some policy implementations have been successful. Craig, Pepler, and Blais (2007) assessed the efficiency of various students' plans for curbing bullying. Their results indicated that girls have a higher rate of reporting bullying incidents to teachers and adults, whereas boys often tend to engage in countering bullying activities or finding other ways to stop or resist the bullying themselves. Essential efforts included involving students who have been victimized and helping them interact in a constructive manner. Confidentiality and efficiency were key to such interactions (Craig et al., 2007). After contrasting and comparing the results from different studies, Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, and Isava (2008) stated that fewer cases of victimization were reported after school employees had participated in intervention programs.

Since Olweus (1991) conducted the first large-scale study on bullying in Norway (the OBPP), many institutions have successfully duplicated his school-wide approach. The school-wide tactic that Olweus used on 2,500 students in grades 4-7 involved four levels at which bullying prevention practices should be simultaneously implemented to

curb bullying: school, individual, classroom, and community. Pepler, Craig, Xiegler, and Charach (1994) conducted an OBPP evaluative study on 1,052 K-8 students. Bauer, Lozano, and Rivara (2007) evaluated Olweus's school-wide method on roughly 6,500 seventh- and eighth-grade students in Seattle, WA. In Pennsylvania, Limber, Olweus, Missiello, Molnar-Main, and Moore (2012) conducted an OBPP evaluative study on 70,531 students in grades 3-12. All the students in these studies exhibited significantly greater improvements on the post-test than the control group in the prevention of bullying. The school-wide approach commonly involves an overall bullying prevention policy, increased monitoring, and program activities. The OBPP method is an important evidenced-based program for reducing bullying (Farrington & Ttofi, 2010).

A school will have an effective bullying prevention program if it comprehensively focuses on a school-wide policy that includes cooperation at all levels and the highest student performance expectations (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009; Morrison, Furlong, & Morrison, 1994). The benefits associated with bullying prevention programs specifically target offenders and provide behavioral intervention (Lord, 2014). Empowering students to identify and resolve conflicts at their level is sensible because students often spend time in areas with reduced supervision, such as school buses, lunchrooms, and outdoors (Packman, Lepkowski, Overton, & Smaby, 2003; Rusby, Crowley, Sprague, & Biglan, 2011). School administrator and teacher monitoring is also critical to an effective program (Hirschstein, Edstrom, Frey, Snell, & MacKenzie, 2007). According to Beran (2012), if teachers were confident in their skills and knowledge, they might see themselves as effective in addressing and preventing bullying.

School Bus Intervention Strategies

As bullying incidents on the bus continue to increase, intervention strategies are needed to help bus drivers maintain a safe environment on the school bus. Despite not having a significant amount of evidence-based studies supporting the efficacy of currently used interventions, many school districts have implemented strategies including training models, use of technology, adult monitors, discipline strategies, and force.

Training Models

The Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment on Our Nation's School Buses training curriculum was introduced in June 2008 as a result of collaboration between the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) and United States Department of Education's Office of Safe and Healthy Students ([U.S. ED OSHS] 2008). Twenty-seven school transportation professionals from across the United States and representatives of the Safe and Supportive Schools Technical Center helped create the curriculum. (No additional information was provided regarding the specific job responsibilities of the 27 contributors (U.S. ED OSHS, 2008). The antibullying training curriculum consists of two PowerPoint modules complete with a trainer's guide, posters, and other reference components. The first module, "See Something. Do Something: Intervening in Bullying Behavior," teaches school bus operators how to identify actions which do and do not constitute inappropriate student behaviors and by what means a driver should appropriately react to these behaviors within a bus environment. The protocol to report abusive conduct is addressed. The second module, "Creating a Supportive Bus Climate: Preventing Bullying," focuses on creating an environment of mutual respect. The

objectives of the training focus on how to maintain a bus environment that fosters student civility, which can prevent and combat bullying by encouraging students to commit to carrying out simple, concrete strategies for building positive relationships with the students on the school bus (U.S. ED OSHS, 2008). The training curriculum provides drivers with intervention strategies to reduce violent acts of bullying and other forms of aggressive behaviors. Finally, the training curriculum provides a context for policymakers to develop policies, procedures, and protocol related to school bus violence.

Breaking up Fights on the Bus (n.d.), developed by Coastal Training Technologies, is a training module available on DVD and VHS. The purpose was to help bus drivers learn strategies for verbally and physically stopping altercations on the school bus. In 2005, the Pupil Transportation Safety Institute developed *Growing Respect on Your Bus*. This 30-minute training video provides student behavioral management tips and highlights the importance of adopting a respectful tone within a bus environment (Roher, 2011). *Bullying Prevention on the School Bus* (n.d.), developed by the School Safety Company, consists of three instructional videos with three established goals for drivers: (a) identify bullying, (b) prevent bullying on the school bus, and (c) highlight effective ways to address bullying situations (Wolf, 2011). Some states have implemented another model where adult volunteers provide supervision on buses (Roher, 2011).

Technology

Technology, including video monitoring and audio recording, is starting to become implemented to deter and address bullying behaviors on the bus. Pennsylvania

now allows audio recordings on the school bus as long as parents are notified and warning notices are visible on the school bus (Aguinaldo, 2014). Boston Public Schools also equipped their 750 school buses with cameras and microphones to address and assist in investigating bullying incidents (School Bus Fleet, 2014). Video monitoring has been found effective if paired with other bullying prevention strategies (Krueger, 2010). Additionally, it is also important for the videos to be reviewed regularly and the incidents be addressed immediately by administration (Krueger, 2010; Raskauskas, 2005). On the other hand, video-monitoring in the Bonneville County Joint School District in Idaho worked only as a minimal deterrent and showed few results (Roher, 2012). The school district decided to include adult monitoring as a second intervention to address bullying.

Adult Monitors

Adult monitors provide an additional presence of authority and supervision within a bus environment and allow bus drivers to focus mainly on safely driving the bus. Some bus monitors are volunteers or are hired by the school district (Roher, 2012). In Danvers, MA, high school juniors and seniors are being trained to serve as bus monitors on buses transporting elementary students (Student Bus Fleet, 2011).

Discipline Strategies

The Tennessee legislature passed a bill that will allow bus drivers to use reasonable force when necessary to prevent death or bodily harm (McMahon, 2012). Bus drivers also have the authority to report bullying incidents to the school's administration by writing referrals. This method is effective because it provides a tracking system of the student bully and number of incidents, and it also shows whether the students were

complying with the school bus rules (Hirsch et al., 2004). Some people disagree with this approach of having bus drivers contact administration because it sends a message to the children that the bus driver has no authority (Atkinson, 2009). If the bus driver is allowed to contact parents, assign seats, dismiss rows one by one—all ways of addressing the behaviors—then the bus driver feels empowered and the students' poor behaviors decrease (Atkinson, 2009).

Bullying Policies and Laws

Because of the abundance of school violence, bullying incidents, and bullying-related suicides, bullying has been deemed an education, social, and health concern, pushing the debate regarding legislation to the forefront (Marr & Field, 2001; Stuart-Cassel, Bell, & Springer, 2011). Individual states originate and implement their own respective bullying policies. On behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development Policy and Program Studies Service, Stuart-Cassel et al. (2011) evaluated state bullying laws and policies and presented the following findings.

- From 1999 to 2010, more than 120 bills were introduced by state legislatures nationally to address bullying and related behaviors in schools.
- Forty-five state laws have instructed school districts adopt a policy.
- Forty-two state laws use clearly defined language prohibiting students from bullying. There are three states that prohibit bullying, but they do not define the actions or behaviors that constitute bullying.

- A significant number of states have enacted legislation against "bullying," "bullying and harassment," or "bullying, harassment, or intimidation," using these terms interchangeably. Nine states make a distinction between "bullying" and "harassment" and delineate them separately under the law. Two states only address "harassment" as it relates to behavior in schools, with no mention of "bullying."
- Thirty-six states include cyberbullying or bullying using electronic media in their education codes.
- Thirteen states have indicated that schools have jurisdiction over off-campus bullying behavior that creates a hostile school environment.
- The state laws with the least expansive language have dictated that local school districts must develop bullying policy and its content. (p. 15)

It is important to note that, although these policies exist, they are only effective if the administration implements them properly (Lerman, 2010). School personnel must understand the definition of bullying behavior, policies and procedures, roles and responsibilities, and the importance of receiving prevention training (Flores, 2014; Lerman, 2010). Forty-two states provide their school districts with detailed requirements on how to establish guidelines for policy and procedure publication. These policies range from posting in the student and faculty handbook, to disseminating information to students in writing, to posting about school policies, to in-service training (Stuart-Cassel et al., 2011, p. 32).

Stuart-Cassel et al. (2011) found that 32 states mandate local educational

jurisdictions to outline policies and procedures for documenting and reporting behaviors, student consequences, and prohibited student behaviors in the student handbook. Additionally, the laws for 22 states require that employee manuals include the same policy and procedures published in student handbooks. 16 states mandate or highly recommend local school districts to sponsor open meetings to provide an opportunity for students to freely discuss the schools antibullying policies.

These activities were designed to improve familiarity of everyone involved in policies, procedures, and other protocol related to school violence. States use various procedures to legislate training and prevention for personnel.

The laws usually also encourage or dictate continuing education or professional development and training for students as an element of their bullying policies. For example, 10 states have laws that enforce or recommend school districts to address bullying and to identify prevention strategies by developing committees, or advisory boards. Additionally, 25 states have laws that requires mandated training for school employees. Students are often required to participate in bullying trainings. There are 20 states require students to participate in bullying awareness and prevention programs (Stuart-Cassel et al., 2011).

Summary

The literature review covered the prevailing research on bullying prevention and the pervasiveness of bullying in the school and bus environment. Bullying is pervasive in schools worldwide and has many negative ramifications, regardless of grade level or

gender (Olweus, 1993, 2011). This type of behavior results in a harmful environment that is detrimental to learning (Lipson, 2001).

Students who bully engage in verbally and physically abusive behavior in school, on the bus, as well as electronically through cyber bullying. Research suggests that adequately understanding these variations enables leaders to design effective corrective action programs or interventions once the bullying is identified.

An essential requirement is for the school administration to consistently conduct and enhance training that reinforces a comprehensive understanding of bullying prevention policies and definitions (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003). Further research is needed on the transportation environment of the school bus, especially, given the limited information and studies on the perceptions and actions of school bus drivers regarding this problem.

Bandura's (1977) social learning theory explains one mechanism for how bullying is learned and how it potentially frames interactions between drivers and students. Social learning theory was appropriate for this research because its central basis is behavioral modeling, which elucidates how people potentially become or do not become bullies. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social ecological systems model serves as the conceptual framework to explain how other environmental systems integrate with bullying.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the rationale for choosing a case study methodology. Additionally, I describe the design of the study and provide additional information on the methods selected. Information on the approach and data collection activities are discussed

as well. Finally, the nature of the participants and ethical considerations of the study are presented.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Despite the considerable body of research on bullying prevention in U.S. schools, few researchers have examined violence and bullying on U.S. school buses. The voice of school bus drivers is also largely absent from extant literature on school bus bullying (deLara, 2008). This phenomenological case study was undertaken to examine the lived experience of bullying behavior on school buses through the lens of 12 school bus drivers; it specifically recorded their perceptions of antibullying training programs and the policies and procedures developed for school bus drivers.

The results of this study provide a much-needed practitioner review of the policy and procedures that address bullying in school. The results of this study provide data on bus drivers' views of age, gender, and grade levels on bullying. The findings of this research contribute data for both local and national policies and curricula that could decrease bullying incidents on the school buses and in schools. In this chapter, I present the purpose statement and research questions, the research design, participants, setting, and the data collection and analysis methods. Lastly, I review the ethical implications of the study.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

A review of the literature indicated that school bus drivers have not been included in local or higher level policy discussions on anti-bullying training curricula or bus anti-bullying policies. Specifically, the extant literature suggests school bus drivers should be

more involved in policy development related to school bus violence in the form of bullying. The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experience of the bus driver utilizing a phenomenological case study approach.

The main research question investigated by this study was: In what ways do school bus drivers perceive that their school's antibullying training and policy enables or precludes their ability to function as supported, prepared, and involved positive role models for student passengers?

Several subquestions were used to answer the main research question:

1. What emerges from the data that implies an internal process which bus drivers' experience that allows for and contributes to, or prohibits and impedes a sense of support and involvement in the antibullying training programs?
2. What internal process emerges from the data that allows bus drivers to believe their involvement in policy development is or is not represented in the training programs?
3. What emerges from the data that allows bus drivers' to confirm or disconfirm their thoughts about the grade levels, gender and ages of students involved in school bus violence in the form of bullying?

Research Design

Qualitative research explores issues, helps understand phenomena, and answers questions using various data sources (Fielding, 2005). Qualitative research requires the researcher to ask questions and gather data in the participants' environment or setting. The data analysis should focus on identifying or studying particular themes (Creswell,

2009). Creswell (2009) defined qualitative research "as inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analyzing the data" (p. 19). In this study, I collected data using semistructured interviews conducted online through Skype videoconferencing and face-to-face interviewees. I contacted each participant at the agreed time using his or her Skype ID. Despite technology, Skype with videoconferencing is an appropriate method of collecting data in a qualitative study (Janghorban, Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2014; Sullivan, 2013). Skype with videoconferencing interviews provide an additional benefit to the participant by allowing the participant to remain in the comfort of their own home or a comfortable setting of their choice (Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014).

The interviews conducted using Skype videoconferencing took place in a private setting to ensure the participants' confidentiality and sense of comfort and privacy. The sample of 12 represents one case; all were current U.S. bus drivers who shared common experiences of school bus bullying. Additionally, the racial, ethnic, and gender breakdown of the sample approximated a representative sample of bus drivers so that findings would be potentially transferable, as explained later in this chapter. Moreover, the researcher's job is to make interpretations and ascertain the essence and awareness of the phenomenon under consideration. Qualitative research is appropriate to understand a particular phenomenon through the individuals lived experience (Creswell, 2009). This study examined the perceptions of school bus drivers regarding their perception of the antibullying training programs.

Case Study Method

Creswell (2009) proposed five strategies for conducting qualitative research: ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological research, and narrative research. 1. Ethnography is a strategy used to study a cultural group in its ordinary environment for an extended timeframe. 2. The grounded theory is used to develop a theory on the basis of the studied phenomenon. 3. A case study is a comprehensive exploration into the contributing factors of an event; person, process or activity. 4. The phenomenological research describes in detail the perceptions of an event or experience. 5. The narrative research is the study of an individual or individuals through their life stories. According to Yin (2012), researchers utilizing a case study inquiry can include an exploratory and descriptive approach in order to fully understand the actual background and dynamic of a modern occurrence. There are three types of inquiries according to Stake (1995): instrumental, intrinsic, and collective case studies. For this study, a phenomenological instrumental case study was the most applicable methodology because a policy that reflects bus drivers' perceptions may lead to a revised policy that could be better implemented with fidelity.

I utilized Bandura's (1977) social learning theory as the primary theoretical framework and Bronfenbrenner's (1999) social ecological systems model as the interpretive framework in probing bus drivers' understandings of what they would consider to be effective bullying policies and procedures that could lead to more effective antibullying interventions on the school bus. Bandura's (1977) theory provided a way to explore the *how* of the actual behaviors of students and the responses of school bus

drivers, and Bronfenbrenner's framework provided information on the *what* of the systemic issues. Bandura (1977) addressed the manner in which people learn from one another by means of modeling and imitation. Bronfenbrenner's (1999) model facilitates classification of the different ways in which systems (teachers, officials, community, and family) impact behavior.

I followed Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological research approach to analyze the data. The two most prominent schools of thought in phenomenology are hermeneutic phenomenology (the focus of van Manen [1990]) and transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). Both schools of thought have their roots in philosophy, particularly the works of Edmund Husserl, with influence from Immanuel Kant, Hegel, and Descartes. Moustakas (1994) stated that Hegel defined phenomenology as involving knowledge as it is experienced in consciousness. He described it as the method of describing one's perceptions and ideas, and as the awareness of and knowing within one's own environment and experience. This process, Hegel posited, opens the individual to phenomenal consciousness. Although Husserl was influenced by Hegel's ideas regarding consciousness, Descartes influenced Husserl in his concept of *epoche*, which is the emptying one's self of one's perceptions, preconceived ideas, and refraining from judgment (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl was interested in discovering meanings and essences including that information gained from his ideas of subjective and objective knowledge and their interaction within their simultaneous existence (Moustakas, 1994).

Two other major concepts that influence both transcendental and hermeneutic phenomenology are consciousness and intentionality of consciousness. Consciousness is

the part of the human mind that processes knowledge and awareness of tangible reality. Descartes (as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 28) stated that knowledge or perception of objective reality is actually dependent upon subjective reality. Husserl (as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 28) believed that differences exist between the tangible and intangible, and that it is the awareness of both parts of reality that are necessary. Intentionality of consciousness has its roots in Aristotelian philosophy where the word *intention* implies a relationship between the orientation of the mind and its object (Creswell, 2007, p. 28). Stewart and Mickunas (1990) described intentionality of consciousness as being directed toward an object.

Hermeneutical phenomenology emphasizes examining the lived experience of persons, describing the experience and interpreting the experience through the use of texts (Van Manen, 1990). Hermeneutical phenomenology examines the lived experience of participants, describing and interpreting their life stories from the text of their recorded and written interviews. It focuses on the subjective experience of the participants (Van Manen, 1990). Specifically, Van Manen (1990) stated a decent phenomenological description that establishes the essence of something is interpreted so that the development of a lived experience is shown to us in a way is easy for us to understand the importance of the experience in a way that we did comprehend before.

Unlike Van Manen and hermeneutical phenomenology, transcendental or descriptive phenomenology places more of an emphasis on description of the experiences of the subjects rather than focusing on the researcher's interpretation of experiences being had by the persons being studied. One of the basic concepts that Moustakas (1994)

emphasized was that of Hursserl's epoche, or bracketing, in regard to the experience of the researcher. For the researcher, epoche or bracketing means the setting aside of all preconceived ideas, knowledge, or suppositions to be able to experience the lived experience of the participant with new eyes, as though the researcher were experiencing the event with the participant for the first time. Moustakas (1994) described transcendental as a state in which everything is viewed uniquely. Not only does the process of epoche involve setting aside biases, preconceived conclusions, and so forth, but the researcher also should engage in what Moustakas referred to as reflective-meditation about the experience and how that experience may be affecting the researcher.

A researcher who is following Moustakas will choose a phenomenon to study and begin the bracketing process in preparation for the lived experience. The researcher then selects individuals who have experienced the phenomenon and collects data from each of them, analyzing the data by identifying significant statements, quotes, thoughts, and feelings. These statements can then be grouped as themes. The researcher then writes what the participants experienced as a textural description of the lived experience. The researcher also prepares "the how" of the experience for the participants or the structural description of the lived experience telling how the participants experience the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Role of the Researcher

My role in this project was to listen openly, without biases or presuppositions, and learn about what a school bus driver experiences as his or her reality. I recorded these stories as accurately and descriptively as possible using the interviewee's own words,

context, and perception. I am an "outsider" in this project. I worked for 20 years as a logistics and transportation specialist with the United States Navy, which helped me establish a rapport with the bus drivers and evaluate their responses from that perspective. Having spent a career in the military, my primary responsibilities included forging and maintaining relationships with intervention level personnel as well as military officials. This experience gave me a chance to meet new people each day and engage them in conversation pertaining to adherence to policies, procedures, and protocols pertaining to military operations.

One of the most difficult tasks for me as the researcher was that of epoche—the laying aside of all past knowledge about the phenomenon of school violence and bullying in order to be able to listen as though I had never heard and possessed no knowledge of anything that pertains to bus drivers. I bracketed my own theoretical perspective and opened myself to each driver's memories of students with issues related to bullying. I strived to be present with and for the participant with whom I engaged. Subsequent to my interaction with the participant, I practiced the art of mindfulness in order to prepare myself to be totally in the moment and completely genuine with the participants as they shared with me their experiences. Mindfulness refers to the compartmentalization of one's own bias and prejudice, while ensuring that full attentiveness and alertness is consciously focused on an experience being currently undertaken and observed (Linehan & Wilks, 2015).

I received approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (Approval #12-30-15-0163129; Exp. 12/29/2016) to conduct the study and to ensure that

the rights of the participants were protected. I had no direct relationships with the participants. I strived to remain aware of how my experiences and thoughts could influence the semistructured interviews. As indicated, I performed the bracketing process to prevent the interference of preconceptions, attitudes, and beliefs regarding the phenomenon (Fischer, 2009). Further, I took notes and recorded the interviews to avoid misinterpretations. I maintained field notes of my observations and experiences (Morris, 2015; Yin, 2012). I also ensured that I did not put any identifying information about the participants in the notes. Additionally, I offered the participants the opportunity to review the transcripts or listen to the recordings so that they could make any necessary corrections. I informed each participant that pseudonyms would serve as their names for personal privacy purposes.

Participant Selection Logic, Recruitment, and Participation

The target population for this study included school bus drivers who drove school-age children to and from a school on a daily basis. The bus driver sample was developed through a Facebook group known as "School Bus Drivers," with approximately 11,000 members, the largest group of pupil transportation specialists on Facebook (School Bus Drivers, 2015). Its mission is to "share the common interest of School Bus Safety and School Bus Driver Issues" (School Bus Drivers, 2015).

The type of sampling chosen for this study was stratified purposeful sampling. Stratified purposeful sampling, according to Creswell (2009), should be used when conducting a qualitative study because the researcher needs to choose subjects with the central phenomenon as personal experience. In a stratified random sample, the population

is separated in smaller groups called strata. The researchers chooses random samples from the groups (Creswell, 2009).

To obtain the stratified sample of bus drivers, I contacted the group administrator of the Facebook group via instant message and email and explained my research interests. I informed the administrator that I was conducting a Ph.D. research study regarding bullying on school buses and bus drivers' perceptions of drivers' abilities based on training and experience to maintain bus safety. I also provided a description of the participant criteria and voluntary nature of the study, and participants' right to withdraw from participating in the study upon request. I explained provisions for confidentiality and the fact that participants' identities would be kept anonymous.

The group administrator authorized the notification for a request of study participants to be placed within the public forum of the group. Within three weeks, 17 drivers expressed interest. The sample of 12 bus drivers was organized into four categories based upon years of bus driving experience: less than 5 years, 6-10 years, 11-20 years, and over 21 years of experience. The first 12 respondents filled each of the four categories with 3 participants. Two additional participants were kept "in waiting" in case any of the others dropped out. The other two were thanked but not asked to participate. Dworkin (2014) suggested that anywhere from five to 50 interviews or participants are common in qualitative research. Morse (2000) argued that the number of participants may not be as important as the quality of the data, nature of the topic, and the amount of appropriate or helpful data gained from the subject. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) determined that 12 participants from the same group was sufficient for saturation.

I emailed and telephoned eligible bus drivers to coordinate their receipt of the participant recruitment and consent form. If the participant agreed to the preliminary interview, I scheduled an appointment time with each participant to meet either in person or Skype. I explained the informed consent and asked each participant to sign a consent form (see Appendix A) and to return it to me along with a brief demographic information form prior to participating in the study (see Appendix B). I emailed both forms to nine participants and provided the forms to three in person. The participants either sent the signed forms to me via email or handed them to me in person. Upon receipt of these forms, I reviewed the structure of the interview with each participant. The Skype participants ensured their location was secure and free of distraction as requested. The approximate time for each interview was 30-45 minutes, although five interviews were approximately 25 minutes in length.

Instrumentation

I used a guided question protocol based on the research questions for each semi-structured interview (see Appendix C) and asked follow-up questions to gather additional information as necessary. The open-ended interview questions provided support for the drivers to provide and articulate views (Morris, 2015). I made a field test with a transportation specialist to gauge the understandability and potential usefulness of the interview questions. There were no recommended modifications to the questions to better capture the variables related to the current study under investigation. The interview protocol effectively structured the interviews and resulted in a greater understanding of the lived experience of bus drivers related to bullying on school busses.

Data Collection

The Walden University Institutional Review Board granted permission to collect data (Approval #12-30-15-0163129; Exp. 12/29/2016). The semistructured interviews yielded a collection of the participants' experiences in their own words (Yin, 2009). By establishing good rapport with each interviewee, I gathered a comprehensive description of the experience through the lens of the participant. I used various data collection tools associated with qualitative research, such as digital tape-recorded interviews, behavior observation (poor or no eye contact, changes in body language, or voice tone), a journal to take notes and the examination of documents (Yin, 2009). To record the interviews, I used a digital recorder, and I recorded each interview on a separate disc labeled with the assigned pseudonym, start and end times, and date. I asked each interviewee if they had any questions and made them aware of their necessity to review the interview transcript for accuracy.

Interview notes were taken throughout each session utilizing a journal, in which I wrote important thoughts, ideas, and statements. The journal was an essential tool during the transcribing process and assisted with transcription accuracy. Upon my completing interview transcribing, I emailed each interviewee a copy of the transcription and offered them the chance to review, add, or change any portion of their interview. I received confirmation from each participant either via e-mail or electronic text messaging; no changes or additions were requested on the behalf of any interviewee.

I read all written transcripts multiple times to describe, classify, and interpret the data. Doing so helped me identify the major themes and patterns among the participants.

To ensure ongoing confidentiality of the raw data, pseudonyms were used when taping and coding the data. The data is stored in my home office in a locked cabinet. After 5 years, I will destroy the data. Additionally, the field notes and other data collected are password-protected on my home computer.

Data Analysis

According to Yin (2009), data analysis is the process of understanding and organizing data collected from the participants. Data analysis utilizes the process of gaining a deeper understanding of the meaning to obtain greater meaning. Data analysis for this research study followed the process of analysis based upon Moustakas's textural description, bracketing, and mindfulness (1994). Moustakas provided a clear, logical methodological guide that can be used to gain greater experience in the analysis of qualitative data for a new qualitative researcher. Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological data analysis method was used to (a) recognize participant statements, (b) eliminate repetitive and unrelated statements, (c) provide a description of the lived experience, and (d) produce the detailed narrative description of lived experience (Moustakas, 1994).

After the interviews are transcribed, horizonalization is the first step in analyzing data (Creswell, 2007; Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004; Moustakas, 1994). Horizonalization involves identifying specific areas within the transcripts that provide information about the experience. I highlighted significant statements and themes in each of the transcriptions. I sorted out any overlapping themes or statements. Statements and themes were examined and color-coded based on similarity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). From data analysis of the interview transcription, the essential interaction among

the bus drivers, the bus drivers' lived experience and the researcher's active involvement with the phenomenon lead to a greater understanding of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Research Quality: Issues of Trustworthiness, Reliability, and Validity

In qualitative research, rigorous scholarship is essential (Padgett, 1998). Validity in qualitative research is the process of ensuring the accuracy of the results by implementing strategies (Creswell, 2008; Yin, 2009). In this qualitative study, trustworthiness, triangulation, peer review, and member checking were used to ensure reliability. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness is safeguarded when the findings closely reflect the themes and meanings as explained by the study participants. Some threats to trustworthiness are the participants' reactions or biases relating to the topic.

Methodological triangulation was used to protect the legitimacy of the study. Triangulation was achieved through the following methods: (a) the literature review, (b) field notes, and (c) interviews. Pyrczak (2008) stated that validating involved the checking of findings against several sources. Member checking was ensure validate the themes and to improve accuracy of the data to ensure credibility (Creswell, 2008; Yin, 2009). Member checking occurred by emailing a copy of the transcription to each participant to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. Confirmation was received by each participant either by e-mail or electronic text messaging. No participant desired to add or change their respective interview comments. Reliability in a qualitative study is determined by the quality of the research that depends on the consistency of the

participant interview question responses (Golafshani, 2003). Reliability was increased by recording all interviews and documenting all procedures of the study.

Ethical Procedures

As described previously, I implemented strategies to prevent risk or harm to the participants while they are participating in the study through informed consent, anonymity, and data security procedures. I informed the participants that participation in this study was voluntary. Additionally, I explained that they were allowed to end participation at any time during the study. Last, I reviewed the participants' rights to confidentiality, potential risks, expectations, and benefits of the study before I asked them to provide informed consent (Creswell, 2008). I protected the participants' identities by assigning pseudonyms to them. As stated previously, the interviews and all materials for the study will be coded, password protected, and locked in a file cabinet. I used an independent reviewer to review transcripts and analyze data, notes, and the methodology, I obtained signed confidentiality from the reviewer.

Summary

This phenomenological case study examined perceptions of the efficacy of antibullying training programs and policies and procedures developed for school bus drivers through interviews with 12 drivers on the lived experience of bullying behavior on school buses. The study provided much needed information on the perceptions of the bus drivers. Additionally, the results of this study may lead to a review of current training, policies, and policy implementation procedures. These experiences of bus drivers had not previously been studied and were a necessary data stratum for the

development of strategies that could improve school bus antibullying outcomes on a local and national level.

In this chapter, I presented the purpose statement and research questions, research design, participants and setting, and data collection and analysis methods. Efforts to ensure the rights and respectful treatment of participants were explained substantively. Additionally, I addressed the reliability and strategies for countering threats to validity in the proposed sampling strategy, recruitment, instrumentation, and ethical considerations.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the demographics of the sample and data collection and tracking procedures. Data analysis is presented, including a discussion of emergent themes. Findings, issues of trustworthiness, and a summary conclude the chapter.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

This instrumental case study examined the lived experience of bullying behavior on school buses through the lens of 12 school bus drivers. The purpose of the study was to collect bus drivers' perceptions of antibullying training programs, policies, and procedures developed for school bus drivers. I used the participants' interview responses to gain insight into answering the main research question: In what ways do school bus drivers perceive that their school's antibullying training and policy enables or precludes their ability to function as supported, prepared, and involved positive role models for student passengers? The following subquestions were explored through in-depth interviews with 12 bus drivers:

1. What emerges from the data that implies an internal process which bus drivers' experience that allows for and contributes to, or prohibits and impedes a sense of support and involvement in the antibullying training programs?
2. What internal process emerges from the data that allows bus drivers to believe whether or not their involvement in policy development is represented in the training curriculum?
3. What emerges from the data that allows bus drivers to confirm or disconfirm their thoughts about the grade levels, gender, and ages of students involved in school bus violence in the form of bullying?

I answered these questions using interviews with the 12 participating school bus drivers. I specifically used semistructured, open-ended interview questions to ascertain

their individual feedback regarding their challenges and perceptions of bullying prevention policy on school buses. Qualitative research is useful for exploring issues, understanding phenomena, and answering questions using various data sources (Fielding, 2005). Qualitative research requires the researcher to ask questions and collect data in the participants' environment or setting (Creswell, 2007). Because school bus drivers perform their duties with varying experience, one-on-one interviews provided the means to acquiring data directly from each school bus driver.

This research is the beginning of an effort to close the gap in the literature to have a better knowledge of what school bus drivers' experience. The study was designed to record the lived experience of school bus drivers who had experienced a similar phenomenon (bullying on the bus), to capture the essence of their experiences in their own words, and to reduce these verbal records of their experiences down to a description of the essence of that phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). In this chapter, I discuss participant demographics and the processes used to collect, store, and analyze the themes.

Recruitment

The participants, as stated in the previous chapter, were recruited from the target population of U.S. school bus drivers who transport school-age children to and from a school. Potential participating bus drivers responded to a recruitment flyer posted on a Facebook group page named School Bus Drivers. This group page had approximately 11,000 members and was the largest Facebook group of pupil transportation specialists at the time of this study (School Bus Drivers, 2015). Its stated mission is to "share the

common interest of School Bus Safety and School Bus Driver Issues" (School Bus Drivers, 2015).

Demographics

A Demographic Information Form (Appendix B) was utilized to gather participant data. Fourteen drivers volunteered for the study. Two potential participants were unable to or chose not to return informed consent forms. Thus, 12 drivers were selected as participants. As shown in Table 1, the participants ranged in age from 39 to 62 years old. All participants were actively employed as school bus drivers. Three had driven for less than 5 years; three had driven for 5–10 years; three had driven for 11–20 years; and three had driven for 21 or more years. The majority of the participants were women and self-identified as non-Hispanic. All of these participants stated that they had witnessed bullying and were deemed to meet the criteria for this study. Further information on the sample is recorded in Table 1.

Data Collection and Setting

The consent form (Appendix A) provided the participants with the terms of the research study, including my contact information. Each participant was assigned a two letter pseudonym ID: AA for Participant 1, BB for Participant 2, through the succession of 12 participants. Participants FF and MM were the two back-up participants who ultimately were not needed in the study. The two-digit alpha assignment of each participant provided an anonymous ID. Communication with each of the 12 participants in the data collection stage occurred via email, phone, and text messaging. All participants preferred to communicate by text messaging.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of School Bus Drivers (N = 12)

Demographic Variable	Number of Drivers	Percent of Drivers
Gender		
Male	3	25
Female	9	75
Ethnicity		
Not Hispanic	11	92
Hispanic	1	8
Race		
African American	8	67
Caucasian	4	33
Latin	0	0
Other	0	0
American Indian	0	0
Asian	0	0
Multi-Racial	0	0
Years of Experience as School Bus Drivers		
≤ 5 years	3	25
5-10 years	3	25
11-20 years	3	25
≥ 21 years	3	25
Live in School District	10	83
Grew up in School District	5	41
Child in School District	2	16
Community Involvement	6	50
Witnessed Bullying	12	100
Received Training by SD	2	16
Geographic Location		
Arizona	3	25
Georgia	1	8
North Carolina	1	8
Ohio	2	16
Texas	5	41

I varied the scheduled venue and time of the interviews to accommodate the participants. Three face-to-face interviews took place in a closed school room within the participants' school district. Nine interviews occurred via synchronous Skype calls using audio- and videoconferencing. The interviews ranged from approximately 25 to 45 minutes. During the interviews, I took notes of important details and documented essential information regarding the participants' demeanor and inflections while answering questions. Where applicable, I asked follow-up questions to gain clarity. The interview process, including transcriptions and member checks, took four weeks to complete.

Data Analysis

I followed Moustakas's (1994) phenomenological data analysis method to (a) recognize participant statements, (b) eliminate repetitive and unrelated statements, (c) provide a description of the lived experience, and (d) produce a detailed description of the lived experience. After the interviews were transcribed, horizonalization was implemented as a beginning step to analyze the data, in accordance with Creswell (2007), Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell (2004), and Moustakas (1994). Horizonalization involves identifying specific areas within the transcripts that provide information about the experience Moustakas, 1994). I highlighted significant statements and themes in each of the transcriptions. I then sorted out any overlapping themes or statements. Statements and themes were examined and color-coded based on similarity, in alignment with McMillan and Schumacher (2010). Data analysis of the interview transcriptions, the bus drivers'

lived experiences, and my active involvement with the phenomenon led to a greater understanding of the phenomenon.

Findings

I employed a qualitative phenomenological case study methodology to investigate the lived experience of 12 bus drivers. The study was designed to determine what general perceptions these drivers had of what constitutes an effective antibullying intervention policy, based on Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Bandura (1997). The results of this study provide much-needed data on school bus antibullying policy and training adequacy from the perspective of the drivers. In the sections that follow, I discuss in detail the themes that developed from the individual interview questions. In Chapter 5, I further discuss the connection of the interview questions to the main research questions and sub-questions.

Theme 1 (Interview Question 1): Training or lack thereof affects bus drivers' ability to define bullying. Table 2 reveals that 67% of participants did not feel they received training on bullying. Participant AA stated, "In my particular school district they did not give training for bullying. It comes from common sense that the bus drivers have." Participant HH stated, "At this employer, we've had no training. Nothing on bullying. Previous employer was very minimal training. Basically, kids picking on another kid." Of those who participated in training, bullying was described as the intimidation, aggravation, harming, or threatening violence by one or more students toward another student. For example, Participant DD responded:

> Okay, I think bullying in reference to not bullying is when an individual tends to aggravate or intimidate someone to the point when they are feeling inferior or

beneath someone else or because of the clothes they wear or because they dress differently or they talk differently. They'll intimidate them to the point where maybe the person might be a little bit down on themselves or maybe come to the point where they might get mad enough to want to fight. The bully sometimes just does that to get a response from them more than really wanting to jump on them or fight them, but sometimes it does lead to fights.

Table 2

School Bus Drivers' Short Responses: Question 1 – How Has Past Training Provided You an Understanding of What Is and What Is Not Bullying?

Participant	Response
AA	"In my particular school district they did not give training for bullying."
BB	"I've have a great deal of training on bullying and have also trained about bullying in my years of driving."
CC	"The guy told us some of it is teasing. To watch how it's said. The tone of voices and things like that, he said."
DD	"I think bullying in reference to not bullying is when an individual tends to aggravate or intimidate someone to the point when they are feeling inferior or beneath someone else."
EE	"To be honest, we really don't get a lot, a lot of training on bullying. I'm being straight up honest with you."
GG	"We have safety meetings and during those meetings they instruct us on bullying, and sexual harassment, and several other things."
HH	"At this employer, we've had no training."
JJ	"[Our district] has not had many training on bullying."
KK	"Well, at this district, I didn't have any training on that, but the other district that I worked for did."
LL	"My training has helped me with a lot of things that I wouldn't think would be bullying as far as, I guess, the playful pushing that you think would be playful but then that child is being pushed and is not thinking that that's fun. Stuff like that. Different eye contact that they would give."
NN	"To be honest, the schools that I work for I haven't had any training for bullying."
OO	"There's not too much classes that do describe that for bus drivers. With me sitting in classes, I did get a little bit of study in with it, but also I'm a psychology major so, therefore, I know the concept of bullying and not fitting in."

Theme 2 (Interview Question 2): Emphasis is placed on identifying and monitoring bullying behaviors. As shown in Table 3, the need to monitor student behavior and assign seating prevailed as the primary factor in ensuring driver awareness

for 75% of participants. The majority of drivers believed that identifying bullying behavior was predicated on properly monitoring students. Participant CC stated, “I don’t know. They just told us to watch and listen. Watch the body language, because you’re not going to be able to hear anything, they told us. Watch like that.” Another driver, Participant GG stated, “I watch my outside mirrors as well as my inside mirrors, watching the kids as well as the road. On most occasions I have picked up on bullying or the preliminary bullying and put a halt to it immediately.” Other drivers responded by mentioning the training received every three years, establishing expectations and receiving a chart which described bullying behavior.

Table 3

School Bus Drivers' Short Responses: Question 2 – How have previous trainings provided an awareness of what bullying looks like on the school bus?

Participant	Response
AA	"My district doesn't provide any kind of bullying type of training at our yearly in service. It's just safety training, no kind of bullying training unfortunately."
BB	"It has been invaluable. I am aware of voice tone, aware of the demeanor of children getting on the bus. Keeping an eye in the mirror to see what children are doing behind me as I'm going forward."
CC	"I don't know. They just told us to watch and listen. Watch the body language, because you're not going to be able to hear anything, they told us. Watch like that."
DD	"Well, we've been trained to monitor the students as we drive. We have mirrors that can reflect the seating arrangement and everything and we know that some kids tend to sit by kids that they get along with."
EE	"Me being a bus driver, we have to learn how to identify what problems, a lot of problems, on our own. If we do have a problem or we think we have bullying on the bus, we do write the kid up and go turn it in and stuff."
GG	"For a bus driver to be aware of it in advance they have to really watch their mirrors. I watch my outside mirrors as well as my inside mirrors, watching the kids as well as the road."
HH	"I would say it looks like somebody picking on the same kid or the same group of kids every day, trying to take things from them."
JJ	"Our book do, you know when we have, well we have every 3 years a training. Our book do tell us about bullying and ... They do that but it don't go into a full detail."
KK	"To me, it's like when kids pick on another kid and continue to pick on another kid and then with the group. That's what I think."
LL	"Yes, they give you videos and charts and explain to you different scenarios and different things. You really don't know until you actually get out there and actually observe it to the kids."
NN	"Any of the kids picking on another kid, and it's got to be consistently."
OO	"A kid drops his pencil on the floor on the bus and another kid kicks it, then I would consider that somewhat bullying to that effect."

Theme 3 (Interview Question 3): Reporting bullying behaviors to administrators is essential. As shown in Table 4, 58% of the drivers believed reporting bullying behavior, in compliance with policy, was essential to maintaining a safe transportation environment. Participant LL said, “It’s really cut and dry. You contact your supervisor and let them know what’s going on and you write out a report and then they’ll take it from there.” Participant KK said, “I have to write them up.” Other drivers referred to a lack of training, the importance of greeting students, and the significance of building a rapport with students.

Table 4

School Bus Drivers' Short Responses: Question 3 – How have past trainings equipped you with strategies that can be used to address and report bullying when it occurs on the bus?

Participant	Response
AA	"It hasn't."
BB	"It's more up to the drivers' ability to control the behavior and make a safe drive."
CC	"They have paperwork they can fill out. On my bus I just come talk to the principal and she takes care of it."
DD	"I tend to form a relationship with the students. I try to learn each one of their names individually."
EE	"We should have training, and I'm glad that you're bringing up this. I'm going to get with my supervisor on it, but we should."
GG	"I in turn have raised children, so I believe in encouraging children. The first thing is, "Good Morning. Hello." High school kids don't do a whole lot of speaking."
HH	"Only when they're hurting are themselves, they're really not doing anything, they're just doing damage to the seat, let them go. Don't get involved because one, they've got a sharp object."
JJ	"Every 3 years, we have a certain person that goes over bullying and what should we look for, what should we do."
KK	"I have to write them up"
LL	"It's really cut and dry. You contact your supervisor and let them know what's going on and you write out a report and then they'll take it from there."
NN	"First of all, if I was to see something like that I would bring it up to my supervisor's attention, and then we could bring it up to the principal or whoever is, you know, to the school, and we could both just take it from there I would think."
OO	"Like I said, there's not too much training on the bus. It's just not there, but there is ... Basically, you've got to set your own morals."

Theme 4 (Interview Question 4): Bus driver engagement with students contributes to a safe environment on the bus. Table 5 shows that a majority of drivers (75%)

believed that making a positive impression and greeting students upon entering the bus was essential. Participant EE stated,

> Just making sure everybody's safe. Safety. You look for safety and stuff like that. Try to find out if there is a problem. Like I said, when a kid [enters the bus] we're the first ones they see in the morning.

The outliers addressed the need to establish boundaries, separate the genders, and verbally correct students. For example, participant KK stated, "They tell you to talk to the kids and try to make them understand that it's not right to do that [bully]."

Table 5

School Bus Drivers' Short Responses: Question 4 – How have previous trainings provided you with usable strategies to build positive relationships on the school bus?

Participant	Response
AA	"It hasn't [helped]
BB	That eye-to-eye contact, that acknowledging them that I see you and I hear you."
CC	"The main thing they said is greet everybody. They were like, good morning, hello, good afternoon, whatever. How was your day?"
DD	"Yeah, I tend to, I listen to a lot of the kids' conversations and I tend to interact with them as to when they're talking about extracurricular things they do at school and stuff like that."
EE	"Just making sure everybody's safe. Safety. You look for safety and stuff like that. Try to find out if there is a problem. Like I said, when a kid ... We're the first ones they see in the morning."
GG	"The first thing is, "Good Morning. Hello." High school kids don't do a whole lot of speaking."
HH	"I treat them with the same respect that I expect to receive."
JJ	"Got to know their circumstances and that way you could relate to the person that's on the bus."
KK	"They tell you to talk to the kids and try to make them understand that it's not right to do that."
LL	"It has been mostly my experience that was helpful."
NN	"I have not had any previous training on bullying."
OO	"To talk to the students hopefully before it [bullying] takes place."

Theme 5 (Interview Question 5): Setting expectations and encouragement are useful interventions to address bullying. As shown in Table 6, there were six drivers, 50%, who believed that setting expectations lessened bullying incidents. Participant DD stated:

> In the incidence of bullying, I let them know that you will be written up, you will be turned in to the school and the consequences.

Four drivers (33%) commented in regard to positive encouragement. Driver BB stated, “Whether it’s, I like your book bag, or you’ve got a different hairdo today, just some way that allows the child to know, I’m aware you’re on the bus and I see you and I hear you.” Outliers also commented on their use of common sense and the need to immediately address negative behavior when it happens as an effective intervention.

Table 6

School Bus Drivers' Short Responses: Question 5 – How are you prepared to address bullying on the school bus?

Participant	Response
AA	"Common sense and personal history."
BB	"Whether it's, 'I like your book bag,' or 'You've got a different hairdo today," just some way that allows the child to know, I'm aware you're on the bus and I see you and I hear you."
CC	"I usually stop my bus and get away from the person doing it."
DD	"In the incidence of bullying, I let them know that you will be written up, you will be turned in to the school and the consequences."
EE	"If I feel like that I have a problem with it, I'm going to talk to a student, try to find out what's the problem, what's going on, try to talk to both students. If I feel like I have a problem then I will report it to the school."
GG	"I'll tell [students] I've gone down that road that you're trying now."
HH	"If you don't tell them how to the act in the beginning you're in trouble."
JJ	"I tell them, 'You don't let nobody take you out of your character. You don't let nobody tell you what you can or cannot do.' "
KK	"I think the bus that I drive, like I say, I talk to them. I tell them I'm not going to have it. That's enough."
LL	"Getting to know students. Addressing behaviors before they happen."
NN	"If I saw bullying, I would report it to the school."
OO	"To talk to the students hopefully before it takes place."

Theme 6 (Interview Question 6): Drivers have a minimal awareness and understanding of current bullying policies. The variety of responses received from the drivers (see Table 7) reveal that 41% of the drivers had no awareness of current bullying policy due to a lack of training. Participant EE stated, "Again, we ... I understand the

question, but we just ... We have no meetings about bullying. Period. We never have." Drivers who received training highlighted the requirement to stop the bus, report bullying behavior to administrators, intervene immediately, and enforce the zero tolerance policy direction.

Table 7

School Bus Drivers' Short Responses: Question 6 – Tell me what you understand about the current bullying policy as it relates to bus drivers.

Participant	Response
AA	"The most we can do is try and mediate between the students and kind of watch what's going on and then if it's not getting any better on the bus then take it to the administration and let them take it from there but still keep an eye on things."
BB	"My immediate strategy is to pull the bus over. I need to intervene in something that's taking place and where I can safely stop the bus."
CC	"Zero tolerance."
DD	"Well, the bullying policy is that there's just zero tolerance for bullying. That's about the basic. It's just zero tolerance."
EE	"We have no meetings about bullying. Period. We never have."
GG	"Well we're supposed to always write them up and report it."
HH	"One, I don't know because no one's ever brought that up."
JJ	"If you find it, you write it up, and you report it."
KK	"I have no idea. With the other district, they talked about this all the time."
LL	"Now, you turning around and standing up and saying stop don't always mean they're going to stop."
NN	"The policy I would say is to report it. To report it to your superiors, your supervisor, and see the principal, supervisor."
OO	"There might be a policy there but it's not been my… it's not something that just out there."

Theme 7 (Interview Question 7): Drivers experience support from administrators. The overwhelming consensus among drivers (75%) is that school administrators do follow-up on reports of bullying behavior. For example, Participant NN stated,

> Oh yeah. Right here for sure. Especially at this school. To be honest I was, not to mention no names, not the original name, but the previous school you would

report stuff about kids hitting other kids, whatever, and they would just go like okay.

Three drivers did not feel supported. One in particular, participant LL, stated in regard to being cussed out by a student, “No, they would just tell you to write them up and that’s it. Usually when something like that happens they don’t do much about it.”

Table 8

School Bus Drivers' Short Responses: Question 7 – Tell me how you are supported by local administrators to report bullying.

Participant	Response
AA	"The principal and I we do our very best to go ahead and get things where it doesn't escalate. It's taken care of pretty quickly. For the most part, it has worked. I myself do not have a lot of bullying issues on my school bus."
BB	"I believe that the administrators here are willing to intervene at the level that they can, whether they decide to remove the child from the bus under my recommendation."
CC	"Really good. I've talked to a couple principals and they're right there. They get right on top of it."
DD	"We are supported by the schools. They do make one-on-one contact with the schools...We have a form that we fill out when we write them up, we have referral forms that we write out on the students, which we put all the information on."
EE	"If we do have a problem with bullying, they will support you."
GG	"Well the few incidents that I have reported, they handled it immediately because I am not one to write my kids up for every little bitty thing."
HH	"Yes, our supervisor would support us 100%."
JJ	"They slow because we can write up stuff, they can investigate something, and they might not feel that it's a form of bullying."
KK	"I haven't reported any yet, because like I said, it don't go that far on my bus. It don't go that far."
LL	"No, they would just tell you to write them up and that's it. Usually when something like that happens they don't do much about it."
NN	"Oh yeah. Right here for sure. Especially at this school. To be honest I was, not to mention no names, not the original name, but the previous school you would report stuff about kids hitting other kids, whatever, and they would just go like okay."
OO	"Yes. I had issues on the bus, not so much of bullying, but different issues, so I can go to the administrators."

Theme 8 (Interview Question 8): Lack of communication between the students' support groups is a challenge. A communication gap between both drivers and parents, as

well as drivers and school staff, was mentioned by 58% of drivers (Table 9). One driver stated:

> I think sometimes with some of the districts, not all of them, I think communication, the communication within the different departments and everything, because a majority of the bullying starts from the classroom and ends up in the bus or out in the recess area and ends up in the bus. Sometimes the communication's lack thereof. I think if a school provides a uniformed way of doing things, like the training and everything like that, then it shouldn't be no problem with doing the same thing for the kids on board, because you're the driver. You have to take control just like a teacher has to take control of their classroom, you have to take control of your bus.

There were four bus drivers who were concerned about parental involvement in terms of them not holding children accountable. In the words of one driver, "Dealing with the parents. There are a lot of parents that condone what their kids do." The remaining drivers responded on the number of student passengers, the size of the students, and the kinds of students in their current school district as being a challenge.

Table 9

School Bus Drivers' Short Responses: Question 8 – What do you believe is your greatest challenge when dealing with bullying?

Participant	Response
AA	"Parents, not much else."
BB	"Protecting them from exposure to someone else being bullied, protecting the child that is being bullied."
CC	"Some of them [students] just think they are beyond ... They can do what they want and don't have to follow and don't listen."
DD	"I think the greatest challenge is with some kids don't have the, I guess parents don't explain to them the importance of being respectful to adults and that kid might go off on another kid and might as well go off on you too."
EE	"It went on for a while, but they did talk to the kids, talk to the kids' parents, and after a while it stopped."
GG	"He kind of wanted to use his size to bully."
HH	"Is basically that everybody's equal and no one is to get in anybody's personal space and don't touch anybody."
JJ	"My challenge is trying to get these kids to get along. We don't know what issues these kids have in their life when they go home."
KK	"Well, I guess when I first started with this district, I not knowing the kids and these kids, they was out of control, really out of control and it was the kids I had on the same bus and it was hard for me."
LL	"There are a lot of parents that condone what their kids do."
NN	"First of all I think it would be difficult to detect it [bullying], because like I said, we're driving and you have 50, 60 kids in your bus."
OO	"Sometimes it starts at home and then it comes into the bus, because early in the morning, we're the first ones to see them. A child may walk up in the bus and be like really down and out and you don't know what's really going on."

Theme 9 (Interview Question 9): Drivers rely on experience over training. As illustrated in Table 10, 50% of drivers believed that their experience driving and

interacting with students provided them more skill than did structured training. For example, participant AA stated:

> Like you're working with so many different personalities and you have to know your kids' personality and you got to, you have to kind of use whatever personality you're working with at that point, that's how you got [students who bully] to use [the skills] you've learned to get that child to respond to you.

Six remaining drivers gave a myriad of comments to include that learned strategies were useful, helping kids feel welcome, helped them identify bullying behavior and listen to student concerns. Additionally, there was a driver who did not witness bullying on his bus.

Table 10

School Bus Drivers' Short Responses: Question 9 – Have learned strategies been useful when addressing bullying on the school bus?

Participant	Response
AA	"Like you're working with so many different personalities and you have to know your kids' personality and you got to, you have to kind of use whatever personality you're working with at that point, that's how you got [students who bully] to use that [the skills] you've learned to get that child to respond to you."
BB	"Yes, learned strategies are useful. It keeps me aware as to what my options are, of what the intervention should be."
CC	"I've been doing this for a long time so I know what to look for when it comes to students."
DD	"Yeah, it depends. Just keeping a cool head and trying to ... I'll tell you this, I think the strategies would be sometimes you have to provide your own strategy as you go, because you have to learn each kid individually and know what they respond to."
EE	"They never discussed it with us. Being a bus driver, we automatically should know what to look for."
GG	"Again, it all about helping the kids feel welcome when they come on to the bus."
HH	"You pick up things here and there but sometimes you have to use your best judgement."
JJ	"It has taught me to listen and understand the children."
KK	"I would say yes, district. I would say yes, age, and yeah. Most of the kids that do the bullying are the kids from the housing projects."
LL	"Knowing what behavior to look for. Keeping students safe."
NN	"Honestly, I have not detect any bullying on the bus."
OO	"Talking with the children and addressing behaviors on the bus. Also, sometimes reporting it."

Theme 10 (Interview Question 10): Drivers experience threats and intimidation. As shown in Table 11, 50% of the drivers stated that they had not been bullied or intimidated; however, half of the drivers did recall instances of student intimidation. Participant CC stated:

> It was scary and I put the child on the other side to where I could see him. He said he was going to stab me. I just had to ... I watched what ... I put him on the other side of the aisle where I could see him all the time and constantly watched him get on or off.

Participant LL stated:

> He got up to get off the bus. I'm watching him walk up to the front of the bus so that I can stop him. I'm like, no, you don't live over here. As he's walking to the front of the bus he's looking at me. It was like it was slow motion. The whole thing was like slow motion. He came to the front of the bus, stopped, and looked at me. He punched me in my face and got off the bus.

Table 11

School Bus Drivers' Short Responses: Question 10 – Have you ever felt bullied or intimated on the bus?

Participant	Response
AA	"Well, let me see. What's this month? January, back in October I actually had a student that threatened me."
BB	"Yes, because there's always children that think they can out do the driver. Yes, there are children that come with their intentions to threaten that you're going to lose your job or they're going to tell their parents on you."
CC	"It was scary and I put the child on the other side to where I could see him. He said he was going to stab me."
DD	"No, not really. Not intimidated or bullied."
EE	"No, I don't have too many problems. Like I say, I've been blessed these years."
GG	"Oh yes, I've been threatened. There are some kids, they're going to test you."
HH	"No, I would say they try to intimidate you."
JJ	"When you get a child to tell you ...We run the first bus driver off, we ran the second bus driver off, and we going to run you off. They broke me for a minute but what I realized through my living, you can't run me."
KK	"No, no."
LL	"I have been."
NN	"Oh no."
OO	"No. No. I get along with the kids really well."

Theme 11 (Interview Question 11): Age and socioeconomic factors do affect bullying behaviors. Table 12 reveals that the consensus among drivers, 91%, was that the age and socioeconomic background of the student were determining factors in the likelihood that a bullying incident would occur. The younger students were believed to be easier to manage as opposed the school students, who were more likely to exhibit bullying behavior. Participant BB stated:

> More prevalent as they get older, because they feel they have the leeway to do and think and behave the way they choose to. They're in high school or they're older. The most control of teaching happens when they're in elementary, because by the time they're out of elementary, they're already, they have that information and now they're just trying to see how to use it to their advantage.

Several drivers (58%) believed that students who belonged to an economically deprived neighborhood or school district were more likely to exhibit bullying behavior. One driver put it, "Most of the kids that do the bullying are the kids from the housing projects. I would say yes, district. I would say yes, age." One outlier stated that there were no differentiating factors.

Table 12

School Bus Drivers' Short Responses: Question 11 – Have you noticed if bullying strategies are more effective based on the student's age, school district or other factors?

Participant	Response
AA	"Age and other factors, not necessarily the district."
BB	"I think elementary is the age that you have the most opportunity to make the difference."
CC	"The older ones I get right in their face."
DD	"Yeah, I don't know. Maybe it crosses social and economic lines where maybe a bully might not have the best home environment."
EE	"Probably age and the school district."
GG	"I drive middle school and high school. I've had bullying in middle school and of course I handle them a little bit different because I will get in their faces."
HH	"I would say school district. Because this is my third district that I've worked at and the one that I worked in [previously with] underprivileged kids, basically, that was a little worse down there."
JJ	"I have noticed. My high school zone is a lot different than my middle school, depending on what area it comes from, and how they was raised."
KK	"Most of the kids that do the bullying are the kids from the housing projects. I would say yes, district. I would say yes, age."
LL	"Now, the elementary kids, you can kind of control them a little better, of course, because they're smaller and they are a little bit more impressionable."
NN	"Yeah. This school district the kids aren't as wild."
OO	"They were like fifth grade, sixth grade, seventh grade, the more the bullying. Kinder through first, second, and third, it's not too much"

Theme 12 (Interview Question 12): Bullying is a response to a negative home environment. As shown in Table 13, the drivers (58%) believed that bullies engaged in bullying behavior as result of a negative home environment and need for attention. Participant NN stated, "I don't know that could be a lot things, maybe he's going through tough times at home, or he's raised depending a lot of things." Another participant, EE,

said, “Well, first of all, it starts in the home. Either the child having a problem at home or acting off because he’s not getting attention at home or something.” Other participants responded that their perception was not impacted and they didn’t know what factors contributed to students exhibiting bullying behavior on the school bus.

Table 13

School Bus Drivers' Short Responses: Question 12 – Tell me how your experience witnessing bullying behavior has impacted your perception of bullies.

Participant	Response
AA	"I think bullies do it for the attention that they're not getting from somewhere else, I honestly do...I think they see a lot of it at home, not all of it but I think they do see a lot of it at home."
BB	"It's not just that the bully is a rough person that we should just, how can I get rid of them from my bus or from my presence, but what it is that they're looking for? What is it that they need? How to direct them to get what they're looking for. "
CC	"I don't know. I really don't know."
DD	"Yeah, I don't know. Maybe it crosses social and economic lines where maybe a bully might not have the best home environment or maybe a kid is having ... Someone's doing that to him at home."
EE	"Well, first of all, it starts in the home. Either the child having a problem at home or acting off because he's not getting attention at home or something."
GG	"First of all I don't like bullies. I was one of the quieter ones in school."
HH	"My perception of bullying is somebody who's going to be sitting in a seat and trying to pick on another student any chance they can get, if that's not letting them sit in the seat, not letting them go by them."
JJ	"It hasn't changed me."
KK	"To me, bullies are kids. Kids. Like I say, the ones that's on my bus comes from those places."
LL	"They need help. The parents need help. It should start at home."
NN	"I don't know that could be a lot things, maybe he's going through tough times at home, or he's raised depending a lot of things."
OO	"I believe that somewhere along the line either they're having something bad at home or something's not going right, or maybe they're insecure of themselves."

Theme 13 (Interview Question 13): Drivers' behavior influences students' behaviors. Table 14 reveals that the drivers (100%) overwhelmingly understood their positive behavior influenced positive student behavior.

Table 14

School Bus Drivers' Short Responses: Question 13 – Tell me what you understand about your role modeling as it relates to addressing bullying on the school bus.

Participant	Response
AA	"I've always been taught that kids model what they see. If I can impact one child's life by my actions, if I can impact a child's life positively by my actions then I'm doing my job."
BB	"Everything. What I was speaking of earlier about relationships, I need to speak to children that I'm expecting when they get on that they're speaking in a respectful tone, that they are aware there are other people present."
CC	"I've seen bus drivers try and bully the kids into doing this and that. You can't do that. Doesn't work. You have to treat them with respect if you want to be treated with respect."
DD	"There again, it lets them know that you might tell somebody if they act up, that they know that I know. That really helps the situation on the bus as well."
EE	"I think it does. It does because if I get on ... If I go to work angry or whatever, taking it out on the kids, then I might have problems with kids, too."
GG	"For me it just depends on the child and the level that that child is on because more than likely even a bully, trust me they're going through something at home and they're taking their frustrations out at school, on the bus. You know what I'm saying?"
HH	"I think it's very important"
JJ	"I go back, you never know what they go through. They just want somebody to listen. That's why I never change schools."
KK	"What I want from these kids is to have respect for one another, where I drop these kids off at school."
LL	"If you appear to them to be ghetto or not professional they think of you as on their level so they could say or do whatever they want to do."
NN	"I think it's important. I think that if you treat them kids with respect, and just treat them like they wanted to be treated, you know what I'm saying?"
OO	"They need to set a role model for these children. Just like I tell them, if you allow the kids not to eat, then don't eat in front of them. If you say don't drink, don't drink in front of them."

Participant OO stated:

> They need to set a role model for these children. Just like I tell them, if you allow the kids not to eat, then don't eat in front of them. If you say don't drink, don't drink in front of them.

Another driver, participant BB, responded:

> Everything. What I was speaking of earlier about relationships, I need to speak to children that I'm expecting when they get on that they're speaking in a respectful tone, that they are aware there are other people present.

Theme 14 (Interview Question 14): Drivers' community involvement establishes positive relationships with students. As shown in Table 15, the majority of drivers (83%) participated in their community at various events. Participant GG stated:

> Oh, it's great. In fact the Baptist church I attend are very active within the school district. They do a lot of after school programs working with kids. I am a member of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church. They do a lot of after school programs working with kids. We have a big kid's program there.

Another bus driver, participant JJ, explained her inability to participate:

> I don't have too much involvement because I work seven days a week and my only involvement is that I try with my kids only on my bus is to do one-in-one when I hear something that's going on. Of course my working in the community, I work seven days a week, and I will work at any job and I'm just trying to make ends meet. I try to deal with my kids on another level.

Table 15

School Bus Drivers' Short Responses: Question 14 – Tell me about your community involvement in the school district where you work as a bus driver.

Participant	Response
AA	"Whenever they are having the day, whatever, their education day, I'll go out and help on those days."
BB	"I happen to drive a bus in the area that I live, that I also attend church, that I am part of our neighborhood association meetings."
CC	"I volunteer for the softball. I'm a secretary for the league."
DD	"As community involvement, I guess we do a lot of interacting with the kids and going to bring them to soccer games and basketball games."
EE	"No, I need to. To be honest, no, because I'm always busy."
GG	"Oh it's great. In fact the Baptist church I attend are very active within the school district. They do a lot of after school programs working with kids."
HH	"I volunteer at Southwest Indian Ministries."
JJ	"I don't have too much involvement because I work 7 days a week and my only involvement is that I try with my kids only on my bus is to do one-in-one when I hear something that's going on."
KK	"I guess, I mean you try to help out as much as you can to help the kids in the school."
LL	"I was working, I was in PTA and Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts."
NN	"I've coached my son's teams."
OO	"In the community, I work with the Salvation Army when I get a chance."

Research Quality: Issues of Trustworthiness, Reliability, and Validity

In qualitative research, rigorous scholarship is essential (Padgett, 1998). Validity in qualitative research is the process of ensuring the accuracy of the results by implementing strategies (Creswell, 2008; Yin, 2009). In this qualitative study, trustworthiness, triangulation, peer review, and member checking were used to ensure reliability. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness is safeguarded when

the findings closely reflect the themes and meanings as explained by the study participants. Some threats to trustworthiness are the participants' reactions or biases relating to the topic. Methodological triangulation was used to protect the legitimacy of the study. Triangulation was achieved through the following methods: (a) the literature review, (b) field notes, and (c) interviews. Pyrczak (2008) stated that validating involved the checking of findings against several sources. Member checking was used to validate themes and ensure credibility (Creswell, 2008; Yin, 2009). I emailed a copy of the transcription to each subject for their review and transcription validation. The participants verified the transcripts for accuracy and responded via e-mail and electronic text messaging; all transcripts were favorably reviewed with no changes or additions requested. Reliability in a qualitative study is determined by research quality and depends on participant consistency with regard to interview question responses (Golafshani, 2003). Reliability was increased by recording all interviews and documenting all procedures of the study.

Summary

The accounts of the 12 school bus drivers' lived experiences of bullying behavior on school buses were presented in Chapter 4. Data analysis from the Demographics Information Form (Appendix B) and open-ended Interview Questions (Appendix C) addressed both the main research question as well as the three research subquestions. An exhaustive review of the participants' responses yielded 14 themes. The following themes emerged:

1. Training or lack thereof affects bus drivers' ability to define bullying.

2. Emphasis is placed on identifying and monitoring bullying behaviors.
3. Reporting bullying behaviors to administrators is required.
4. Student engagement contributes to a safe environment on the bus.
5. Setting expectations and encouragement are useful interventions to address bullying.
6. Drivers have a minimal awareness and understanding of current bullying policies.
7. Drivers experience support from administrators.
8. Lack of communication between the students' support groups is a challenge.
9. Drivers rely on experience over training.
10. Drivers experience threats and intimidation.
11. Age and socioeconomic factors do affect bullying behaviors
12. Bullying is a response to a negative home environment.
13. Drivers' behavior influences students' behaviors.
14. Drivers' community involvement establishes positive relationships with students.

The bus drivers in this study believed that not only bullying training, but also relationship building, parent and school administrator involvement, and understanding of policy is imperative to address bullying behaviors. Chapter 5 concludes the study with an analysis of the findings, interpretations based upon both the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and contributions to the literature. The limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and positive social change implications are also addressed.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Introduction

School districts across the United States have implemented policies and adopted training programs to prevent bullying. Research, however, has shown that community stakeholders, including parents and child protective services, must better address bullying (Finkelhor & Jenkins-Tucker, 2015). As an extension of the educational environment, the U.S. school bus environment and related policies and practices should be as consistently adhered to as policies that are in place in a physical school itself to minimize school bus bullying and to maintain safe environment on the school bus. Schools are required to foster a safe educational environment that is free of peer intimidation, harassment, and physical and emotional abuse, as guided by a discipline plan that extends to the environment (Welch & Payne, 2012). A gap in research exists on whether antibullying policies related to school bus violence are communicated to drivers in training programs; whether such policies are being consistently or inconsistently adhered to; and finally, if such policies are applied in practice by drivers (Allen et al., 2003; deLara, 2008).

This phenomenological case study was designed to examine the lived experience of bullying behavior on school buses through the combined lens of 12 school bus drivers who were interviewed to ascertain their perceptions of antibullying training programs, policies, and procedures developed for school bus drivers. The phenomenological approach supported the development of questions specifically designed to understand the lived experiences of bus drivers. The results of the study showed that bus drivers believed they lacked adequate training to identify and to address bullying behaviors and that

relationship building was essential in monitoring students' behaviors. The research findings can be used by administrators to enhance policies and their implementations to improve bus drivers' abilities to respond to school bus violence in the form of bullying of student riders. In this chapter, I provide an overview of the study, analysis of findings to include interpretations of the theoretical framework from the literature. Additionally, the chapter provides the limitations of the study, future research recommendations, social change implications, and conclusions.

Overview of the Study

Research has suggested that school bus drivers should be included in the discussion on developing policy and procedures to address bullying on the school bus. Examining the lived experience of 12 bus drivers led to a deeper understanding of their school's antibullying policy viewpoints and the efficacy of training they have experienced. The study was guided by Bronfenbrenner's conceptual model of environmental and social systems and Bandura's theoretical framework of role modeling. The results showed whether bus drivers are sufficiently included in antibullying policy discussions. The findings from the main research questions and three subquestions are discussed within Bronfenbrenner's (1979) conceptual framework of social ecological theory and the theoretical framework of Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. A review of current driver policies and development of strategies could improve outcomes on a local and national level.

Analysis of Findings

Main Research Question

The main research question was: "In what ways do school bus drivers perceive that their school's antibullying training and policy enables or precludes their ability to function as supported, prepared, and involved positive role models for student passengers?" I answered this main research question using several subquestions that were explored through in-depth interviews with 12 bus drivers:

1. What emerges from the data that implies an internal process which bus experience that allows for and contributes to, or prohibits and impedes a sense of support and involvement in the antibullying training programs?
2. What internal process emerges from the data that allows bus drivers to believe whether their involvement in policy development is represented in the training curriculum?
3. What emerges from the data that allows bus drivers to confirm or disconfirm their thoughts about the grade levels, gender, and ages of students involved in school bus violence in the form of bullying?

Bandura's (1977) social learning theoretical framework explains how bullying is a learned behavior and manifests within school bus environments. The data from this dissertation study suggests there is a gap concerning the school bus drivers' ability to model the antibullying behavior and practices of school staff operating within the school (administrators, teachers, and staff). The information that people receive through modeled behavior serves as a guide for understanding what behavior is desirable and

acceptable in society (Bandura, 1977). Additionally, people pay attention to and retain the behavioral examples that they perceive as motivating. The school bus drivers regarded their experience as being a dominant determinant in their success over received training; the lack of opportunity to participate in training and policy development explains this phenomenon.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social ecological systems model was used to conceptualize this study and supports this study's findings. The application of Bronfenbrenner's social ecological theory to the issue of bullying in a school bus environment bullying in this study revealed that positive interaction with the school bus driver affected students' behavior and created a safer environment on the bus. Bus drivers believed increase interactions with students, parents and school administrators would help minimize bullying on the school buses. Additionally, drivers argued that consistent reports from school staff and parents regarding specific student issues would increase the awareness necessary to provide effective oversight and safety. While Bandura's social learning theory provided a way to explore the *how* of the actual behaviors of students and the responses of school bus drivers, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) framework provided information on the *what* of the systemic issues by applying the five systems of the results of the study. Bronfenbrenner (1979) separated an individual's environment into five systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The relationships and interactions within these systems can have a negative or positive effect on a person's environment.

The bus drivers in this study stated that building a rapport with students is essential to creating an environment conducive to safety and increased likelihood that bullying behavior would be reported by students while decreasing the possibility of negative behavior. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) classifications, school bus drivers are included in the students' microsystem. Both the bus driver and the students are contributors to the creation and development of the environment on the bus. Setting student behavior expectations early in the school year were was perceived by bus drivers to be essential in establishing their credibility.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) mesosystem consists of interactions and connections between two or more systems within the lives of the parents, child, and family. These connections have a direct effect on the student, which is consistent with the thoughts of the bus drivers. The drivers believed that negative parent behavior often undermined their authority over students and was the reason that children bully others. Additionally, bus drivers found that the direct interaction with other microsystems in the school such as administrators, teachers, and students influenced the student's behavior or mood before the driver transporting them home. For example, one bus driver believed that if a student had a bad experience with a peer that this would continue on the bus or be projected on to another student on the bus.

The third system is the exosystem. In the case of this study, the exosystem includes elements of the environment that have a direct influence on the student. Although the student is not directly involved in the exosystem, they still feel the force, whether positive or negative. For example, a parent who spends an excessive amount of

hours at work that prevents parent involvement is a member of the exosystem whose actions can impact their children-students (1979). The exosystem aligns with the bus drivers' thoughts that communication from school staff and parents concerning the background on specific student issues would increase the awareness necessary to provide appropriate oversight and decrease bullying behaviors on the bus (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Additionally, the environment created on the bus due to the lack of antibullying training, and multitasking necessary to safely transport as many as 60 students while maintaining positive oversight, affects the behaviors as well as the perceived safety of the students. For example, if the student does not feel safe on the bus because of lack of supervision, that student may bully as a way to gain control or to protect oneself.

The fourth element of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) system is the macrosystem: the student's values, morals, and beliefs based on their personal experiences. Macrosystems can include a student's exposure to religion, culture, identified gender roles, and socioeconomic status. In this study, the bus drivers stated that there were higher rates of bullying in students who were from a low socioeconomic status.

Bronfenbrenner's fifth system is the chronosystem which includes environmental events such as divorce, death, natural disasters, or other life-changing events that can influence a student's life. Many of the bus drivers shared the opinion that building relationships and being involved in the community allowed them to have a window into what is going on with the student outside of the bus environment. The bus drivers felt that this awareness allowed them to prepare for significant changes or life events that could affect the student's behavior on the bus. Bus drivers discussed the importance of

recognizing that the bus is the first interaction a child has after leaving home and the first place for students to express their anger related to a negative home environment. The bus is also the first place to express anger or frustration after experiencing a stressful day at school. deLara (2008) found that students were more afraid of other student passengers while to and from school on the bus.

Bandura (1977) believed that people learn from their experiences and observations; this is supported by the bus drivers' responses when sharing their interactions with the students to help maintain a safe environment. The drivers believed that their personal and professional experiences were more valuable to prevent bullying behavior than provided structured trainings (Bandura, 1977). The school bus drivers overwhelmingly understood their positive behavior to influence positive student behavior. The majority of drivers participated in the community at various events and saw their community involvement as offering additional opportunities to positively change student behavior. The drivers found that building rapport, establishing a relationship, and positive encouragement were all effective strategies to address bullying.

The need for antibullying training was a consistent concern from the bus drivers. The revealed themes and existing literature suggested the majority of school bus drivers believed they did not possess the requisite amount of training necessary to determine what bullying is or is not. One driver stated it had been about three years since training on bullying took place. The lack of training negatively affected drivers' opportunities to contribute to training curricula and policy (Bradshaw et al., 2011). Several participants described bullying as intimidation, aggravation, harming and threatening violence to

another student. Drivers believed that monitoring student behavior, including body language, voice tone, and escalation, provides adequate oversight of bullying behavior.

Research Subquestion 1

The first subquestion was, "What emerges from the data that implies an internal process which bus drivers' experience that allows for and contributes to, or prohibits and impedes, a sense of support and involvement in the antibullying training programs?"

Stuart-Cassel et al. (2011) found that 32 states required local educational jurisdictions to publish their policies in manuals accessible by students, making this information available to all. The laws usually encourage continuing education or professional development as an element of their bullying policies (Stuart-Cassel et al, 2011). School personnel must understand the definition of bullying behavior, policies and procedures, roles and responsibilities, and the importance of receiving prevention training (Flores, 2014; Lerman, 2010). The majority of school bus drivers reported a lack of training. According to Kallestad and Olweus (2003), school staff should consistently conduct and improve training that reinforces a cohesive understanding of bullying prevention policies and definitions. The bus drivers stated that most of their training focused on bus safety training and monitoring the students' behaviors on the bus. The prevailing literature is consistent with the findings presented in this study. Bus drivers have identified the need to have training on bullying and strategies to manage these behaviors (Allen et al., 2013; Student Bus Fleet, 2014). In an additional study by Student Bus Fleet (2013), only 3% of drivers reported having participated in school bullying training. The absence of bullying training for school bus drivers eliminated not only the

opportunity for school bus drivers to contribute their knowledge and experience but also prohibited involvement in the development of antibullying training programs.

In contrast to the past research, the majority of the bus drivers participating in this study felt they were supported by school administrators when making a report of bullying. In previous research, drivers believed that their communication was often one-sided, and discipline was minimal or inconsistent (deLara, 2008; School Bus Fleet, 2004). Although at least three bus drivers believed that administrators did not follow through with the reports and did not address the student, the results mostly contradict previous thinking on of bus drivers regarding administrators. However, only one of the bus drivers reported being involved in the decision-making process to determine what discipline was appropriate for the student. Many bus drivers said that their involvement ended once the bullying was reported to administrators.

According to Sadlier (2011) the ability of schools to create a bullying-free and secure atmosphere that is conducive to learning relies upon unimpeded avenues of communication between students and staff. Although administrators supported the bus drivers, many of them believed that there is a communication gap between the departments. These findings further support the lack of opportunity for school bus drivers to lend their voice to the development of antibullying policies as well as antibullying training. The majority of bus drivers did not know the current bullying policy, other than reporting bullying to the administrators. These are similar to the findings found in previous research (Allen et al., 2003; deLara, 2008). Because bus drivers were not provided information or trained on the current antibullying policies, bus drivers did not

have the opportunity to indicate whether or not the interventions identified were effective or feasible to implement while trying to maintain the safety of the approximately 60 students.

The bus drivers of the study did not discuss being trained on how to maintain their own personal safety when with students, how to manage their own frustration, or where to go for support when being bullied by students or parents. Bus drivers are victims of bullying when transporting students (deLara, 2008; Evans, 2014). They are often bullied by students, parents, and legal guardians. Evans (2014) found that bus drivers often did not report these incidents out of fear of retaliation or losing their jobs for failure to manage student behaviors. In this study, more than half of the bus drivers felt intimidated or threatened by students on the bus. These behaviors included yelling, threatening, staring, posturing, physical aggression, and physical assault. One bus driver reported being punched in the face by a student as he exited the bus.

In contrast to the abovementioned research, these bus drivers all reported the incidents to administration. After reviewing the incidents of bus driver bullying, it was evident that the bus drivers were not trained on how to protect themselves and there was a fear of being harmed while performing their job duties. Bus driver defensive and personal safety training appear to be insufficient in antibullying training curricula and policy.

Research Subquestion 2

The second subquestion was, “What internal process emerges from the data that allows bus drivers to believe whether or not their involvement in policy development is represented in the training curriculum?”

Lack of training was a prominent theme among the bus drivers. A small number of bus drivers had attended training related to bullying. These bus drivers reported that they were trained how to identify bullying behaviors and to monitor bullying behaviors. The bus drivers agreed that identifying body language such as voice tone escalation and posturing were helpful in addressing bullying behaviors before they escalated. Drivers commonly believed that identifying bullying behavior was predicated on properly monitoring students' changes in body language and voice tone. However, half of the bus drivers felt that their personal knowledge and experiences would be more effective than what was shared in the training. This data suggests that many of the bus drivers' used interventions and approaches to bullying which were not reflected in training curriculums.

Drivers reported that it was challenging to monitor students' behaviors while driving and maintaining road safety. Although the bus drivers believed that having a monitor on the bus would assist in maintaining a safer bus environment and decrease bullying and unsafe behaviors, no drivers reported having a monitor on his or her bus. Roher (2012) reported bus monitors can provide additional support and presence of authority that would allow bus drivers to focus on the safety of the road. The bus drivers responded that the aids and monitors were used to assist bus drivers that transported students with identified disabilities. Additionally, a small number of drivers reported having technology on the bus and saw this as a deterrent to bullying behaviors. Additionally, the drivers with technology believed that it assisted with building rapport and occupying students. Krieger (2010) also found similar results when combining video

monitoring with other prevention strategies. One bus driver reported turning on music from the radio on the bus as a way to calm students on their rides to and from school. These tools were only provided with a small number of drivers many of the bus drivers. Therefore, many of the bus drivers believed that their concerns and need for assistance to maintain safety were being overlooked and not addressed by the administrators or policies.

Research Subquestion 3

The third subquestion was, "What emerges from the data that allows bus drivers to confirm or disconfirm their thoughts about the grade levels, gender, and ages of students involved in school bus violence in the form of bullying?"

The consensus of the bus drivers was that older students were more challenging than the younger students. The bus drivers also felt bullying incidents were more prevalent among the older students, particularly middle schoolers. This finding is consistent with the research that showed that 28 % of middle and high school students were verbally or physically abused by other students between 2010 and 2011 (NCES, 2011). Some of the bus drivers also noted that they observed bullying behaviors in students who lived in the inner city while a small number reported that they have observed bullying in the suburbs and rural areas. The bus drivers believed that the age of the student was a determining factor in the likelihood that a bullying incident would occur. The bus drivers considered younger students easier to manage than high school students. Older students were considered prone to exhibit bullying behavior. Although, the bus drivers did not note any gender differences in the behaviors associated with

bullying; all incidents that involved physical, aggressive incidents described by the bus drivers involved male students. The bus drivers shared similar perceptions of how grade level, gender, and ages affect the children who bullies. Bus drivers also agreed on other assertions about students who bully others.

According to the research, children often form their moral and reasoning perception based on what is modeled and learned from the home (Pettit & Bates, 1989; Bandura, 1977). The majority of the bus drivers believed that bullies were bullying others because a need not being met at home or because of a negative home environment or influence. Several of the bus drivers stated that bullies were seeking attention that they did not receive at home or were responding to poor parenting or a negative home environment. In their observations and interactions with bullies, they believed that these students had parents that were less involved or modeled poor behaviors. Teachers had a similar point of view as it related to school violence. Teachers indicated that environment, absence of community and parent engagement in schools, as well as an inadequate amount of administrative support were believed to be related to school violence (Espelage & Swearer, 2011). Consequently, drivers felt that setting student behavior expectations by all responsible parties early in the school year was necessary to providing the bus drivers with credibility while increasing the likelihood that students of all ages would respect driver authority.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of the study was that the participants in the study were recruited from the same school bus drivers group on Facebook which may have limited the

generalizability of the results. Second, this phenomenological inquiry collected depth perceptions of lived experiences of 12 school bus drivers from a Facebook group claiming approximately 11,000 members. The limited perspective of the issues and challenges raised regarding school bus drivers makes this limitation worthy of note. Third, the drivers were asked to recall their past lived experiences, which could have resulted in unintended fabrication of some details. Fourth, the study focused on school bus drivers only. A study involving both administrators and parents could provide greater depth and insight on bullying policies, procedures, and training curricula. Fifth, this analysis was subjected to researcher interpretation. I controlled my bias and judgments so participant responses were not led but revealed.

Recommendations

School bus drivers often witness violence on school buses, yet their voices in public policy making are often silent. This phenomenological case study examined the lived experience of bullying behavior on school buses through the lens of school bus drivers and their perceptions of antibullying training programs, policies, and procedures developed for school bus drivers. The guiding research question addressed the ways that bus drivers perceive that their school's antibullying training and policy enables or precludes their ability to function as supported, prepared, and involved role models for student passengers. The following recommendations emerged from the interviews:

- Future research should examine school bus driver perceptions within a specific state. The population of this study was representative of five different states. A

state by state study could potentially provide valuable information to respective school administrators.

- Future research should examine the effects of student engagement and positive encouragement (words) from driver to student as it relates to bullying. Data provided by the participants of this study would indicate that positive driver comments upon student entrance to the bus environment helps build rapport and reduces bullying behavior.
- Future research should examine student behavior outcomes when bullying policy encourages rather than limits or restricts communication between bus drivers and parents. The results of this study suggest that enhanced communication might lead to better driver awareness and supervision.
- Future research should explore the effectiveness of audio and video monitoring technology on school buses as it relates to antibullying policy. This study suggests that school buses with technology might have diminished incidents of bullying behavior.
- School administrators should move swiftly to address the perceived lack of training by school bus drivers by implementing a fleet-wide bullying prevention training time-out, documented semiannually thereafter.
- Training curricula should be developed with significant driver input before implementation. The participant drivers of this study identify their level of experience as a determining factor in the effectiveness of their ability to identify and subvert bullying behavior. The acquisition of driver best practices should be

moved to a routine business process. Drivers are often the first and last person within the school system to interact with the student; their experiences and feedback are invaluable.

- Methods of greater communication between drivers, parents and administrators should be implemented. Study results suggest that if the bus driver is allowed to contact parents, assign seats, dismiss rows one by one—all ways of addressing the behaviors of bullies—then the bus driver feels empowered, and the students' poor behaviors decrease.
- Bus monitors provide an additional presence of authority and supervision on the school bus and allow bus drivers to focus mainly on safely driving the bus. Bus monitors are primarily used on buses transporting special education students.
- Driver health and safety must be provided, along with targeted training and resources, to address the stress associated with being the victim of intimidation and student aggression while multitasking the safe transportation of passengers.
- Training curricula should be further developed to include computer-based learning, simulation and role play exercises, and peer-driven learning. Drivers do not now possess the learning options which are complementary to the seriousness of the issue and time constraints of their duties. Future research in these training modalities specifically for school bus drivers is recommended.

Positive Social Change Implications

A review of the literature suggested that, although significant research has been conducted on students verbally and physically abusing one another in school, few studies

have focused on the bullying of students and drivers that occur on school buses (Doll et al., 2003). The time that students spend on a school bus accounts for an essentially unsupervised part of the day, which increases the risk of bullying behaviors. According to Raskauskas (2005), approximately two bullying incidents take place per day on a school bus ride. Studying bus drivers' lived experiences provides a basis for evaluating the bus drivers' perceptions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and responses (Bandura, 1977) to the environment. This study addressed the need for additional training for school bus drivers on the strategies for effectively handling bullying on school buses and provided uniquely relevant information on school bus bullying and school antibullying policies. With established input and voices integrating components of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Bandura (1977), bus drivers could be afforded opportunities to have substantial input into training curricula.

Although the literature review documented the increase of bullying on school buses, only limited research has addressed the perceptions of school bus drivers on bullying. This phenomenological case study of 12 school bus drivers used Bandura's theory of social learning within the conceptual framework of Bronfenbrenner's model of social ecological systems to examine the lived experience of bus drivers.

This phenomenological qualitative research on the lived experiences of bus drivers illustrates the variety of data and insight that might be obtained using this methodology with other populations. In light of bus drivers' lived experience, existing policies and programs should be adjusted as outlined above. Such changes could lower the risk of a student moving into the bullying or victim role.

A significant amount of research had addressed school antibullying program efficacy (Bowllan, 2011). This research shows that the myriad of antibullying prevention programs has not diminished the prevalence of bullying in the school system and on school buses. This study confirms that bus drivers are insufficiently included in antibullying policy discussions. These findings provide evidence of the urgent need for a review of current driver policies and the development of strategies that could improve outcomes on a local and national level.

Results revealed the need to train bus drivers on unified criteria for identifying and managing bullying behavior on the bus. Moreover, bus drivers must understand the importance of uniform enforcement of their school's policy on bullying and the responsibility of the school to properly training bus drivers on these policies. The findings in this study give administrators a firsthand account of the bus drivers' difficulty in managing bullying behaviors while safely driving the bus. In budget-tight environments, this data can open the discussion of employing monitors or installing additional tools to ensure further ensure each child arrives home safely at the end of the school day.

This study's theory and conceptual framework support the importance of bus drivers developing relationships with students, administrators and parents. Bus drivers should be involved with schools' open houses or similar events that provide an opportunity for relationship building among bus drivers, students, parents, and administrators. Such interactions send a message that all parties are equally accountable for creating and maintaining a healthy bus environment.

Application of the results of this study to school districts in the United States could directly affect positive social change in the lives of approximately 24 million daily student passengers. Publication of findings and follow-up studies by other researchers will provide evidence school administrators, and antibullying policymakers need if they are to remedy existing training deficiencies to enable positive training outcomes and more effective policy implementation.

Conclusion

School bus drivers are charged with creating a safe environment while transporting students to and from school and other locations on a daily basis. This time of supervision allows an opportunity for school bus drivers to observe and intervene in bullying behaviors on the school bus. School bus drivers not only have interactions with the students but also with school administrators and parents. When transporting students, bus drivers are seen as a line of support and are often in the trenches. School bus drivers should be regarded as an extension as a contributor to students' development and growth and an extension of the school. It is evident that school bus drivers can provide relevant information that would contribute to the development of antibullying curricula and policies.

The data from this study should be used to contribute to the field of public policy and to provide policymakers and school administrators with a broader knowledge base during the creation and implementation of school bus driver bullying prevention training and policies. The school bus drivers were inconsistent on defining bullying and policy and procedures. It is evident that bus drivers are receiving insufficient training on how to

address bullying behavior in a manner consistent with federal, state and local school district policies. Additionally, the data should be presented to bus drivers to emphasize and to help them recognize that they have relevant experiences and perceptions of bullying that may change the way they are expected to perform their jobs. Additionally, school bus drivers have an opportunity to be social change agents by understanding that their contribution could not only keep children on their bus safe but also children around the word. Their contributions can also prevent or decrease bullying instances as well as the long-term adverse effects of bullying, high dropout rates, and detrimental psychological symptoms. This study has highlighted a significant gap in research regarding school bus bullying, bullying of school bus drivers, and the lack of communication between everyone responsible for protecting and shaping the development of students.

Future research is necessary to study the effectiveness of alternative training modalities as well as the effects that antibullying training programs have on increasing bus drivers' competency on bullying behaviors and addressing bullying incidents when transporting students. Additional research should address how deficient school bus driver performance affects students' behaviors and feelings of safety in a school bus environment. The data revealed within this study suggests that policy and training curriculum should reflect greater understanding and appreciation of school bus driver challenges.

In this chapter, I presented a study overview, interpretation of the data, and results of my research, findings provided a summary. Additionally, I discussed the limitations of

the study, positive social change implications and provided recommendations. This study provides administrators and policymakers a broader perspective which informs their effort to implement effective antibullying policy and training. It sets out a foundation from which school administrators, policymakers, parents, and bus drivers can unify their joint effort to address the maintaining of a safe environment on school buses.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Document

The Lived Experience of School Bus Drivers: Bullying Prevention on School Buses

Walden University

You are invited to take part in a research study that will explore the experience of school bus drivers as it relates to bullying prevention on the school bus. You were selected as a possible participant because you are an active bus driver driving students and a part of the School Bus Driver Facebook Group. Additionally, you are a professional in the field and your opinion is valuable for the current research. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to take part. Prior to your participation, the signed form (electronically or pen and ink) must be returned to the researcher's email address; timothy.crable@waldenu.edu or mailed to 12983 E. Kalil Drive, Scottsdale AZ 85259.

This study is being conducted by Timothy Crable, a doctoral candidate at Walden University in Public Policy and Administration, specializing in Public Management and Leadership. This study is part of the research requirement for the doctoral degree.

Background Information

This is a case study on your perceptions about antibullying training and policies on school buses. A case study means the researcher interviews a few people to try and gain a better understanding of what their experience has been with a specific event. The study will focus on your perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes regarding the effectiveness of training programs and bullying policy in the context of the school bus.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to attend an interview and to receive one follow-up email to review the transcript of your interview.

- An individual 30-45 minute interview with the researcher will conduct interviews via Skype or face to face if the participant resides in the same location as researcher.
- The interview will be audio recorded. Additionally, handwritten notes will be collected by the researcher.
- Follow-up questions will be asked as necessary.

- The purpose of this email is to give you the opportunity to review the transcripts notes of your interview for accuracy. You will be given the opportunity to provide clarification and interpretation as needed.

Participation is Voluntary

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to participate in the study, you may terminate from the study at any time. If you feel uncomfortable during the study you may stop at any time. You may have the right to not answer any questions that you feel are too personal or otherwise not appropriate or applicable. Your employment will not be affected in any way if you choose not to participate.

Benefits and Risks of Being in the Study

The benefits of participation in this study will be felt by your school, community, and peers. To help address school bus bullying, administrators need to understand what your perceptions of bullying are and of the training curricula. Your input could lead to positive policy changes at the local, state, and national level.

There foreseeable risks include the stress anxiety associated with providing your experience of a past event, the disclosure of your identity, or a conflict of interest. The risk of identity disclosure is mitigated by the precautions outlined in the "Confidentiality" section of this consent form. The conflict of interest risk is minimized as the researcher has no working or personal relationships with either the group administrator or any participant. If at any time or for any reason you feel you do not wish to continue in this research, you may withdraw your participation.

Confidentiality

Your real name will not be used during the recorded interview. It will be controlled by a pseudonym, which is a code name the research will create for you. Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your information for purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study. Please note that, as a student, my work is being closely supervised by Walden University faculty who hear and read about the work I do. Be advised that the researcher is a duty to report criminality such as child or elderly abuse to the proper authorities.

All electronic files associated with this study will be password-protected on the researcher's computer and all other files and data will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home office. The file cabinet will only be accessible to me, the researcher. The files will be destroyed after five years.

Compensation

If you decide to participate in the study, you will not be compensated (paid) for you time.

Contacts and Questions

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me via email: timothy.crable@waldenu.edu or my daytime phone: 434-637-5084. My dissertation chairperson is Dr. Bethe Hagens, and she may be contacted at bethe.hagens@waldenu.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact the research Participant Advocate at Walden University via telephone at 1-800-925-3368 ext. 312-1210 within the USA or irb@waldenu.edu from outside the USA.

Statement of Consent

I acknowledge that I understand the nature of the study and the means by which my identity will be kept confidential. I have been able to ask questions about this study. The researcher has answered all my questions. I voluntarily agree to be in this study.

By signing this form, I have not given up any of my legal rights as a research participant

I understand the above statement and give consent for my information to be used in the study. By replying to this e-mail with the words **I Consent**, I agree to the terms stated above.

I will give you a copy of this consent statement for your records.

Printed Name of Participant

_____ _____

Signature of Administrator Date

_____

Printed Name of Researcher

_____ _____

Signature of Researcher Date

Appendix B: Demographics Information Form

Demographic Information (Please highlight or place an X by your response.)

1. **Age**: _____

2. Gender: _____

3. Which of the following best describes your primary ethnic identity: (Circle one)

African American/or Black White (Non-Hispanic) Native American

Native Alaskan Caribbean/West Indian Asian

Middle Eastern Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander

Latin/Hispanic Other: please specify _____

4. Are you within a vulnerable population category (pregnant, resident of a facility, mentally/emotionally disabled, victims of crisis, elderly)? yes or no

5. How many years have you been driving a school bus?

A. 6 months-5 years

B. 5-10 years

C. 11-20 years

D. 21+

6. Do you live in the school district? yes or no

7. Did you grow up in this school district? yes or no

8. Do you have children that attend school in the district? yes or no

9. Do you have any involvement in this district other than work? yes or no

If yes, please explain.

10. Have you ever witnessed bullying activity by students on the bus while you are driving? yes or no

If yes, explain.

11. Have you received antibullying training for school bus drivers? If yes, please provide the name and details about the training.

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. How has past training provided you an understanding of what is and is not bullying? (Adapted from U.S. ED OSHS, 2008)

2. How have previous trainings provided an awareness of what bullying looks like on the school bus? (Adapted from U.S. ED OSHS, 2008)

3. How has past training equipped you with strategies that can be used to address and report bullying when it occurs on the bus? (Adapted from U.S. ED OSHS, 2008)

4. How have previous trainings provided you with useable strategies to build positive relationships on the school bus? (Adapted from U.S. ED OSHS, 2008)

5. How are you prepared to address bullying on the school bus?

6. Tell me what you understand about the current bullying policy as it relates to bus drivers.

7. Tell me how you are supported by school administrators to report bullying.

8. What do you believe is your greatest challenge when dealing with bullying?

9. Have learned strategies been useful when addressing bullying on the school bus?

10. Have you ever felt bullied or intimidated on the bus?

11. Have you noticed if bullying strategies are more effective based on the student's age, school district, **or other factors?** If so, please explain.

12. Tell me how your experience witnessing bullying behavior has impacted your perception of bullies.

13. Tell me what you understand about your role-modeling as it relates to addressing bullying on the school bus?

14. Tell me about your community involvement in the school district where you work as a bus driver.

Appendix D: School Bus Driver Facebook Group Administrator Letter of Cooperation

Letter of Cooperation

December 4, 2015

Timothy E. Crable
13983 E. Kalil Drive
Scottsdale AZ, 85259

Dear Mr. Crable,

Your requested study entitled the Lived Experience of School Bus Drivers: Bullying Prevention on School Buses is authorized, by me, the Administrator of the School Bus Driver Facebook Group.

Background

It is understood that you are a doctoral candidate at Walden University in Public Policy and Administration, specializing in Public Management and Leadership. It is understood that the study is part of the research requirement for your doctoral degree. Additionally, it is understood that the phenomenological case study will be on school bus driver perceptions about antibullying training and policies on school buses. I understand that a case study means the researcher interviews a few people to try and gain a better understanding of what their experience has been with a specific event. The study will focus on perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes regarding the effectiveness of training programs and antibullying policy in the context of the school bus.

Compensation

I understand that I will not be compensated (paid) for my time.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality must be assured for all participants who agree to voluntarily participate.

Contacts and Questions

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me via email: [redacted] If I have any questions, I understand that I can contact you at timothy.crable@waldenu.edu or my daytime phone: [redacted] Your dissertation chairperson is Dr. Bethe Hagens, and she may be contacted at bethe.hagens@waldenu.edu.

If I have questions about the rights of the group participants, I understand that I may contact the research Participant Advocate at Walden University, Dr. Leilani Endicott, via telephone at 1-800-925-3368 ext. 3121210.

Statement of Consent

I acknowledge that I understand the nature of the study and the means by which my identity will be kept confidential. I have been able to ask questions about this study. The researcher has answered all my questions. I voluntarily agree to approve and support this study.

By signing this form, I have not given up any of my legal rights as the group administrator

By replying to this e-mail with the words **I Consent**, I agree to the terms stated above.

I will give you a copy of this consent statement for your records.

[redacted]

Printed Name of School Bus Drivers Facebook Group Administrator

[redacted]

Signature of School Bus Drivers Facebook Group Administrator Date 12-4-15

TIMOTHY CRABLE

Printed Name of Researcher

Signature of Researcher Date 12-4-15