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A Qualitative Study on Female Opinions of Female Bullying and Relational Aggression

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Walden University
2016

Abstract

A Qualitative Study on Female Opinions of Female Bullying and Relational Aggression

by

Cindy McClure

MA, City University, 1987

BS, Whitman College, 1980

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

General Psychology

Walden University

October 2016

Abstract

According to the American Psychological Association, 160,000 children miss school each day because of a fear of bullying. Existing research indicates that the typical male style of bullying is distinctly different from the typical female style of bullying, which is referred to as *relational aggression*. This kind of aggression can cause damage to girls in the form of low self-esteem, eating disorders, and suicide. Research on female bullying has increased in the last five years, yet there is minimal research on relational aggression from the female perspective. The purpose of this qualitative study was to expand on the existing bullying research by exploring the opinions of 3rd, 5th, and 7th-grade girls (N=16) from a rural area of the Pacific Northwest regarding the definition, development, and response to female bullying and relational aggression with the use of semi-structured interviews. The main theoretical foundations for this study were the social learning perspective and the social information processing theory. Participant responses indicated differences by grade in the definition of relational aggression. There was general agreement among the responses that bullying increases over time. Participant responses supported previous research findings that victims, bystanders, and the bully suffer from the behavior. Findings from this study contribute to the body of knowledge about female bullying from a female perspective. This additional knowledge has the potential to assist education policy makers, school personnel, parents, and children in understanding and recognizing the female bullying process and consequences. This understanding will assist with recognition and intervention in bullying situations as well as the development and implementation of more effective bullying prevention programs specific to girls.

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Dedication

For Peter and my children, Caden and Kally, who now may get to know their Mother "who is not always working on the dissertation." Their agreeability in allowing me the time to complete this process is a demonstration of patience, caring, and love. To all the children who have experienced bullying, know that there are teachers who care, parents who want to help, and bystanders who struggle about how to help. Tell people what is happening and tell until someone does something.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

In the past 30 years, the impact of bullying has become an increasing concern for schools and society. Correspondingly, research on the topic has increased. What is now known about bullying includes information about the frequency of bullying occurrences; long and short-term effects of bullying for the victim, the bully, and the bystanders; the likely background factors of the family, home, and school environment for the bully and victim; typical responses to bullying; and intervention strategies. Most of this research has focused on the combining of data on girls and boys or data related to male bullying which is generalized to female bullying. However, it is evident from the research that the typical male style of bullying is distinctly different from the typical female style of bullying. Thus, information about female-only bullying is not only lacking but what exists is also confusing and contradictory.

Included in this chapter is an introduction to the issue of female bullying, including a summary of the research literature on bullying, identification of the gap in knowledge that this study will address, and justification of the need for this study. Presented next are the research questions that this study addressed, the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study, and the nature of the study including the specific design. Next, the definitions of terms specific to this study will be provided, followed by assumptions about the research design which may have affected the study. The scope and delimitations will then be introduced, as well as an explanation regarding the reasoning

for the selection of the population and identification of the conceptual framework for the study. The limitations of the study, including biases, transferability, and dependability will be outlined, followed by a description of the significance of the study to effect social change. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the information presented.

Background

Research on the issue of bullying began in 1983 by Dr. Dan Olweus of Norway after the suicide of three teenage boys attributed to long-term bullying (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). From his research on bullying, Dr. Olweus developed an intervention program that reduced bullying in the schools of Norway by 50% (Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, & Voeten, 2005; Olweus, 1993). The Olweus studies defined bullying as the physical form typically demonstrated by boys and combined the data for boys and girls (Olweus, 1993), which led to the development of an intervention program that focused on physical bullying. Olweus' research influenced studies in the 1980s and 1990s in other countries, including the United States (Smith & Brain, 2000). School shootings in the United States in the 1990s influenced further research on bullying, which found a correlation between school shooters and documented histories of being bullied in the school system (Burgess, Garbarino, & Carlson, 2006). Because all but two school shooters in the last 25 years have been male (Vossekuil in Reuter-Rice, 2008) and the Olweus research indicated boys are more likely than girls to bully and to be bullied (1993), research has focused on the physical form of bullying, which is more typical of boys. Typical female bullying is referred to as *relational aggression* (Crick & Grotpeter; Card et al.) and occurs when

relationships are used to bully. This type of aggression includes behaviors such as gossiping and social exclusion (Boulton & Smith, 1994).

Research on the variable of sex, specifically on the method of bullying, yields conflicting results. There is general agreement that overall, boys bully more than girls (Boulton & Smith, 1994; Crick & Grotpeter,1995; Nansel et al., 2001) and that boys are more likely than girls to use physical or overt bullying methods (Card et al., 2008). When relational aggression—which is more typical of girls—is included in the research, there is no sex difference in frequency of bullying (Crick & Grotpeter; Card et al.). Other research by Crick and Grotpeter (1995) found that girls are more likely than boys to use relational aggression to bully, while Card et al.(2008) found that boys and girls are equally likely to use indirect methods of bullying such as relational aggression.

Additional bullying variables researched for the current study included: becoming a bully or becoming a victim, family background, parenting style, and home and school environments. I also explored the consequences of bullying and the development of intervention and prevention programs for the current study.

Problem Statement

This study addressed the problem that, to date, little is known about the phenomenon of girls' opinions of the definition, development, and response to female bullying, specifically relational aggression. However, extensive quantitative data have been accumulated regarding the definition, development, and response to instrumental

aggression or physical bullying which is focused on boys or the combined experience of the sexes.

A review of the literature on bullying indicates that there is both a lack of research and conflicting results of existing research data specific to female relational aggression. The focus of previous research has been on overt or physically aggressive bullying more typical of boys, while research indicates that girls are more likely to engage in covert or relational aggression (Boulton & Smith, 1994; Delligatti, Akin-Little, & Little, 2003; Olweus, 2003). Female bullying in the form of relational aggression is less likely to be recognized by others than male/female bullying in the form of physical aggression, thus preventing intervention strategies from being developed and implemented. Such strategies are needed because relational aggression causes significant damage to girls in the form of low-self-esteem, eating disorders, and suicide (Crick, 1996; Fosse & Holen, 2006; Klomek, Sweatingham & Waller, 2008; Sourander, & Gould, 2010). Although research on this particular form of bullying has increased in the last 5 years, there remains minimal research on female bullying and relational aggression from the female perspective (Owens, Shute, & Slee, 2000; Varjas, Meyers, Bellmoff, Lopp, Birchbichler & Marshall, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to expand on the existing bullying research and address the gap in understanding female bullying and female relational aggression. This study contributed to the body of knowledge concerning bullying by

exploring and clarifying the opinions of girls on the definition of female bullying and female relational aggression and included their opinions on the development and response to female relational aggression.

Research Questions

Research Questions

The following were the primary questions explored in this study:

1. In the opinion of girls, what behaviors are considered to be bullying?

2. What is the opinion of girls regarding how bullying or relational aggression changes as girls get older?

3. What is the opinion of girls about how targets and others respond to bullying or relational aggression?

4. What is the opinion of girls regarding what happens if a girl is caught bullying?

5. What is the opinion of girls regarding what happens to the target of bullying or relational aggression if she reports the behavior to an adult?

Exploration of the research questions was informed by the sociocultural theory, bystander effect, social information processing theory, and the reformed social information processing theory. The conceptual framework of the psychological approach to qualitative research, informed by the phenomenological tradition and a social constructivist worldview was applied in this study.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation for this study is based on Albert Bandura's sociocultural/social learning perspective, the research of John Darley and Bibb Latane on the bystander effect, Kenneth Dodge's social information processing theory (SIP), and Nicki Crick and Kenneth Dodge's reformulated SIP theory.

Bandura (1973) theorized that aggressive children were modeling behavior of a parent, actors on television, or individuals in their peer groups. Based on Bandura's (1973) theory, the sociocultural/social learning perspective can be applied to the exploration of the development of bullying behavior as well as the response of the victim and bystanders to bullying. Sociocultural/social learning perspective as it applies to the perception and definition of bullying and the impact of modeling by parents, teachers, and peers in bullying situations will be explored in more detail in Chapter 2.

Latane and Darley (1968) posited that the *bystander effect,* which is the tendency for bystanders to fail to engage in a crisis, is affected by a three-part process that determines whether they will intervene in a given situation. The steps include (a) the emergency must first be noticed, (b) it must be recognized as an emergency, and (c) the bystander must feel responsible for the outcome.

Research detailed in Chapter 3 will further explain the errors of cognitive processing that affect the bystander's ability to assess the situation as bullying. Research on the bystander effect (Latane & Darley, 1968) will be explored in relationship to the response to bullying as well as the impact of the response to those involved.

Social information Processing (SIP) defines the cognitive process the victim and bystanders in bullying engage in to determine a response to bullying. Kenneth Dodge (1986) originally proposed a four-step information-processing model for children in determining a response when faced with a situational cue. The steps include (a) encoding of the environmental cue, (b) engaging in a mental representation and interpretation process, (c) searching for a behavioral response to the cue, and (d) deciding on the response (Dodge, 1986). Crick and Dodge (1994) expanded the SIP process to include two additional steps. The reformulated SIP model involves the following steps to decision-making: (a) the process of encoding internal and external cues, (b) interpretation of the cues, (c) clarification of the goals or desired outcome of the social situation, (d) the accessing from memory of behavioral response options to the situation, (e) selection of the response decision, and (f) the behavioral enactment of the selected response option (Crick & Dodge, 1994). Research on the SIP model depicting possible flaws in the process when a child applies it to a bullying situation and the consequences to perceptions of bullying will be further explored in Chapter 2.

Conceptual Framework

The phenomenon that I explored in this study was the opinions of girls regarding female bullying and relational aggression. In this study, following the ideas presented by Creswell (2007), I used the psychological approach to qualitative research, informed by the phenomenological tradition and a social constructivist worldview in this study. Qualitative research was an appropriate method of inquiry for this study because

quantitative methods do not appear to explain relational aggression/bullying sufficiently. Interviewing girls allowed for a richer and fuller description of the phenomenon which will increase the research knowledge of female bullying. The research questions were explored in audio-taped, semi-structured interviews in a private room at the local fire department. A more thorough examination of the conceptual framework will be detailed in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

The participants in this study were girls in the third, fifth, and seventh grades, from a rural southeastern Washington and Oregon State area which included three school districts. The purposeful sampling strategy or criterion-based selection (Maxwell, 2005) for participation in this study was that the participants are female, in the third, fifth, and seventh grades, and had experienced the phenomenon of having opinions about female aggression/bullying. *Data saturation* (Creswell, 1998) determined sample size with the use of semi-structured interviews in the qualitative tradition. The interview was semi-structured, with five main questions and follow-up questions as they evolved. The data analysis approach for phenomenology designed by Moustakis (1994), and referred to as a modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method (Creswell, 1998) was used for this study. The nature of the study will be further detailed in Chapter 3.

Definitions

The following are the operational definitions for this study:

Bullycide: refers to suicide as a result of bullying (Klomek, Sourander, & Gould, 2010).

Bullying: Olweus (1993) includes three elements that must be present for behavior to be defined as *bullying:* negative actions, a disparity of power, and repeated incidences. Smith et al. (2002) report that the English term *bullying,* as used by children, typically focuses on physical and verbal aggression and does not include social exclusion or relational aggression.

Bullying Triad: consists of the bully, victim, and bystanders.

Bully/victims: an additional category of children who were once bullied and also have bullying behavior. Janson (2011) found that *bully/victims* are aggressive and depressed, and score low on measures of social skills, academic skills, and self-esteem (Janson, 2011). Children with these characteristics are likely to respond to bullying in an aggressive manner (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2011).

Bystander effect: a three-step process in determining whether to assist in an emergency situation such as bullying (Latane & Darley, 1968). The steps include: (a) the emergency must first be noticed, (b) it must be recognized as an emergency, and (c) the bystander must feel responsible for the outcome.

Callous-unemotionality (CU): lacking guilt and empathy, or a callous manipulation of others (Crick & Dodge, 1996; Hubbard et al., 2002; Frick et al., 2003; Crapanzano et al., 2010). Reactive and proactive aggression may have a personality factor of CU.

Conduct disorder: The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (APA, 2000) defines *conduct disorder* as:

> A repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or other age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated as manifested by the presence of three (or more) of the following criteria in the past 12 months, with at least one criteria present in the past 6 months: frequent bullying or threatening of others, frequent provoking of physical fights, physical cruelty to people and animals, destruction of property, deceitfulness or theft, and serious violations of rules. (pp.90-91)

Covert aggression: relationship behaviors such as gossiping and social exclusion that are used to bully.

Cyber-aggression: peer victimization through the use of technology (Grigg, 2010).

Cyberbullicide: a suicide as a response to direct or indirect online aggression (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009).

Cyberbullying: Patchin and Hinduja, (2006) defined this as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic texts" (p.152).

Cyber victimization: a term that is specific to bullying by technology (Dempsey, Sulkowski, Nichols, & Storch, 2009; Dooley, Pyzalski, & Cross, 2009).

Direct aggression: bullying with physical methods such as hitting and verbal threats (Boulton & Smith, 1994).

Indirect aggression: the use of relationships to bully including relationship behaviors such as gossiping and social exclusion (Boulton & Smith, 1994).

Instrumental aggression: bullying with physical methods such as hitting and verbal threats (Boulton & Smith, 1994).

Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire: developed by Dr. Olweus of Norway to assess bullying in the school system. The questionnaire provided a clear definition of the term *bullying*, time or reference period for the behavior, a Likert scale of frequency, and inclusion of the bystander reaction to bullying (Olweus, 1993). The questionnaire was distributed to all primary and secondary school students in Norway.

The Olweus Intervention Program: a program developed as a result of the responses of the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire. The program addresses individual behavior, the classroom environment, and the school environment.

Overt aggression: bullying with physical methods such as hitting and verbal threats (Boulton & Smith, 1994).

Physical aggression: bullying with physical methods such as hitting and verbal threats (Boulton & Smith, 1994).

Physical bullying: involves many of the same behaviors as conduct disorder including "threatening of others, frequent provoking of physical fights, physical cruelty to people and animals, destruction of property, deceitfulness or theft, and serious violations of rules" (APA, 2000, pp.90-91).

Proactive aggression: a well-planned act of aggression to gain dominance over others (Crapanzano, Frick, & Terranova, 2010; Stickel, 2011).

Reactive aggression: an angry impulsive response to a perceived provocation (Crapanzano, Frick, & Terranova, 2010; Stickel, 2011).

Relational aggression: relationship behaviors such as gossiping and social exclusion that are used to bully (Boulton & Smith, 1994).

Reformulated social information-processing model (SIP): Kenneth Dodge (1986) originally proposed a four-step information-processing model for children in determining a response when faced with a situational cue and involves the following steps to decision-making: (a) the process of encoding internal and external cues, (b) interpretation of the cues, (c) clarification of the goals or desired outcome of the social situation, (d) the accessing from memory of behavioral response options to the situation. Crick and Dodge (1994) added steps (e) selection of the response decision; and (f) the behavioral enactment of the selected response option to the existing SIP. One of three theoretical frameworks applied to the current study.

Social learning theory: Bandura's theory that aggressive children were modeling behavior of a parent, actors on television, or in their peer groups. *Social Cognitive Model and Sociocultural Model* are interchangeable terms to explain the development of behavior (Bandura, 1973). One of three theoretical frameworks applied to the current study.

Social information processing theory (SIP): the cognitive process the victim and bystanders in bullying engage in to determine a response to bullying. The steps include (a) encoding of the environmental cue, (b) engaging in a mental representation and interpretation process, (c) searching for a behavioral response to the cue, and (d) deciding on the response (Dodge, 1986). This theory was expanded upon by Crick and Dodge (1994) to include two additional steps. One of three theoretical frameworks applied to the current study.

Targets: victims of bullying.

Assumptions

This study included the five basic assumptions within each worldview, outlined by Creswell (1998), that guide the design of all qualitative studies. The ontological assumption is concerned with the nature of reality; for this study, it was the reality of the opinions of the participants as described in the participant's voice, with the assumption that the participants were truthful in expressing opinions. The epistemological assumption focuses on the relationship of the researcher to what is being studied, which for this study included the assumption that I had a rapport with participants during the interview process and that I interpreted the responses in the manner the participant intended. The axiological assumption is focused on understanding the role of the researcher's values to the study. The assumption is that I was aware of this effect and did not insert my values into the interviewing process. The rhetorical assumption is concerned about the personal voice of the researcher in reporting the study with the

assumption that the methodology of qualitative research. The methodological assumption focuses on the design of the study with the assumption that specific categories of meanings emerged throughout the process and that I recognized the general categories as they related to the specific categories. The assumptions of the study will be further detailed in Chapter 3.

Scope and Delimitations

The focus of this qualitative study was female opinions about female bullying, also referred to as relational aggression (RA), which increased the body of knowledge concerning this particular form of bullying.

Although extensive quantitative data have been accumulated regarding the definition, development, and response to instrumental or physical aggression (Mishna, 2004); the data were focused more on boys. Little is known about the phenomenon of girls regarding their opinion of the definition, development, and response to female RA (Varjas et al., 2008; Owens et al., 2000).

The purpose of this study was to expand on the existing bullying research by exploring the opinions of girls on the definition, development and response to female RA. The research questions were developed based on the literature review of female bullying, which indicated confusing and contradictory results of studies about the definition, development, and response to female RA.

Research has found that environmental variables of home and school contribute to bullying. Conflicting results of the research indicate that the home environment is more

predictive of RA and victimization than the school environment (Pernice-Duca, Taiariol, & Yoon, 2010). Other research indicates that the school environment, particularly the attitude and behavior of school administrators toward bullying, can determine how safe a child feels and the likelihood that a bullied child will seek help (Barnes, Belsky, Broomfield, Melhuish, & the National Evaluation of Sure Start Research Team, 2006; Eliot, Cornell, & Fan, 2010; Hurford, Cole, Jackson Thomasson, & Wade, 2010; Stickle, Marini, & Thomas, 2011).

I conducted this study at the fire department in College Place, Washington, a city of approximately 9,000 people located in the southeastern corner of the state. I conducted the interviews at the College Place Fire station in a private setting referred to as a "conference room" at the convenience of the student so as not to interfere with school or other activities. The interviews were on a voluntary basis. Girls in grades 3, 5, and 7 were the population chosen for this study. Previous research indicated that: third grade girls are at a point when RA becomes evident, that fifth grade girls are the most likely to report RA (Esbensen, & Carson, 2009), and that bullying peaks in middle school (Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, & Scheidt, 2001; APA, 2005; Nansel, Edmondson & Zeman, 2009). As the social information processing systems of girls in pre-school and early elementary school has not yet matured, there is likely to be use of overt and easily recognized behaviors of RA (Crick & Dodge, 1996; Leff, Waasdorf, & Crick, 2010; Young, Nelson, Hottle, Warburton, & Young, 2011), as well as an all-encompassing definition of bullying. Girls 8 years old or younger have not yet learned the indirect

aggression strategies that older girls have mastered (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992). Therefore, it was determined based on the research that girls in third grade are the youngest population with a maturing social information processing system and with a developmental capability of participating in this study. Girls in fifth grade were chosen to participate as students in grades five and six are reported to be the most likely to include examples of RA in their definitions of bullying (Smith, Cowie, Olafsson, & Liefooghe, 2002). Girls in grade 7 were chosen to participate in this study as research indicated that seventh-grade girls are more involved in bullying than 8th-grade girls (Seals &Young, 2003).

NonEnglish-speaking participants were excluded from the study. The justification for the exclusion was that I lacked the ability to translate the questions to have the same meaning in another language. As such, even if translated, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for me to fully understand if the spirit of the questions had been retained. It would also have been difficult for me to redirect a child should they get off course in the interview and begin to disclose an actual event as opposed to opinion. The availability of a certified translator with experience in understanding the nature of the questions was limited in this community, and the cost of hiring an expert was prohibitive for the research. Including the nonEnglish speaking population may have affected confidentiality and privacy by adding an additional person in the interviewing process, even with the safeguard of signing a confidentiality statement.

Types of bullying excluded from this study were cyberbullying, which is a recently recognized form of bullying without a body of supporting research, and workplace bullying, which is outside the age range for this study. A more recent form of bullying has been disclosed in the media of late regarding professional football players. Research on bullying and team sports, amateur or professional, was not explored in this study.

Theories applied to this study were Albert Bandura's sociocultural/social learning perspective, John Darley's and Bibb Latane's research on bystander effect, Kenneth Dodge's SIP theory, and Nicki Crick and Kenneth Dodge's reformulated SIP theory. These theories related most clearly to the research questions.

Transferability is the qualitative equivalent of the quantitative term of external validity: the extent to which the information can be generalized to similar situations (Creswell, 1998). As I interviewed a small, purposeful sample of participants in a single setting and event, external transferability may be difficult to determine. The results of this study may be transferable to third, fifth, and seventh-grade girls attending public school in an agricultural community with a population of between 30,000 and 50,000 people.

Limitations

My goal was to expand on existing research about female bullying or relational aggression. The psychological approach, informed by the phenomenological tradition and a social constructivist worldview, to qualitative research was used in this study. The qualitative data were collected through semi- structured interviews with five main

questions and follow-up questions as they evolved. The participants in this study were girls in the third, fifth, and seventh grades, from a rural southeastern Washington and Oregon State area which included three school districts. The area includes 12 elementary schools, five middle schools, and two private schools. The participants were from communities ranging in a population of 30,000 people to 8,000 people.

Potential limitations of the study related to design and methodological weaknesses included transferability, dependability, and researcher biases. Transferability may be difficult to determine, as I interviewed a small, purposeful sample of participants in a single setting and event. To increase the likelihood of transferability and as indicated in Creswell (1998), I provided a rich, detailed description of the participants which will allow for the reader of the study to determine if the findings can be transferred because of shared characteristics to other settings. Another potential weakness of this study was data collection to the point of saturation, which assumed that several categories of RA and bullying behavior will be identified from the limited number of participant responses. Following the ideas presented by Creswell (1998), to determine if the findings of the study are supported by the data, referred to as dependability, my dissertation committee reviewed the findings. My biases about bullying might represent a weakness to the design of the study in the interpretation of the participant responses and unintentional perceptual misrepresentations. Methods of addressing the biases included journaling my subjective experiences, deliberately and consciously setting aside my presuppositions, audio-taping

interviews, member-checking, and peer review of the data. Limitations of the study will be further detailed in Chapter 3.

Significance

This study addressed the problem that, to date, little is known about the phenomenon of the lived experience of girls regarding their opinion of the definition, development, and response to female relational aggression. However, extensive quantitative data have been accumulated regarding the definition, development, and response to instrumental or physical aggression which is focused on boys or the combined experience of the sexes. The purpose of this study was to expand on the existing bullying research by exploring the opinions of girls on the definition, development, and response to female relational aggression, which adds to the body of knowledge that addresses this particular form of bullying.

Contributing to the body of knowledge about female bullying has the potential to assist education policymakers, administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and children in understanding more completely the bullying process and consequences. This understanding could lead to the development of more effective strategies and intervention programs to address female bullying. More effective strategies and intervention programs could have the impact of fewer children missing school because of fear of bullying, a safer school environment, more disclosure when bullying does occur, and ultimately, less bullying behavior.

Summary

This chapter introduced the topic of female bullying including brief background information, a summary of the research literature on bullying, identification of the gap in knowledge that this study addressed, and justification of the need for this study. The research questions that this study proposed to address were presented, then the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study; and the nature of the study including the specific design. Next, the definition of the terms specific to this study was provided followed by assumptions about the research design that could have affected the study. The scope and delimitations were introduced followed by the reasoning for the selection of the population and identification of the conceptual framework for the study. The limitations of the study were outlined including biases, transferability, and dependability followed by a description of the significance of the study to effect social change. The information presented will be further explored in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), 160,000 children miss school each day in the United States because they fear intimidation and bullying at school (APA, 2005). Short-term effects of bullying may include the development of depression, low self-esteem, and other psychological problems (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Sweetingham & Waller, 2008; Arseneault, Bowes, & Shakoor, 2010). Long-term effects of bullying include the development of eating disorders, participation in school shootings or other acts of revenge, drug and alcohol use and abuse, criminal behavior, and continued violence in other types of relationships (Hawker & Boulton; Pepler, Craig, Connolly, Yuile, McMaster, & Jiang, 2006; Pies, 2007; Sweetingham & Waller; Arseneault et al.).

Despite the implementation of bullying prevention programs beginning in kindergarten, bullying behavior persists and even peaks in middle school (APA, 2005; Nansel et al., 2001). Both boys and girls bully, but the behavior takes different forms by sex. Boys typically bully through physical means such as hitting and may also use verbal threats (Boulton & Smith, 1994). This method of bullying is referred to as instrumental aggression, physical aggression, overt aggression, and direct aggression. Girls are more likely to use relationships in their method of bullying, such as spreading gossip and enacting social exclusion (Boulton & Smith,1994; Olweus, 2003). This method of bullying is referred to as relational aggression (RA), social aggression, covert

aggression, and indirect aggression. A study conducted by Crapanzano et al. (2010),

posited that the categories of instrumental (physical) aggression and RA each also contain

elements of reactive aggression, which is an angry, impulsive response to a perceived

provocation; and proactive aggression, which is a well-planned act of aggression to gain

dominance over others. In their study, the researchers measured an additional personality

factor of callous-unemotionality (CU) to both proactive and reactive aggression

categories and found that children who exhibit high levels of CU along with high levels

of proactive and reactive aggression have been shown to exhibit long-term patterns of

antisocial behavior (Crapanzano, Frick, & Terranova, 2010). The findings of the study

indicated that the cause of RA in boys is different than the cause of physical aggression,

whereas the research results suggested that the causal factors for physical aggression and

RA for girls are the same (Crapanzano et al., 2010). Additionally, research links physical

aggression in girls to future adjustment problems (Ostrav & Keating, 2004). Boys who

demonstrate RA are likely to be directing the behavior toward girls, not boys (Ostrav &

Keating).

Quantitative research consistently shows that boys bully more than girls (Boulton

& Smith, 1994; Crick & Grotpeter,1995; Nansel et al., 2001) and that boys demonstrate

more direct bullying methods (Card et al., 2008), but research on bullying in general and

the prevalence of bullying specifically, uses the definition of bullying more typical of

girls and thus combines data from both sexes. When RA—which is more typical among

girls—is included in the research, there is no sex difference in the frequency of bullying

(Crick & Grotpeter; Card et al.). Card et al.(2008) determined in a meta-analytic investigation that, although boys are more directly aggressive than girls, boys and girls are equally likely to use indirect aggression (Card et al., 2008). The authors concluded that indirect aggression should not be considered an exclusively female form of aggression (Card et al.). Etiology and long- term results of male-style bullying are well researched and documented; however, little is known about the definition, amount, long-term consequences, and development of female-style bullying from the female perspective.

Bullying research indicates that some victims of bullying may become bullies, and are referred to as *bully/victims*. Bullying behavior from childhood may continue in the workplace as adults, and those who experience bullying may experience long-term psychological and emotional problems. There is research to indicate that playground bullying can lead to other relationship bullying such as sexual harassment, dating violence, marital violence, workplace aggression, and elder abuse (Pepler et al., 2006).

Victims who became bullies were exemplified in the case of Darren Klebold and Eric Harris and the shootings committed at Columbine High School (Pies, 2007). The aftermath of a school shooting has a devastating impact on the school system, families of the victims and families of the shooters, legal system, and community. Of the 41 documented school shooters in the last 25 years, 71% of those studied reported that bullying by peers was a factor in the decision to commit the shooting (Reuter-Rice, 2008).

Child bullies and victims may grow up to continue the behavior in the workplace, affecting productivity and morale (Harvey, Heames, Richey, & Leonard, 2006). Those who bully in the workplace may have observed bullying modeled within their family and school settings, which influenced their subsequent bullying behavior (Harvey et al., 2006). Additional consequences for the bullies, victims, and bystanders of bullying include psychological problems of depression and psychosomatic illnesses, incarceration, continued aggression toward others, and alcohol and drug abuse (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Arseneault, et al., 2010).

Suicide as a result of bullying also referred to as bullycide, is yet another consequence of bullying. A review of cross-sectional research on the association between bullying and suicide in youth indicates a clear relationship between the two (Klomek, Sourander, & Gould; 2010). Some research indicates that girls involved in bullying as the victim or the bully have higher rates of suicidal ideation and attempts than boys involved in bullying (Kim et al. in Klomek et al., 2010), while other research indicates that only female bullies, not female victims or male bullies or victims, are at high risk for suicide (Roland in Klomek, Sourander, & Gould, 2010). Longitudinal research indicates a similar association between involvement in bullying as either the victim or the bully and suicide. However these studies indicate there is a difference by sex with involvement in bullying as the most likely correlate to suicide for girls; involvement in bullying combined with other psychopathology is associated with suicide for boys (Klomek, Sourander, & Gould). For example, the recent and much publicized suicide of Phoebe Prince, as well as

the suicides of Megan Meier and Daniel Scruggs and others, all occurred after repeated incidences of bullying at school and in some cases through the use of technology (Hargrove, 2010; O'Neil, 2008; Heyman, Stochmal, & Paley, 2003). Hinduja and Patchin (2009) refer to suicide as a response to direct or indirect online aggression as cyberbullicide.

There is disagreement among researchers as to whether the use of technology to bully is an extension of face-to-face bullying or is a separate and distinct form of aggression (Dempsey et al., 2009; Dooley et al., 2009). Peer victimization through the use of technology is referred to as cyberbullying or cyber victimization. Research on cyberbullying is in its infancy, and the majority of studies have been exploratory in nature with mixed and inconclusive results (Dempsey et al.). One area of exploration is the development of a clear and consistent definition of cyberbullying. Patchin and Hinduja (2006) have presented a definition of cyberbullying as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic texts" (p.152). Smith et al. (2008) have adapted the definition and included the Olweus element of a power imbalance between bully and victim. Grigg (2010) has suggested the term cyber-aggression as opposed to cyberbullying to describe broad negative behaviors that occur by users of the internet and cell phones if the action is likely to cause harm to the intended recipient of the message. This definition includes repeated behavior as well as one-time behavior and does not focus on a power imbalance between sender and recipient (Grigg, 2010).

Cyberbullying is distinct from face-to-face bullying in that cyberbullying has the possibility of extending from the schoolyard to the home world with little or no adult supervision or intervention. There is the probability of cyberbullying reaching far more people than face-to-face bullying, and there may be no chance for escape from cyberbullying as once it is on the internet, it cannot be erased. Cyberbullies may feel emboldened to be more volatile due to the factor of anonymity (Dempsey, et al., 2009). Additionally, students may fear for their safety offline due to online threats and intimidation (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007).

Research on face-to-face bullying consistently finds that boys bully more often than girls (Boulton & Smith, 1994; Crick & Grotpeter,1995; Nansel et al., 2001); however, Hinduja and Patchin (2008) found that there was no statistically significant gender difference in cyberbullying between boys and girls in equal numbers as victims and aggressors (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Wade and Beran (2011) found that girls were at greater risk of cyberbullying than boys, especially in the areas of rumor-mongering, impersonation, and sexual solicitation (Wade & Beran, 2011). Contrary to other research findings on cyberbullying, Dempsey et al. (2009) found that cyberbullying was related to the development of high levels of social anxiety but not depression and RA had the greatest connection to the development of symptoms of social anxiety (Seals & Young, 2003).

Despite the differences between cyberbullying and face-to-face bullying, there are also some similarities. As with face-to-face bullying, cyberbullying peaks in seventh

grade then decreases through 11th grade (Wade & Beran, 2011). The effect of cyberbullying has been linked to offline delinquent behavior, school difficulties, emotional and psychological problems, and other deviant behavior for both aggressors and victims (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007). Cyberbullying has also been linked to suicide, as in the case of Phoebe Prince, the 15 year-old Irish student in Massachusetts who suffered verbal assaults, threats, and vicious text messages from a group of girls because she had dated a "popular" male student (Hargrove, 2010). Nine teenage girls were later charged with bullying in the Phoebe Prince case (Hargrove, 2010).

Cyberbullying is a new venue for bullying and its contributory factors, and other variables have yet to be explored. Gender is one of the factors to explore; it is reasonable that girls would be more likely than boys to cyberbully because it is consistent with increased female participation in the less direct and more covert RA (Dooley et al., 2009). However, the research reflects mixed results in the area of the frequency of cyberbullying and sex (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Wade & Beran, 2011).

There are similarities and differences between face-to-face bullying and cyberbullying but the research on cyberbullying is in its infancy and much has yet to be determined (Dempsey et al., 2009). Because of the newness of technology and scarcity of research on cyberbullying, I excluded it from this study. The focus was solely face-to-face female bullying.

As with cyberbullying, not much is known about the effect and etiology of female face-to-face bullying (Crick, 1996), but what is known about RA indicates that the

consequences to girls are connected to the development of eating disorders, perfectionism tendencies, low self-esteem, and RA in the workplace. There is some evidence that eating disorders among girls and women are correlated to bullying by peers, especially in relation to being teased about appearance (Sweetingham & Waller, 2008). In a sample of adult women hospitalized for eating disorders, it was noted that being bullied by peers and family was positively correlated with social anxiety and body dissatisfaction (Sweetingham & Waller). In addition to factors such as an over-protective father and childhood sexual abuse by parents or other adults, a link has been established between bullying by peers and the development of bulimia nervosa (Fosse & Holen, 2006). Low self-esteem was evident in a population of female adult outpatients who met the criteria for bulimia nervosa and who reported being bullied in their youth (Fosse & Holen). Perfectionism tendencies of a population of first-year college women were found to be related to experiences of covert aggression; however, overt aggression did not appear to link to adult perfectionism (Miller & Vaillancourt, 2007). The majority of research on the impact of bullying in the workplace examines both men and women, but some research indicates that there is a parallel between the method of female bullying in the education system and female bullying in the workplace. Types of bullying found in education and workplace settings include spreading rumors and gossip, perpetrating social isolation and alienation, and stealing friends or romantic partners (Crothers, Lipinski, & Minutolo, 2009).

The research on female bullying tends to focus on traditional areas of research for women in general, such as the relationship between bullying and self-esteem, eating disorders, and victimization. There is a lack of information about the definition, and development of female bullying as well as research on the female victim, bully, and bystanders' response to bullying. The research is abundant on the impact of overt aggression, including research about male bullying and male and female combined bullying, but is lacking regarding the ramifications of the more subtle relational bullying that seems to be more typical of girls and women.

The literature review begins with a presentation of the various theories that pertain to the specific role in the bullying triad played by the bully, victim, and bystander. The first theory presented is the social learning model as it relates to bullies in the school system. The next theory included in the review is specific to the observer of bullying, referred to here as the bystander. This theory is an examination of the bystander effect. The next theories are relevant to the bystanders as well as the victims of bullying. They are the social-information processing model and Crick and Dodge's (1994) mental stages of the responses to bullying.

A history of bullying and bullying research is then provided as well as outcomes of bullying. Additional research is presented on environmental variables predisposing one to become either a bully or a victim of bullying as well as characteristics of bullies, victims, and bully/victims. A comparison of overt aggression and RA is then explored regarding the research variables of the grade in school, the definition of bullying, the

prevalence of bullying, the method of bullying, the and response to bullying by role. Instrumental and RA prevention programs are then explored. The next part of the review includes an analysis of previous research methodologies utilized in the study of bullying research.

The databases used for this study included: Academic Search Premier, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, *Google*. Keyword database searches included the following: *bullying, bullying and gender, relational aggression, instrumental aggression, bullying prevention, bullying prevention programs, bully and victim, bully and bystanders, bullying and teachers, bullying and school systems, bullying and suicide, Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, aggression in the schools, cyberbullying, school shooters.*

Theoretical Framework

Many theoretical perspectives and models can be applied to understanding aggressive and bullying behavior. The focus of this dissertation was Albert Bandura's sociocultural/social learning perspective, which can be applied to each role in bullying; John Darley's and Bibb Latane's research on bystander effect which is applied specifically to the observers or bystanders to bullying; Kenneth Dodge's social information processing (SIP) theory and Nicki Crick and Kenneth Dodge's reformulated SIP theory, both of which can be applied to understanding the behavior of the victim and the bystanders to bullying.

Social Learning/Social Cognitive Model

Albert Bandura expanded on the previous learning theory of B.F. Skinner to include a social component to the learning process as well as incorporating the significance of learning by imitation of models (Bandura, 1969). The resulting learning model is termed sociocultural model and interchangeably, the social learning model, and the further revised social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). This model can be applied to the understanding of the development of bullying behavior as well as the behavior of the victim and bystanders to bullying.

Skinner's learning theory is based on principles of reinforcement which increase the probability behavior will continue or increase and punishment following behavior which will decrease the likelihood that the behavior will continue (Skinner, 1969). Bandura expanded the learning theory of B.F. Skinner by adding vicarious learning or modeling as an additional variable to affect behavior (Bandura, 1969). The premise of the theory is that learning can also take place by observing models and the consequences of the modeled behavior. Bandura furthered his research on learning through imitation or modeling with his work on aggression in children. The Bobo doll experiment is an example of the power of modeling to shape aggressive behavior (Bandura, 1973). Children were exposed to a model that would behave aggressively toward the Bobo doll. Children were then placed in a controlled setting where subsequent acts of aggression were documented as children imitated the acts of aggression on the Bobo doll (Bandura, 1973). The specific components to the social learning theory are attention to the behavior

or noticing the behavior; retention of behavior which may be in the form of mental rehearsal; reproduction of the behavior; and motivation to re-create the behavior as a result of adequate reinforcements (Bandura, 1969). Bandura (1973) further posited that same-sex models carried more weight in the imitation process for children, which includes those in the parenting role. Other significant models to influence the behavior of children include television characters and peer groups (Bandura, 1973). Additional factors that effect learning are the environment and characteristics of the individual (Bandura, 1978). Bandura (1983) theorizes that there is a four step process to the instigation of aggressive behavior: (a) a directive function in that the observer can predict that they will receive the same reward or punishment as the model of the behavior; (b) *a* disinhibiting function in that if the model of the aggressive behavior does not receive punishment, the inhibitions of the observer toward the same behavior decreases; (c) emotional arousal of observation by others which increases the likelihood of modeling the aggressive behavior as well as the intensity of aggressive responses; (d) increased use of implements in a situation if the model uses implements (such as mallets, or dart guns).

The social learning model can be applied to the three parts of the bullying triad; the bully, the victim, and the bystanders; through the modeling of the aggressive behavior of parents, teachers, and peers. Bandura (1973) theorized that aggressive children were modeling the behavior of a parent, actors on television, or in their peer groups.

Bystander Effect

The bystander effect can provide an explanation as to the behavior of observers to bullying. In 1968, John Darley and Bibb Latane conducted an experiment to determine the likelihood of receiving help from bystanders in an emergency situation. Darley and Latane (1968) determined that there is less likelihood of receiving assistance when more than one person is witness to the situation. The research indicated that diffusion of responsibility occurs as more people witness an emergency situation which leads to inaction on the part of the observer which they referred to as "the bystander effect" (1968). Darley's and Latane's research indicated that an individual is less likely to respond to an emergency if others are present; the likelihood of offering assistance if the group is less than three people is statistically higher than if there are more than three people in the group; there is not a difference in the sex of the observer or the victim in the likelihood of offering assistance; and most subjects believed that the presence of others did not determine their response (1968). Another result of the research of Darley and Latane is that the bystander appeared to experience some anxiety about the decision process (1968). Latane and Darley (1968) posited a three part process in determining whether to help in an emergency situation: (a) the emergency must first be noticed, (b) it must be recognized as an emergency, and (c) the bystander must feel responsible for the outcome.

In a bullying situation, research indicates errors of perception in processing the situation may affect the bystander's cognitive processing of steps (b) and (c) of Latane

and Darley's bystander process. A method of determining responsibility for the event

(step b) is to look around at how others are responding to the event. If others are

responding as though it is an emergency situation, the bystander will be influenced to

respond in kind; if others are responding as though it is not an emergency situation, the

bystander will also assume a passive role (Latane & Darley, 1968).

Social Information Processing Theory

Social information processing (SIP) theory defines the cognitive process the

victim and bystanders in bullying engage in to determine a response to bullying. Kenneth

Dodge (1986) originally proposed a four-step information-processing model for children

in determining a response when faced with a situational cue. The sequential steps include

(a) encoding of the environmental cue; (b) engaging in a mental representation and

interpretation process; (c) searching for a behavioral response to the cue; and (d) deciding

on the response (Dodge, 1986). Crick and Dodge (1994) expanded the process to include

two additional steps. The reformulated SIP, which includes consideration of both

biological predispositions and environmental experiences of the child, involves the

following steps to decision-making: (a) the process of encoding internal and external

cues; (b) interpretation of the cues; (c) clarification of the goals or desired outcome of the

social situation; (d) the accessing from memory of behavioral response options to the

situation; (e) selection of the response decision; and (f) the behavioral enactment of the

selected response option (Crick & Dodge, 1994). As the child matures, the SIP also

develops leading to increased speed of processing as well as increased rigidity in already-acquired adaptive and non-adaptive processes and tendencies (Crick & Dodge, 1994).

Research on the application of the social information processing model to aggressive or bullying children indicates that there may be a flaw in step (b), the interpretation of cues including a hostile and negative attribution bias; and step (c), the clarification of goals or outcome for the social situation (Crick & Dodge, 1996). Once a reactive-aggressive child (those who respond impulsively with violence to perceived threats) attributes hostile intentions to another child in an interaction, they become fixated on the perceived hostility and unable to move to the step (c) of the SIP model, deciding on the desired outcome for the social situation. The child relies instead on retaliatory or aggressive responses to the perceived hostility which can then lead peers to respond to the child with hostility, which then confirms to the child that the peers are hostile (Crick & Dodge). Proactive-aggressive children (those that respond for a reward) are more concerned with the reward than potential damage to the relationship which is step (c) of the SIP model, goal clarification (Crick & Dodge). The response of acting aggressively may become stronger over time as the child becomes more practiced and confident in the use of aggressive behaviors to attain goals (Crick & Dodge). The research has implications for the development of intervention programs that are tailored for reactive-aggressive children and pro-active aggressive children (Crick & Dodge). Development of anger management techniques, learning to recognize bodily cues of anger, and the use of problem-solving techniques might better address reactive aggressive behavior while

developing programs that reduce the rewards of aggression might be more effective for proactive, aggressive children.

Bullying Research

The topic of bullying has been an issue in the European school system for decades, and the most recognized researcher is Dr. Dan Olweus of Norway. Consistent with the more easily assessed instrumental aggression, Dr. Olweus's bullying research began in 1983 after the suicide of three teenage boys attributed to long-term overt bullying. The Norwegian Ministry of Education commissioned Dr. Olweus to conduct research on bullying in the school system, to develop an intervention program to address bullying, and to implement the program in every primary and secondary school (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Dr. Olweus developed the Bully/Victim Questionnaire which provided a clear definition of the term, a time or reference period for the behavior, a Likert Scale of frequency, and the inclusion of the bystander reaction to bullying (Olweus, 1993). The questionnaire was distributed to all primary and secondary school students in Norway of which there was an 85% response rate (Olweus). The results of 130,000 randomly selected student responses indicated that one student in seven reported being involved in a bullying situation now and then either as a bully or a victim (Olweus). Olweus's (1993) research found that: bullying behavior decreases with age, four times as many boys as girls reported bullying other students, boys carried out the majority of bullying to which girls were subjected, and that boys rather than girls were more often perpetrators as well as victims of bullying. The Olweus research defined bullying as the physically aggressive

form usually demonstrated by boys but also included a component of indirect aggression. The results of the questions on indirect aggression indicated that boys are equally as likely as girls to be victims of indirect aggression but did not specify the sex of the perpetrator of the indirect aggression (Olweus). Follow-up data on the effectiveness of the Olweus Intervention Program which targets individual behavior, the classroom environment, and the school environment indicated that bullying in the school system had decreased by 50% and student overall satisfaction with school had increased (Salmivalli et al., 2005; Olweus, 1993). The Olweus studies on bullying influenced further research in Sweden, Japan, Finland, Wales, Scotland, New Zealand, Australia, and the United Kingdom during the 1980s and 1990s (Smith & Brain, 2000).

Research on bullying in the United States began in the early 1990's when it was documented to be a factor in school shootings (Burgess et al., 2006). The research included background factors which could lead to predictions about becoming a bully as well factors that could lead to becoming a victim of bullying. Environmental factors of family background and parenting styles, home environment, and school climate were explored as contributary variables in the development of bullying. The consequences of bullying for the bully and victim and the development of prevention and intervention programs were then explored and developed. The majority of the research is quantitative and focused on bullying, in general, combining overt and RA as well as combining male and female information. Female only RA research will be highlighted within the bullying context and variables.

School Shootings

An abundance of research in the United States on the significance of bullying evolved as a result of the school shootings in the 1990's (Burgess et al., 2006). Many factors are involved in school shootings in the United States including mental health issues, refusal to take or lack of proper medication, and depression or feelings of isolation (Pies, 2007). Research has determined 40 of the 41 school shooters of the last 25 years were a male between the ages of 14 and 18, and that 71% of the school shooters studied expressed that before the shooting they had experienced bullying by peers, including threats and injuries (Vossekuil in Reuter-Rice, 2008). The classic example of a child seeking revenge for perceived bullying, referred to as a bully/victim, was Eric Harris of the Columbine School shooting (Pies, 2007). Newman et al. (in Burgess, 2006) have identified five factors that contribute to a bullied child becoming a bully. Those factors include (a) a history of chronic bullying and victimization by peers (b) a psychiatric illness at the time of the shooting (c) a cultural script of regaining a sense of masculinity as a result of an act of overt aggression (d) assessed as a possible suicide risk, not homicide and (e) access to guns. An area of interest that resulted from the research on school shootings was sex of the shooter which are almost exclusively male (Burgess et al.). Only 2 of the documented school shooters prior to 1999 have been female; Brenda Spencer in San Diego in 1979, and Gena Lawson in Pensacola, Florida in 1996 (Linedecker, 1999). There have been no deadly school shootings by girls since 1996 to the current date. There is a difference in how boys and girls handle bullying and research

on the outcomes for girls who have been bullied is not included in research on school shooters as there have been so few female school shooters. Further research about outcomes of bullying, in addition to school shootings, have been explored, but the information is more applicable to an understanding of male victims.

Important areas of bullying research include: factors that contribute to being victimized or becoming a bully; research on the characteristics and background of bullies and victims; a comparison of overt and RA variables of grade, prevalence, method of bullying, and response to bullying; the influence of the settings of home and schools; and the development of intervention and prevention programs which are all elements to understanding RA.

Outcomes of Bullying

Victim. Male and female victims of bullying exhibit more psychological distress and lower self-esteem than non-victims (Cassidy, 2009). Gibb, Horwood, and Fergusson (2011) found that bullying victimization in childhood was associated with higher rates of adult mental health issues (Gibb, Horwood, & Fergusson, 2011). Overt and RA are positively associated with the development of social anxiety, social avoidance, and physiological distress which may negatively impact academic and social performance in school (Storch, Brassard, & Masia, 2003). Nabuzoka, Ronning, and Handegard (2009) found that boys who have been bullied have more conduct and peer problems while girls who have been bullied have more prosocial behavior and emotional difficulties (Nabuzoka, Ronning, & Handegard, 2009). Carbone-Lopez et al. (2010) found that

bullied girls are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior. Bullied girls are also at risk for the development of bulimia nervosa (Fosse & Holen, 2006), dating aggression, sexual harassment, workplace harassment, marital harassment, and elder abuse (Pepler et al., 2006), as well as elevated levels of loneliness and anxiety (Storch, Brassard, & Masia, 2003). Girls who are bullied by others have lower self-esteem than those who are not bullied (Pollastri, Cardemil, & O'Donnell, 2010). Data indicated a clear association between bullying and suicide in a review of 31 cross-sectional studies, but the results varied by sex (Klomek et al., 2010). Frequent victimization of girls was clearly associated with suicidality more than any other factor, whereas, for boys who were victims of frequent bullying, suicidality also included the component of existing psychopathology in addition to frequent bullying (Klomek et al., 2010).

Bullies. Olweus (1994, 2003) found that bullies are more likely to be convicted of a crime by age 24 and have children who are more aggressive than those who are not identified as bullies. Gibb et al. (2011) found that perpetrators of bullying are more likely to experience mental health problems as adults. Although the outcomes of bullying focus on overt aggression, some research does address RA outcomes, but also combines data for the sexes. However, some research indicates that girls who are relationally aggressive have more chance of future adjustment difficulties (Crick, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995).

Environmental Variables

The school shootings and additional outcomes of bullying clearly indicate the urgency and necessity of understanding this behavior. The history of bullying indicates that the focus has been primarily on overt aggression more typical of boys with research on RA, specifically girls, lacking. There are also other contributary variables to be considered when exploring the mosaic of bullying including the home environment and school climate.

Family and home environment. Various factors within the home contribute to bullying and victimization. Studies indicate that high levels of conflict and fractured familial relationships, harsh punishment, neglect in rewarding prosocial behavior, and coercive parenting particularly by the mother may be contributing factors to overt and RA (Merrell, Buchanan, & Tran, 2006). A lack of parental responsiveness by both mother and father plus the additional maternal coerciveness may be factors in the development of RA (Merrell et al., 2006). Research conducted by Holt, Kantor, and Finklehor (2009) revealed several family characteristics associated with bullying and peer victimization including child maltreatment, exposure to domestic violence, and living in a mother-only home (Holt et al., 2009). It is also possible that a mother models RA not overt aggression to her children (Merrell et al., 2006). A study by Espalage, Bosworth, and Simon (2000) revealed that the family environment was an important factor in the later development of bullying behavior. Participants included 558 students of which 300 were girls, in grades 6, 7, and 8. It was determined that parental physical discipline, lack

of parental supervision and time spent with the child, access to guns, negative peer influences, and neighborhood safety concerns were all positively correlated to bullying (Espalage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000). The data were combined for the sexes. Boys and girls who report engaging in RA experience similar family backgrounds to children who overtly bully. According to Pernice-Duca, Taiariol, and Yoon (2010) relationally aggressive children experience a more controlling family environment, less family cohesion, a lack parental responsiveness to the child's needs, or a lack of emotional support. The research also found that the paternal unresponsiveness was particularly important in predicting female RA behavior as well as male victimization. Additional studies indicate that bullying within the family, especially within the parent-child relationship, may be referred to as abuse and this type of parent-child relationship is linked to future bullying behavior (Smith & Brain, 2000). A study of 377 Greek Cypriot children, half of whom were girls, found that the anxiety level of the mother was significant in the victimization of children (Georgiou, 2008).

Victims of RA report some similarities in the family background to bullies. According to research by Cenkseven Onder and Yurtal (2008), bullies and victims both report negative perceptions about their family ability to problem-solve and communicate effectively. Bullies and victims also have a perception of an inequality of power between parents with fathers as more powerful than mothers (Cenkseven Onder & Yurtal, 2008).Victims report poorer family relations, ineffective coping strategies, and less encouragement from parents and teachers (Cassidy, 2009). This was found to be

particularly true of targets who are girls. Storch, Brassard, and Masia (2003) found, however, that there were no sex differences in the background of victims of RA (Storch, Brassard, & Masia, 2003). Outcome data was combined for the sexes but indicated a strong association between maternal responsiveness based in anxiety and victimization (Georgiou, 2008). Maternal overprotectiveness, as well as permissiveness, were also strong correlates to victimization. However, children raised in authoritatively structured homes did not experience victimization (Georgiou).

In a study of self-identified bully/victims who are girls, participants identified the source of their behavior as rooted in victimization within the home; usually related to a sibling who bullied them (Edmondson & Zeman, 2009). They then act the victim at home and the bully at school as there may be a social benefit to bullying at school, such as a sense of power and satisfaction, not available within the home (Edmondson & Zeman).

School environment and climate. Pernice-Duca, Taiariol, and Yoon (2010) found the family experience to be more predictive of RA and victimization than the school environment. However, other research indicates that the school environment is also a factor in the amount of aggression experienced by children at school. A study on school disorder in England which included acts of violence, aggression, and bullying, focused on 1777 primary schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods determined that school overcrowding, poverty, and the number of children receiving free meals are associated with bullying victimization (Barnes et al., 2006). Additionally, research indicates correlationally that a supportive school climate increases the likelihood of help-seeking

behavior in situations of bullying and aggression for both boys and girls (Eliot et al.,

2010). The School Violence Survey (SVS), an instrument to determine student perception

of school safety with measurements for school violence and school climate, was

administered to 806 Midwest middle-school students and additional 130 students online

(Hurford et al., 2010). Results indicated that the most important factor to students in the

climate of the school is the administrator behavior. When administrators tolerate bullying

behavior, display favoritism for one group over another, or inconsistently apply

consequences for the breaking of rules, students felt unsafe and unwilling to report

incidences of bullying and aggression (Hurford et al.) The researchers suggest that

decreasing the perception of favoritism by administrators, modeling respect for all

students, and demonstrating receptivity to student ideas could work well to decrease

school violence and bullying and increase the feeling of student safety (Hurford et al.).

Nancy Meyer-Adams and Bradley Connor (2008) found that when students are involved

in bullying behaviors the school environment can be viewed as hostile which in turn

creates a higher possibility that they will respond aggressively as in bullying or carrying

weapons, or avoidantly as in truancy.

Characteristics and Risk Factors of Bullies, Victims, and Bully/Victims

Individual biological factors such as attention deficit hyperactivity (ADHD); brain

damage or low I.Q. or any cause that leads to poor development of social interactions is

related to both becoming a bully or becoming a victim of bullying (Merrell et al., 2006).

Bullies and victims often share a similar background, such as difficult family

relationships, but there are distinct differences in each bully group as well. There is an additional category of children who were once bullied and also have bullying behavior. They are referred to as *bully/victims.*

Bullies. Jansen et al. (2011) determined risk factors for becoming a bully include aggressiveness as early as pre-school, good motor functioning, low socioeconomic status, and fractured families. Several predictors of bullying were determined in a meta-analytic investigation of bullying literature from 1970-2010. Researchers found that the typical bully had externalizing behaviors and internalizing symptoms, was challenged academically but socially adept, had negative beliefs about self and others, had difficulties problem-solving with others, experienced a family background of conflict and poor parental monitoring, and was generally negatively influenced by friends, neighborhood, and community factors (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010). Bollmer, Harris, and Milich (2006) found that bullies score lower on the Big 5 categories of agreeableness and conscientiousness. Male bullies have a behavioral profile that resembles the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Disorders (DSM) diagnosis of conduct disorder (Arseneault et al., 2010). The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (APA, 2000) defines conduct disorder as:

> A repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or other age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated as manifested by the presence of three (or more) of the following criteria in the past 12 months, with at least one criteria present in the past 6 months: frequent bullying or threatening of

others, frequent provoking of physical fights, physical cruelty to people and animals, destruction of property, deceitfulness or theft, and serious violations of rules (pp.90-91).

There is some controversy as to how this description is relevant to girls. Boys are consistently diagnosed with conduct disorder more frequently than girls (APA,2000; Delligatti, Akin-Little, & Little, 2003); the criteria was developed primarily from a sample of boys and from the criminal justice system and never validated on a female population (Delligatti et al., 2003). The criterion reflects externalized aggression typical of boys and does not reflect RA or less confrontational behaviors more typical of girls (APA, 2000; Delligatti et al., 2003; Gelhorn et al., 2009). There is a small population of girls diagnosed with conduct disorder who behave in a similar manner to boys with the disorder (APA; Delligatti et al.; Gelhorn et al.), but the female population as a whole do not demonstrate bullying in an overt manner. Male overt bullying fits neatly into the DSM diagnosis of conduct disorder, whereas female RA does not meet the criteria for a childhood disorder unless it is displayed in the typical male manner (Delligatti et al.).

The characteristics for overt bullying are fairly straightforward and recognizable and follow the behaviors for diagnosis of conduct disorder; the features of RA are neither straightforward nor easily recognizable and there is no DSM diagnosis that can neatly be applied to the behavior. Therefore, the typical male bully is more likely to be recognized as such and receive intervention and treatment whereas the typical female bully is not

easily recognizable and is not likely to receive intervention or treatment (Delligatti et al., 2003).

In order for RA to be effective, the bully is generally of higher social status than the target and also has exceptional social skills (Merrell et al., 2006). Research conducted by De Bruyn, Cillessen, and Wissink (2009) regarding levels of perceived popularity and acceptance within peer groups determined that those with high popularity and low acceptance (likability) bullied more than those perceived to be popular and accepted. A meta-analytic investigation of research on indirect aggression outcomes (Card et al., 2008) found that children who use indirect methods of aggression, such as exclusion or spreading rumors, have high prosocial behavior as they require the support of peers for the behavior.

Victims. Janson (2011) found that victims of bullying tend to be anxious, less physically coordinated than their peers, less social than their peers, depressed, and withdrawn. Several predictors of bullying victimization were determined in a meta-analytic investigation. Researchers found that the typical victim of bullying demonstrated internalizing symptoms, poor social skills, came from a negative community, family, and school environments, and experienced rejection and isolation by peers (Cook et al., 2010). In a study of bullying and victimization of schoolchildren, individual characteristics, problem-solving style, and family and school contexts were explored (Cassidy, 2009). Participants included 461 children of which 263 were girls, ages 11-15 years, attending school in the United Kingdom. The results of the study indicated that

girls with poorer family relations, poor self-esteem, and who do not have support from parents and teachers are likely to be bullied (Cassidy).

De Bruyn, Cillessen, and Wissink (2009) found that adolescents who are low in popularity and who are disliked by peers are at high risk of being bullied. It was also determined that the effects of popularity and acceptance (likability) were linear for boys but curvilinear for girls (De Bruyn, Cillessen, and Wissink, 2009). In other words, as the likability of a boy increases the chances of being bullied decreased; girls on either end of the spectrum of likability, either not likable or very likable, were at high risk of being bullied (De Bruyn, Cillessen, & Wissink).

Bully/Victims. There is an additional category of children who were once bullied and also have bullying behavior. They are referred to as *bully/victims*. Janson (2011) found that bully/victims are aggressive and depressed, score low on measures of social skills, academic skills, and self-esteem. This group of children is likely to respond to bullying in an aggressive manner (Holt et al., 2009; Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2011). The bully/victim internalizes and externalizes problems, has low social skills, poor academic skills, thinks negatively of themselves, and is negatively influenced by peers with whom they interact (Cook et al., 2010). Solberg et al.(2007) determined from a large-scale sample of students (18,154) in grades 4-9 that less than 2% of the sample met the criteria for bully/victims. It was also found that there are more boys than girls who become bully/victims and that the behavior decreases over time (Solberg et al.). The authors suggest the possible sex difference may be the result of measurement instruments less

sensitive to female than male forms of aggression (Solberg et al.). A study of

bully/victims who are girls revealed that the behavior began in early childhood and that

there were active efforts on the part of the bully/victim to cover their bullying behavior

by acting like a victim (Edmondson & Zeman, 2009). The study further revealed that the

female bully/victim justified their bullying as an act of self-defense and demonstrated

little remorse. Another factor to the bully/victim behavior was the power of other-

directed anger versus the loss of power of inner-directed anger with female bully/victims

choosing other-directed displays to preserve their personal power (Edmondson &

Zeman). Additionally, the study revealed that anger was the primary driving emotion for

the study participants; not depression as identified in previous studies.

Overt versus Relational Aggression Research Variables

To understand the nature of bullying in the form of RA, this section of the chapter

will focus on the literature relevant to variables in RA. Research on RA is in general

quantitative in method and is combined for boys and girls, with a limited amount of

research that is qualitative in method and available on female-only RA, particularly from

the female perspective. Research regarding the grade in school and how it relates to the

definition of bullying, development of bullying over time, the method of bullying, and the

bully, victim, and bystander response to bullying will be explored.

Grade in school. Nicki Crick and Jennifer Grotpeter (1995) found that RA is a separate

and distinct form of aggressive behavior and that girls are more likely to participate in the

behavior than are boys. Other studies indicate that RA is not exclusive to girls nor is

instrumental aggression exclusive to boys. Tomada and Schneider (1997) found in a study of Italian elementary school children consisting of 167 boys and 147 girls; Italian boys display both physical aggression and RA more often than do girls. However, the greatest difference between the sexes was the frequency of overt aggression while the frequency of RA was similar between the sexes. Ostrav and Keating (2004) found in a study conducted in rural New York pre-schools that boys were more likely to use physical aggression and girls were more likely to use RA during free-play and structured play (Ostrav & Keating; 2004). However, children who were dominant in their sex group were more likely to cross gender barriers in their display of aggression; dominant boys were physically aggressive with boys but relationally aggressive with girls while dominant girls used both RA and physical aggression, but only with girls (Ostrav & Keating). Girls who directed physical aggression toward boys were likely to be rejected by their peers and suffer future adjustment problems (Ostrav & Keating; Crick, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995).

Research determined that the behaviors children perceive as bullying vary with age and sex (Russell et al., 2010); physical aggression is more likely to be determined to be bullying, and younger children find relational and physical aggression to be more hurtful than older children (Russell, Kraus, & Ceccherini, 2010). Nicki Crick (1996) conducted a study to determine the stability of RA of girls over time (grades 3, 4, and 5) as well as to ascertain the long-term social adjustment of female bullies. Included in the study were separate measurements of overt aggression for boys as well as measurements

of social adjustment for boys. It was hypothesized that similarly to overt aggression, RA is associated with risk of social adjustment as well as the rejection of the initiator by peers after repeated incidences of RA (Crick, 1996). The measurement system included assessments by teachers and peers (Crick). Both hypotheses were validated as results of the study indicated that RA is relatively stable over time, is predictive of social adjustment and that RA increased peer rejection over time (Crick). Crick (1996) also determined based on the study that teacher assessments and peer assessments were fairly consistent.

Additional studies on the stability of RA indicate that as children mature, the SIP system also matures; skill with indirect RA increases while the more physically violent and less socially acceptable direct aggression decreases (Crick & Dodge, 1996; Leff et al., 2010). According to Young et al. (2011), RA requires verbal, cognitive and social skills. These skills are unsophisticated in the preschool and early elementary school age which makes RA easier to assess than with the older student (Young et al., 2011). Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, and Kaukiainen (1992) studied developmental trends in direct and indirect aggression in a group of 8, 11, and 15-year-old boys (N=40) and girls (N=45) in Turku, Finland (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992). The results of the indirect aggression component indicated that 8-year-old girls had not yet learned the indirect aggression strategies that 11 and 15-year–old girls were adept at using (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992). A study on the stability and constancy of bully and victim behavior over time and setting determined that bullying behavior

remained stable over time and setting while victim behavior remained stable over time but was unstable across settings (Strohmeier et al.; 2010). Edmondson and Zeman (2009) reported that bully/victim behavior peaked in middle-school and decreased in high school as reported by the sample of self-identified female bully/victims. Despite this decrease, participants also suggested that should they perceive a need to bully in the future, it would be a realistic option of behavior. Seals and Young (2003) report that seventh graders were more involved in bullying than eighth graders but also found that eighth-grade girls were more likely to be physically bullied by other girls than seventh-grade girls (Seals &Young, 2003).

Recognition/definition of bullying. Olweus (1993) includes 3 elements that must be present for behavior to be defined as bullying: negative actions, a disparity of power, and repeated incidences. Smith et al. (2002) report that the English term *bullying,* as used by children, typically focuses on physical and verbal aggression and does not include social exclusion or RA. Chan (2009) found the term "imbalance of power" to be confusing to those completing bullying inventories; the respondents were unclear if the term referred to grade level, age, physiological, or psychological advantages. Research indicates that younger children are more likely to report any act of aggression as bullying (Pepler et al., 2006), whereas older students are less likely to report acts of aggression as bullying based on their understanding of the term (Monks & Smith, 2006; Vaillancourt et al., 2008; Russell et al., 2010). Younger children may, in fact, be reporting single incidences of aggression as bullying, not repeated incidences of aggressive behavior.

Vaillancourt et al. (2008) further noted that less than 2% of students interviewed mentioned intentionality and only 6% mentioned repeated incidences of behavior in their explanations and examples of bullying. Power imbalance was mentioned by 26% of students, mainly older students; 92% of the students, mainly younger students, identified overtly negative aggressive behaviors as bullying. Half of the students in the study identified harassment as bullying, while only 13-16% identified verbal or RA as bullying. Students in grades 5 and 6 were the most likely to include examples of RA in their definitions of bullying. Smith et al. (2002) conducted a fourteen-country investigation of a comparison of terms used to define bullying. It was determined that 8-year-olds are most likely to label behavior as bullying if there is overt aggression involved; they do not seem to have a clear understanding of different forms of aggression such as RA and physical aggression (Smith et al., 2002; Russell et al., 2010). It was also determined that 14-year-olds clearly distinguished aggression from bullying; they also identified the various forms of aggression, including verbal and exclusion, as bullying. The all-inclusiveness of the term demonstrated by 8-year-olds may explain the apparent decrease in bullying that 14-year-olds report (Smith et al.). Due to the variability of interpretation of the term *bullying,* Vaillancourt et al. (2008) stressed the importance of the researcher to provide a clear and behaviorally specific definition of the term to get valid and reliable research results. Esbensen and Carson (2009) conducted a longitudinal study of 1,100 American students attending 14 schools in various cities, in four states, to determine the student definition of the term bullying based on the first 2 criteria of Olweus' (1993)

generally accepted definition of repeated incidences and physical harm. The findings

indicated that repeated incidences of bullying are generally not part of the student

definition (Esbensen & Carson). It was also determined that reported prevalence of

bullying dramatically increased when students were provided a behaviorally specific

definition versus the generic term "bullying" (Esbensen & Carson). Varjas et al. (2008)

conducted open-ended semi-structured interviews with 30 students (56% male) ranging in

age from 9-15 years old in grades 4-8 (M=11.9), in a southern urban school district. The

results indicated that teachers do not always recognize or intervene in bullying.

Additionally, student perceptions of bullying vary from the accepted adult definition in

that bullies do not hold power over the victim but are bullying to get power; and the harm

caused by the bullying may be unintentional (Varjas et al., 2008). The authors (2008)

contend that these findings support the need for qualitative research, which includes

student input.

Qualitative research (Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener, 2006) determined that children,

teachers, and parents define behavior as bullying depending on several factors. The first

factor is whether behavior matched their definition of bullying which typically involved

overt displays of aggression and not exclusionary behaviors and whether behavior

involved a power imbalance or intent to cause harm. The second factor was the

consideration of whether the act involved a friend and an assessment of the normalcy of

friendship behavior. The third factor was if the behavior of the victim matched the

perception of victim behavior. If the child reported victimization but was seemingly well-

adjusted, not easily angered, was receiving good grades, appeared confident, stood up for themselves, and was well liked, the child did not fit the perception of a victim, and the bullying was likely to be perceived as normal friendship behavior. Normalization of the behavior in the larger societal context also was a factor in the identification of bullying behavior, with children sometimes reporting bullying behavior that an adult viewed as a "normal part of growing up." The authors (2006) noted that when provided a definition of bullying including RA behaviors, girls were likely to reconsider an answer to reflect that they had been bullied. A previous study by Mishna (2004) comparing children's perspectives on victimization to parents and educator perspectives revealed 2 major themes of bullying. The first theme was confusion by children, parents, and educators in determining if an incident was bullying; the second theme was confusion about identifying behavior as bullying when the behavior occurred between friends (Mishna, 2004). Giles and Heyman (2005) found evidence that pre-school children have developed gendered beliefs about aggression. In a study with the use of storytelling about an aggressive incident, participants identified relationally aggressive characters as female and physically aggressive characters as males (Giles & Heyman, 2005). The same study (Giles & Heyman) found when the behavior crossed gender pre-school children were likely to distort the memory to be consistent with gender beliefs about aggression.

Prevalence of bullying. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), it is estimated that 160,000 children miss school each day in the United States because they fear intimidation and bullying at school (2005). A study of 192 children in

the rural Appalachian region of the United States found that 43% of the total population had experienced bullying at least two to three times per month during the previous three months (Dulmas et al., 2006). A study of 575 students 11-15 years of age in Sheffield, England found that the 44% of students reported being victims of bullying or witnessing bullying (Nabuzoka et al., 2009). An earlier study (Seals & Young, 2003) on the prevalence of bullying and victimization found that of 454 students between 12 -17 years of age, 45% of seventh graders and 42% of eighth graders reported involvement "often" in bullying with seventh graders as more involved than eighth graders (Seals & Young). In addition, 109 students reported direct involvement in bullying: 10% bullied others at least once a week, 13% reported being victimized at least once per week, and 1% reported being bullied and bullying at least once per week (Seals & Young).

Method of bullying. Nabuzoka et al. (2009) determined that a large percentage of secondary school children are exposed to bullying, and they are exposed to overt aggression more frequently than RA. It was also determined that girls were more likely to be victims of RA than boys (Giles et al., 2005; Nabuzoka et al., 2009) which contradicts other research that indicates boys and girls are equally likely to experience RA (Tomada & Schneider, 1997; Card et al., 2008). Carbone-Lopez et al. (2010) found that girls are significantly more likely than boys to experience indirect aggression and more likely to be repeat victims. An explanation for this disparity may be contained in the definition of bullying used for research.

As indicated previously, as the SIP of the child matures, the aggressive child relies on the subtle RA to reach their goals, as opposed to the more obvious and less socially acceptable overt or instrumental aggression (Crick & Dodge, 1996).

Bully, victim, and bystander response to bullying. Social learning theory would suggest that children who view bullying would model that behavior (Bandura, 1973); in other words, children who view overt aggression would have a higher risk of becoming overtly aggressive and children who view RA would be more likely to model that behavior. It may not be possible for a child to retaliate directly against a rumor or gossip; therefore, they may be more likely to respond in indirect ways (Waasdorp, 2011). Research by Waasdorp (2011) indicated that typical responses to frequent bullying include the most frequent response of ignoring the bullying behavior, boys responding in a physically aggressive manner while girls were responding in a verbally aggressive manner, and seeking assistance from friends or adults.

Bollmer et al. (2006) conducted a study on reactions to peer victimization and bullying. Participants included 99 children (50 male, 49 female) between the ages of 10 and 13 in the area of Lexington, Kentucky. The procedure included physiological recordings of the child narratives of bullying and victimization, structured interviews, and parental questionnaires including the Big 5 measure of personality. The authors (2006) found that children who bully minimize the negative effect to the victim, feel less guilt about their behavior than non-bullies, report a sense of enjoyment from the behavior, and even portray the bullying behavior as positive in some way (Bollmer et al., 2006). The

author concluded that intervention programs designed to assist the bully to behave in a kinder manner might not be effective because of the bully personality characteristics and the internal positive reinforcement received as a result of bullying (Bollmer et al.).

Bollmer et al. (2006) found that on the Big 5 traits victims of bullying rated low on Conscientiousness and high on Neuroticism. The authors (2006) indicated that victims were judged to harbour much anger against their aggressors and hold grudges which may also correlationally contribute to continued victimization. Bollmer et al. (2006) found that when victims relate stories of bullying they demonstrate negative affect, as well as, physical indicators of stress and anger at their perpetrator. It was also determined that the child who responds physically with distress to a bullying attack will increase the frequency, duration, and severity of attacks (Bollmer et al., 2006).

Research by Mishna, Pepler, and Wiener (2006) suggest that bystanders, including teachers and parents, are not likely to intervene in a situation involving RA because they may not recognize it as bullying, the victim is not acting in a manner consistent with their perception of victimization, the behavior is viewed as normal, and RA was viewed as representative of girls' personalities. The authors (2006) also found that there was a lack of school policy and guidelines in how to intervene with RA which furthered hampered the likelihood of intervention, as opposed to the clear policies and intervention guidelines regarding physical aggression. Jacobsen and Bauman (2007) found that school counselors had the least amount of empathy for victims of RA and were the least likely to intervene in RA as opposed to physical or verbal aggression.

Intervention Programs

Prevention programs have evolved since the 1980's from those that targeted the more obvious and observable instrumental aggression which also combined the data for sexes, to the current research examining the more covert and difficult to observe RA characterized as female only or majority female population. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is the prototype for prevention programs in the school systems of the countries of Japan, Ireland, United Kingdom, Holland, and Finland. It was developed to address overt or instrumental aggression. In the early 1990's, Dr. Susan Limber of Clemson University and Dr. Dan Olweus collaborated to implement the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in the United States. Despite the development and implementation of many bullying prevention programs in the United States, as well as other countries, it was noted that as of 2003 very few of the programs had an RA component (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Waasdorp (2011) suggests that the most effective programs should be developmentally appropriate, for example, findings from research on middle school bullying indicate that children are likely to seek help from parents and adults. This would imply that intervention programs should include a heavy emphasis on the role adults play in intervention. Waasdorp (2011) also suggests that the majority of bullied children should ignore or walk away from a bullying situation. In a study to determine reactions and psychological adjustment of students age 11-15 years old exposed to bullying as a victim or bystander, Nabuzoka et al. (2009) concluded that sex is a factor in determining the type of intervention strategy that would be most effective as well as guide the anti-

bullying and coping strategies of the intervention program. Cunningham et al. (2010) suggest that students should be consulted in the designing of prevention strategies and intervention programs as they have the information and perspective to contribute to programs that work. As recognition of the distinct forms of aggression increased, programs expanded to include intervention for RA.

Programs focused on instrumental aggression. One of the first bullying intervention programs was developed by Dr. Dan Olweus in response to 3 teen suicides in Norway. At the time, it was believed that girls rarely bullied and, therefore, the research data was combined for the sexes (Olweus, 2003). The program addressed instrumental aggression with a multi-level approach: individual, classroom, and school levels (Salmivalli et al., 2005). The first large-scale implementation of the program was in Bergen, Norway. The follow-up data revealed that it was an overall effective program in Bergen, yet the data yielded mixed results on the effectiveness in other European cities (Salmivalli et al.). The three-level system became the model for additional prevention programs in other European cities and countries such as Sheffield, England; Seville, Spain; and the Dutch and Finnish school systems (Salmivalli et al.).

Leff et al. (2001) reviewed the research design and effectiveness of five programs that addressed violence in elementary school using a broad definition typical of instrumental aggression but including both sexes. Programs reviewed included: First Step to Success, Second Step, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), Anger Coping Program, and Brain Power Program. The following dimensions of the programs

were evaluated: (a) general description and overview of the program, participants, and facilitators; (b) research design; (c) outcome evaluation; (d) critique including strengths and weaknesses of each program including generalizability, appropriateness for boys and girls, and longitudinal and replication efforts (Leff et al., 2001). The overall critique detailing weaknesses for each program indicated that the broad definition of violence did not specifically address RA; therefore, the programs were more effective for boys than girls (Leff et al., 2001).

Bullybusters is a psychoeducational intervention program designed for intervention of overt aggression at the system level (Bell, Raczynski, & Horne, 2010). The program addresses bullying behavior by training teachers to recognize aggression and then to intervene effectively in the bullying dyad (Bell, Raczynski, & Horne). Results on the effectiveness of the program are mixed: teachers report a decrease in bullying and an increase in efficacy in the intervening in a bullying situation while students report both an increase and a decrease in bullying (Bell, Raczynski, & Horne). The mixed results of effectiveness were hypothesized to be the outcome of more teacher efficacy in intervening jading accurate analysis, vested interest in the outcome of the project by teachers, student misrepresentation on outcome surveys, and bully dyadic relationships that were fixed and "normalized" by the end of the academic year (Bell, Raczynski, & Horne).

Steps to Respect (STR) is a multiyear bullying prevention program addressing overt bullying with teacher implemented lesson plans and coaching of the application of

the learned anti-bullying behaviors. Hirschstein et al. (2007) examined the student

outcomes of the program. Mixed results indicated a rise in reported victimization by the

participants, but no increase in bullying behaviors observed on the playground. It was

hypothesized by the researchers that education about bullying may increase student

awareness of a wider range of bullying behavior including RA and, therefore, increase

reporting (Hirschstein et al.).

   Programs focused on relational aggression. Stephen Leff, Tracy Waasdorp, and

Nicki Crick (2010) reviewed the research design and effectiveness of nine programs that

addressed RA in elementary school. Programs reviewed included: Early Childhood

Friendship Project, You Can't Say You Can't Play, I Can Problem Solve, Walk Away,

Ignore, Talk, Seek Help (WITS), Making Choices: Social Problem Skills for Children

(MC), Friend to Friend (F2F), Second Step, Social Aggression Prevention Program

(SAPP), Sisters of Nia (Leff et al., 2010). The following dimensions of the programs

were evaluated: (a) general description and overview of the program with the inclusion of

a manual, target population, and outcome measures; (b) clarity of causal inferences

including a well-controlled experimental study; and (c) generalizability of findings (Leff

et al.). The programs reviewed revealed the promise of future research directions and also

revealed that effective programs targeting RA must take into account important

developmental, cultural, sex of the participant, and contextual considerations (Leff et al.).

The authors (2010) indicated that intervention programs addressing RA are still in

infancy; that it is imperative to intervene early in school as RA becomes more

sophisticated and thus harder to detect as the child develops; RA takes different forms by sex, and thus the development of sex appropriate programs should be explored; despite the fact that relational aggressors may exhibit poor peer relationships, they are often viewed as powerful and influential within the peer group and programs should include a prosocial leadership component; that RA may have elements of instrumental aggression that also need to be addressed, and that the success of a program depends on the inclusion of school personnel, parents, community leaders, and other relevant adults leaders (Leff et al.).

Charisse Nixon (2010) explored the effectiveness of the Creating a Safe School: Ophelia Project (CASS) whole school intervention program in the middle school system. CASS was created specifically to decrease RA (RA) and victimization (RV) by raising awareness of RA, building empathy, and addressing normative beliefs about RA (Nixon, 2010). Intervention is designed to include all roles in the bullying triad, administrators and teachers (Nixon). Students are trained as mentors to younger students in methods to handle RA or RV. CASS follows the basic guideline of the Olweus program which targets individual behavior, the classroom environment, and the school climate in the effort to implement the program. The results were clear that, for those who pre-tested at high levels of RA and RV, the levels decreased (Nixon). The results for those who pre-tested at low levels of RA and RV reported a small increase in RA and RV (Nixon). The assessment of the program is that CASS is effective in reducing RA for middle-school students who are already aggressive but is less effective in reducing aggression for

middle-school students who demonstrate average amounts of aggressive behavior (Nixon).

Methods Review

The literature clearly demonstrates that there is a substantial body of research on bullying but existing research is more focused on male bullying than female bullying and research currently favors quantitative versus qualitative methods. It is also evident that the quantitative tools to measure bullying assess the male style of bullying. The Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ) was developed to address instrumental aggression and was based on a predominantly male sample the results from which were generalized to female respondents (Olweus, 1993). There is no research supporting the construct reliability or validity of the OBVQ (Olweus). The revised OBVQ (1996) added questions on RA and has been determined to be reliable and valid using Rasch modeling (Kyriakides, Kaloyirou, & Lindsey, 2006). The Revised OBVQ measures two aspects of bullying, the extent to which the child bullies others and the extent to which a child is victimized. The Revised OBVQ also has assessments for the three main forms of bullying: physical, verbal, and indirect bullying (Kyriakides et al., 2006). Additional quantitative methods for studying bullying include peer and teacher nominations, self-nominations, and use of The Direct and Indirect Aggression Scales (DIAS) which has measurements for physical, verbal, and indirect aggression (Osterman et al.,1998, Owens et al., 2000).

The majority of research on bullying is conducted through the use of surveys and instruments such as the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ). There is some evidence that suggests that qualitative assessments of bullying, such as verbal interviews with children, can be a useful method for gathering additional information to understand the complexities of bullying (Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener, 2006). Children's perceptions were explored by Mishna et al. (2006) in a qualitative study of 4th and fifth graders. Interviewed children reported that they perceived behavior to be bullying when the incident matches their definition of bullying, when the victim "acts" like a victim, and when the individual expectations of friendship behavior are violated (Mishna et al.); which are areas not explored in the Revised OBVQ. The use of qualitative questions can be: a complement to the information gleaned from quantitative assessments (Mishna et al.); clarification for terms not fully understood by the respondent; explored as reasons for reported prevalence and developmental discrepancies in quantitative research, and a method to capture the subtleties of behavior not easily captured through the written word.

The choice to study a population of third grade, fifth grade, and seventh grade girls was guided by research indicating there is a difference by age/grade in the recognition, definition, method, and prevalence of bullying (Monks & Smith, 2006; Frisen et al., 2008; Vaillancourt et al., 2008). Research indicates that: third-grade girls are at a point when RA becomes evident; that fifth-grade girls are the most likely to report RA (Esbensen, & Carson, 2009) and that bullying peaks in middle school (Edmondson & Zeman, 2009). Research indicates that the age of the girl effects the understanding of the

criteria for defining bullying, with middle school girls more likely to apply the criteria of repeated incidences, an imbalance of power, and harm than younger girls (Frisen et al.).

Current research indicates the accepted definition of bullying has posed difficulties in assessing the changes in bullying behavior by grade (age) as well as determining the prevalence of bullying, methods of bullying, and the response to bullying. The accepted criteria for the behavior to be assessed as bullying includes repeated incidences, an imbalance of power, and harm (Olweus, 1993). This causes some confusion for the Respondent based on age, with younger students likely to include overt aggression in their definition but not covert or RA (Smith et al., 2002; Monks & Smith, 2006; Villancourt et al., 2008). Students, in general, tend to disregard the repeated incidence criteria and the intent to harm criteria in their definition (Esbensen & Carson, 2009; Villancourt et al.). There is also some discrepancy by students in the identification of an imbalance of power as a criterion for bullying, particularly if power is defined by the student as being older (Chan, 2009). Research indicates most bullying occurs by the same age individuals (Chan). Older students are more likely to identify an imbalance of power as a component to bullying than younger students (Chan; Villancourt et al.). Other research suggests that girls likely consider power imbalance and intention of harm but not repeated incidences as part of their definition of bullying (Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener, 2006).

In addition to the three generally accepted criteria for the definition of bullying, qualitative research (Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener, 2006) indicates that there is a subjective

component to the definition of bullying. This component includes that the bullying

behavior matches the individual's perception of what bullying and victimization behavior

look like and whether the person involved is considered to be a friend. Monks and Smith

(2006) found that the definition of bullying is contingent upon the respondents'

experience: that of bullying others or as a victim of bullying. Those who have been

aggressive tend not to identify aggressive behavior as bullying, and those who have been

victimized are more likely to identify aggressive behavior as bullying (Monks & Smith,

2006). Research suggests that girls may consider the victims' experience of bullying as a

criterion to the definition of bullying (Frisen et al., 2008) which is not part of the

accepted definition of bullying as presented by Olweus (1993). The accepted definition of

bullying, particularly RA, continues to provide difficulties for research and that difficulty

includes the areas of the method of bullying, prevalence and course of bullying, and

responses to bullying.

There is evidence that suggests that the prevalence of bullying, as well as the type

of bullying, may be effected by the maturing of the child's SIP as well as the maturing of

verbal skills (Crick & Dodge, 1996; Leff et al., 2010; Young et al., 2011). The maturation

process could change the type of bullying from the more easily identifiable overt

aggression of the very young to the more sophisticated and less obvious RA of older

students (Young et al.). Therefore, prevalence reports would be skewed toward higher

bullying reporting of the young and lower reporting for older students. Further

complicating the data on the prevalence of bullying is research indicating that as children

mature, they are less likely to report incidences of bullying (Frisen et al., 2008). Esbensen and Carson (2009) report that providing the student with a behaviorally specific definition for bullying increased the reported prevalence of bullying as opposed to using the generic "bullying" term. The Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire provides a behaviorally specific definition for the term (Olweus, 1996), and an interview could further clarify that definition to accommodate developmental and perspective differences in interpretation of behavior by the respondents.

There are several options of response to the bully for the victim. Waasdorp and Bradshaw (2011) identified four common patterns with the largest number of children responding by ignoring or walking away from the bully. The three remaining response categories include seeking support from an adult, responding aggressively to the bully, and internalizing the messages of the bully. The last category of internalizing the message included the children most likely to experience socio-emotional problems and more likely to experience RA (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2011). Research suggests that the majority of children are not likely to report incidences of bullying, but when they do report, it is most likely to a teacher (Frisen et al., 2008). Children also report that they are not likely to receive help when bullying is reported, but if help is offered it is generally offered by a teacher, school nurse, or another adult at school (Frisen et al.). Mishna et al. (2006) found that the majority of bullied students did not report the bullying to a parent for fear that the parent could make the situation worse for them and that their peers would dislike them. Other research results indicate that children are not likely to report bullying because of a

feeling of powerlessness, the victim blaming themselves for the bully's behavior, and because of a fear of losing the friendship of the bully (Mishna et al., 2006).

The teacher response to bullying presents some further challenges. Most teachers report that it is difficult to sort out what has occurred if they did not witness the bullying incident which makes it difficult to determine who is credible in their version of the bullying incident: the reported victim or the reported bully (Mishna et al., 2006). Children do not often report incidences of bullying to their parents, but when they do, parents struggle to intervene because of the difficulty defining typical friendship conflict versus bullying (Mishna et al.). Later research by Mishna, Wiener, and Pepler (2008) expanded on the difficulty that teachers, parents, and the victim have of assessing and intervening in bullying situations involving friends. Additional research indicates that the response to bullying varies by age/grade and sex; younger students that witness bullying are more likely than older students to report the incident to school personnel and also are more likely to take positive action (Trach et al., 2010).Girls across all age ranges were more likely to align with the victim of bullying than were boys, but this decreased with age (Trach et al.).

Chapter Summary

Bullying and the bullying consequences have a wide-ranging effect on society, as precursors to: school shootings (Pies, 2007), suicide (Klomek, Sourander, & Gould, 2010), eating disorders (Sweetingham & Waller, 2008; Fosse & Holen, 2006), low self-esteem, substance abuse (Fosse & Holen; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Arseneault et al.,

2010), aggressive adult behaviors in the workplace (Harvey et al., 2006; Crothers et al., 2009), criminal behavior (Olweus, 1994, 2003), and domestic violence (Pepler et al., 2006). Bullying not only occurs at school but extends to neighborhoods and the internet in the form of cyberbullying. Not enough is known about cyberbullying at this point and thus cyberbullying will not be included in this work.

The theoretical perspectives applied to understanding aggressive and bullying behavior for this dissertation were: Albert Bandura's sociocultural/social learning perspective; John Darley's and Bibb Latane's research on bystander effect; Kenneth Dodge's SIP theory and Nicki Crick and Kenneth Dodge's reformulated SIP theory.

Bullying research has been conducted at least since 1983 with the seminal research of Dr. Dan Olweus in Norway and leading to research in the 1990's in the United States as a result of the school shootings. With most research, the focus has been on males with relatively little emphasis on female bullying. The development of the most used measurement tool, the Bully/Victim questionnaire, and the most widely implemented intervention program, the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program evolved out of that male-focused research.

There is very little that is known about the outcomes for female victims of bullying and female bullies. In addition to the societal implications discussed above for bullying of and by both sexes, research suggests outcomes of bullying for the female victim may also include: higher rates of adult mental health issues (Gibb et al., 2011), social anxiety, social avoidance, and psychological distress, which may negatively impact

academic and social performance in school (Storch, Brassard, & Masia, 2003), and risk factors for involvement in dating aggression, sexual harassment, workplace harassment, elder abuse (Pepler et al., 2006), and suicide (Klomek, Sourander, & Gould, 2010). Less is known about the outcomes for the female bully but what is known is that they have more chance of future adjustment difficulties (Crick, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Research suggests that various factors within the home and family as well as within the school environment may contribute to bullying and victimization. The research combines data for boys and girls. Factors within the home and family include high levels of family conflict, harsh punishment, coercive parenting, lack of parental responsiveness (Merrell, et al., 2006; Holt, Kantor, & Finklehor, 2009); and a lack of parental supervision and time spent with the child, access to guns, and negative peer influences (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000). Administrator behavior is the single most significant factor in the development of bullying and unsafe environments within the school system (Hurford et al., 2010). Those behaviors include administration modeling of bullying behavior or acceptance of bullying behavior, expressions of favoritism for particular groups or individual students, and inconsistently applying consequences for the breaking of rules (Hurford et al.).

Male and female bullies and victims share some similarities in the background, such as fractured family relationships, but have many differences in personality characteristics. Individual characteristics for the male bully most clearly resemble the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (APA, 2000) category of conduct

disorder (APA, 2000). Female bullies do not cleanly fit into this category, however, similar to male bullies they are socially adept which facilitates the support of peers in their bullying behavior (Card et al., 2008). Victims of bullying tend to be anxious, have poor social skills, and have experienced negative family relationships (Janson, 2011; Cook et al., 2010; Cassidy, 2009). The research data for boys and girls is generally combined, however, a surprising result of research by DeBruyn, Cillessen, and Wissink (2009) suggests that a difference between male and female victimization is that of likability. As the likability of the boy increases, the likelihood of being bullied decreases whereas girls on either end of the spectrum of likability were vulnerable to becoming a victim of bullying. The third category of children who were once bullied and then became bullies is referred to as *bully/victims*. Children in this category generally have characteristics similar to the victim but respond to bullying in an aggressive manner; the school shooters fit this category. Research on the female bully/victim indicates that girls will more likely cover their bullying behavior by claiming to be the victim and by justifying their bullying as self-defense (Edmondson & Zeman, 2009).

Girls were the focus for this study based on the research that indicates RA is more typical of girls than boys, there is little likelihood of girls crossing the gender barrier in their aggressive behaviors, and there is only a slight possibility that girls will use physical aggression against other girls (Ostrav & Keating, 2004). The variables explored include the grade in school as it relates to the amount of bullying, the definition of bullying, the method of bullying, and the bystander response to bullying. Previous

research indicates that RA is relatively stable over time (Crick et al., 1996; Crick, 2006).

Other research suggests that as the SIP system of the child matures they become more

adept at RA as it is more socially acceptable than physical aggression (Crick & Dodge,

1996; Leff, Waasdorf, & Crick, 2010). The research suggests that the three elements of

bullying: negative actions, a disparity of power, and repeated incidences (Olweus, 1993),

is not necessarily understood by children. Younger children are likely to report any

aggressive behavior by others as bullying (Monks & Smith, 2002; Vaillancourt et al.,

2008); 8-year-olds are likely to consider an act to be bullying only if it involves overt

aggression (Smith et al., 2002), and students in grade 5 and 6 are the most likely to

identify acts of RA as bullying (Smith et al.; Russell et al., 2010). Older students are the

most likely to apply the three required elements in the definition of bullying which may

be an explanation as to why bullying behavior seems to decrease over time (Smith et al.).

The amount of bullying experienced by schoolchildren is reported to be from 42% to

45% (Dulmas et al., 2006; Nabuzoka et al., 2009; Seals & Young, 2003); however, the

criterion to define bullying is unclear. The American Psychological Association (APA)

reports that 160,000 children a day miss school because of fear of being bullied (2005),

but it is not known how many children attend school but have the same fear. Research on

the method of bullying is contradictory. Nabuzoka et al. (2009) found that younger

children are more likely to be exposed to overt aggression and that girls rather than boys

are more likely to be victims of RA (Nabuzoka et al., 2009). A contradictory finding by

Card et al. (2008) found that boys and girls equally experience RA (Card et al., 2008).

Again, an explanation for the disparity may be contained in the definition of bullying

used for research. Waasdorp (2011) found that the typical victim response to bullying

was to ignore the behavior with the next most likely to respond in an aggressive manner,

then to seek assistance from peers or adults. Bollmer et al. (2006) found that bullies may

minimize the distress they cause their victims, portray the bullying behavior as somewhat

heroic, experience a sense of enjoyment from the bullying, and tend not to experience

guilt about their behavior. Bollmer et al. (2006) also found that victims of bullying

express much anger toward their aggressor and have physical indicators of stress and

anger at their attacker, which may increase the frequency, duration, and severity of the

attack.

The primary research on bullying was conducted by Dr. Dan Olweus in Norway

(1983). From that research, the Olweus Bullying Prevention program was developed. It

has proven to be effective in reducing bullying (Salmivalli et al., 2005; Olweus, 1993),

however, it primarily targets instrumental aggression. Björkqvist, Lagerspetz, and

Kaukiainen (1992) investigated aggression with the use of The Direct and Indirect

Aggression Scales (DIAS) in a group of male and female Finnish students ages 8, 11, and

15 years-old. The authors found that indirect aggression was the most likely aggressive

style used by girls across age and ethnicity while it was the least likely form of

aggression used by boys (1992). As research on bullying increased, additional programs

were developed that targeted not only instrumental aggression but also RA. A review of

the effectiveness of prevention programs that address overt aggression (Leff et al., 2001)

determined that the programs were much more effective for boys than girls; it was also found that teachers and administrators were a critical component to intervention strategies and that bullying dyads tend to become normalized by the end of the school year decreasing the likelihood of inclusion in the data (Bell, Raczynski, & Horne, 2010). Research assessing intervention programs that target RA are still evolving but stress that the intervention must take into account sex among other variables, intervention must occur in the early years as the behavior becomes more sophisticated and less recognizable by others over time, the intervention must also include addressing of instrumental aggression, and the success of the program depends on the inclusion of school personnel, parents, community leaders, and the involvement of other relevant adult leaders (Leff, Waasdorf, & Crick, 2010).

The review of the literature guided the decision on the qualitative method of investigation. The qualitative method is a series of interview questions designed to supplement and expand the knowledge base about bullying acquired from quantitative methods such as the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ; 1996), and peer and teacher nomination instruments. Previous qualitative research on relational/indirect aggression has included focus group and individual interviews and has focused on teen girls (Owens, Shute, & Slee, 2000). Valuable information has been gathered from the use of focus groups, however, as the focus group may include bullies who could influence the expressions of others in the group (bystander effect), the method of data collection for this qualitative study was individual interviews. Girls in grades 3, 5

and 7 were the population of interest with a focus on the recognition and definition of bullying, the method of bullying, how age/grade effects bullying, and the response to bullying.

Gap in the Research

Despite the implementation of bullying prevention programs in public schools beginning in kindergarten, bullying behavior persists and even peaks in middle school (APA, 2005; Nansel et al., 2001). RA in school-age children is by its very nature more difficult to assess than overt aggression (Merrell et al., 2006). The research on bullying focuses on the overt style, often referred to as physical aggression, typical of male bullying and thus combines data from both sexes. Etiology and long-term results of physical aggression are well-researched and documented; however, little is known about the definition, amount, long-term consequences, and development of RA, which is more typical of girls, from the female perspective. What is known about RA is that it is more covert and less likely to be noticed than physical aggression. The covert nature of RA by girls makes it more difficult to study (Owen et al., 2000b) and hence to develop effective bullying intervention programs.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

A review of the literature on bullying indicated that there is both a lack of research and conflicting results of existing research data on female bullying, specifically RA. The purpose of this study was to expand on the existing research by exploring the definition, development, and response to female bullying and RA from the perspective of girls, which will add to the body of knowledge that addresses this particular form of bullying. This study had a qualitative design informed by the phenomenological tradition, and focused on the participant opinion, not lived experience of bullying or RA.

This chapter includes the qualitative research design for exploring female bullying and RA in elementary and middle school (see Figure 1). This chapter begins with a detailed description of the design of the study, including the proposed research questions, the central concept of the study, and the research tradition. It also includes a section on the role of the researcher. The methodology portion of the chapter includes a description of the sample population, the instrumentation, and the data analysis. The Issues of Trustworthiness section of the chapter includes ethical concerns such as credibility and transferability, as well as ethical procedures. The chapter concludes with a summary of the information.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Questions

The following were the primary questions explored in this study:

1. In the opinion of girls, what behaviors are considered to be bullying?

2. What is the opinion of girls regarding how bullying or relational aggression changes as girls get older?

3. What is the opinion of girls about how targets and others respond to bullying or relational aggression?

4. What is the opinion of girls regarding what happens if a girl is caught bullying?

5. What is the opinion of girls regarding what happens to the target of bullying or relational aggression if she reports the behavior to an adult?

Figure 1.

Goals
Expand on existing bullying research
Add to the body of knowledge that addresses female relational aggression
Assist in the development of intervention strategies and programs
Decrease relational aggression

Theoretical & Conceptual Framework

Social Learning perspective

Research on the bystander effect

Social Information processing Theory

Research Questions

In your opinion, what behaviors by girls are considered to be bullying?
In your opinion, how do bullying behaviors by girls change as girls get older?
In your opinion, how do girls, targets and others, respond to bullying?
In your opinion, what happens if a girl is caught bullying?
In your opinion, what happens to the target of bullying if she reports it?

Method

Qualitative research
Phenomenological perspective
Social Constructivist wordview
Semi-structured Interviews
3ʳ, 5ᵗ, & 7ᵗ grade girls
Data Saturation
Moustakis data analysis approach

Issues of Trustworthiness

Journaling of research experiences
Bracketing of presuppositions about relational aggression
Collecting of "rich" data
Recording of interviews
Respondent validation/ peer review
Triangulation of sources, methods, and materials

Representation of the interconnectedness of major areas of qualitative research on relational aggression/bullying. The research questions are central to the decision of significant goals, theoretical and conceptual framework application, the method of exploration, and issues of trustworthiness of the researcher and the research.

The previous research of Mishna, Pepler, and Wiener (2008), with the use of qualitative interview questions, have helped to clarify the respondent's definition of RA/bullying for a complete understanding of existing research on female RA/bullying. An exploration of bullying from the female perspective can clarify the confusing and contradictory results from previous female bullying studies. The intent of the current research questions was to add to existing research so as to clarify knowledge of RA/bullying. The research questions assisted me in exploring the definition, development, and response to female bullying and RA from the objective opinion, not the subjective lived experience, of girls which expands on the existing research which is primarily quantitative.

Research Tradition and Rationale

Following the guidelines of Creswell (2007), I decided to use qualitative research that is informed by the phenomenological tradition and within a social constructivist worldview for this study. Qualitative research is a particular method of inquiry that relies on research in the natural setting and on the use of words for data as opposed to the quantitative focus on numbers (Creswell, 1998). There are typically fewer participants in qualitative studies because they explore a phenomenon or social problem through depth and detail in the information or responses given by the participants (Creswell, 1998). The researcher is the instrument of data collection and focuses, through interviews, on understanding the research topic from the perspective of the participants (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative research was an appropriate method of inquiry for this study because

quantitative methods do not appear to explain RA/bullying sufficiently. Using a qualitative method of gathering data from the ground up as told from the girls' points of view will, following the ideas presented by Creswell (1998), allow for a fuller description, explanation, and hopefully a clarification of this point of view.

The phenomenological tradition seeks to understand the meaning of an experience or phenomena and focuses on the lived experience of the individual (Creswell, 1998). This study was informed by the phenomenological tradition but did not seek the participants' experiences of bullying and RA. Rather, my goal was to understand the personal perspectives and opinions of the participants on the issue of bullying and RA.

The phenomenological tradition relies on the ability of participants to describe their experiences in detail, which may contribute to a universal meaning of the essence of the experience (Creswell, 1998). The ability of the participants to describe their opinions and perceptions on bullying and RA was intended to provide an understanding of the essence of female opinions and perceptions of the issue. The exploratory nature of the research questions for this study and the need to understand the participants' opinions and perceptions of bullying/RA were designed to enhance existing knowledge about bullying/RA. The design of the study follows the ethical guidelines of using children as participants. These factors make the selection of the influence of the phenomenological tradition, but not a true phenomenological study, appropriate for this study. My intent was to examine the participant opinion and perception of female aggression/bullying in general, not to examine the lived experience of being personally involved in bullying.

There are typically four worldviews or philosophical assumptions that provide a basis for qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method research (Creswell, 2007). The worldviews are constructivism, advocacy and participatory, post-positivism, and pragmatism. Constructivism and advocacy and participatory worldviews are generally associated with qualitative research, while post-positivism is more likely to be associated with quantitative research. Pragmatism is typically associated with mixed method research (Creswell).

The underlying worldview for this study was constructivism, specifically a social constructivist worldview. The social constructivist worldview purports that individuals try to understand the world in which they live by constructing meaning that correlates to their subjective experience, which occurs through social interaction with others (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The social constructivist worldview was, therefore, appropriate for this study, which attempted to understand the experience of adolescent girls from their perspectives, in their words, and from their self-constructed realities.

Creswell (1998) indicates that there are five basic assumptions within each philosophical assumption that guide the design of all qualitative studies. The assumptions are categorized as ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological, and all assumptions were present in this study. The ontological assumption is concerned with the nature of reality (Creswell, 1998); which in this study, were the observations about female bullying as told from the female point of view. The epistemological assumption focuses on the relationship of the researcher to what is being

studied (Creswell, 1998); for this study this encompassed the recording of responses from participants to the research questions in the interviewing process. The axiological assumption is focused on understanding the role of the researcher's values to the study (Creswell, 1998); for this study I have attempted to identify my values and biases regarding female bullying and to understand how these values and biases may affect the overall interpretation of the observations of the participants. The rhetorical assumption is concerned with the personal voice of the researcher in reporting the study (Creswell, 1998). Creswell (1998) indicated that a qualitative researcher uses specific terminology, writes in a personal voice, and that the definition of terms evolves throughout the study. I was aware of my rhetorical tendencies as I conducted and reported this study. The methodological assumption focuses on the entire design or conceptualization of the study by inductively developing categories from participant information rather than specifying the categories in advance, and by paying attention to the meaning of the individual statements before developing clusters of similarity (Creswell, 1998). I recorded each interview by audiotape; I attempted to understand the meanings of the statements and observations and then grouped the statements into themes that emerged.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in qualitative studies is that of the conductor of research as well as that of a participant in the research process (Maxwell, 2005). The researcher becomes an active participant when conducting research, and the research relationships that are formed are essential to that process (Maxwell, 2005). There is a reciprocal

relationship between researcher and participant where each has an impact on the other. The researcher becomes a part of the social world being studied, a concept referred to as *reflexivity* (Maxwell, 2005). I was aware that not only did I affect the participants in this study by being the instrument of research but that the participants also affected me. My role as a qualitative researcher was to conduct the interviews, transcribe the interviews, interpret the data, and present the findings of the study.

I collected the qualitative data through semi-structured interviews. My goal was to rely on the participants' opinion of RA/ bullying which required asking open-ended questions and carefully listening to the response of the participant. Following the ideas of Englander (2012), the response of the participant-guided the spontaneous follow-up questions of clarification by me as the researcher. The follow-up questions of the participant were, therefore, secondary to participant responses and focused on the phenomenon being studied (Englander), opinions of female bullying/RA. The interview was audiotaped to refresh me of content and to track follow-up questions and to ensure accurate representation of the data. The semi-structured interview questions explored the participant views of bullying including the definition, the method, the themes that emerged over time, and the response to bullying.

I brought my background and experiences to this study which, as Maxwell (2005) indicates, can lead to researcher bias and reactivity. My experiences as a student, social worker, teacher, parent of a teen girl, and as a woman have shaped my basic assumptions and biases about bullying. It is impossible to eliminate my experiences, but I attempted to

understand how my experiences influenced the conduct of the participants and the conclusions of the study and used the biases productively as opposed to negatively. I identified, reported, and monitored any biases which could have impacted the validity of the study by documenting my subjective experiences in a research journal to review with the use of reflection and introspection. To understand the phenomenon of the subjective experience of the participant, I had to *bracket* or set my presuppositions or previous experiences aside, as Creswell (1998) suggested, about female bullying and RA and focused on the participant's opinion. The completion of research classes at the master's and doctoral level as well as reading the literature on the topic highlighted the need to manage biases and assumptions in an objective manner. I made every effort to ensure objectivity in the research process and managed personal biases with an acknowledgment that each may shape the way the data was collected and interpreted. To further ensure the management of assumptions and biases, respondent validation or member checking, Rich Data or verbatim transcripts of interviews, and peers checking the data was utilized, as well as keeping a journal.

I had no known conflict of interest or relationships of power to the proposed population of girls for this study. The proposed population was not a part of my current work environment, and incentives for participation were not used.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The initial intended participants in this study were girls in the third, fifth, and seventh grade, in College Place School District #250, elementary and middle school. Phenomenological studies require that the participants in the study have experienced the phenomenon being explored and can articulate their conscious experience (Creswell, 1998). As this study is informed by the phenomenological tradition but not a true phenomenological study, the phenomenon in this study is the opinion, not firsthand account or lived experience, about female bullying as told from the female point of view. The selection to study a population of third grade, fifth grade, and seventh grade girls was guided by research indicating there is a difference by age/grade in the recognition, definition, method, and prevalence of bullying (Monks & Smith, 2006; Frisen et al., 2008; Vaillancourt et al., 2008). Girls in the third grade are not yet practiced at RA and therefore more likely to rely on overt aggression as well as having a definition of bullying that includes any mean behavior (Crick & Dodge, 1996; Leff, Waasdorf, & Crick, 2010; Young, Nelson, Hottle, Warburton, & Young, 2011; Frisen et al); girls in the fifth grade are more likely to include RA in examples of bullying (Smith, Cowie, Olafsson, & Liefooghe, 2002) as well as recognize and report bullying (Esbensen, & Carson, 2009); and girls in middle school are most likely to apply the three criteria of repeated incidences, an imbalance of power, and harm (Frisen et al.) in defining bullying. Bullying peaks in middle school (Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, & Scheidt, 2001; APA,

2005; Nansel, Edmondson & Zeman, 2009) with girls in grade 7 more involved in bullying behavior than those in grade 8 (Seals &Young, 2003). Girls in the grades before third grade may not be developmentally able to articulate their conscious experience clearly, and those beyond grade 7 are outside the range of focus for this study.

Sampling strategy. The criteria for participation in this study was that the participant is female, in the third, fifth, and seventh grades, understands and speaks the English language, and has opinions on the phenomenon of female aggression/bullying. The specific opinions of the behaviors considered female aggression/bullying include the following: how female aggression/bullying changes as girls get older, how girls respond to female aggression/bullying, and what happens if a target reports female aggression/bullying. This purposeful sampling strategy also referred to as criterion-based selection (Maxwell, 2005), meant as Creswell (1998) suggests, that all participants in the study have opinions and perceptions about female bullying. There are at least four possible outcomes of this purposeful sampling strategy: that the participant's views adequately represent the average student in the targeted grades; the participant's views represent the entire range of views between the grades; and an illustration of the differences of views between the grades of the participants (Maxwell, 2005). The last outcome could be a disclosure by a participant of bullying which would be the extreme case. Because of ethical concerns, it was opinions and perceptions of bullying or RA not disclosures of firsthand experiences of bullying being sought; there was no goal of incorporating extreme cases or firsthand accounts of bullying or victimization into the

data. This information was clearly explained in age appropriate language to the

participants by me in the participant protocol. A protocol was established to address the

needs of the participant in cooperation with the appropriate personnel from the school

should such a disclosure be made by a participant.

Number of participants and rationale. Sample size with the use of semi-

structured interviews in the qualitative tradition is determined based on *data saturation*

which Creswell (1998) indicates is the point where there is no new additional data found.

There is no clear, pre-set number of interviews until that point is reached (Francis et al.,

2010). However, it is typically between 20-30 interviews, though it could be as few as 4-

10 interviews (Creswell, 1998). As girls in three grades were interviewed; I estimated

that saturation would be reached within ten interviews per grade totaling 30 interviews, or

a sample size of 30 participants.

Instrumentation

The interview was semi-structured with five main questions and follow-up

questions as they evolved (Appendix A). The participant was provided the Assent form

(Appendices D, E, F, & G) and the parent was provided the Consent forms well as

Appendix A, Sample Interview Questions for the pilot study as well as the main study.

Both parent and participant received a verbal explanation about the study including an

emphasis that it is opinions or perspectives about bullying, not firsthand accounts or

experiences of bullying that are a focus of the study. Following the ideas presented by

Creswell (2007), included in the Assent form and Consent form for both the pilot study

and the main study were explanations, both verbal (tape recorded) and in writing, of the

participant right to withdraw voluntarily at any point, the central purpose of the study,

protection of confidentiality, a statement of known risks for participating in the study, the

expected benefits of participation in the study, available mental health and school district

resources addressing bullying, and a signature line**.** The setting for the one-on-one

interviews was at the College Place Fire Department in a room designated as the

"Conference Room" which has good acoustics conducive to speaking and sharing ideas.

A tape recorder/audiotape was used to preserve the interview.

   I completed the Interview Tracking form (Appendix B) as the interview

progressed. The Interview Tracking form included five open-ended questions addressing

each of the research questions with space between each to write the responses. The

interview questions were researcher developed based on literature sources and directly

related to the research questions and the purpose of expanding on the existing research by

exploring the definition, development, and response to female RA. Content validity was

established by respondent validation or member checking, Rich Data or verbatim

transcripts of interviews, peers checking the data, as well as keeping a journal of

impressions and insights about the process.

Pilot Study

   To evaluate the effectiveness of the interview questions (See Appendix A) to

elicit the information to answer the research questions, I conducted a pilot study with a

select sampling of participants. The sample for this pilot study consisted of two third

grade girls. Research indicates the participants most likely to have difficulty with understanding the accepted definition of bullying that include the concepts of power imbalance, repeated incidences, and intent to harm, are students in the third grade (Crick & Dodge, 1996; Leff, Waasdorf, & Crick, 2010; Young, Nelson, Hottle, Warburton, & Young, 2011; Frisen et al). A pilot study assisted in identifying problems with the wording of the interview questions, identifying possible follow-up questions, and identifying and correcting any problems with the instrumentation or data collection technique. The predicted procedures for recruitment, participation, data collection were consistent with the main study.

Recruitment, Participation, Data Collection

Participants were identified through recruitment letters sent home to each parent of the female students in the selected grades (Appendix C) by the designated school on behalf of the researcher. An *Assent to Participate* form was signed by the student (Appendices D, E, F, & G) for the pilot study as well as the main study. A *Consent to Participate* form was explained to the parent and signed by the parent for the pilot study as well as the main study and returned to the researcher. At the time the Parent Consent was explained, sample interview questions embedded in the Consent and as Appendix A was presented for the parent to consider in determining whether their child should participate in the study. The *Assent to Participate* was read with the student and explained at the beginning of the interview. It was returned to the researcher after the participant signed it.

The data was collected by the researcher at the College Place Fire Department in a private room designated as a "Conference Room," was pre-scheduled with the parent, and lasted up to 2 hours. The interviews were scheduled at a time convenient to the participant, and that did not interfere with educational or other activities of the participant. The individual interviews were scheduled so as to preserve privacy and confidentiality of the participant. As the researcher, I was responsible for conducting the interview, transcribing the interview, interpreting the data, and presenting the findings of the study. This interview was a one-time event and lasted approximately 45 minutes to 2 hours. The target sample size to saturation was ten interviews per grade. As there were too few participants and the predicted saturation was not reached, an additional recruitment took place to increase the number of participants. I thanked each participant at the end of the interview for their participation and asked for permission to request follow-up information from them if need be. The parents and participants were provided a 1-2 page summary of the results of the study including contact information for the researcher to answer questions that arose.

Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis approach for phenomenology designed by Moustakis (1994) referred to as a modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method (Creswell, 1998) was used for this study. The approach is a seven step process for data analysis which includes data managing, reading and memoing, describing, classifying, interpreting, and representing (Creswell, 1998).

To manage the data, I created files and organized them on a continual basis as the study proceeded. I regularly journaled about my experiences this study as the study progressed. Memos can help with reflection on methods and research questions and can also assist with analytic thinking about data; it was an ongoing process throughout the collection and analyzing of the data (Maxwell, 2005). During listening to and transcribing the audio-taped interviews, I took notes and memos of my impressions of the data. I also read and reviewed my notes of the interviews and observations which helped me to develop tentative ideas about categories and relationships (Maxwell, 2005). This process was accomplished best by transcribing interviews, analyzing the data, and reviewing the notes and memos as they occurred rather than allowing the data to accrue to a quantity that was overwhelming which would have made the analysis more difficult to complete (Maxwell, 2005).

I began the analysis with a full description of my experience of the phenomenon based on the literature review, research, and personal observations. The descriptive process continued with a horizontalization of the participant data by individually listing each of the statements by the participants of the opinions and perceptions about female bullying with an equal value given to each statement. Textural description of the statements then occurred which is grouping the statements into units of similarity with a description of the texture of the experience addressing the question of "What Happened?" (Creswell, 1998). Coding is a process for organizing data with similar themes into categories that can be compared to develop theoretical concepts (Maxwell, 2005). I

continued with the coding process by anticipating the broad categories that I could

establish before the collection of the data based on my knowledge of the phenomenon

from the literature and research. These broad categories were descriptive in nature, not

explanatory, and provided a means of initially sorting data which was consistent with the

ideas of Maxwell (2005).

From the broad categories, five or six substantive or theoretical categories were

developed, as Maxwell (2005) suggests, which were not anticipated before data

collection and provided some explanation of the phenomenon. Theoretical categories are

abstract, based on the researcher perspective from prior theory (Maxwell, 2005). I

examined my description of the phenomenon by following Creswell's (1998) suggestions

and used an imaginative variation or considered the phenomenon from all meanings,

perspectives, and contexts and developed a description of my experience of the

researched phenomenon. Substantive categories are concrete and based on the

participants' words and can be used in developing a general theory (Maxwell, 2005). A

description of the meaning and essence of the opinion was formed followed by an

account of each participant. My descriptions as the researcher and the participant

descriptions were then combined to form a composite description of the opinions as

Creswell (1998) suggests. This connecting strategy of the participant and researcher

statements was an attempt to interpret and understand the data in context and to identify

the relationships that connected the statements and events into a coherent whole was used

to develop a theory as Maxwell (2005) indicates. The final phase of data analysis was to

represent what was found through a narration of experience and a visual representation such as a chart or table (Creswell, 1998). Software was not used for data analysis. Data that presented a contrary view to the established evidence (Creswell, 2007) could represent issues of validity in the qualitative data collection process. The management of discrepant cases occurred through member checking for an accurate reflection of the experience, peer checking, and reporting the discrepant cases in the final narrative as Creswell (2007) suggests.

I was attempting to expand the knowledge base of female bullying, and the research questions reflected that interest. To answer the research questions, the similarities and differences of the participant responses and the context of the responses was explored which required coding of the data, interpretation of the data, and presentation of the data with a connecting analysis strategy for the researcher and participant perspectives and a clear narrative and visual representation of the data as indicated by Creswell (1998).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Strategies for establishing verification and trustworthiness of the study, or determining if my interpretation of the data was accurate, included addressing Lincoln and Guba's (1985) concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and inter-coder and intra-coder reliability (Creswell, 1998). Specific strategies to minimize threats to the trustworthiness of the data were built into the study.

Credibility is the qualitative equivalent of the quantitative term of internal validity and is the extent to which the inferences connect to the sample population and inferences from the data are accurate (Creswell, 1998). Maxwell (2005) identifies two important threats to the credibility of a study; data collector bias and data collector characteristics (reflexivity). I identified, reported, and monitored any biases which could have an impact the validity of the study by documenting my subjective experiences in a research journal to review with the use of reflection and introspection. To understand the phenomenon from the subjective opinion of the participant, I set aside or *bracketed* my presuppositions or previous experiences about female bullying and RA as indicated by Creswell (1998) and focused on the participant's opinion. To handle reflexivity, I attempted to understand how my experiences influenced the conduct of the participants and the conclusions of the study. I had prolonged contact with each participant which allowed for the collecting of "rich" data. The recorded interviews allowed for review to determine detail and accuracy of the participant responses. Respondent validation or member checking and peer review of the data was utilized, as well as a journaling of impressions and observations. Interviews were conducted to the point of saturation when no new information was disclosed. The only source of information was from the interviews; thus, triangulation of information based on the review of the literature and theories was used for ensuring credibility.

Transferability is the qualitative equivalent of the quantitative term of external validity; the extent to which the information can be generalized to similar situations

(Creswell, 1998). As I interviewed a small, purposeful sample of participants in a single setting and event, external transferability is hard to determine. To increase the likelihood of transferability, I provided a 'rich' detailed description of the participants which allowed for the reader of the study to determine if the findings can be transferred because of shared characteristics to other settings as Creswell indicates (1998). Maxwell (2005) indicates that it is the theory rather than the results that are a priority in transferability of qualitative research.

Dependability and confirmability are determining if the findings of the study are supported by the data (Creswell, 1998). An independent external consultant, my dissertation committee, reviewed the findings. Confirmability or reflexivity was addressed by my acknowledgment of the influence that I had on the participants and influence the participants had on me as I conducted this study.

Ethical Procedures

The required permissions were completed including from Walden IRB (Approval #12 05 0306392) and the Fire Chief of the College Place Fire Department, David Winter (Appendix H). Parental consents and child assents (Appendices F, G, H, I) were also completed for each participant. The participants were treated with dignity and respect. Recruitment materials were preapproved by the IRB of both institutions.

I was seeking participants who have an ability to vocalize their opinions of female bullying clearly, not the lived experience of being bullied or bullying someone. I clearly stated this direction to the participant and the parent during the introduction and

explanation of the study in age-appropriate language to follow ethical guidelines addressing the risk of physical, psychological, social, and economic harm to participants. Data collection did not include specific individual cases but focused on the general ideas and opinions of the participants. I provided all participants and parents with a list of community resources and local therapists/counselors who treat bullying. Because I am not a mandated reporter in the state, had there been a disclosure of bullying, I would have informed the parent or guardian of the disclosure. The concern of recognition and victimization of the participants was addressed by conducting the interviews in a private room at a location where participants were not likely to be observed by classmates or peers. Interviews were scheduled for one participant at a time in 2-hour blocks of time with a 30-minute break scheduled between interviews and conducted at the convenience of the participant so as not to interfere with the educational process or other activities. I do not have a connection to the population other than as a researcher, however; this is a small community and the likelihood of a dual role with the participant at some time, such as if they become a college student where I am employed, is not an unreasonable possibility. I explained this to the participants so they could decide if they wanted to be excluded from participation in the study.

This study involved minors (under the age of 18) and needed to have full board review and documented parental consent and child assent. Anonymity was protected by masking the participant names for the final report. The Informed Consent and Assent and the interview protocol were explained in general terms and with full disclosure to each

participant including that they are participating in a study about female bullying with the purpose of others learning more about it. I did not use deception in the study. I informed participants that they could withdraw from the study at any point without penalty, their information would be protected, and confidentiality would be respected. The participants were informed that there might be some risk to them for participating in this research. Even though confidentiality safeguards were in place, they could have been recognized by someone or the questions may have brought up uncomfortable memories relating to a bullying incident. The benefits of participating were explained including an increase in knowledge of the topic on a societal level which can assist with recognition of female bullying and possible development of effective intervention strategies and programs. There was not any financial incentive or remuneration for participating in the study. I provided each parent with a 1-2 page summary of the completed study and provided my phone number should they have questions for me. I thanked them for their assistance with this project.

The data, including completed consent and assent forms, interview tapes and transcripts, personal notes, and journal were stored in a locked file in my home office. I did not use a computerized data analysis system, but any records stored on the computer had a backup copy made. The file is password protected. The Dissertation Committee members have access to the completed dissertation but not the independent data. The data will be destroyed after five years.

Summary

Included in this chapter is a proposal for the qualitative research design to address the central concept of increasing research information on female bullying, specifically on RA, in elementary and middle-school. The proposed research questions include the following:

1. In the opinion of girls, what behaviors are considered to be bullying?

2. What is the opinion of girls regarding how bullying or relational aggression changes as girls get older?

3. What is the opinion of girls about how targets and others respond to bullying or relational aggression?

4. What is the opinion of girls regarding what happens if a girl is caught bullying?

5. What is the opinion of girls regarding what happens to the target of bullying or relational aggression if she reports the behavior to an adult?

The psychological approach to qualitative research was used in this study informed by the phenomenological tradition and a social constructivist worldview (Creswell, 2007). Using a qualitative method of gathering data allowed for a fuller description, explanation, and hopefully a clarification of this phenomenon as indicated by Creswell (2007) than what is possible with quantitative research. The exploratory nature of the research questions for this study and the need to understand the participants' opinions and perceptions of bullying/RA influenced this study to be informed by the

phenomenological tradition, but not a true phenomenological study. The attempt to understand the opinion of the adolescent girl, in her words, and from her self-constructed reality meets the criteria for the social constructivist worldview as identified by Creswell and Clark (2007). Identification and methods of management of the basic assumptions of ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological that guided this study have been addressed in the final paragraph of the Research Tradition and Rationale section of the chapter.

My role as a qualitative researcher was to conduct the interview, transcribe the interview, interpret the data, and present the findings of the study. Factors that affected that process include *reflexivity*. In managing the bias that can be a result of *reflexivity* and my background and experiences, there was a focus on the participant opinion, an awareness of the impact of listening skills, audio-taping of the semi-structured interviews, and *bracketing*. To further attempt to minimize the effect of my assumptions and biases, I relied on respondent validation or member checking, Rich Data or verbatim transcripts of interviews, peers checking the data, and journaling.

The phenomenon in this study was the reality of the opinions about female bullying as told from the female point of view. The selection to study a population of third grade, fifth grade, and seventh grade girls was guided by research indicating there is a difference by age/grade in the recognition, definition, method, and prevalence of bullying (Monks & Smith, 2006; Frisen et al., 2008; Vaillancourt et al., 2008). I followed the ideas presented in the writings of Creswell (1998), and a purposeful sampling strategy

was used to select and recruit those with opinions and perceptions about female bullying not the lived experience, or who represent those who have opinions and perceptions about female bullying. The number of participants, or sample size, was determined based on *data saturation,* which means that there are no clear, pre-set number of interviews until that point is reached (Francis et al., 2010). An estimate of the number of interviews was anywhere from 4-10 per age range to 20-30 interviews per age range (Creswell, 1998). The interview was semi-structured with five main questions and follow-up questions as they evolved. The participant was provided the Assent form (Appendices, D, E, F, & G) and the parent was provided the Consent form and Sample Interview Questions (Appendix A). Both parent and participant received a verbal explanation in age-appropriate language about the study including an emphasis that it is opinions or perspectives about bullying, not firsthand accounts or experiences of bullying that are a focus of the study. Participants were identified through recruitment letters (Appendix C) sent home by the school to each parent of the female student in the selected grades and with the approval of the appropriate school Administrator. The Recruitment Letter contained an explicit statement that it was sent from the school on behalf of the researcher. Due to a lack of response and with the approval of the IRB, the snowball sampling method was added which increased the number of participants in the study. I conducted the research interviews at the College Place Fire Department (Appendix H) in a private room designated as a "Conference Room" and scheduled in 2-hour blocks of time at a time convenient to the participant which did not interfere with educational or

other activities of the participant. Each interview was a one-time event lasting between 45 minutes to 2 hours with estimation to saturation of approximately ten interviews per grade or a total of approximately 30 interviews. The data analysis approach for phenomenology designed by Moustakis (1994), referred to as a modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method (Creswell, 1998), was used for this study with a seven-step process for data analysis (Creswell, 1998). The steps include data managing, reading and memoing, describing, classifying, interpreting, and representing.

Strategies for establishing verification and trustworthiness of the study, or determining if the researcher's interpretation of the data is accurate, included addressing Lincoln and Guba's (1985) concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and inter-coder and intra-coder reliability (Creswell, 1998). Specific strategies to minimize threats to the trustworthiness of the data were included in the study. These strategies included audio-taping of interviews, an awareness of biases I may have, an awareness of the effects of reflexivity, respondent validation, rich, detailed descriptions of the participants, and peer review of the data. Procedures to ensure the ethical treatment of participants and data by the researcher included that all required permissions were completed from IRB Walden, David Winter of the College Place Fire Department, Tim Payne of School District #250, and Principals Linda Byerley and Christopher Drabek. Recruitment materials were preapproved by the IRB of Walden University (#12 05 0306392). Parental consents and child assents were also completed for each participant as well as a full Board review as the population was younger than 18

years of age. Recruitment materials were preapproved by the IRB of both institutions. Parental consents and child assents were also completed for each participant as well as a full Board review as the population was younger than 18 years of age. The participants were treated with dignity and respect and the specifics of treating the participants within the ethical guidelines established by the APA were followed.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to expand on the existing bullying research

to address the gap in understanding female bullying and female RA. This study

contributed to the current body of knowledge by exploring and clarifying the opinions of

girls on the definition of female bullying and female RA and includes their opinions on

the development, and their responses to female relational aggression.

The specific research questions are:

1. In the opinion of girls, what behaviors are considered to be bullying?

2. What is the opinion of girls regarding how bullying or relational
   aggression changes as girls get older?

3. What is the opinion of girls about how targets and others respond to
   bullying or relational aggression?

4. What is the opinion of girls regarding what happens if a girl is caught
   bullying?

5. What is the opinion of girls regarding what happens to the target of
   bullying or relational aggression if she reports the behavior to an adult?

The first part of this chapter will describe the pilot study and its impact on the

main study. The setting for the main study will be outlined followed by a description of

participant demographics and characteristics. Data collection will be detailed and

includes the number of participants, the location and method of data collection, unusual

circumstances affecting data collection, and an explanation of the changes that occurred from the plan presented in Chapter 3. An explanation of data analysis follows, which will include the coding and themes that emerged, as well as any discrepant cases and how they were factored into the analysis. Evidence of trustworthiness including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability will be described. The results and supporting data for each of the research questions will be presented, and will include a discussion of discrepant cases and non-confirming data and tables and figures. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the information.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with two third-grade girls to evaluate the effectiveness of the interview questions (See Appendix A) to elicit the information to answer the research questions. The intent of the pilot study was to assist in identifying problems with the wording of the interview questions, to identify possible follow-up questions, and to identify and correct any problems with the instrumentation or data collection technique. The procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection were consistent with the main study as outlined in Chapter 3.

Participants were identified through recruitment letters sent home to each parent of the female students in the third-grade (Appendix C) at an elementary school in College Place, Washington. The interviews were arranged at the convenience of the parent and child at the College Place Fire Department in a room designated as the "Conference Room." The participants were provided the Assent form (Appendix D), and the parent

was provided the consent form, as well as a list of the available school district and mental

health bullying resource contacts and resources, participants could use for bullying

concerns. Both parent and participant received a verbal explanation of the study, which

included an emphasis that the study would be asking about their opinions or perspectives

about bullying that are a focus of the study, not their firsthand accounts or experiences of

bullying.

Included in the assent form and consent form were explanations, both verbal and

in writing, of the participant's right to withdraw voluntarily at any point, the central

purpose of the study, protection of confidentiality, a statement of known risks for

participating in the study, the expected benefits of participation in the study, and

available mental health and school district resources addressing bullying. The participants

and the parents indicated that they understood the Consent and Assent forms, signed the

forms, and returned them to me before the interview began. The parents waited in a

nearby room/area during the child's interview. I used a tape recorder/audiotape to

preserve the interview. The interview was semi-structured with five main questions and

follow-up questions as they evolved (Appendix A). The interviewer completed the

Interview Tracking form (Appendix B) as the interview progressed. The Interview

Tracking form included five open-ended questions addressing each of the research

questions with space between each to write the responses.

A primary concern in interviewing third-grade participants was their ability to

discern between the experience of bullying and their opinion about bullying. The

responses from both participants indicated that they easily grasped the difference and answered the interview questions consistently within that understanding. The wording of the interview questions was, therefore, determined to be appropriate. The pilot study interviews prepared me for potential follow-up questions, especially the phraseology of the questions for third-grade level understanding. I was able to complete the tracking sheet during the interview without interruption of the flow of questions and answers. The interviews lasted approximately 1 hour each, and the tape ran out during the first interview when the reading of the Assent and the Consent to participate were included in the audiotaping. The interview continued but without the audiotaping of the process for the last 10 minutes of the interview. It became apparent from the pilot study interviews that taping the reading of the Assent to Participate and the Consent to Participate would cause the tape to run out, so, at the point of reading those during the second pilot study interview, I turned off the audio-recorder to preserve the time on the tape. As a result of this process, the tape did not need to be changed during the interview, which could have been distracting to the flow of the interview process. I determined that taping of assent and consent portions of the interview for the main study were unnecessary. A significant outcome of the pilot study was the lack of response to the recruitment letter, necessitating the request to the IRB of adding the additional snowball sampling method to the recruitment process (Appendix I).

Setting

A purposeful sampling strategy or criterion-based selection (Maxwell, 2005) for participation in this study required that the participants were female, in the third, fifth, or seventh grades, and had opinions about female aggression/bullying. The intended participants in this study were girls in the third, fifth, and seventh grade in the public school system in College Place, Washington, a city of 9,000 in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. Due to a lack of response for participation and after multiple recruitment letters were given to the students to take home to their parents by the school personnel, an additional method of snowball recruitment was approved by the Walden University IRB which expanded the population sample to nearby communities.

The location for the individual interviews was at the College Place Fire Department in a private room designated as the conference room. The conference room contained a long table with seating for 12 people. The participants sat at the end of the table; the parents sat at the side of the table directly to their right, and I sat directly to their left. The door was closed for privacy as well as to eliminate outside noise. There was easy access to the restroom and drinking faucets, as well as to the room where the parent went after giving their informed consent.

Demographics

Participants in this study were from a rural southeastern Washington and Oregon State area which included three school districts. The area includes 12 elementary schools, five middle schools, and two private schools. The participants were from communities

ranging in a population of 30,000 people to 8,000 people. Information about the communities are as follows: Walla Walla, Washington has a population of approximately 31,000 people; 66.1% are White, 25.1% are Hispanic, and the remainder are Black, Asian, or Native American. Participants represented two public middle schools: Garrison Middle School (N3) with a population of 610 students with 52% White and 42% Hispanic; Pioneer Middle School (N2) has a population of 605 students of whom 71% are White, and 23% are Hispanic. Also represented from Walla Walla was a participant from a private Catholic school (N1), which includes students from kindergarten through eighth grade (K-8) with a population of 225 students. No demographics by race were available.

College Place, Washington is a suburb of Walla Walla and has a population of approximately 9,000 people, 85% of whom are White, with no further breakdown available by race. Two participants were from the public elementary school (N2), and two participants were from the private Adventist school, which includes grades K-8 with a population of 328 students. Milton Freewater, Oregon is 10 miles from Walla Walla with a population of approximately 8,000 people; 53.4% are Hispanic, and 44.1% are White. There were five (N5) participants from the elementary school with a population of 330 students.

I work at one of the three colleges in the Walla Walla area. The snowball recruitment method may have contributed to 12 of the 16 participants (including two pilot study participants) being affiliated in some way with a college, for instance having parents as teachers or instructors, or in other capacities within the education system, such

as clerical support. Employment within the education setting or the education level of the parents may have affected the responses of the child. I will explore these issues further in Chapter 5.

Data Collection

Number of Participants

I interviewed a total of 14 participants (N14) for this study; three third grade girls (N3), six fifth grade girls (N6), and five fifth grade girls (N5). The sample size to reach saturation had been estimated to be from four to 30 interviews per grade.

Data Collection

I collected the data at the College Place Fire Department in a private room designated as the conference room. The interviews were pre-scheduled with the parent and child, individually conducted by me, and were between 45 minutes and 2 hours in length over a period of 6 months.

Data Recording

I collected the data through semi-structured interviews that included five main questions and follow-up questions as they evolved (Appendix A). Each participant was provided the Assent form (Appendices F, G, H, & I) and the parent was provided the Consent form. The parent was also provided sample interview questions and a list of available mental health and school district resources before the start of the interview. The parent and child received a verbal explanation of the study. Once I obtained assent and consent for participation in the study, the parent was asked to leave the room but stay in

or near the building to allow for privacy for the interview. I completed the Interview

Tracking form (Appendix B) during the interview by recording significant impressions,

keywords, and responses of the participant as they occurred. The interview was also

audiotaped to preserve the content and to allow me to review the interviews for the

accuracy of interpretation.

Variations from Chapter 3 Plan and Unusual Circumstances

Participants were initially recruited through the College Place school system by

letters sent home from the school on behalf of the researcher (Appendix C). A lack of

response necessitated initiation of an additional snowball recruitment method (Appendix

I) with the approval of the IRB. The addition of the snowball recruitment method

increased the response of participants but narrowed the diversity as the participation

involved the familiarity of the participants to each other.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

I was attempting to expand the knowledge concerning female bullying, and the

research questions reflect that interest. I explored the similarities and differences of the

participant responses and the context of the responses to answer the research questions.

Following guidelines by Creswell (1998), the exploration required coding of the data,

interpretation of the data, and presentation of the data with a connecting analysis strategy

for the researcher and participant perspectives and a clear narrative and visual

representation of the data. How discrepant cases were factored into the analysis was also

explored.

Data Analysis Approach

The data analysis approach for phenomenology designed by Moustakis (1994) referred to as a modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method (Creswell, 1998) was used for this study. The approach is a seven step process for data analysis which includes data managing, reading and memoing, describing, classifying, interpreting, and representing (Creswell, 1998).

Data management. To manage the data, I created files and organized them on a continual basis as the study proceeded. I regularly recorded my experiences with this study in journal form. This ongoing process throughout the data collection and analysis steps assisted me to reflect on the methods, research questions and facilitated analytic thinking about data consistent with the ideas of Maxwell (2005). I listened to and transcribed the interviews by rewinding the interview until a certainty was reached that no words were missed. Once the interview was transcribed, I read the transcription while listening to the interview to ensure accurate transcription. No software was used for this purpose. During the process of listening to and transcribing the audio-taped interviews, I took notes of my impressions of the data. I also read and reviewed my notes of the interviews and observations, as Maxwell (2005) suggests, which helped me to develop tentative ideas about categories and relationships. I followed the ideas of Maxwell (2005), and I transcribed the interviews and reviewed the notes shortly after they occurred rather than allowing the data to accrue to a quantity that was overwhelming.

Reading and memoing. Guided by the ideas in the writings of Maxwell (2005), during the process of listening to the interviews and transcribing the audio-taped interviews, I took notes and memos of my impressions of the data. I read and reviewed my notes of the interviews and observations which helped me to develop tentative ideas about categories and relationships.

Descriptive process. The descriptive process began with a horizontalization of the participant data by individually listing each of the statements by the participants of the opinions and perceptions about female bullying with an equal value given to each statement. Textural description of the statements then occurred by grouping the statements into units of similarity. The units of similarity were established first as responses by grade for each research question, followed by responses between the grades for each research question (Appendices J). A description of the texture of the experience evolved out of the units of similarity within the grade and between grades.

Classifying. Following the ideas of Maxwell (2005), I continued the process of coding by organizing similar themes into categories that were compared to develop theoretical concepts. I began the coding process by anticipating the general categories that were established before the collection of the data based on my knowledge of the phenomenon from the literature and research. These broad categories were descriptive in nature, not explanatory, and provided a means of initially sorting data as Maxwell (2005) suggests. The responses of the participants were then assigned to categories based on the

research. Additional categories were established as a result of this study which included the discrepant cases to the research.

From the codes or broad categories, other substantive or theoretical categories were developed which had not been anticipated before data collection and provided some explanation of the phenomenon (Maxwell, 2005). The theoretical categories are abstract, and based on the researcher perspective from prior theory (Maxwell, 2005). For example, prior theory regarding the definition of bullying (Research Question #1) led me to develop the categories of physical methods, verbal methods, and exclusion as probable definitions of bullying. The categories of "gossiping" and "spreading rumors" were added as a result of the number of participant responses using that language as opposed to the use of "verbal methods" of bullying. The responses for each research question were consistent with the categories established based on the research but nonconfirming evidence, or discrepant cases, were reported and compared to the confirming responses, which expanded some of the categories (Appendix J & K). For instance, research question #1 about behaviors considered to be bullying received responses about ignoring the victim, or shunning as a form of bullying, concepts which have not been clearly identified as bullying in the research. They could have been coded as exclusion behavior, which was coded as a separate category for this study. Participants reported harassment with the use of phrases like "constantly teasing someone else about something that would make them feel bad" and "being constantly mean; insulting their outfits, hair, and appearance." Harassment or use of the term "constantly," confirms the repeated

incidences aspect of the bullying definition of Olweus (1993) which texturally was confirming evidence for the previous research of the definition of bullying addressed in question #1. Achievement of power as a bully was identified in the response of "empowerment is the main reason they bully" which is connected to a disparity of power in Olweus' (1993) definition of bullying. The discrepant responses to research question #2 included "third-graders are pretending to bully but not really, it is simple behavior in their own groups" and "I am not aware that third-graders bully" as well as "I'm not sure how third-graders bully." These specific responses were not identified in the literature and therefore were coded as a separate category for this study. There were two additional responses to research question #3 not clearly established in the literature. These responses expanded the existing codes to include the category of development of depression and self-esteem issues with responses such as "she feels really bad and wants to talk to someone about it, like her Mom or a teacher, but she keeps it to herself." The other response to research question #3, "she might stick up for herself or friends may take care of them" could be coded as part of "They respond aggressively to the bully" (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2011) category but the texture of the response indicated that aggression was not a component of the behavior but rather the behavior was nurturing. The expansion of categories for research question #4 included coding for the response indicating that the bully gets into trouble or is given detention with responses such as "they'll tell them to stop or punish them with detention or cleaning up the classroom" and "at school the bully would be sent to the principal and get a major referral, detention, and punishment of

some kind." An additional category for research question #4 was developed for the response indicating that the bully is dishonest about her behavior. One such response was "the bully lies about what she did, and the teacher believes them, so the victim gets into trouble instead." This category of response expands on the category identified from the literature of "the bully acts like they were the victim, indicates the behavior was in self-defense and demonstrates no remorse (Edmondson & Zemon, 2009). Responses to research question #5 not only supported the research but added four more categories to the coding including the victim believes she deserves to be bullied and; the bully feels bad and stops; the victim gets blamed, and the victim avoids the mean girl. Some of the supporting responses for the additional categories include: "If she told a parent, she might be told she needs to stick up for herself; the target may begin to believe what is being said about her even though it isn't true"; "the bully stops bullying because if she keeps doing it she'll get into trouble"; "the girl who tells is the one who gets blamed"; "she avoids other mean girls, they are within her friendship circle though".

Interpretation. I examined my description of the phenomenon by following the ideas of Creswell (1998) and applying imaginative variation or examining the phenomenon from all meanings, perspectives, and contexts and developing a description of my experience of the researched phenomenon. Substantive categories were based on the participants' words and were used in developing a general theory (Maxwell, 2005). A description of the meaning and essence of the opinion was formed followed by an account of each participant. As Creswell (1998) indicates, the researcher and participant

descriptions were then combined to create a composite description of the opinions. This

connecting strategy of the participant and researcher statements was an attempt to

interpret and understand the data in context and to identify the relationships that connect

the statements and events into a coherent whole that was used to develop the theory

(Maxwell, 2005).

Data representation. The final phase of data analysis was to represent what was

found through a narration of experience and through a visual representation of a chart or

table (Creswell, 1998) which is included in the Results section of this chapter. Computer

software was not used for data analysis.

Discrepant Cases

Categories of responses were added to the preconceived responses based on the

literature to manage nonconfirming responses and discrepant cases. Data that presented a

contrary view to the established evidence (Creswell, 2007) could have represented issues

of validity in the qualitative data collection process. Therefore, processes of member

checking for an accurate reflection of the experience and peer checking were used for the

discrepant cases and nonconfirming responses. The additional categories developed as a

result of the discrepant cases were reported in the classifying narrative as Creswell (2007)

indicates and will be further explained in the Results section of this chapter.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Strategies for establishing verification and trustworthiness of the study, or

determining if my interpretation of the data was accurate, included addressing Lincoln

and Guba's (1985) concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and inter-intra-coder reliability (Creswell, 1998). Specific strategies to minimize threats to the trustworthiness of the data were built into the study.

Credibility

Credibility is the extent to which the inferences from the data connect to the sample population and are accurate (Creswell, 1998). Maxwell (2005) identifies two significant threats to the credibility of a study; data collector bias and data collector characteristics (reflexivity). I identified, reported, and monitored my biases which could have an impact the validity of the study by documenting my subjective experiences in a research journal to review and by using reflection and introspection. To understand the phenomenon from the subjective opinion of the participant, I set aside or *bracketed* my presuppositions or previous experiences about female bullying and RA (Creswell, 1998) and focused on the participant's opinion. To handle reflexivity, I attempted to understand how my experiences may influence the conduct of the participants and the conclusions of the study. I had prolonged contact with each participant which allowed for the collecting of "rich" data. The recorded interviews allowed for review for detail and accuracy of the participant responses. Respondent validation or member checking and peer review of the data was utilized. I kept a journal documenting my impressions and observations of the processes. Interviews were conducted to the point of saturation when no new information was disclosed. The only source of information was from the interviews; thus, triangulation of information based on the review of the literature and theories was used

for ensuring credibility. There were no adjustments from the strategies indicated in

Chapter 3.

Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which the information can be generalized to similar

situations (Creswell, 1998). As I interviewed a small, purposeful sample of participants in

a single setting and event, external transferability could have been difficult to determine.

To increase the likelihood of transferability, I provided a 'rich' detailed description of the

participants which allowed for the reader of the study to determine if the findings can be

transferred because of shared characteristics to other settings (Creswell, 1998). There

were no adjustments from the strategies indicated in Chapter 3.

Dependability and Confirmability

To assess for dependability and confirmability, or determining if the findings of

the study are supported by the data, an independent external consultant reviewed the

findings as suggested by the ideas of Creswell (1998). This consultant was my

dissertation committee. Confirmability or reflexivity was addressed by my

acknowledgment of the influence that I had on the participants and the influence the

participants had on me as I conducted this study. There were no adjustments from the

strategies indicated in Chapter 3.

Results

The purpose of this study is to expand on the existing research by exploring the

definition, development, and response to female bullying and RA from the female

perspective, which will add to the body of knowledge that addresses this particular form of bullying. The current qualitative study involved semi-structured interviews which focused on the participant opinion, not lived experience of bullying or RA. The results for each research question are as follows:

Research Question #1

In the opinion of girls, what behaviors are considered to be bullying?

According to Olweus (1993), bullying must include three elements; negative actions, a disparity of power, and repeated incidences to be considered bullying. Physical aggression includes hitting, verbal abuse, and threats. RA is a particular type of bullying where relationships are used to bully and include such behaviors as social exclusion and gossiping (Boulton & Smith, 1994).   It was expected that participants would identify examples of physical aggression in their responses. A typical response identifying physical aggression as an example included: "physically hurting someone" and "pushing, kicking, and punching." It was also expected that gossiping and verbal insults would be included in the responses. This category had the greatest number of responses with a representative quote of "gossiping and saying mean things such as "insulting outfits, hair, and appearance." Another example was "stealing friends, telling lies about a friend." It was not surprising that social exclusion was considered as an example of bullying. A typical example of a social exclusion response was: "ignoring friends; ignore them or don't partner with them on group assignments." As another example, "they can't play what the other kids are playing."

Research Question #2

What is the opinion of girls of how bullying or relational aggression changes as girls get older? Nicki Crick (1996) found that RA remains stable over time. The current study results differed from this finding, with participants in all three grades reporting most frequently that bullying behavior increases in severity from third to fifth-grade. A response that indicated the behavior increases with age was: "fifth-grade girls are really, really, mean, and as the grades go down, and kids are younger it is not as mean." Additional, less frequent, responses resulted in categories that included: that bullying behavior decreases or stays the same over time, as well as an unexpected category that third-graders don't bully. A representative response indicating a belief that the behavior decreases or stays the same is "they don't do it as much (as they get older) because you only have time for the people you care about." A typical response indicating the perception that third-graders don't bully is "I am not aware that third-graders bully."

Research Question #3

What is the opinion of girls of how targets and others respond to bullying and relational aggression? Research by Waasdorp (2011) indicated that typical responses to frequent bullying include the most frequent response of ignoring the bullying behavior, boys respond in a physically aggressive manner while girls respond in a verbally aggressive manner, and seeking assistance from friends or adults. Waasdorp and Bradshaw (2011) added the category of the response of internalizing the message of the bully. Participant responses to this question supported the research by Waasdorp

(2011) and Waasdorp and Bradshaw (2011). The most frequent response of all participants in this study was to ignore the behavior. The underlying reason for this response of ignoring the bullying varied and included: "if she was a popular bully, she wouldn't say anything if she wants to be her friend" and "she might be embarrassed to tell anyone"; "they might pretend it doesn't bother them" and "they can try to ignore it; pretending not to care"; "…she doesn't tell friends because she doesn't want to be made fun of for it"; "might tell a friend or keep it a secret because she is scared." Response categories for this question included: telling an adult, ignoring the behavior, retaliating, keeping it to herself, and sticking up for herself. An example of telling an adult included the response of "if they feel bad they could tell a teacher, and then the bully would get into trouble." A response of ignoring the behavior is "she tries to show the bully that they are not hurt or really sad, but inside their feelings are really hurt; they're just trying not to show it." A response indicating retaliation as an option was "she be's mean back." Keeping it to herself included the response of "she keeps it to herself; she doesn't tell friends because she doesn't want to be made fun of for it." The last category of sticking up for herself included the response of "she might stick up for herself, or friends may take care of them."

Research Question #4

What is the opinion of girls of what happens if a girl is caught bullying?
Adults are not likely to recognize bullying or intervene in a bullying situation according to Mishna, Pepler, and Wiener (2006). The opinions of the participants indicated that if a

bully is caught, the bullying may increase, the bullying may decrease, the bully may get into trouble, and the bully denies she bullied. Participants in all three grades gave responses that if a bully is caught at school bullying, she will get into trouble by receiving detention or some other corrective action. An example of the belief that the bully gets into trouble/detention is the response of "well, the most obvious answer is that they get into trouble".

Previous research found that there was a lack of school policy and guidelines in how to intervene with RA, which hampered the likelihood of intervention, as opposed to the clear policies and intervention guidelines regarding physical aggression (Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener, 2006). This topic was not explored with school personnel but based on the participant responses, the participants were aware of what the school policies on bullying are and expressed an understanding of the process of reporting of bullying. If a bully is caught bullying by another adult, that adult was identified by the participants to be a teacher or the Principal. The consequences identified included being sent to the Principal's office, informing the parent, receiving detention, or being sent to "Juvie" (juvenile detention). Other categories of responses for this research question include: The bullying increases, the bullying decreases, and the bully denies she bullied. A typical response indicating belief that the bullying increases is "sometimes she may go after the victim more." A typical response indicating belief that the bullying decreases is "if the parents are called, it changes to less bullying." A representative response of the bully

denying she bullied is "the bully lies about what she did, and the teacher believes her so the victim gets into trouble instead."

Research Question #5

What is the opinion of girls of what happens to the target of bullying or relational aggression if she reports the behavior to an adult? Research suggests that the majority of children are not likely to report incidences of bullying, and as children mature, they are even less likely to report incidences of bullying, but when they do report, it is probably to a teacher (Frisen et al., 2008). Children also report that they are not likely to receive help when bullying is reported, but if help is offered it is offered by a teacher, school nurse, or another adult at school (Frisen et al.). Participants from all three grades in this study indicated that their perception was that the bullying would get worse if it were known by the bully that the victim had reported the behavior to an adult. The categories of responses for this research question include: the bullying continues or increases (Bollmer et al., 2006; Cassidy, 2009), the victim gets blamed, the victim believes she deserves to be bullied, the bullying stops, and the victim avoids the mean girl(s). Responses to this question frequently involved more than one of the identified categories such as "The bullying may become more severe and more threatening, or the bully could get scared and stop. It depends on the girl." A response in the category of the victim getting blamed was "the bully will say the victim is the bully, and the teacher believes them." Avoiding the mean girl was demonstrated with the response of "She avoids other mean girls, but they are within her friendship circle." The response of "…

the target may begin to believe what is being said about her even though it isn't true" indicated the belief that the participant perceived that the target may believe she deserves to be bullied.

Summary

The codes, categories, and themes identified from the literature and the interview responses included:

In the opinion of girls, what behaviors are considered to be bullying?

- Exclusion behaviors (Smith et al., 2002; Russell et al., 2010).

- Verbal aggression (Smith et al., 2002; Russell et al., 2010).

- Physical aggression (Russell, Krauss, & Ceccherini, 2010).

What is the opinion of girls of how bullying or relational aggression changes as girls get older?

- It increases (Crick, 1996; Crick & Dodge, 1996; Leff et al., 2010).

- It decreases (Crick, 1996; Crick & Dodge, 1996; Leff et al., 2010; Strohmeier, et al., 2010).

- It remains stable (Crick, 1996; Crick & Dodge, 1996; Leff et al., 2010; Strohmeier, et al., 2010).

- Third-graders don't bully

What is the opinion of girls of how targets and others respond to bullying or relational aggression?

- They seek support from an adult (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2011)

- They ignore or walk away from the bully (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2011)

- They respond aggressively to the bully (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2011)

- They internalize the messages of the bully (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2011)

What is the opinion of girls of what happens if a girl is caught bullying?

- The bully acts like they were the victim, indicates the behavior was in self-defense and demonstrates no remorse (Edmondson & Zemon, 2009).

- Demonstrates other directed anger to preserve their personal power (Edmondson & Zemon, 2009).

- The bullying increases (Bell, Raczynski, & Home, 2010)

- The bullying decreases (Bell, Raczynski, & Home, 2010; Nixon, 2010)

- The bully gets into trouble

What is the opinion of girls of what happens to the target of bullying or relational aggression if she reports the behavior to an adult?

- Bullying continues or increases (Bollmer et al., 2006; Cassidy, 2009)

- The victim gets blamed

- The victim believes she deserves to be bullied

- The bullying stops

- The victim avoids the mean girl(s)

The results of the research question responses will be further explored in Chapter 5 by examining and comparing the responses to what was found in the literature described in Chapter 2. The discrepant responses to the research questions will be further

explored in Chapter 5, such as the responses to Research Question #2 which included the responses of "third-graders are pretending to bully but not really; it is simple behavior in their own groups" and "I am not aware that third-graders bully" as well as "I'm not sure how third-graders bully." The findings of this study will be interpreted in the context of the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to expand on the existing bullying

research, which will contribute to the understanding of female bullying and female RA.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge by exploring and clarifying the opinions

of girls on the definition of female bullying and female RA. This study includes female

opinions of the course bullying takes over time. This study includes the response of the

victim and others to female RA, the perceived outcome for the bully if she is caught

bullying, and the outcome for the target if she reports the bullying to a teacher or other

adult.

Key findings of the study include that the participant responses were consistent

with research on the understanding of the definition of bullying, particularly Olweus's

(1993), three elements of negative actions, a disparity of power, and repeated incidences.

Participant responses reflected a clear understanding of negative actions as examples of

bullying. Consistent with previous research, third-grade responses focused on the

physical aspects of bullying while fifth and seventh-grade responses included RA in the

definition (Pepler et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2002; Russell et al., 2010). The participant

responses supported the research by Chan (2009) indicating that there is confusion about

the role of power in bullying. A point of confusion supporting the research of Varjas et

al., (2008) was whether bullies bully to get power or bullies bully to assert power. The

participants did not identify the third factor of repeated incidences in the bullying

definition. This finding supports research by Esbensen and Carson (2009), indicating that this element is not part of the child definition of bullying.

Participants from all three grades reported that bullying behavior increases in severity from third to seventh-grade. This response is consistent with the previous research finding of Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, and Kaukiainen, (1992) and Young et al., (2011) that eight-year-old girls have not yet learned the indirect aggression strategies that 11 and 15-year-old girls were adept at using. Third-grade participants focused on physical aspects of bullying as opposed to the relational aspects of bullying. Third graders also indicated that the relational aspects of bullying become more severe as girls got older than when they are younger. Third graders did not respond about the progression of the physical aspects of bullying. Third-grade participants focused on physical aspects of bullying more than the relational aspects. Third graders did, however, report that the relational aspects of bullying become more severe as girls get older than when they are younger.

Fifth and seventh-grade participants each had the added response category indicating the belief that third graders do not know how to bully but noted that bullying gets worse from third-grade to seventh-grade. Nicki Crick (1996) and Strohmeier et al. (2010) found that RA remains stable over time.

The current study results differed from this finding. Participant responses as to how targets and others respond to bullying supported the research by Waasdorp (2011), which indicated that typical responses to frequent bullying include: ignoring the bullying

behavior, reacting in a verbally aggressive manner, and seeking assistance from friends or adults.

The most frequent participant response to what happens if a girl gets caught bullying was that "the bully gets into trouble/detention." Research by Delligatti et al. (2003) found, however, that the typical female bullying behavior is not easily recognizable and is not likely to receive intervention or treatment. The next most frequent response was of the fifth and seventh-grade participants that the bully denies she bullied. Other categories of responses for this research question include the bullying increases and the bullying decreases.

 Participants from all three grades indicated that their perception was that the bullying would get worse in the older grades. The categories of responses include: the bullying continues or increases the victim gets blamed, the victim believes she deserves to be bullied, the bullying stops, and the victim avoids the mean girl(s). Responses to this question frequently involved more than one of the identified categories such as "The bullying may become more severe and more threatening, or the bully could get scared and stop. It depends on the girl." The responses support the research of Mishna et al. (2006) that most children are not likely to report bullying.

Chapter 5 will present a detailed analysis and interpretation of each of the five research questions. Presented are the core concepts of the study, as well as the key patterns and themes that arose. Following the presentation of the key concepts, patterns, and themes is an exploration of the relationship of the findings to the theoretical

framework in the existing literature from Chapter 2 and how the findings address the research problem. Identification of the limitations of the study as well as recommendations for future research follows. Next, the implications of the study will be explored. The chapter will close with the conclusions of the study.

Interpretation of the Findings

Research Question #1

In the opinion of girls, what behaviors are considered to be bullying?

Olweus (1993) included three elements that must be present for behavior to be defined as bullying: negative actions, a disparity of power, and repeated incidences. Research by Russell et al. (2010) found that behaviors children determine as bullying vary with age and sex; younger children are more likely to identify physical aggression as bullying and also to find physical aggression and RA to be more hurtful than older children.

Participant responses reflected a clear understanding of negative actions as examples of bullying. The negative actions included the categories of exclusion behaviors, verbal aggression, and physical aggression. Third grade responses focused more on physical aggression than other forms of aggression with responses such as "like if they are standing in line, they push their way through to get where they want to go. At recess they may push somebody off a slide" and "pushing, kicking, and punching; girls don't hurt them as hard as boys would but they still do physical things."

This category of response is consistent with research by Pepler et al. (2006), indicating that younger children are more likely to report any act of aggression as bullying. It is also consistent with Smith et al. (2002) and Russell et al. (2010) who found that eight year olds are most likely to label behavior as bullying if there is overt aggression involved. They do not seem to have a clear understanding of different forms of aggression such as RA and physical aggression (Smith et al., 2002; Russell et al., 2010).

Fifth grade responses focused on verbal behaviors as examples of relational aggression with responses such as: "they point out things that are wrong about them, like maybe their teeth aren't straight or their clothes don't match," but also defined physical aggression as a factor in female bullying. Reflected in the fifth grade responses was the physical component of the definition of bullying such as " not necessarily physical but sometimes throwing a ball or kicking them in line at recess." This response is consistent with research by Smith et al. (2002) indicating that students in grades five and six were the most likely to include examples of RA in their definitions of bullying. Seventh grade responses also focused on verbal aggression with responses such as "making fun of them behind their back" and "they may say mean words or bring each other down." Statements about physical aggression by seventh graders such as "they are not too physical" or "physically hurting someone" demonstrated an automatic response in defining bullying in general rather than an example of how girls bully. The seventh grade responses were consistent with research indicating that they may have a clearer understanding of

incidences of aggression versus a pattern of aggression inherent in bullying (Smith et al., 2002; Russell et al., 2010).

No responses clearly indicated an imbalance of power as part of RA, although there were two responses overall that reported that bullies are "popular kids," and they viewed bullies as "taking things out on others."

Merrell et al. (2006) and De Bruyn, Cillessen, and Wissink (2009) found that female bullies tend to have higher social status and better social skills than their victims. DeBruyn, Cillessen, and Wissink (2009) found that girls with high popularity and low acceptance by their peers bullied more than girls with high popularity and high acceptance.

The participants in this study did not refer to social status or social skills as factors in bullying, but did refer to popularity as a factor. The participant responses were consistent with research by Chan (2009), indicating that perhaps there is a lack of clarity as to what an "imbalance of power" is to participants. Additionally, research suggests that student perceptions of bullying deviate from the accepted adult definition that bullies do not hold power over the victim but are bullying to get power (Varjas et al., 2008). Responses of the participants demonstrated the differences in the understanding of the role of power in bullying compared to adult perceptions of the role of power in bullying. The confusion was evident in responses of bullies to victims who demonstrated they were visibly upset by the bullying. Responses included "The bully believes they have won because it is all about power" and "You can tell a bully in the third grade playing four

square; she's the one who doesn't follow the rules. If she's out, she'll argue it. She's powerful, and she gets her power from parents; she takes things out on others."

The responses of the participants to the third factor of repeated incidences in the bullying definition provided by Olweus (1993) contained qualifiers such as "constantly" but not the specific "repeated incidences" of Olweus's definition. These descriptions are consistent with the findings of Esbensen and Carson (2009), which stated that repeated incidences of bullying are not part of the student definition. Research indicates that younger children are more likely to report any act of aggression, even a one-time occurrence as bullying (Pepler et al., 2006).

Research by Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener (2006) determined that children, teachers, and parents define behavior as bullying depending on several factors. The first factor is whether the behavior matched their definition of bullying which typically involved overt displays of aggression, the second factor included an assessment of if the act involved a friend and the normalcy of friendship behaviors, and the third factor was if the victim matched the perception of victim behavior. Previous participant response analysis supported the first factor of overt displays of aggression as a determinant of bullying.

Participant responses identified the second factor of friendship status as "ignoring friends; ignore them or don't partner with them" and "stealing friends, telling lies about a friend." The responses of seventh grade girls and fifth grade girls included friendship as an element in the description of bullying. Third grade participant responses did not focus on friendship, but instead used neutral relationship phraseology such as "calling people

names," and "they can't play what other kids are playing." Based on the participant responses, it was hard to determine whether they perceived RA as normal friendship behavior or if there was a lack of clear guidelines in determining what are considered to be normal friendship behaviors.

Mishna, Pepler, and Wiener (2006) noted that when provided a definition of bullying including RA behaviors, girls were likely to reconsider an answer to reflect that they had been bullied. A previous study by Mishna (2004), comparing children's perspectives on victimization to parents and educator perspectives, revealed two major themes of bullying. The first theme was the difficulty of children, parents, and educators in determining if an incident was bullying, the second theme was the complexity of identifying behavior as bullying when the behavior occurred between friends (Mishna, 2004). The participant responses in this study also indicated a lack of clarity regarding bullying and friendship behaviors.

Research Question #2

What is the opinion of girls of how bullying or relational aggression changes as girls get older? Nicki Crick (1996) and Strohmeier et al. (2010) found that RA remains stable over time. The current study results differed with this finding with participants in all three grades reporting the perception that bullying behavior increases in severity from third to seventh grade as the most frequent response to this research question. The third-grade participant responses indicated that third-graders are more likely to be physically mean or acting out with temper tantrums while fifth, and sixth-

graders are likely to hurt other's feelings. The older participant responses indicated the

perception that third-grade girls don't know how to bully and that bullying increases as

one gets older because of an increase in stress, jealousy issues, and insecurities about

body changes. Additional responses about the frequency in RA as one gets older include

that RA is modeled by parents, and that it provides a sense of empowerment. Participants

also reported that older girls have developed the skills to relationally bully that girls who

are younger have not yet developed. The frequency of the response that bullying

increases over time is consistent with the finding that eight-year-old girls have not yet

learned the indirect aggression strategies that 11 and 15-year-old girls were adept at using

(Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992). A third -grade participant responded that

the bullying became different as girls get older; that when girls are mean they are smiling

and sneakier about it. This perception is consistent with the finding that as the social

information processing systems mature, skill with indirect RA increases while the more

physically violent and less socially acceptable direct aggression decreases (Crick and

Dodge, 1996; Leff et al., 2010). These responses are also consistent with the finding by

Young et al. (2011) that verbal, cognitive and social skills are unsophisticated in early

elementary school girls and easier to assess than in the later elementary and middle

school girls. Older girls are more sophisticated about applying skills of indirect

aggression strategies (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992). It is interesting to

note that although the general perception was that third-grade girls are unsophisticated in

how they bully the third-grade participant responses indicated that they can recognize in

older girls the subtleties of RA. Further complicating the data on the changes that occur in bullying as a girl gets older is research indicating that as children mature, they are less likely to report incidences of bullying (Frisen et al., 2008).

Discrepant responses from the literature included one seventh-grade participant response and one fifth-grade participant response that indicated third-grade girls don't know how to bully. One third -grade participant reported that she believed that as girls got older they would become nicer.

Research Question #3

What is the opinion of girls of how targets and others respond to bullying or relational aggression? Research by Waasdorp (2011) indicated that typical responses to frequent bullying include ignoring the bullying behavior and seeking assistance from friends or adults. Waasdorp and Bradshaw (2011) added the category of response whereby individuals internalize the bully's message. Participant responses to this question supported the research by Waasdorp (2011) and Waasdorp and Bradshaw (2011). The most frequent response of all participants in this study was to ignore the behavior. The participant responses support research that indicates the victim feels powerless to stop bullying; the victim blames herself for the bully's behavior; and the victim doesn't want to lose the bully's friendship (Mishna et al., 2006). Responses included: "she can try to ignore it, pretending not to care. But it takes a long time to get it to stop"; and "she might have a comeback or walk away. Walking away is better, but neither stops the bullying." Other responses were "she sits there and is quiet; they feel

embarrassment and upset especially if people are present"; and "she keeps to herself, doesn't tell friends because she doesn't want to be made fun of for it." An additional response was "she kind of goes along with it 'cause she can't stop her. She could tell her what she's doing and to please stop." The reasons a victim chooses to ignore a bully are significant in that the participants indicated the bullying still affects them in negative ways despite walking away or ignoring it. The participant responses did not suggest that ignoring the bullying behavior was effective in stopping the behavior or that the victim felt positive about themselves or powerful for ignoring the behavior.

Seeking assistance from friends or adults was the next most frequent response of fifth and seventh-grade participants. Seeking assistance from friends or adults included the response of "she feels really bad and wants to talk to someone about it, like Mom or a teacher, but keeps it to herself." This response of wanting to tell someone but not doing it is consistent with research that children are not likely to report bullying; if bullying is reported, it will be reported to a teacher or other school personnel (Frisen et al., 2008). It is also consistent with research indicating that victims are hesitant to report bullying to a parent for fear the bullying will get worse as a result of parental involvement (Mishna et al., 2006). This information is significant in the responses to research question #4 "what is the opinion of girls of what happens if a girl is caught bullying?" This information is also significant to research question #5 "what is the opinion of girls of what happens to the target of bullying or relational aggression if she reports the behavior to an adult?"

One third-grade participant indicated that retaliation would be the most likely response of a victim to a bully. Two seventh-grade participants and two fifth-grade participants indicated that retaliation was a possibility with the additional information that the bullying would not stop but may get worse as a result of retaliation. The research indicates that less than 2% of children who have been bullied respond to bullying by retaliating or in an aggressive manner (Solberg et al., 2007). They are referred to as *bully/victims* (Holt et al., 2009; Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2011). It is troubling to note that female bully/victims make an active effort to cover their bullying behavior by acting like a victim, justifying their behavior as self-defense, and demonstrating little remorse about their bullying behavior (Edmondson & Zemon, 2009). Bully/victim behavior would further complicate the recognition of bullying behavior by other children as well as teachers, administrators, and other adults. Bollmer et al. (2006) found the correlation that victims judged as angry toward their aggressors contribute to continued victimization and that the child who responds physically with distress to a bullying attack will increase the frequency, duration, and severity of attacks (Bollmer et al., 2006). Participant responses supported the research by Bollmer et al. (2006) that if a victim is visibly upset by the bullying, the bully believes that "they've won because it is about power and the bullying would keep going. They think they are the winner." The exception to demonstrations of anger by the victim of bullying as adding to their victimization is the less than 2% who respond with aggression or retaliation. Anger appears to be the primary reason that contributes to becoming a bully/victim, and the goal of the anger is to preserve the

bully/victim's personal power in the relationship (Edmondson & Zeman). These were the only responses reflecting on the areas of research regarding retaliation and power.

Research by Mishna, Pepler, and Wiener (2006) suggest that bystanders, including teachers and parents, are not likely to intervene in a situation involving RA. The research (Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener, 2006) also suggest that there was a lack of school policy and guidelines in how to intervene with RA, which furthered hampered the likelihood of intervention. This study did not directly address the question of whether teachers and other adults would intervene in a bullying situation, but the fifth and seventh -grade participants indicated that a likely response to the witnessing of a bullying situation would be to tell an adult such as the teacher, principal, or parent. However, the consequences for a bystander or victim reporting bullying identified by the participants included that telling a teacher could make the bullying worse, or the victim would also be known as a "tattler" which could make the bullying worse. The discrepant response was a fifth-grade girl who indicated that telling someone could result in the person encouraging the victim to stand up for herself. These responses support the research suggesting that RA is difficult for a bystander such as a teacher or other adult to detect (Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener, 2006) unless a victim discloses it to the adult. The participant responses to tell an adult did not support the research that there was a lack of school policy and guidelines in how to intervene with RA but rather that the bystander or victim makes a choice on whether to disclose to an adult based on possible consequences to them of the disclosure.

Teachers and other adults were not interviewed for this study about understanding school policy and guidelines regarding intervention.

Research Question #4

What is the opinion of girls of what happens if a girl is caught bullying? The participant responses to this question were twofold. The first grouping of responses focused on what would happen to the target if a girl is caught bullying her which in part addresses research question #5; the second cluster of responses, which more directly addressed this research question, focused on what would happen to the bully if she were caught bullying. The opinions of the participants indicated that the bullying may increase; the bullying may decrease, the bully may get into trouble, and the bully denies she bullied. Participants in all three grades agreed that if a bully bullied at school bullying, she would get into trouble by receiving detention or some other corrective action. Previous research indicated the difficulty in recognition of RA as bullying, and the existence of clearer school policies in intervention with physical aggression than RA (Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener, 2006). However, the participant responses of this study indicated a clear understanding of the school policies of reporting bullying with the expectation of consequence to the bully for the behavior. Consistent with the research of Jacobsen and Bauman (2007) participant responses indicated that a teacher or the principal were the most likely people to intervene in a bullying situation while school counselors were least apt to intervene in RA as opposed to physical or verbal aggression.

The participants identified the counselor as part of the punishment response and not as the intervening adult.

The response of the bullying increasing is "sometimes the bullying could become more severe because it is viewed as 'tattling' but it depends on who the Principal is." Additional responses included "sometimes she may go after the victim more, and the behavior is worse," and "it could make it worse, the bully might start hurting her physically so now it is a mixture of physical and verbal." These responses reflect the focus as to what happens to the target of bullying when a girl is caught bullying them and also support research which suggests that the frequency, duration, and severity of bullying could increase should a victim respond physically to bullying (Bollmer et al., 2006). These responses also reflect the participant opinion of the significance of how the principal, teachers, or other adults handle bullying determines if the bullying continues. There was also the perception that the bullying could decrease as a result of an adult intervening; "she bullies less if the parents are involved." A fifth-grade participant indicated that the bullying could increase or decrease. One third-grade participant reported something similar with the response of "the girl might feel that she shouldn't do that anymore, or she might just get mad and keep doing it."

The participant response exemplifying the bully denying she bullied is "they make excuses or say 'I was just joking.'" Participants reported other denials of bullying such as "she denies she bullied or finds an excuse or disguises the bullying as 'just trying to be nice.'" Another response was "the bully lies about what they did, and the teacher

believes them, so the victim gets into trouble instead." Previous research indicates that

most teachers report that it is hard to sort out what has occurred if they did not witness

the bullying incident which makes it difficult to determine who is credible in their version

of the bullying incident: the reported victim or the reported bully (Mishna et al., 2006).

The responses of this study indicate the participant perception that the bully will lie about

their bullying behavior and the bully has the social skills to be more convincing than the

victim in relating the incident, so the bully is more likely to be believed by a teacher or

adult. The participant responses reflect the research that indicates that the bully

minimizes the effect to the victim, receive enjoyment from the behavior, do not

experience much guilt about the behavior, and portray bullying as a positive behavior

(Bollmer et al., 2006). The behavior of bully/victims further complicates and confuses

teachers, administrators, and other school personnel as to the identification of bullying

behavior and believability of the reporting victim.

Research Question #5

What is the opinion of girls of what happens to the target of bullying or

relational aggression if she reports the behavior to an adult? Participants from all

three grades in this study indicated that their perception was that the bullying would get

worse if the bully knew that the victim had reported the behavior to an adult. The

categories of responses for this research question include: the bullying continues or

increases (Bollmer et al., 2006; Cassidy, 2009), the victim gets blamed, the victim

believes she deserves to be bullied, the bullying stops, and the victim avoids the mean

girl(s). Research suggests that a supportive school climate increases the likelihood that a victim will seek help from an adult in a bullying situation (Eliot et al., 2010). An indicator of a supportive school climate and the most important factor for seeking help is the behavior of the school administrator (Hurford et al., 2010) or the Principal of the school. If a student perceives that the administrator (Principal) tolerates bullying behavior, displays favoritism for one group over another, or inconsistently applies consequences for the breaking of rules, they would feel unsafe and unwilling to report incidences of bullying and aggression (Hurford et al.). The response to research question #4 of "sometimes the bullying could become more severe because it is viewed as 'tattling' but it depends on who the Principal is," is relevant to research question #5. A victim of bullying seeking help is dependent on the perceived supportive climate to seek help established by the principal. The majority of children are not likely to report incidences of bullying, but when they do report, it is to a teacher (Frisen et al., 2008). Children also report that they are not likely to receive help when reporting bullying, but if help is offered it is a teacher, school nurse, or another adult at school (Frisen et al.).There were only two responses by the same participant indicating that a victim would inform a parent of the bullying. These responses are consistent with research by Mishna (2006) suggesting that bullied students do not report the bullying to a parent for fear the parent may make the situation worse or that the peers will dislike the victim for reporting. Bullying reported to a parent highlights the confusion of the friendship relationship and the connection to bullying. The parents struggle to intervene because of the difficulty

defining typical friendship conflict versus bullying (Mishna et al.). The participants in this study indicated that "some girls parents want them to be tough so threats wouldn't scare them" and " if she told a parent, she might be told she needs to stick up for herself." DeBruyn, Cillessen, and Wissink (2009) found that "girls who are unlikable or girls who are very likable are at high risk of being bullied." Therefore, contrary to the instrumental aggression typical of boys who bully others outside their friendship circle, girls are likely to bully within their friendship circle. Mishna, Wiener, and Pepler (2008) found that teachers, parents, and the victim also have difficulty in assessing and intervening in bullying situations involving friends.

The responses indicating the perception that the bullying would get worse included examples such as "doing something to them like pranking them," and "she'll get picked on by the bully's friends, so now she is bullied more; she won't tell again because of fear." Other responses included "it could become physical if she gets angrier," "meaner words and behavior, and "name-calling to punching." The more physical nature of the examples given of "worse" indicate that there is an underlying theme that physical aggression is worse for the victim than the RA. Two seventh-grade participants, one fifth-grade participant, and one third-grade participant also indicated in their responses that the bullying could get worse, the option that the bully might regret their behavior and apologize or stop bullying.

The victim gets blamed for the bullying was a response of three fifth-grade participants. The responses included: "the girl who tells is the one who gets into trouble,"

"the bully will say the victim is the bully, and the teacher believes them," "the bully starts lying…anything to get out of trouble." Similarly to the responses to research question #4, most teachers report that it is hard to sort out what has occurred if they did not witness the bullying incident (Mishna et al., 2006). Further complicating the identification of bullying behavior is the difficulty of recognition within friendship circles (DeBruyn, Cillessen, & Wissink, 2009). The responses of the participants in this study indicate the perception that the bully has the social skills to be more convincing than the victim in relating the incident, so the bully is more likely to be believed by a teacher or adult.

Response by a seventh-grade participant that indicated the opinion that the victim believes she deserves bullying was "the target may begin to believe what is being said about her even though it isn't true." Girls who are bullied by others have lower self-esteem than those not bullied (Pollastri, Cardemil, & O'Donnell, 2010), and they exhibit more psychological distress and lower self-esteem than non-victims (Cassidy, 2009). This response supports previous research.

The victim avoiding the mean girl or running away from her was a possible response to the interview question regarding what might happen if a bully finds out the victim disclosed to an adult. This response is consistent with research that overt and RA are positively associated with the development of social anxiety, social avoidance, and physiological distress which may negatively impact academic and social performance in school (Storch, Brassard, & Masia, 2003).

A third-grade participant responded in a discrepant way by focusing on the thoughts and feelings of the bully with the response of "maybe the bully feels sad that she did it, and now the teacher knows so she'll get into trouble and can't do it anymore. She's sad she got caught and sad she can't do it anymore".

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation for this study is Albert Bandura's sociocultural/social learning perspective, the research of John Darley and Bibb Latane on the bystander effect, Kenneth Dodge's SIP theory, and Nicki Crick and Kenneth Dodge's reformulated SIP theory. The sociocultural/social learning perspective is applied to the exploration of the development of bullying behavior as well as the response of the victim and bystanders to bullying. Bandura (1973) theorized that aggressive children were imitating the behavior of a significant model in their lives. Social learning theory would suggest that children who view bullying would model that behavior (Bandura, 1973) especially if the model were of the same sex as the child and if there was a perceived reward for the behavior (Skinner, 1969). According to Bandura (1973), vicarious learning can also take place by observing models and the consequences of the modeled behavior. Bandura's Bobo doll experiment, where children imitated the acts of aggression on the doll, is an example of the power of modeling to shape aggressive behavior (Bandura, 1973). The participant responses indicated that social learning theory could be applied the development of bullying to the bully, the victim, and the observers to bullying such as parents, school personnel and other adults. It was the perception of participants that girls

learn to bully vicariously by observing a parent behavior of bullying with a response such as "When they are little they don't understand bullying. It is modeled by parents, or they want to hang out with the cool kids." Vicarious learning, observing the model's behavior and the consequences of the behavior for the bully was evident in responses such as "Bullies are popular, not likable but has friends that she bullied to be her friend. The friends also know how to bully." A response describing the changes in bullying from third-grade to seventh-grade was "fifth and sixth-graders learn from older kids how to be mean; older kids know how to hurt feelings more." According to Bandura (1969), there are four distinct components to social learning theory: attention, retention, reproduction, and imitation. The first component to learning is attention to the behavior or noticing the behavior. Applying this first component to the learning of RA, the participants in this study indicated an understanding of RA as including gossiping, exclusion behaviors, saying mean things, and physically hurting another child. Participant responses reflected a clear understanding of negative actions as examples of bullying. Third-grade participants did not seem to have a precise understanding of different forms of negative actions such as RA and physical aggression. Fifth-grade responses focused on verbal behaviors as examples of RA but also defined physical aggression as a factor in female bullying. Seventh-grade responses also focused on verbal aggression and included physical aggression as an occasional factor in bullying. The seventh-grade responses were consistent with research indicating that they may have a precise understanding of an incidence of aggression versus a pattern of aggression inherent in bullying (Smith et al.,

2002; Russell et al., 2010). No clear responses were indicating an imbalance of power as part of RA although there were two responses overall that reported that bullies are "popular kids." The participants in this study did not refer to social status or social skills as factors in bullying but did refer to popularity as a factor. It is evident from the participant responses that can recognize bullying although the definition, specifically the inclusion of physical aggression, varies with the age group. A study by Mishna (2004) comparing children's perspectives on victimization to parents and educator perspectives revealed two major themes of bullying. The first theme was the difficulty for children, parents, and educators in determining if an incident was bullying; the second theme was the complexity of identifying behavior as bullying when the behavior occurred between friends (Mishna, 2004). The participant responses in this study indicated problems identifying bullying behavior when it took place between friends. Based on the participant responses, it is hard to determine whether RA was perceived as normal friendship behavior or if there is a lack of clarity about what are considered to be "normal friendship" behaviors. There is a curvilinear relationship to being bullied for girls in that girls on either end of the spectrum of likeability, either very likable or popular or not likable, are at risk of being bullied (DeBruyn, Cilleson, & Wissink, 2009).

The second component to learning is retention or remembering the behavior that you noticed which may be in the form of mental rehearsal, symbolic coding, or cognitive organization (Bandura, 1969). The participant responses indicated clear examples of

female bullying, but the protocol for this study required that they do not discuss any incidences that they remembered, or that had occurred.

The third component to learning is a reproduction of the behavior; including if the child or adult perceives the physical capability of bullying (in the form of retaliation) or intervening in bullying. The overarching theme of participant responses was a futility and hopelessness that any intervention would cause the bullying to cease. Retaliation to bullying was identified as an option for participants but interpreted as an act of frustration rather than a realistic response to bullying. A participant indicated that "she won't fight back because then it will break out in a drama-fest with everybody picking sides and it becomes like a gang-type thing." Another participant response indicating hopelessness was "the victim would do revenge, say it right back at them but it doesn't stop the bullying." Those who have been bullied and then become bullies, known as bully/victims are the exception to the perception of hopelessness. Not only was the behavior modeled for them at some point, but now there is motivation to continue the behavior. Bully/victims are aware of behaviors that indicate victimization. They can feign them to disguise their bullying as identified by the participant response of "she denies she bullied or finds an excuse or disguises the bullying as "just trying to be nice." A participant response that indicated an awareness of bully/victim behavior was "the bully lies about what they did and the teacher believes them, so the victim gets into trouble instead."

The last component to learning is motivation to re-create the behavior as a result of adequate reinforcements (Bandura, 1969). There is motivation for the bully in the

opinion of the participants such as power, popularity. There is motivation for the victim

not to report and to keep it to herself as participant responses indicated the bullying could

get worse or teachers won't believe them if they tell. Results of the School Violence

Survey (SVS) showed that the most important factor to students in the climate of the

school is the administrator behavior. When administrators tolerate bullying behavior,

display favoritism for one group over another, or inconsistently apply consequences for

the breaking of rules, students felt unsafe and unwilling to report incidences of bullying

and aggression (Hurford et al., 2010). In a study of self-identified female bully/victims,

participants identified the source of their behavior as rooted in victimization within the

home; usually related to a sibling who bullied them (Edmondson & Zeman, 2009). They

then act the victim at home and the bully at school as there may be a social benefit to

bullying at school, such as a sense of power and satisfaction, not available within the

home (Edmondson & Zeman).

Bandura (1983) theorizes that there is a four step process to the instigation of

aggressive behavior; (a) a *directive function* in that the observer can predict that they will

receive the same reward or punishment as the model of the behavior;(b) *a disinhibiting*

function in that if the model of the aggressive behavior does not receive punishment, the

inhibitions of the observer toward the same behavior decreases; (c) *emotional arousal* of

observation by others which increases the likelihood of modeling the aggressive behavior

as well as the intensity of aggressive responses; (d) increased use of implements in a

situation if the model uses implements (such as mallets, or dart guns).The participant

opinions support Bandura's four step process to the instigation of aggressive behavior with the exception of (d) increased use of implements.

Research by Mishna, Pepler, and Wiener (2006) determined that children, teachers, and parents define behavior as bullying depending on several factors. The first factor is whether behavior matched their definition of bullying which typically involved overt displays of aggression. The participants expressed the opinion that female bullying involves more physical aggression in third-grade than fifth and seventh-grade. This opinion indicates that RA of fifth and seventh-graders would not typically be identified as such by other children, teachers, and adults. The second factor involved an assessment of if the act involved a friend and the normalcy of friendship behaviors; as previously indicated, participant responses indicated the opinion that there does seem to be confusion for girls and adults in recognizing bullying when the bullying occurs between friends. An example of this difficulty is a participant response indicating that the victim will "back up the bully if she is her friend, or not do anything if the bully is her friend." The third factor in defining behavior as bullying was if the victim matched the perception of victim behavior, which again can be confusing. The participant responses indicated that although a victim ignores the behavior, there is still a negative impact on the victim. Participants reported that a response to a girl getting caught bullying is to deny she was bullying, and "the bully lies about what they did and the teacher believes them, so the victim gets into trouble instead." In each of these cases, the victim does not have the expected victim behavior and therefore the incident would not be perceived as bullying.

Latane and Darley (1968) proposed a three-part process in determining whether to assist in an emergency situation referred to as the *bystander effect.* The steps include: (a) the emergency must first be noticed, (b) it must be recognized as an emergency, and (c) the bystander must feel responsible for the outcome. The participant's responses indicated that third-grade girls are most likely to include physical aggression in their definition of bullying, and fifth-grade girls and seventh-grade girls are more apt to focus on RA in their definition. Research indicates that adults and children have difficulty assessing a situation as bullying if it is occurring between friends. Recognition of RA by children, parents, school personnel and adults are challenging and complicated thus not as likely to happen as with the more clearly defined physical aggression. The errors of cognitive processing of RA effect the bystander's ability in assessing the situation as bullying, recognizing the situation as an emergency, or accepting responsibility for the outcome of the incident.

Social information processing theory (SIP) defines the cognitive process the victim and bystanders in bullying engage in to determine a response to bullying. Kenneth Dodge (1986) initially proposed a four-step information-processing model for children in determining a response when faced with a situational cue. Crick and Dodge (1994) expanded the SIP process to include two additional steps. The reformulated SIP involves the following steps to decision-making: (a) the process of encoding internal and external cues; (b) interpretation of the cues; (c) clarification of the goals or desired outcome of the social situation; (d) the accessing from memory of behavioral response options to the

situation; (e) selection of the response decision; and (f) the behavioral enactment of the selected response option (Crick & Dodge, 1994). Studies on the stability of RA indicate that as children mature, the SIP system develops; skill with indirect RA increases while the more physically violent and less socially acceptable direct aggression decreases (Crick and Dodge, 1996; Leff et al., 2010). The opinion of the participants in this study reflected this research with a response of "third-graders are not too intense; it is more like friends being mean to friends but not as fierce as fifth or seventh-graders. Third are not intentionally harmful, but older girls are intentional about hurting." Another participant response reflecting the research was "fifth, and seventh-graders are harsher." They are older and have more power and control over each other. Third-graders just act mean without as much power; it's more back and forth." These responses also support research that indicates RA requires verbal, cognitive and social skills (Young et al., 2001). These skills are unsophisticated in the preschool and early elementary school age which makes RA easier to assess than with the older student (Young et al., 2011).

Limitations

The central purpose of the study was to expand on existing research about female bullying or RA. The qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with five main questions and follow-up questions as they evolved. A limitation of the present study is the small qualitative sample size (N=16 including N=2 pilot study) sample (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). The original sampling strategy proposed for this study was criterion-based, or a purposeful sampling strategy with

recruitment letters from the researcher sent home through the school to each parent of the

girls in the selected grades. After multiple letters were sent home with no responses, an

additional recruitment method of snowball sampling was added. Snowball sampling is

used when there are low numbers of potential participants in hidden populations and

when the topic under investigation is sensitive (Browne, 2005). Snowball sampling

employs a participant's social network to recruit participants (Browne, 2005). There were

fourteen participants recruited over two months that participated in the study; two

additional participants were in the pilot study. A limitation of this study was the small

number of participants which, according to the research of Griffiths et al.(1993), may

represent a subcultural population, but the information cannot be generalized to other

populations. A second limitation of this study was the demographic composition of this

population who live in a rural area of Southeastern Washington and Northeastern Oregon

does not reflect state or national demographic statistics and is therefore not generalizable.

Another limitation of this study is the recruitment of participants through the snowball

sampling method which lends toward a biased sample. Generalization to other

populations cannot occur as the participants know each other, they may have similar

experiences, attitudes, and beliefs about female bullying as each participant brings in

other participants, according to Browne (2005) and Griffiths et al. (1993). An additional

limitation of this study is that the initial participants in this study may have

disproportionately affected the composition of the sample (Griffiths et al., 1993). The

participant's family backgrounds included parents employed in the education system who

may, therefore, influence the opinion of their child about bullying because of their experience and training as educators. Finally, an additional limitation was that the interviews and information were from the female perspective only and did not include information from the perspectives of the teacher, principal, parents, or other adults (Crick, 1996). Including their perspectives in future research could give a more well-rounded reflection of female bullying.

Recommendations

Some recommendations for areas of further research emerged from the interviews with study participants. The responses of participants in this study confirms research that suggests the accepted definition of bullying which includes the elements of negative actions, disparity of power, and repeated incidences (Olweus, 1993), is not necessarily understood by children, particularly when comparing what third-grade girls perceive as components of bullying to that of fifth-grade girls and seventh-grade girls. Exploring the "imbalance of power" component in future research could help determine what defines power and how power is perceived by age which then could add to a more accurate definition of bullying relevant to the population studied. The element of power was not addressed by participants in this study except with concerning physical aggression as a behavior demonstrating power. Development of a behaviorally specific definition of bullying and RA which includes the perspectives of children could assist children, parents, and educators in recognizing the behavior and identifying methods to intervene effectively. As identification of bullying is related to the perception of victim behavior,

exploring the reactions to bullying from the victim and bystander perspective could broaden the accepted understanding of how victims and bystanders react to bullying. Identifying and understanding appropriate and acceptable friendship behaviors as well as understanding bullying within friendships are other areas to explore. As reported by Esbensen and Carson (2009), when conducting research on female bullying and RA, providing the student with a behaviorally specific definition for bullying may assist in clarifying the contradictory research results of female bullying such as defining bullying, the progression and method of bullying that occurs over time, and how targets and bystanders react to bullying.

The group of children likely to respond to bullying in an aggressive manner (Holt et al., 2009; Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2011) are referred to as bully/victims. Research to further understand the bully/victim process should be considered as bully/victims poses a particular difficulty within our society. They tend to have low self-esteem, poor social skills, and poor academic performance; they also tend to externalize problems and are easily negatively influenced by peers (Cook et al., 2010). Bully/victims can disguise their bullying by acting like a victim (Edmondson & Zeman, 2009). The bully/victim behavior begins in early childhood, is a means of preserving personal power by directing anger against others (Edmondson & Zeman). Participants in the current study indicated that female bullies were apt to: deny they bullied, disguise their bullying, lie about bullying, and identify the victim as the bully. Although more boys than girls become

bully/victims, this finding could be the result of measurement instruments less sensitive

to RA than physical aggression (Solberg et al., 2007) and should be further explored.

Further research to focus on the developmental process that happens in RA could

assist with recognition and intervention of RA at an earlier age. Research could focus on

what specifically occurs developmentally that by the seventh- grade, the view that

physical aggression of the third-grade girls by seventh-grade girls is not considered to be

bullying. Third-grade participant responses indicated the opinion that third-grade girls

bully physically and that the bullying becomes worse (more relationally aggressive) as

girls age. However, seventh-grade participants expressed the opinion that third-grade

girls don't bully yet bullying increases in severity and meanness by seventh-grade. Chan

(2009) and Villancourt et al.(2008) report that older students are more likely to identify

an imbalance of power as a component to bullying than younger students and that older

girls are the more powerful in a bullying situation when there is a difference in age.

Younger students are likely to include overt aggression in their definition but not covert

or RA (Smith et al., 2002; Monks & Smith, 2006; Villancourt et al., 2008). The

participant responses in this study did not include an imbalance of power in their

definitions or descriptions of bullying.There is evidence that suggests that the prevalence

of bullying, as well as the type of bullying, may be affected by the development of the

child's SIP as well as the maturing of verbal skills (Crick & Dodge, 1996; Leff et al.,

2010; Young et al., 2011). The maturation process could change the type of bullying

from the more easily identifiable overt aggression of the very young to the more

sophisticated and less obvious RA of older students (Young et al.). Additional research

suggests that as the SIP system of the child matures they become more adept at RA as it

is more socially acceptable than physical aggression (Crick & Dodge, 1996; Leff,

Waasdorf, & Crick, 2010). Understanding how and when a girl becomes aware of the

power of RA as a form of bullying and dismisses physical aggression as acceptable could

address the question of whether bullies bully to get power or to assert power (Varjes,

et.al., 2008).

Research could be conducted to determine why ignoring the bullying is the most

frequent response to bullying, even though the participants in this study were familiar

with the reporting process and the potential consequences to the bully.The participants

also indicated that by ignoring the bullying, the bullying did not stop, and the victim

suffered emotionally. The participants also expressed that reporting the bullying to a

teacher or other adult would lead to being known as a "snitch" or "tattler". The

participants in this study were aware of the procedure to report bullying, yet the most

frequent response to research question #3 was the opinion that the victim would keep

bullying to herself and not follow the reporting process. Research by Waasdorp (2011)

determined that the majority of children should ignore or walk away from bullying. The

potential consequences to the bully as a result of being reported were clear to the

participants in this study yet they indicated ignoring bullying was the most likely

response to bullying.They also indicated that the response would not stop the bullying

and that the target would also suffer emotional consequences. Further research from the female's perspective might allow for insight on the reason for this disparity.

Further information on what is perceived to be the emotional impact to bystanders to bullying (Research Question #3) could be further explored as the participants in this study responded as to the opinion of the behavioral consequences of bullying to the bully and behavioral as well as emotional consequences to the victim. Further studies should be conducted that include a more diverse population of girls as well as the opinions of parents and school personnel which could add to the body of research on this topic.

Implications

The current study added to the research information about RA and supported much of the existing research on female bullying. Some participant responses contradicted previous research findings and areas to explore further were identified. The participant responses to research question #1 supported previous research which indicates that there is confusion for students, parents, and educators as to what constitutes bullying and how to identify bullying. The accepted definition of bullying includes three elements of negative actions, a disparity of power, and repeated incidences Olweus' (1993). However, bullying behavior is not interpreted based on Olweus' description. Recognition of bullying by the child, the bystander, and from the adult perspective is dependent on various factors. These factors include the age of the child, the friendship relationship, and the expected behavior based on preconceived ideas about how the bully or victim should act (Crick & Dodge, 1996; Leff et al., 2010; Young et al., 2011; Mishna, Pepler,

&Wiener, 2006). This inconsistency in the accepted definition and those who are exposed to bullying or RA creates difficulties in assessment, intervention, and treatment, as there are many subjective variables to consider when determining the behavior.

Research specific to Question #1, the definition of bullying, and how it changes to exclude physical bullying as girls age might be relevant to the development of intervention programs (Waasdorp, 2011). Waasdorp (2011) suggests that the most effective programs should be developmentally appropriate and that intervention programs should include an emphasis on the role adults play in intervention. It is further suggested by Leff et al. (2009) that it is of particular importance to include school psychologists in the development, implementation, and evaluation of intervention programs addressing RA.Waasdorp (2011) also suggests that the majority of bullied children should ignore or walk away from a bullying situation. Although that option was identified by participants in this study, it was also perceived that the bullying still affects victims in negative ways despite walking away or ignoring it. The participant responses did not indicate the perception that ignoring the bullying behavior was effective in stopping the behavior or that the victim felt positive about themselves for ignoring the behavior.

Leff et al. (2010) indicated that it is imperative to intervene early in school as RA becomes more sophisticated and thus harder to detect as the child develops. Frisen et al. (2008) indicate that as children mature, they are less likely to report incidences of bullying. The participants in this study supported the Leff et al. finding by reporting that bullying gets worse as a child matures. It was the perception of participants in this study

that older girls have developed the skills to relationally bully, and younger girls haven't yet developed RA skills. This perception is consistent with the finding that as the social information processing system matures skill with indirect RA increases while the more physically violent and less socially acceptable direct aggression decreases (Crick and Dodge, 1996; Leff et al., 2010). These responses are also consistent with the finding by Young et al. (2011) that verbal, cognitive and social skills are unsophisticated in early elementary school girls. The lack of sophistication makes it easier to assess than in the later elementary and middle school girls who are more sophisticated about applying skills of indirect aggression strategies (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992). Crick and Werner (1998) found that relationally aggressive children tend to underreport their behavior and the context is significant in understanding the social information processing factors that determine the use of aggression. Recognition and intervention of bullying at the earliest age when it is more recognizable could interfere with the development of the more sophisticated and harder to recognize RA.

The behavior of bully/victims further complicates and confuses children, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel as to the identification of bullying behavior and believability of the reporting victim. In a study of self-identified female bully/victims, participants identified the source of their behavior as rooted in victimization within the home; usually related to a sibling who bullied them (Edmondson & Zeman, 2009). They then act the victim at home and the bully at school as there may be a social benefit to bullying at school, such as a sense of power and satisfaction, not

available within the home (Edmondson & Zeman). The research further indicates that girls will cover their bullying behavior by claiming to be the victim and justifying their bullying as self-defense (Edmondson & Zeman). Only one participant in the current study indicated an opinion that parents could model a source of bullying behavior in the home setting. Victimization by siblings was not an identified factor by participants as in the development of bullying. Despite the responses regarding parents and siblings, the participant responses in this study supported the Edmondson and Zeman (2009) description of bully/victim behavior. The participants expressed an awareness and understanding of bully/victim behavior which may calculate into the victim decision to report bullying. At the same time, the bully may be convincing about presenting as a victim which affects the eventual outcome or intervention strategy by the adult and perhaps other children who are bystanders to the behavior. Understanding bully/victim behavior is an essential element of effective intervention in bullying by school personnel and other adults.

RA is particularly difficult to detect within friendships (Mishna, 2004). Qualitative research by Mishna, Pepler, and Wiener (2006) determined that children, teachers, and parents define behavior as bullying depending on several factors including whether the act involved a friend and an assessment of the normalcy of friendship behavior. Having friendships in early childhood can be considered to be both a positive influence as well as a negative influence (Sebanc, 2003). Sebanc (2003) found in her study of young children's friendships that supportiveness is positively correlated with

prosocial behavior while a friendship with conflict positively correlated with overt aggression, RA, and peer rejection. Exclusive and intimate friendships were determined to associate positively with RA and negatively with peer rejection (Sebanc). Teachers have demonstrated reliability in assessing friendship features (Sebanc) which could be an asset in evaluating risk for relationally aggressive behavior.

Mishna, Pepler, and Wiener, (2006) determined that a factor in the assessment of bullying behavior as determined by children, teachers, and parents was if the behavior of the victim matched the perception of victim behavior. If the child reported victimization but was seemingly well-adjusted, not easily angered, was receiving good grades, appeared confident, stood up for themselves, and was well liked, the child did not fit the perception of a victim and the bullying was likely to be perceived as normal friendship behavior (2006). Normalization of behavior in the larger societal context also was a factor in the identification of bullying behavior, with children sometimes reporting bullying behavior that an adult viewed as a "normal part of growing up" (2006). The variance of responses to victimization is not fully recognized.

Bullying takes different forms by sex with girls more likely to engage in RA while boys are more likely to engage in physical aggression. Thus the development of appropriate programs based on sex should be explored in determining the most effective interventions to reduce bullying (Nabuzoka et al., 2009). Despite the fact that relational aggressors may exhibit poor peer relationships, they are often viewed as powerful and influential within the peer group and programs should include a prosocial leadership

component; that RA may have elements of instrumental aggression that also need to be addressed (Leff et al., 2010). Bollmer et al. (2006) concluded that the internal rewards and the personality of bullies make it unlikely that intervention programs designed to assist the bully to behave in a kinder manner are unrealistic and ineffective. The success of a bullying intervention program depends on the inclusion of school personnel, parents, community leaders, and other relevant adult leaders (Leff et al., 2009, Waasdorp, 2011). Hurford et al. (2010) suggest that the school administrator behavior is the most important factor in addressing bullying (Hurford et al., 2010). Decreasing the student perception of favoritism by administrators, modeling respect for all students, and demonstrating receptivity to student ideas could work well to reduce school violence and bullying and increase the feeling of student safety. Cunningham et al.(2010) suggest that students should be consulted in designing bullying intervention programs that work. Although there was not a question in this study addressing specific intervention programs, participant responses indicated the importance of the behavior of teachers and other school personnel in intervening in a bullying incident.

Bullying behavior from childhood may continue in the workplace as adults, and participants in bullying may experience long-term psychological and emotional problems. There is research to indicate that playground bullying can lead to other relationship bullying such as sexual harassment, dating violence, marital violence, workplace aggression, and elder abuse (Pepler et al., 2006). Additional consequences for the bully, victim, and bystanders of bullying include psychological problems of depression and

psychosomatic illnesses, incarceration, continued aggression toward others, and alcohol

and drug abuse (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Arseneault, et al., 2010). Overt and RA is

positively associated with the development of social anxiety, social avoidance, and

physiological distress which may negatively impact academic and social performance in

school (Storch, Brassard, & Masia, 2003).Female victims of bullying may develop eating

disorders, particularly bulimia nervosa (Fosse & Holen, 2006). There is a relationship

between bullying and suicide (Klomek, Sourander, & Gould; 2010). Some research

indicates that girls involved in bullying as the victim or bully have higher rates of suicidal

ideation and attempts than boys involved in bullying (Kim et al. in Klomek et al., 2010).

Other research indicates that only female bullies, not female victims or male bullies or

victims, are at high risk for suicide (Roland in Klomek, Sourander, & Gould, 2010).

Cyberbullying is an expansion on face-to-face bullying with challenging aspects

yet to be explored through research. Cyberbullying has devastating consequences to

society as well as the victim of bullying, the bully, and others who participate actively or

passively in the cyberbullying process. The much-publicized suicide of Phoebe Prince, as

well as the suicide of Megan Meier, occurred after repeated incidences of bullying at

school and through the use of technology (Hargrove, 2010; O'Neil, 2008; Heyman,

Stochmal, & Paley, 2003). The method of bullying through technology presents many

similar challenges as in face-to-face bullyings, such as defining and recognizing the

behavior. Cyberbullying is distinct from face-to-face bullying in that cyberbullying has

the possibility of extending from the schoolyard to the home world with little or no adult

supervision or intervention (Dempsey, et al., 2009). There is the probability of cyberbullying reaching far more people than face-to-face bullying. There may be no chance for escape from cyberbullying as once it is on the internet, it cannot be erased; and cyberbullies may feel emboldened to be more volatile due to the factor of anonymity (Dempsey, et al., 2009). Additionally, students may fear for their safety offline due to online threats and intimidation (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007). The issue of accountability for threatening or bullying messages and behavior on-line and the consequences that occur as a result is a gray area that also needs to be further explored. Some of the information and intervention techniques learned about face-to-face bullying may be a starting point to address the issues in the less tangible world of cyberbullying.

Although research on RA has increased in the last five years, there remains minimal research on female bullying and RA from the female perspective (Owens, Shute, & Slee, 2000; Varjas, Meyers, Bellmoff, Lopp, Birchbichler & Marshall, 2008). Qualitative research was an appropriate method of inquiry for this study because quantitative methods do not appear to explain RA/bullying sufficiently. Interviewing girls allowed for a richer and fuller description of the phenomenon which increases the research knowledge of female bullying.

Contributing to the body of knowledge about female bullying has the potential to assist education policymakers, administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and children in understanding more completely the bullying process and consequences. This understanding could lead to the development of more effective strategies and intervention

programs to address female bullying. More effective strategies and intervention programs could have the impact of fewer children missing school because of fear of bullying, a safer school environment, more disclosure when bullying does occur, and ultimately, less bullying behavior.

Conclusion

Female bullying in the form of RA is less likely than male/female bullying in the form of physical aggression to be recognized by others, thus preventing effective intervention strategies from being developed and implemented. Such strategies are needed because RA causes significant damage to girls in the form of low self-esteem, eating disorders, suicide, and victim behavior (Crick, 1996; Fosse & Holen, 2006; Klomek, Sweatingham & Waller, 2008; Sourander, & Gould, 2010).

Education to assist in understanding standards of friendship behavior including the risk factors for relationally aggressive behavior in intimate female friendships and normalization of bullying within friendships is a step toward addressing the problem. Adult ability to recognize and intervene appropriately in bully/victim behavior is essential in preventing victimization and the many negative outcomes that may be a result. Victims of bullying that seem not to be affected by the bullying and victims who appear to ignore the bullying but are affected by the bullying should receive the care and concern that intervention provides. The social problem of RA and female bullying can have devastating consequences for the victim of bullying, the bully, the bystanders to bullying, parents and families, teachers, school administrators, and other school

personnel. Intervention programs should include gender, developmental level, the dynamics and roles of victim, bully, and bully/victim, as well as the adult roles, and friendship status. RA can begin as early as the preschool years, therefore bullying prevention programs should also begin as early as preschool.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions to Participants to Address Research Questions

Research Question #1. In the opinion ofgirls, what behaviors are considered to be bullying?

"Tell me about things kids do that you think are bullying."

If both overt and relational aggression are described, I will move to the next Research Question.

If only overt bullying is described:

If overt bullying is described and the word "mean" (or a similar word) is used…I'll ask:

"Are there any other 'Mean' (or their word) kinds of behavior that you think of as Bullying?"

If relational aggression is still not described, I will ask them:

" tell me what mean (or their word) behavior is" and then "can you give me some examples of what a bully might do". Or I might paraphrase what the participant replied with use of the word 'mean' (or their similar word)

If they seem like they are stumbling and as a last resort, I will ask something like:

"That sounds like it is mean behavior (…hurtful, makes people feel bad etc.), is that what you think of as bullying, mean behavior? Can you give me more examples of 'mean' things a bully might do?"

If relational aggression examples are still not given, I will provide an age appropriate definition of relational aggression consistent with the literature review and then ask:

"Do you think that if someone behaved like that, it is bullying?"

If examples of relational aggression are given, I'll move to the next research question. It they are not given, I will continue being more specific as outlined above. I will move to Question #2 after the most specific question.

Research Question #2. What is the opinion of girls of how bullying or relational aggression changes as girls get older?

"Do you think that some older girls, like fifth graders or seventh graders do _____(the word or behavior they described above)?"

If they say "I don't Know", I will move to the next research question.

If they say "they don't do it as much." I'll ask "what do you think some girls might still do that is bullying?"

If they respond: "They do it differently", or in any way indicate the behavior described in #1 changes, I will ask "How do you think it is different?"

If they respond: "they are meaner (or words to that effect) I will ask "what do you think they do that is 'meaner'?"

Research Question #3. What is the opinion of girls of how targets and others respond to bullying or relational aggression?

"What do you think that a girl who someone is being "mean" to might do? Remember, I don't want to know what you would do, but what you think a girl might do if others are being mean to her? ."

The girls may need a prompt here such as:

What are some ways a girl might deal with others who are being to her? Or what are some things a girl might do after others have been mean to her?

Then I'll move to the follow up question:

"what do you think that other kids, or adults might do when they see the girl getting bullied?"

If the participants need a prompt, the next follow-up question might be:

"How might other people act when they see a girl get bullied?"

Research Question #4. What is the opinion of girls of what happens if a girl is caught bullying?

"what do you think might happen to the bully if she is caught by an adult bullying another girl?"

"Nothing" moves me to research #5

"They get in trouble" would lead to follow-up of "can you describe what kind of trouble"?

"I don't know" Might lead me to ask "can you give me some ideas of what you think could happen?"

Research Question #5. What is the opinion of girls of what happens to the target of bullying or relational aggression if she reports the behavior to an adult?

"What do you think might happen to the girl who was bullied if the bully finds out she told someone, like a teacher, or another school adult?"

Follow up questions might be:

"Do you think that some kids or adults might treat a girl who was bullied differently if they found out she told someone?"

If any student attempts to discuss their personal experience, they will be re-directed by the researcher in age appropriate language to talk about their opinion not their experience. For example, if a participant says something such as "One time I…." the researcher will interrupt the response and say something like "Remember, I want to know what you think about what happened. But don't tell me what really happened"…(this is at 3.6 grade level according to the Flesch-Kincaid Scale).

Appendix B: Interiew Tracking Form

Research Question #1. In the opinion of girls, what behaviors are considered to be bullying?

"Tell me about things kids do that you think are bullying."

Follow-up:

Research Question #2. What is the opinion of girls of how bullying or relational aggression changes as girls get older?

"Do you think that some older girls, like fifth graders or seventh graders do _____ (the word or behavior they described above)?"

Follow-up:

Research Question #3. What is the opinion of girls of how targets and others respond to bullying or relational aggression?

"What do you think that a girl who someone is being "mean" to might do? Remember, I don't want to know what you would do, but what you think a girl might do if others are being mean to her? ."

Follow up:

Research Question #4. What is the opinion of girls of what happens if a girl is caught bullying?

"what do you think might happen to the bully if she is caught by an adult bullying another girl?"

Follow up:

Research Question #5. What is the opinion of girls of what happens to the target of bullying or relational aggression if she reports the behavior to an adult?

"What do you think might happen to the girl who was bullied if the bully finds out she told someone, like a teacher, or another school adult?"

Follow up:
"Do you think that some kids or adults might treat a girl who was bullied differently if they found out she told someone?"

Appendix C: Recruitment Letter

Dear Parent,

My name is _____ and I am a student at Walden University working on my dissertation in psychology. I am writing to request your permission for your child to participate in my research study about female bullying and other ways that girls are mean to each other. I am inviting all third grade girls, all fifth grade girls, and all seventh grade girls in College Place School District #250 to be in the study. This letter is being sent to you on my behalf from the school; this research is not sponsored by the school system and the school or school system is in no way responsible for the study other than to provide this letter to you on my behalf.

If you decide to allow your child to participate in this study, your child will be asked to answer some questions about their opinion of girls bullying other girls. It is very important that they give me their opinion, not information about a real event or personal experience. This interview is a one-time occurrence that should last between 20 minutes and 2 hours. Your child will not miss class time because the interview will be conducted at the College Place Fire Department, at a time that is convenient for them. We will meet in a private room to ensure that what they tell me is not heard by others. I would like to audio record your child's interview and then use the information to add to the existing research about female bullying and relational aggression.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. You can choose to allow your child to participate in the study or not. If you'd like your child to participate please contact me to schedule an interview between the dates of Jan. 6th and Feb. 6th and times of 3:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Before the interview, I will be able to more thoroughly explain the interview process to you and answer any questions you may have that will allow you to make a decision as to whether your child should participate in the study. I will also ask that the parent and child sign the forms that give permission for me to interview the child.

If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, you will be asked:
To remain in the Fire Station, but not in the interview room with your child, in case your child becomes upset, until the interview is over.

To provide transportation to and from the interview

If you would like to schedule an interview or have any questions about the study, contact me at or email.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Appendix D: Assent Form for Research (Pilot)

Third Grade Participants

Hello, my name is_____. I am trying to find out about girls being mean to other girls. I am asking you if you want to tell me what you think. You will be helping me to ask questions the right way. I am inviting all third, fifth, and seventh grade girls to talk to me about it. I am going to read this form you. I want you to know what we'll talk about so you can decide if you want to do it.

WHO I AM:
I am a college student. I am working on my degree.

ABOUT OUR TALK:
If you want to talk with me, you will be asked to:

Answer some questions about what you think of girls being mean to other girls. It is important that you answer what you think about it. Please don't tell me of a real time it happened.

Participate in an interview that should take about 20 minutes to 2 hours to finish this talk. I will only talk with you this one time.

Have your parent schedule an interview with me for you at a time convenient for you. We will meet in a private room at the College Place Fire Department, to ensure that what they tell me is not heard by others.

If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, you will be asked to:

Remain in the Fire Station, but not in the interview room with your child, in case your child becomes upset, until the interview is over.

Provide transportation to and from the interview.

Here are some sample questions:

"What do you think that a girl who someone is being "mean" to might do? Remember, I don't want to know what you would do, but what you think a girl might do if others are being mean to her? ."

I might ask you something like this:

"What do you think that a girl who someone is being "mean" to might do? Remember, I don't want to know what YOU would do. I want to know what you THINK a girl might do if others are being mean to her? ."

"Tell me about things kids do that you think are bullying."

IT'S YOUR CHOICE:
You don't have to talk with me if you don't want to. If you decide now that you want to talk with me, you can still change your mind later. If you want to stop, you can.

Talking with me might make you upset. You may remember a time when a girl was being mean to you or someone else. If that happens you may need to talk with your parent about this. I will give your parent(s) a list of people who may help you. Good things may happen because we've talked. One might be that more people will notice girls being mean to other girls. They may decide to help when it happens. Another is that I will know how to ask the questions.

PRIVACY:
Everything you tell me during out talk will be kept private. That means that no one else will know your name or what you said. The only time I have to tell someone is if you tell me something that could hurt you or someone else.

ASKING QUESTIONS:
You can ask me anything you want now. If you think of something later, you or your parents can me at (   )   . You or your parents might want to ask my teacher a question. Her name is Dr._____. Her phone number is
I will give you a copy of this form.

Please write your name below if you want to talk with me.

Name of Child   _____

                                    _____
Child Signature   _____
Date   _____

My Signature   _____

Appendix E: Assent Form for Research

Third Grade Participants

Hello, my name is _____ . I am trying to find out about girls being mean to other girls. I am asking you if you want to tell me what you think. I am inviting all third, fifth, and seventh grade girls to talk to me about it. I am going to read this form you. I want you to know what we'll talk about so you can decide if you want to do it.

WHO I AM:
I am a college student. I am working on my degree.

ABOUT OUR TALK:
If you want to talk with me, you will be asked to:

Answer some questions about what you think of girls being mean to other girls. It is important that you answer what you think about it. Please don't tell me of a real time it happened.

Participate in an interview that should take about 20 minutes to 2 hours to finish this talk. I will only talk with you this one time.

Have your parent schedule an interview with me for you at a time convenient for you. We will meet in a private room at the College Place Fire Department, to ensure that what they tell me is not heard by others.

If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, you will be asked to:

Remain in the Fire Station, but not in the interview room with your child, in case your child becomes upset, until the interview is over.

Provide transportation to and from the interview

Here are some sample questions:

"What do you think that a girl who someone is being "mean" to might do? Remember, I don't want to know what you would do, but what you think a girl might do if others are being mean to her? ."

I might ask you something like this:

"What do you think that a girl who someone is being "mean" to might do? Remember, I don't want to know what you would do, but what you think a girl might do if others are being mean to her? ."

"Tell me about things kids do that you think are bullying."

IT'S YOUR CHOICE:
You don't have to talk with me if you don't want to. If you decide now that you want to talk with me, you can still change your mind later. If you want to stop, you can.

Talking with me might make you upset. You may remember a time when a girl was being mean to you or someone else. If that happens you may need to talk with your parent about this. I will give your parent(s) a list of people who may help you. Good things may happen because we've talked. One might be that more people will notice girls being mean to other girls. They may decide to help when it happens.

PRIVACY:
Everything you tell me during out talk will be kept private. That means that no one else will know your name or what you said. The only time I have to tell someone is if you tell me something that could hurt you or someone else.

ASKING QUESTIONS:
You can ask me anything you want now. If you think of something later, you or your parents can me at (   )   . You or your parents might want to ask my teacher a question. Her name is Dr.   . Her phone number is
I will give you a copy of this form.

Please write your name below if you want to talk with me.

Name of Child	
Child Signature	
Date	
My Signature	

Appendix F: Assent Form for Research

Fifth Grade Participants

Hello, my name is   . I am doing a research project to learn about your opinions of girls being mean to other girl. I am inviting you to join my project. I am inviting all third, fifth, and seventh grade girls in College Place School District #250 to be in the study. I am going to read this form with you. I want you to learn about the project before you decide if you want to be in it.

WHO I AM:
I am a student at Walden University. I am working on my doctoral degree.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:
If you agree to be in this project, you will be asked to:

Answer some questions about what you think of girls being mean to other girls. It is important that you answer what you think about it. Please don't tell me of a real time it happened.

Participate in an interview that should take about 20 minutes to 2 hours to finish this talk. I will only talk with you this one time.

Have your parent schedule an interview with me for you at a time convenient for you. We will meet in a private room at the College Place Fire Department, to ensure that what they tell me is not heard by others.

If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, you will be asked to:

Remain in the Fire Station, but not in the interview room with your child, in case your child becomes upset, until the interview is over.

Provide transportation to and from the interview

Here are some sample questions:

"What do you think that a girl who someone is being "mean" to might do? Remember, I don't want to know what you would do, but what you think a girl might do if others are being mean to her? ."

I might ask you something like this:

"What do you think that a girl who someone is being "mean" to might do? Remember, I don't want to know what you would do, but what you think a girl might do if others are being mean to her? ."

"Tell me about things kids do that you think are bullying."

IT'S YOUR CHOICE:
You don't have to be in this project if you don't want to. If you decide now that you want to join the project, you can still change your mind later. If you want to stop, you can.

As a result of being in this study, there may be some risk of harm to you if you have been bullied, watched someone else bullied, or have bullied someone. You may have some unhappy memories about the experience and need to talk with your parent about this. I will give all parents a list of people who may help you.
The benefits of talking with me might be that more people will know about girl bullying. This might help them make decisions to help when a girl is being bullied.
You won't be paid anything for being in this study but I will greatly appreciate that you are willing to talk with me.

PRIVACY:
Everything you tell me during this project will be kept private. That means that no one else will know your name or what answers you gave. The only time I have to tell someone is if I learn about something that could hurt you or someone else. If you tell me about an actual bullying incident, I will have to tell the people at school that handle those things. Please, only tell me what you think about it, not an actual incident.

ASKING QUESTIONS:
You can ask me any questions you want now. If you think of a question later, you or your parents can reach me at (   )   . If you or your parents would like to ask my university a question, you can call Dr.   . Her phone number is (   )   .

I will give you a copy of this form.

Please sign your name below if you want to join this project.

Name of Child

_____

Child Signature

_____

Date _____

Researcher Signature _____

Appendix G: Assent Form for Research

Seventh Grade Participants

Hello, my name is   and I am doing a research project to learn about your opinions of various aspects of girl bullying that will add to what people know about it. I am inviting you to join my project. I am inviting all third grade girls and all fifth grade girls in College Place School District #250 to be in the study. I am going to read this form with you. I want you to learn about the project before you decide if you want to be in it.

WHO I AM:
I am a student at Walden University. I am working on my doctoral degree.

ABOUT THE PROJECT:
If you agree to be in this project, you will be asked to:

Answer some questions about what you think of girls being mean to other girls. It is important that you answer what you think about it. Please don't tell me of a real time it happened.

Participate in an interview that should take about 20 minutes to 2 hours to finish this talk. I will only talk with you this one time.

Have your parent schedule an interview with me for you at a time convenient for you. We will meet in a private room at the College Place Fire Department, to ensure that what they tell me is not heard by others.

If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, you will be asked to:

Remain in the Fire Station, but not in the interview room with your child, in case your child becomes upset, until the interview is over.

Provide transportation to and from the interview

Here are some sample questions:

"What do you think that a girl who someone is being "mean" to might do? Remember, I don't want to know what you would do, but what you think a girl might do if others are being mean to her? ."

I might ask you something like this:

"What do you think that a girl who someone is being "mean" to might do? Remember, I don't want to know what YOU would do. I want to know what you THINK a girl might do if others are being mean to her? ."

"Tell me about things kids do that you think are bullying."

IT'S YOUR CHOICE:
You don't have to be in this project if you don't want to. If you decide now that you want to join the project, you can still change your mind later. If you want to stop, you can.

Being in this project might make you tired or stressed, similar to when you have to answer your teacher's questions about an assignment. As a result of participating in this study there may be some risk of harm to you if you have been bullied, watched someone else bullied or have bullied someone. You may have some unhappy memories or feelings about the experience and need to talk with your parent about this. I will give all parents a list of people who may help you. I will protect your privacy and keep what you tell me confidential. The benefits of participating might be that more people will know and understand female bullying which might help them make decisions that may help when a girl is being bullied.
You won't get paid anything for participating in this study but I will greatly appreciate that you are willing to talk with me.

PRIVACY:
Everything you tell me during this project will be kept private. That means that no one else will know your name or what answers you gave. The only time I have to tell someone is if I learn about something that could hurt you or someone else. If you tell me about an actual bullying incident, I will have to tell the people at school that handle those things. Please, only tell me what you think about it, not an actual incident.

ASKING QUESTIONS:
You can ask me any questions you want now. If you think of a question later, you or your parents can reach me at ( )   . If you or your parents would like to ask my university a question, you can call Dr.   . Her phone number is ( )   .

I will give you a copy of this form.

Please sign your name below if you want to join this project.

Name of Child

_____

Child Signature

_____

Date _____

Researcher Signature _____

Appendix H: Letter of Cooperation

.
College Place, Wa.

November   , 2014

Dear   ,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled "A Qualitative Study on Female Opinions of Female Bullying and Relational Aggression" in a private room at the College Place Fire Department. I understand that recruitment of participants will take place through the schools and that the Fire Department responsibility will be to provide a private room to conduct the interviews during regular Fire Station hours. I understand that you will conduct the interviews during regular Fire Department hours.

We understand that our organization's responsibility is to provide the private room in which to conduct the interviews. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve the use of the College Place Fire Department, (location),   site for conducting your research.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Authorization Official

Contact information

IRB Reference #12-05-14-0306392

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the email, or (b) copied on the email containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University staff verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Walden).

Appendix I: Snowball Recruitment Letter

Dear Parent,

My name is (name) and I am a student enrolled in the PhD Psychology program at Walden University. You are receiving this letter because the third grade, fifth grade, or seventh grade daughter of a friend or relative of yours participated in my study and thought that your daughter might be a suitable candidate for participation.

I am researching third, fifth, and seventh grade female opinions about female to female bullying. If you decide to allow your child to participate in this study, your child will be asked to answer some questions about their opinion of girls bullying other girls. It is very important that they give me their opinion, not information about a real event or personal experience. This interview is a one-time occurrence that could last between 20 minutes and 2 hours. The interview will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for you/your daughter. We will meet in a private room to ensure that what your daughter tells me is not heard by others. I would like to audio record your child's interview so that I can be sure to hear everything your daughter has to say. This will better assist me to contribute to the existing research about female bullying and relational aggression.

Remember, participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can choose to allow your daughter to participate in the study or not. If you'd like your daughter to participate please contact me to schedule an interview between the dates of (Dates) and times of (times). Before the interview, I will explain the interview process to you and your daughter and I will answer any questions you may have that will allow you to make a decision as to whether your daughter should participate in the study. I will also ask that both parent and daughter sign permission forms allowing me to interview your daughter.

If you agree to allow your daughter to be in this study, you will be asked:
To remain nearby, but not in the interview room with your daughter, in case your daughter becomes upset, until the interview is over.

To provide transportation to and from the interview

If you would like to schedule an interview or have any questions about the study, contact me at (phone number) or email (address).

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Appendix J: Responses by Grade

Research Question #1. In the opinion of girls, what behaviors are considered to be bullying?

"Tell me about things kids do that you think are bullying."

Exclusion Behaviors/ Ignore
7-1
Ignoring friends, Ignore them or don't partner with them on group assignments, Don't pick them for doing assignments with
7-4
-or you exclude them from birthday parties.
7-5
reject them, exclude them from activities.
It also happens at birthday parties where you invite someone as a joke to make fun of them

Gossip
7-1
Gossiping-saying they are not cool or pretty
7-4
Gossip, spreading rumors
7-1
Make fun of them behind their back

Verbal-Say Mean Things
7-1
or making fun of them
7-2
they may say mean words or bring each other down. Girls are sensitive and make them feel bad.
Making fun of: Weight, dress, hanging out with guys not girls
7-3
Bullying is constantly teasing someone else about anything that would make them feel bad.
7-4
, calling names (mainly at school)
7-5
By being constantly mean; insulting outfits, hair, and appearance. Make fun of the choices they make…

Not Physical
7-2
They are not too physical
7-3
Girls don't do as much physical bullying as boys.

Physically Hurting
7-4
, physically hurting someone.

Other Info
7-2
. Girls may bully boys but it is rare.
7-3
There is some guy bullying, he beats up a girl. If they are popular or gossip, it is not the group that I belong to. It is important to belong to a group.

Grade 5 Interview Responses

Verbal-Mean words
5-1
Cybertexting all the time. Like mean words like you're stupid.
It could be verbal-saying mean things to the person.
5-2
. Making fun of someone because of something they can't help like wearing glasses or braces. Tell them they are not good at something. Make fun of them.
5-3
Snotty, try to be in charge, bossy. Making fun of someone about race, how they dress, how they act. More mean words than physical.
5-4
Yell,
5-5
threatening people: ex: I'm going to steal your lunch money if…
5-6
they point out things that are wrong about them, like maybe their teeth aren't straight or their clothes don't match.

Spreading Rumors
5-2
Stealing friends, telling lies about a friend
5-4

embarrass -by spreading rumors, telling others they should not be friends with her
5-5
Spreading rumors, talking behind someone's back,

Physical
5-1
It is not necessarily physical but sometimes throwing a ball or kicking them in line at recess. Might say while smiling "I want to do your hair" and then pulling it. If you're a nerd, they might break your glasses. The bully looks nice so the victim doesn't initially think anything bad will happen.
You can tell a bully like in third grade playing 4 square, she's the one who doesn't follow the rules –if she's out she'll argue it. She's powerful and she gets the power from parents; she takes things out on others.
5-4
, or tripping her in front of others.
5-6
Girls push each other mostly on the playground and at lunch;

Exclusion
5-2
Trying to exclude a friend or take a friend away
5-6
They make others feel left out
5-4
pretend the other girl is invisible, physical, exclude

Grade 3 Interview Responses
Physical
3-1
grabbing a crayon from someone, stealing other peoples' stuff, punching and pushing to the ground or out of the line. Bumping or walking behind someone and dropping a tray to scare them. Showing off like from the movie "Second Chance" which was mainly about doing things to get all the attention and especially getting the boys attention away from the victim. Laughing along with the bully.
3-2
Like if they are standing in line, they push their way through to get where they want to go. .At recess, they might push somebody off a slide.
3-5
Pushing, kicking, punching. Girls don't hurt them as hard as boys would but they still do physical things.

Verbal

3-1
Calling people names,
3-2
Call other kids mean names,
3-3
Bossing them around.), They are called "out" when they are not really out in sports like kickball, Shove people out of line; tell them they don't look good-criticize appearance.

Exclusion
3-3
They can't play what other kids are playing

Research Question #2. What is the opinion of girls of how bullying or relational aggression changes as girls get older?

"Do you think that some older girls, like fifth graders or seventh graders do _____ (the word or behavior they described above)?"

Grade 7
Third Graders Don't Really Bully
7-1
third graders are pretending to bully but nor really-it is simple behavior in their own groups
7-3
I am not aware that third graders bully. I was a tomboy-groups had not been completely formed and the "Drama" is figuring out what group you belong to.

It Increases in Severity and Meanness from third to fifth grade
7-2
Way changes- older have more jealousy issues and may feel bad about themselves and try to bring each other down. It is a delicate time and they are not used to the body changes. It is a big ball of chaos. #third graders are not too intense –it is more like friends being mean to friends but not as fierce as fifth or seventh graders.3rd are not intentionally hurtful but older girls are intentional about hurting. It might lessen for some because they have other ways to protect themselves
7-4
Third graders tease each other and are not trying to hurt each other. It progressively is more hurtful. By seventh grade they want to hurt feelings and use harsher and worse names.
7-5
The bullying is different by grade because there is even more stress when you get older. Third graders don't have to worry about much and the bullying happens more as you get older and have more things to worry about.
third graders –it is less about appearance and more about friendship; fighting over being mad at each other. fifth graders it is about friendship and also some appearance issues .Criticisms. seventh graders- it is everything!

Decreases or Stays the Same
7-1
Don't do it as much because you only have time for the people you care about
Look back on third grade bullying behavior as being dumb

Follow-up:
Yes, they keep doing it maybe because she doesn't realize what she's doing but would find a different way that wouldn't seem like bullying so she wouldn't feel guilty

Grade 5
Third Grade Girls Don't Know how to Bully
5-1
When they are little they don't understand bullying. It is modelled by parents or they want to hang out with the cool kids. I wouldn't want someone to do that to me it would make me sad.

It Becomes more Severe
5-2
fifth and seventh graders are harsher. They are older and have more power and control over each other. third graders just act mean without as much power-it's more back and forth. She might because you might change classes for things. There are more ways to make fun of people and more things like braces.
5-4
Third graders don't know a lot of how to do it so maybe yelling.
Seventh graders know what it is and how to do it.
5-5
As a victim you become much more courageous and feel more empowered as you get older ; As a bully, you are used to being the top dog so you try to stay the top dog, the bully's words are harsher' victim gets stronger but the bully remains the same.
5-6
The way girls do it is they get meaner, spreading rumors and telling lies. They are the same bullies as they get older but it becomes a bigger group.
Not sure how third graders bully.

It Lessens or Stays the Same/Not Sure
5-3
They are more mature and it could go on or it might get better. If it gets worse it is because they know more ways to be mean. I have no idea how seventh graders may bully.

Follow-up:
5-4
Why do they bully? For seventh graders maybe jealousy because they think the other person may have a better life or is a little cooler. Younger -maybe for a toy.

Grade 3
More
3-1
Seventh grade girls are really, really mean and as the grades go down (get younger) it is not as mean. Kindergarteners are mean by throwing temper tantrums and both victims and bully's say they are sorry but keep doing the behavior.

3-2
There is a difference. fifth and 6th graders learn from older kids how to be mean. Older kids know how to hurt feelings more. I think it is different because sometimes seventh and 6th graders have older kids that hurt them.

Less
3-3
Hopefully they'll be nicer to other people by not yelling, being kinder. Maybe they'll forget and stop.

Different
3-5
Yes, kids do nicer bullying when they get older; smiling when saying names, sneakier. Younger kids push, shove, kick, throw them out of line!

Research Question #3. What is the opinion of girls of how targets and others respond to bullying or relational aggression?

"What do you think that a girl who someone is being "mean" to might do? Remember, I don't want to know what you would do, but what you think a girl might do if others are being mean to her? ."

Grade 7
Tell a Teacher or other Adult
7-1
If it is a stranger tell an adult
7-2
might talk to the principal, If she tells a teacher, that could make it worse and she becomes known as a snitch or if it is severe enough like threats, it could stop..
7-3
Telling someone would be better-anonymously- because you don't want to be known as a "Tattler". The persons to tell would be a parent or counselor.
7-4
She feels really bad and wants to talk to someone about it-mom or teacher, but keeps it to herself.

Keeps it to Herself/Ignore It
7-1
If she was a popular bully they wouldn't say anything if they want to be her friend;
A bystander might be embarrassed to tell anyone especially if there is a lot of "no Tattling" messages
7-2
They might pretend it doesn't bother them. Some parents tell kids to stick up for themselves. For kids whose parents blew them off when told may pretend it doesn't bother them.
7-3
Can try to ignore it, pretending not to care. But it takes a long time to get it to stop.
7-4
She keeps to herself, doesn't tell friends because she doesn't want to be made fun of for it.
7-5
Might tell a friend or keep it a secret because she is scared. She might have a comeback or walk away. Walking away is better but neither stops the bullying.

Retaliate

7-3
You could fight fire with fire, like revenge.
7-4
She might try to retaliate and hurt the bully but that only makes it worse.

Stick Up for Herself or Tells a Friend
7-1
Back up the bully if she is their friend; not do anything if it is their friend
If the victim is a friend likely to tell someone because they want to stand up for a friend
7-2
She might stick up for herself, or friends may take care of them.
They could also get surrounded by protective older girls as an intervention

Follow up:
7-5 Why do some kids get bullied and others don't?
Boys stay mad for less time: girls hold grudges and more things annoy them. They may misinterpret what mean behavior is or make things up like spreading rumors.

Grade 5
Retaliate
5-1
The victim would do revenge-say it right back at them; but it doesn't stop bullying
5-6
She might bully them back but it still won't stop.

Ignore It
5-3
She sits there and is quiet; they feel embarrassed/upset especially if people are present. If there are witness
5-4
Depends on the girl: if she's shy she doesn't stick up for herself and tells no one. She tries to get away from it. She has slumped shoulders and looks sad. She avoids situations with lots of people.
5-5
She may ignore it or walk away. She won't fight back because then it will break out in a drama-fest with everybody picking sides and it becomes like gang type thing.

Tells Friends
5-2
Sometimes she tells other friends, she may try to get back at her but doesn't really do anything, she has hurt feelings. Bystanders to bullying are more powerful than the bully.

Tells a teacher or other adult
5-1
 If they feel bad they could tell a teacher and then the bully would get in trouble. The victim would be viewed as a tattler and the bullying would get worse
5-4
If she is more outgoing she might tell a teacher or a parent who might encourage her to stand up for herself.
5-6
Maybe tell a teacher and maybe tell the mom a little bit different thing.

Follow up:
5-2
The bystanders could tell a teacher or ignore the bully. It is no fun to bully if no one is watching. If the victim is really popular or has all the friends than the bully wants to take them from her. She may act super nice but she is not.
5-3
If a teacher sees it they would break it up and send them to the counselor. If it is physical, the bully goes to the principal. There may be a private conversation between the 3 of them.
5-4
There is a designated teacher to handle it at my school
5-6
Does it stop? No, it only gets worse

Grade 3
Retaliate
3-1
She be's mean back. Like while playing with a ball and it's dropped, she gets to it first and throws it elsewhere '
The target might say "Please stop bullying me because I don't like it" If it doesn't stop, she tells the teacher, and then parents and then extended family until it stops….or she transfers to a different school. It is not right then it starts all over again.

Ignores it but Hurt
3-2
They tries to show the bully they are not really sad or hurt, but inside their feelings are really hurt they're just trying not to show it. If they show it, the bully thinks they've won.
3-3
She kind of goes along with it cuz she can't stop her. She could tell her what she's doing and to please stop
3-5

She's sad; she looks embarrassed and tries to run away but they block her. Everyone in the group are all equal in bullying her.

She is embarrassed about other kids seeing her and laughing at her. She is sad because people are walking by and smiling like "we are too cool to be bullied. They act like they are too cool.

Follow up:
3-2
What happens if she shows it?
The bully believes they've won because it is about power and the bullying would keep going. They think they are the winner.

Research Question #4. What is the opinion of girls of what happens if a girl is caught bullying?

"what do you think might happen to the bully if she is caught by an adult bullying another girl?"

Grade 7
The Bullying Gets Worse
7-2
Sometimes the bullying could become more severe because it was viewed as "Tattling" but it depends on who the principal is.
7-3
They might get mad at the person and bully 7-5
Sometimes she may go after the victim more and the behavior is worse.

The Bully Gets Into Trouble / Detention
7-1
She would feel guilty because she knows what she is doing is wrong but would ignore the feeling
If it is a teacher or someone she looks up to she would feel guilty because they would be disappointed in her.
Adults might explain that what she's doing is bullying, might give her a warning assuming she didn't understand she was bullying; might call the parent and be made to

apologize But 7-1 didn't think that was enough to get them to stop and they should have to do more.
7-2
She may be sent to Juvie and that may stop the bullying or detention/suspension but it might not be viewed seriously.
7-4
Usually talk to her about it and bring in the other girl to talk to each other and work it out. The bully has to say sorry. Parents of the bully might be called.
 7-5
She gets in trouble.
If it happens at school she might get detention, sit with a counselor. It might work but it depends on the person.

She Denies She Bullied/Says She was Trying to be Nice
7-3
They probably make excuses or say "I was just joking". They might even admit to it but not likely. Not blame the victim but it is harder to prove
7-5
She denies she bullied or finds an excuse or disguises the bullying as "just trying to be nice".

The Bullying Lessens or Stops
7-3
more OR feel bad, cry, and stop.
7-4
She bullies less if the parents are called.

Grade 5
The Bully gets in to Trouble/Detention
5-1
At school-the bully would be sent to the principal and get a major referral, detention, and punishment of some kind.
5-3
No idea what; talked to privately in an office;
5-4
The teacher confronts them. She pulls the 2 girls out to the hall and stays with them until they work it out. Some girls get caught because they don't know how to be sneaky. If it is really bad, the police get involved (boy yelling at girl)
5-5
Well, the obvious answer is they get in trouble. They both go to the Principal's office and the victim will explain what happened and the bully will get detention.
5-6

The mom gets called; a referral to the principal and maybe she'll stop. Maybe suspension -not sure.

The Bully lies about it/Victim get blamed
5-1
Probably other people would say to (the victim)) "why would you do that?" and they would be bullied and the bullying never stops.
5-2
The bully lies about what they did and the teacher believes them so the victim gets into trouble instead.

The Bullying may become worse or lessen
5-3
The bullying sometimes stops or gets better. It could make it worse-the bully might start hurting her physically so now it is a mixture of physical and verbal.
5-5
This will make the bullying less harsh because the bully is devastated and they will want to get their power back. Empowerment is the main reason they bully.

Follow up:
5-1
Bullies are popular, not likeable but has friends that she bullied to be her friend. The friends also know how to bully.

Grade 3
The Bully get into Trouble
3-1
She would have to go to the principal's office and then they would call the guardian. The guardian grounds the bully. Then the bullying would stop. Yes, the parents will make it stop.
3-3
They'll tell them to stop and punish them with detention or cleaning up the classroom. They catch more boys than girls; girls don't do it as much because they want to have friends. A bully doesn't have friends.
3-5
Gets in trouble and probably has to stay inside with the parent. If it happens at the park, someone tells the parent and she gets grounded by the parent.
At school tell the teacher then the principle. You're suspended. She's told she needs to stop or her mom or dad will have to pick her up.

She Stops Bullying

3-2
The girl might feel that she shouldn't do that anymore, or she might just get mad and keep on doing it.

Research Question #5. What is the opinion of girls of what happens to the target of bullying or relational aggression if she reports the behavior to an adult?

"What do you think might happen to the girl who was bullied if the bully finds out she told someone, like a teacher, or another school adult?"

Bullying Gets Worse
7-1
Many things like on some teen shows- 2 options; could get revenge by doing something to them like pranking them or they may realize what they've done and sincerely apologize.
7-2
The bullying may become more severe and more threatening, or the bully could get scared and stop-depends on the kind of girl. Some girl's parents want them to be tough and threats wouldn't scare them.
7-3
Might get worse but doubt that. It might stop- they might be called a "snitch". The snitch name will eventually lessen because other people don't care as much as you imagine they do.
7-4
The bully usually doesn't tell the whole school, just with her own friends. Bully is private about how she threatens the victim-"if you tell again bad things will happen" or she increases the rumors or number of people she tells the rumors to. The bully sets up sides so the victim still gets bullied more or "I'll tell everyone this…" Increase rumor spreading.
7-5
She'll get picked on by the bully's friends so now she is bullied more. She won't tell again because of fear.

Bullying Feels Bad and Stops
7-1

Many things like on some teen shows- 2 options; could get revenge by doing something to them like pranking them or they may realize what they've done and sincerely apologize.
7-2
The bullying may become more severe and more threatening, or the bully could get scared and stop-depends on the kind of girl.
7-3
Might get worse but doubt that. It might stop- they might be called a "snitch". The snitch name will eventually lessen because other people don't care as much as you imagine they do.

Victim Believes She Deserves to be Bullied
7-2
If she told a parent, she might be told she needs to stick up for herself; the Target may begin to believe what is being said about her-even though it isn't true.

Grade 5
She will be bullied more and/or worse
5-3
The bully would be mad and embarrassed because she got caught so it sometimes could become worse for the victim but sometimes better.
5-4
It could become physical if she gets angrier. Some girls keep bullying no matter what.
5-6
She treats her worse; meaner words and behavior. Nobody likes to be told on and the tolder suffers.

The Victim gets blamed/bully lies
5-1
The victim would be called "the meanest girl ever" and other girls would say you are rude, you are the meanest and the rudest-but the bullying may happen less. Once in a while the bullying may stop but other girls will be mad that she told. The girl who tells is the one who gets into trouble.
5-2
The bully will say the victim is the bully and the teacher believes them.
5-4
The bully starts lying-someone tried to force them…, anything to get out of trouble. Others can't lie.

Victim Avoids "Mean Girls"
5-5

The victim explains to the principal what happened and then the victim tries to move on and forget about it. She avoids becoming friends with other mean girls because she doesn't want to be friends with someone that selfish or end up like them. Avoids other mean girls but sometimes they are within the same friendship circle.

Grade 3
Gets Bullied same/More
3-1
They would get bullied even more from name-calling to punching.
3-3
The bully would stop hanging out with her only with that victim but doesn't stop bullying her.

Victim Feels Scared or sad
3-2
Maybe the bully feels sad that she did it and now the teacher knows so she'll get into trouble and can't do it anymore. She's sad she got caught and sad she can't do it anymore.
3-5
The girl who was bullied will run. She doesn't know what the bully will do.

The Bully Stops
3-5
Yes, the bully stops bullying because if she keeps doing it she'll get into trouble.

"Do you think that some kids or adults might treat a girl who was bullied differently if they found out she told someone?"
7-1
They may be more sensitive to her because they understand how she's been treated. Adults may try to help them become more trusting and to not be afraid of new people. Friends want to build trust and to help them know you are their friend. They would not be treated extra special; friends would try not to tease them about flaws or use certain words because it may bring back bad memories
7-2
Adults would baby her a little; girls might feel respect for her. Or she could be targeted even more because she is viewed as weak.
7-3
There will be people who won't let it go or let her join their group. I wouldn't treat her too differently.

Adults might keep their eyes on her a little more, make sure she settles in differently.
7-4
Some people might but for the most part there is no difference. Getting to know her determines how she will be treated.
Lots of girls hold the pain of bullying in and it builds up.
7-5
They might feel sorry for her cuz its hard or some people may go after her.

Better
5-1
Probably treated nicer. Some may say "we need to be nice to this girl cuz she's been bullied".
5-2
For the victim-watching her, making good friends, being nice, would get cared for and more likely to be protected.
The bully-keep them from recess, ask other girls how she's doing, ask questions.
5-3
She might be treated better 'cause they'd feel sorry for her. Reassuring her and saying nice things
5-5
Others would be nicer to her because she stood up for herself and tried to do the right thing.

Worse
5-3
Or other kids might still be mean to her.

5-4
Some girls might have to move-the victim moves to a different school.

Not Different
5-6
Not sure but probably not treated differently

People will be nicer
3-1
Others would want to be nice to the girl because they don't want to be the cause of her sadness.
3-2
Yes, they try to help stop bullying to her if they see it.
3-3
They would befriend the victim and not be the bully's friend.

3-5
They will protect her from other bullies at the new school.

Additional Information

Research Question #5. What is the opinion of girls of what happens to the target of bullying or relational aggression if she reports the behavior to an adult?

"What do you think might happen to the girl who was bullied if the bully finds out she told someone, like a teacher, or another school adult?"

"Do you think that some kids or adults might treat a girl who was bullied differently if they found out she told someone?"

7-1
To solve bullying:
You know deep down inside the behavior is wrong. You can't take your opinions out on others to hurt them. You can disagree silently. There is no such thing as a "bully seeker". People disguise themselves and it is hard to spot. You need to keep telling them not to bully because it is really easy to fall back to old behaviors.
Anti-bullying education is in the end of fifth or 6th grade
Explorers are a great way to connect to others so you have a support group and are not alone. Kids with similarities can meet each other and there is no exclusion.
My parents raised me to care about people and to have exposure to all types of people. They may be mean but you don't have to be.

7-2
Characteristics of bullies; self-conscious but target girls who may be just like them and bringing them down makes them feel better about themselves. Big friend groups feed off each other and being mean raises their self-esteem. (Heavy girl bullies a heavy girl)
Girls might get bullied if: she doesn't have a group to belong to doesn't fit in anywhere and tries too hard. She doesn't have too many friends or is viewed as the weird girl.
Bystanders: most girls don't like bullies and may stick up for the target.

7-3
Join sports where adults supervise. Might ask another girl to be a mentor. A victim may not understand the social laws of the age.

7-4
If all girls went to counseling once a week; talked about it or did exercises about listening.

Additional Information:
To solve bullying:

5-2
Ignore it so the bully doesn't have power; bystanders could become friends with the victim.

5-3
NO Bully Program-but it doesn't really help. There is always an adult to see the bullying.

5-4
Become friends with former bullies-Work it out. If you are having a hard time somewhere else, you may take it out on others.
Teachers could keep the bully away from the bullied-make them back off.
It's very hard but some girls ignore it so it isn't fun for the bully and if no one is watching it also isn't fun (unless it gets posted on Instagram.
Be careful not to let the bully know it is effecting you-pretend the bully is invisible.

5-5
Bullying is unfair and they have been bullied themself so they become one.

Additional Information:
3-1
Scholastic News Information- bullies have had a rough life and just want a friend. They don't know any other way to make friends. Like in Veggie Tales- they bully to get on your nerves.
If someone bullied me, I'd deal with it in a nice way-like give her a good sack lunch with a message "be my friend". We need to help the bully.
3-5
Boys wrestle; girls kick, shove, punch
To solve bullying:
3-2
To have the victim tell someone and keep on telling someone until it stops.

3-5
Make an experiment around the world with a big camera to stop it.

Appendix K: Collated Responses

Research Question #1. In the opinion of girls, what behaviors are considered to be bullying?

"Tell me about things kids do that you think are bullying."

Exclusion Behaviors/ Ignore
7-1
Ignoring friends, Ignore them or don't partner with them on group assignments, Don't pick them for doing assignments with
7-4
-or you exclude them from birthday parties.
7-5
reject them, exclude them from activities.
It also happens at birthday parties where you invite someone as a joke to make fun of them

5-2
Trying to exclude a friend or take a friend away
5-6
They make others feel left out
5-4
pretend the other girl is invisible, physical, exclude

3-3
They can't play what other kids are playing (exclusion

Gossip
7-1
Gossiping-saying they are not cool or pretty
7-4
Gossip, spreading rumors
7-1
Make fun of them behind their back

5-2
Stealing friends, telling lies about a friend

5-4
embarrass -by spreading rumors, telling others they should not be friends with her
5-5
Spreading rumors, talking behind someone's back,

Verbal-Say Mean Things
7-1
or making fun of them
7-2
they may say mean words or bring each other down. Girls are sensitive and make them feel bad.
Making fun of: Weight, dress, hanging out with guys not girls
7-3
Bullying is constantly teasing someone else about anything that would make them feel bad.
7-4
, calling names (mainly at school)
7-5
By being constantly mean; insulting outfits, hair, and appearance. Make fun of the choices they make…

5-1
Cyber texting all the time. Like mean words like you're stupid.
It could be verbal-saying mean things to the person.
5-2
. Making fun of someone because of something they can't help like wearing glasses or braces. Tell them they are not good at something. Make fun of them.
5-3
Snotty, try to be in charge, bossy. Making fun of someone about race, how they dress, how they act. More mean words than physical.
5-4
Yell,
5-5
threatening people: ex: I'm going to steal your lunch money if…
5-6
they point out things that are wrong about them, like maybe their teeth aren't straight or their clothes don't match.

3-1
Calling people names,
3-2

Call other kids mean names,
3-3
Bossing them around.), They are called "out" when they are not really out in sports like kickball, Shove people out of line; tell them they don't look good-criticize appearance.

Physically Hurting
7-4
, physically hurting someone.

5-1
It is not necessarily physical but sometimes throwing a ball or kicking them in line at recess. Might say while smiling "I want to do your hair" and then pulling it. If you're a nerd, they might break your glasses. The bully looks nice so the victim doesn't initially think anything bad will happen.
You can tell a bully like in third grade playing 4 square, she's the one who doesn't follow the rules –if she's out she'll argue it. She's powerful and she gets the power from parents; she takes things out on others.
5-4
, or tripping her in front of others.
5-6
Girls push each other mostly on the playground and at lunch.

3-1
grabbing a crayon from someone, stealing other people's stuff, punching and pushing to the ground or out of the line. Bumping or walking behind someone and dropping a tray to scare them. Showing off like from the movie "Second Chance" which was mainly about doing things to get all the attention and especially getting the boys attention away from the victim. Laughing along with the bully.
3-2
Like if they are standing in line, they push their way through to get where they want to go. At recess, they might push somebody off a slide.
3-5
Pushing, kicking, punching. Girls don't hurt them as hard as boys would but they still do physical things.

Not Physical
7-2
They are not too physical
7-3
Girls don't do as much physical bullying as boys.

Other Info
7-2
. Girls may bully boys but it is rare.
7-3
There is some guy bullying, he beats up a girl. If they are popular or gossip, it is not the group that I belong to. It is important to belong to a group.

Research Question #2. What is the opinion of girls of how bullying or relational aggression changes as girls get older?

"Do you think that some older girls, like fifth graders or seventh graders do _____(the word or behavior they described above)?"

Grade 7
Third Graders Don't Really Bully
7-1
third graders are pretending to bully but nor really-it is simple behavior in their own groups
7-3
I am not aware that third graders bully. I was a tomboy-groups had not been completely formed and the "Drama" is figuring out what group you belong to.

5-1
When they are little they don't understand bullying. It is modelled by parents or they want to hang out with the cool kids. I wouldn't want someone to do that to me it would make me sad.

It Increases in Severity and Meanness from third to fifth grade
7-2
Way changes- older have more jealousy issues and may feel bad about themselves and try to bring each other down. It is a delicate time and they are not used to the body changes. It is a big ball of chaos. #third graders are not too intense –it is more like friends being mean to friends but not as fierce as fifth or seventh graders. 3rd are not intentionally hurtful but older girls are intentional about hurting. It might lessen for some because they have other ways to protect themselves
7-4
Third graders tease each other and are not trying to hurt each other. It progressively is more hurtful. By seventh grade they want to hurt feelings and use harsher and worse names.
7-5
The bullying is different by grade because there is even more stress when you get older. Third graders don't have to worry about much and the bullying happens more as you get older and have more things to worry about.
third graders –it is less about appearance and more about friendship; fighting over being mad at each other fifth graders it is about friendship and also some appearance issues .Criticisms. seventh graders- it is everything!

5-2

fifth and seventh graders are harsher. They are older and have more power and control over each other. third graders just act mean without as much power-it's more back and forth. She might because you might change classes for things. There are more ways to make fun of people and more things like braces.

5-4

Third graders don't know a lot of how to do it so maybe yelling.

Seventh graders know what it is and how to do it.

5-5

As a victim you become much more courageous and feel more empowered as you get older ; As a bully, you are used to being the top dog so you try to stay the top dog, the bully's words are harsher' victim gets stronger but the bully remains the same.

5-6

The way girls do it is they get meaner, spreading rumors and telling lies. They are the same bullies as they get older but it becomes a bigger group.

Not sure how third graders bully.

3-1

Seventh grade girls are really, really mean and as the grades go down (get younger) it is not as mean. Kindergarteners are mean by throwing temper tantrums and both victims and bully's say they are sorry but keep doing the behavior.

3-2

There is a difference. fifth and 6th graders learn from older kids how to be mean. Older kids know how to hurt feelings more. I think it is different because sometimes seventh and 6th graders have older kids that hurt them.

Decreases or Stays the Same

7-1

Don't do it as much because you only have time for the people you care about

Look back on third grade bullying behavior as being dumb

Follow-up:

Yes, they keep doing it maybe because she doesn't realize what she's doing but would find a different way that wouldn't seem like bullying so she wouldn't feel guilty

5-3

They are more mature and it could go on or it might get better. If it gets worse it is because they know more ways to be mean. I have no idea how seventh graders may bully.

Follow-up:

5-4

Why do they bully? For seventh graders maybe jealousy because they think the other person may have a better life or is a little cooler. Younger -maybe for a toy.

3-3
Hopefully they'll be nicer to other people by not yelling, being kinder. Maybe they'll forget and stop.

Different
3-5
Yes, kids do nicer bullying when they get older; smiling when saying names, sneakier. Younger kids push, shove, kick, throw them out of line!

Research Question #3. What is the opinion of girls of how targets and others respond to bullying or relational aggression?

"What do you think that a girl who someone is being "mean" to might do? Remember, I don't want to know what you would do, but what you think a girl might do if others are being mean to her? ."

Grade 7
Tell a Teacher or other Adult
7-1
If it is a stranger tell an adult
7-2
might talk to the principal, If she tells a teacher, that could make it worse and she becomes known as a snitch or if it is severe enough like threats, it could stop..
7-3
Telling someone would be better-anonymously- because you don't want to be known as a "Tattler". The persons to tell would be a parent or counselor.
7-4
She feels really bad and wants to talk to someone about it-mom or teacher, but keeps it to herself.

5-1
 If they feel bad they could tell a teacher and then the bully would get in trouble. The victim would be viewed as a tattler and the bullying would get worse
5-4
If she is more outgoing she might tell a teacher or a parent who might encourage her to stand up for herself.
5-6
Maybe tell a teacher and maybe tell the mom a little bit different thing.

Keeps it to Herself/Ignore It
7-1
If she was a popular bully they wouldn't say anything if they want to be her friend;
A bystander might be embarrassed to tell anyone especially if there is a lot of "no Tattling" messages
7-2
They might pretend it doesn't bother them. Some parents tell kids to stick up for themselves. For kids whose parents blew them off when told may pretend it doesn't bother them.
7-3
Can try to ignore it, pretending not to care. But it takes a long time to get it to stop.
7-4
She keeps to herself, doesn't tell friends because she doesn't want to be made fun of for it.
7-5
Might tell a friend or keep it a secret because she is scared. She might have a comeback or walk away. Walking away is better but neither stops the bullying.

5-3
She sits there and is quiet; they feel embarrassed/upset especially if people are present. If there are witness
5-4
Depends on the girl: if she's shy she doesn't stick up for herself and tells no one. She tries to get away from it. She has slumped shoulders and looks sad. She avoids situations with lots of people.
5-5
She may ignore it or walk away. She won't fight back because then it will break out in a drama-fest with everybody picking sides and it becomes like gang type thing.

3-2
They tries to show the bully they are not really sad or hurt, but inside their feelings are really hurt they're just trying not to show it. If they show it, the bully thinks they've won.
3-3
She kind of goes along with it cuz she can't stop her. She could tell her what she's doing and to please stop
3-5
She's sad; she looks embarrassed and tries to run away but they block her. Everyone in the group are all equal in bullying her.
She is embarrassed about other kids seeing her and laughing at her. She is sad because people are walking by and smiling like "we are too cool to be bullied. They act like they are too cool.

Retaliate
7-3
You could fight fire with fire, like revenge.
7-4
She might try to retaliate and hurt the bully but that only makes it worse.

5-1
The victim would do revenge-say it right back at them; but it doesn't stop bullying
5-6
She might bully them back but it still won't stop.

3-1
She be's mean back. Like while playing with a ball and it's dropped, she gets to it first and throws it elsewhere '
The target might say "Please stop bullying me because I don't like it" If it doesn't stop, she tells the teacher, and then parents and then extended family until it stops….or she transfers to a different school . it is not right then it starts all over again.

Stick Up for Herself or Tells a Friend
7-1
Back up the bully if she is their friend; not do anything if it is their friend
If the victim is a friend likely to tell someone because they want to stand up for a friend
7-2
She might stick up for herself, or friends may take care of them.
They could also get surrounded by protective older girls as an intervention

5-2
Sometimes she tells other friends, she may try to get back at her but doesn't really do anything, she has hurt feelings. Bystanders to bullying are more powerful than the bully.

Follow up:
7-5Why do some kids get bullied and others don't?
Boys stay mad for less time: girls hold grudges and more things annoy them. They may misinterpret what mean behavior is or make things up like spreading rumors.

Follow up:

5-2

The bystanders could tell a teacher or ignore the bully. It is no fun to bully if no one is watching. If the victim is really popular or has all the friends than the bully wants to take them from her. She may act super nice but she is not.

5-3

If a teacher sees it they would break it up and send them to the counselor. If it is physical, the bully goes to the principal. There may be a private conversation between the 3 of them.

5-4

There is a designated teacher to handle it at my school

5-6

Does it stop? No, it only gets worse

Follow up:

3-2

What happens if she shows it?

The bully believes they've won because it is about power and the bullying would keep going. They think they are the winner.

Research Question #4. What is the opinion of girls of what happens if a girl is caught bullying?

"what do you think might happen to the bully if she is caught by an adult bullying another girl?"

Grade 7

The Bullying Gets Worse

7-2

Sometimes the bullying could become more severe because it was viewed as "Tattling" but it depends on who the principal is.

7-3

They might get mad at the person and bully 7-5

Sometimes she may go after the victim more and the behavior is worse.

The Bully Gets Into Trouble / Detention

7-1

She would feel guilty because she knows what she is doing is wrong but would ignore the feeling

If it is a teacher or someone she looks up to she would feel guilty because they would be disappointed in her.

Adults might explain that what she's doing is bullying, might give her a warning assuming she didn't understand she was bullying; might call the parent and be made to apologize But 7-1 didn't think that was enough to get them to stop and they should have to do more.

7-2

She may be sent to Juvie and that may stop the bullying or detention/suspension but it might not be viewed seriously.

7-4

Usually talk to her about it and bring in the other girl to talk to each other and work it out. The bully has to say sorry. Parents of the bully might be called.

7-5

She gets in trouble.

If it happens at school she might get detention, sit with a counselor. It might work but it depends on the person.

5-1

At school-the bully would be sent to the principal and get a major referral, detention, and punishment of some kind.

5-3

No idea what; talked to privately in an office;

5-4

The teacher confronts them. She pulls the 2 girls out to the hall and stays with them until they work it out. Some girls get caught because they don't know how to be sneaky. If it is really bad, the police get involved (boy yelling at girl)

5-5

Well, the obvious answer is they get in trouble. They both go to the Principal's office and the victim will explain what happened and the bully will get detention.

5-6

The mom gets called; a referral to the principal and maybe she'll stop. Maybe suspension -not sure.

She Denies She Bullied/Says She was Trying to be Nice

7-3

They probably make excuses or say "I was just joking". They might even admit to it but not likely. Not blame the victim but it is harder to prove

7-5

She denies she bullied or finds an excuse or disguises the bullying as "just trying to be nice".

5-1

Probably other people would say to ((the victim) "why would you do that?" and they would be bullied and the bullying never stops.
5-2
The bully lies about what they did and the teacher believes them so the victim gets into trouble instead.

3-1
She would have to go to the principal's office and then they would call the guardian. The guardian grounds the bully. Then the bullying would stop. Yes, the parents will make it stop.
3-3
They'll tell them to stop and punish them with detention or cleaning up the classroom. They catch more boys than girls; girls don't do it as much because they want to have friends. A bully doesn't have friends.
3-5
Gets in trouble and probably has to stay inside with the parent. If it happens at the park, someone tells the parent and she gets grounded by the parent.
At school tell the teacher then the principle. You're suspended. She's told she needs to stop or her mom or dad will have to pick her up.

The Bullying Lessens or Stops
7-3
more OR feel bad, cry, and stop.
7-4
She bullies less if the parents are called.

The Bullying may become worse or lessen
5-3
The bullying sometimes stops or gets better. It could make it worse-the bully might start hurting her physically so now it is a mixture of physical and verbal.
5-5
This will make the bullying less harsh because the bully is devastated and they will want to get their power back. Empowerment is the main reason they bully.

Follow up:
5-1
Bullies are popular, not likeable but has friends that she bullied to be her friend. The friends also know how to bully.

3-2
The girl might feel that she shouldn't do that anymore, or she might just get mad and keep on doing it.

Research Question #5. What is the opinion of girls of what happens to the target of bullying or relational aggression if she reports the behavior to an adult?

"What do you think might happen to the girl who was bullied if the bully finds out she told someone, like a teacher, or another school adult?"

Bullying Gets Worse
7-1
Many things like on some teen shows- 2 options; could get revenge by doing something to them like pranking them or they may realize what they've done and sincerely apologize.
7-2
The bullying may become more severe and more threatening, or the bully could get scared and stop-depends on the kind of girl. Some girl's parents want them to be tough and threats wouldn't scare them.
7-3
Might get worse but doubt that. It might stop- they might be called a "snitch". The snitch name will eventually lessen because other people don't care as much as you imagine they do.
7-4
The bully usually doesn't tell the whole school, just with her own friends. Bully is private about how she threatens the victim-"if you tell again bad things will happen" or she increases the rumors or number of people she tells the rumors to. The bully sets up sides so the victim still gets bullied more or "I'll tell everyone this…" Increase rumor spreading.
7-5
She'll get picked on by the bully's friends so now she is bullied more. She won't tell again because of fear.

5-3
The bully would be mad and embarrassed because she got caught so it sometimes could become worse for the victim but sometimes better.
5-4
It could become physical if she gets angrier. Some girls keep bullying no matter what.
5-6
She treats her worse; meaner words and behavior. Nobody likes to be told on and the tolder suffers.

3-1
They would get bullied even more from name-calling to punching.

3-3
The bully would stop hanging out with her only with that victim but doesn't stop bullying her.

Bullying Feels Bad and Stops
7-1
Many things like on some teen shows- 2 options; could get revenge by doing something to them like pranking them or they may realize what they've done and sincerely apologize.
7-2
The bullying may become more severe and more threatening, or the bully could get scared and stop-depends on the kind of girl.
7-3
Might get worse but doubt that. It might stop- they might be called a "snitch". The snitch name will eventually lessen because other people don't care as much as you imagine they do.

3-5
Yes, the bully stops bullying because if she keeps doing it she'll get into trouble.

Victim Believes She Deserves to be Bullied
7-2
If she told a parent, she might be told she needs to stick up for herself; the Target may begin to believe what is being said about her-even though it isn't true.

The Victim gets blamed/bully lies
5-1
The victim would be called "the meanest girl ever" and other girls would say you are rude, you are the meanest and the rudest-but the bullying may happen less. Once in a while the bullying may stop but other girls will be mad that she told. The girl who tells is the one who gets into trouble.
5-2
The bully will say the victim is the bully and the teacher believes them.
5-4
The bully starts lying-someone tried to force them…, anything to get out of trouble. Others can't lie.

Victim Avoids "Mean Girls"
5-5

The victim explains to the principal what happened and then the victim tries to move on and forget about it. She avoids becoming friends with other mean girls because she doesn't want to be friends with someone that selfish or end up like them. Avoids other mean girls but sometimes they are within the same friendship circle.

Victim Feels Scared or sad
3-2
Maybe the bully feels sad that she did it and now the teacher knows so she'll get into trouble and can't do it anymore. She's sad she got caught and sad she can't do it anymore.
3-5
The girl who was bullied will run. She doesn't know what the bully will do.

"Do you think that some kids or adults might treat a girl who was bullied differently if they found out she told someone?"
7-1
They may be more sensitive to her because they understand how she's been treated. Adults may try to help them become more trusting and to not be afraid of new people. Friends want to build trust and to help them know you are their friend. They would not be treated extra special; friends would try not to tease them about flaws or use certain words because it may bring back bad memories
7-2
Adults would baby her a little; girls might feel respect for her. Or she could be targeted even more because she is viewed as weak.
7-3
There will be people who won't let it go or let her join their group. I wouldn't treat her too differently.
Adults might keep their eyes on her a little more, make sure she settles in differently.
7-4
Some people might but for the most part there is no difference. Getting to know her determines how she will be treated.
Lots of girls hold the pain of bullying in and it builds up.
7-5
They might feel sorry for her cuz its hard or some people may go after her.

Better
5-1

Probably treated nicer. Some may say "we need to be nice to this girl cuz she's been bullied".
5-2
For the victim-watching her, making good friends, being nice, would get cared for and more likely to be protected.
The bully-keep them from recess, ask other girls how she's doing, ask questions.
5-3
She might be treated better cause they'd feel sorry for her. Reassuring her and saying nice things
5-5
Others would be nicer to her because she stood up for herself and tried to do the right thing.

Worse
5-3
Or other kids might still be mean to her.

5-4
Some girls might have to move-the victim moves to a different school.

Not Different
5-6
Not sure but probably not treated differently

People will be nicer
3-1
Others would want to be nice to the girl because they don't want to be the cause of her sadness.
3-2
Yes, they try to help stop bullying to her if they see it.
3-3
They would befriend the victim and not be the bully's friend.
3-5
They will protect her from other bullies at the new school.

Additional Information

Research Question #5. What is the opinion of girls of what happens to the target of bullying or relational aggression if she reports the behavior to an adult?

"What do you think might happen to the girl who was bullied if the bully finds out she told someone, like a teacher, or another school adult?"

 "Do you think that some kids or adults might treat a girl who was bullied differently if they found out she told someone?"

7-1
To solve bullying:

You know deep down inside the behavior is wrong. You can't take your opinions out on others to hurt them. You can disagree silently. There is no such thing as a "bully seeker". People disguise themselves and it is hard to spot. You need to keep telling them not to bully because it is really easy to fall back to old behaviors.
Anti-bullying education is in the end of fifth or 6th grade
Explorers are a great way to connect to others so you have a support group and are not alone. Kids with similarities can meet each other and there is no exclusion.
My parents raised me to care about people and to have exposure to all types of people. They may be mean but you don't have to be.

7-2
Characteristics of bullies; self-conscious but target girls who may be just like them and bringing them down makes them feel better about themselves. Big friend groups feed off each other and being mean raises their self-esteem. (Heavy girl bullies a heavy girl)
Girls might get bullied if: she doesn't have a group to belong to doesn't fit in anywhere and tries too hard. She doesn't have too many friends or is viewed as the weird girl.
Bystanders: most girls don't like bullies and may stick up for the target.

7-3Join sports where adults supervise. Might ask another girl to be a mentor. A victim may not understand the social laws of the age.

7-4
If all girls went to counseling once a week; talked about it or did exercises about listening.

Additional Information:
To solve bullying:

5-2
Ignore it so the bully doesn't have power; bystanders could become friends with the victim.

5-3
NO Bully Program-but it doesn't really help. There is always an adult to see the bullying.

5-4
Become friends with former bullies-Work it out. If you are having a hard time somewhere else, you may take it out on others.
Teachers could keep the bully away from the bullied-make them back off.
It's very hard but some girls ignore it so it isn't fun for the bully and if no one is watching it also isn't fun (unless it gets posted on Instagram.
Be careful not to let the bully know it is effecting you-pretend the bully is invisible.

5-5
Bullying is unfair and they have been bullied themself so they become one.

Additional Information:
3-1
Scholastic News Information- bullies have had a rough life and just want a friend. They don't know any other way to make friends. Like in Veggie Tales- they bully to get on your nerves.
If someone bullied me, I'd deal with it in a nice way-like give her a good sack lunch with a message "be my friend". We need to help the bully.
3-5
Boys wrestle; girls kick, shove, punch
To solve bullying:
3-2
To have the victim tell someone and keep on telling someone until it stops.

3-5
Make an experiment around the world with a big camera to stop it.

Appendix L: Categories and Responses

Number and Grades of Participants

Total Number- 14

Seventh-grade- 5

Fifth-grade- 6

Third-grade- 3

Research Questions

1. In the opinion of girls, what behaviors are considered to be bullying?

   Interview Question: "Tell me about the things kids do that you think are

   bullying?

2. What is the opinion of girls of how bullying or relational aggression changes as

   girls get older?

   Interview Question: "Do you think that older girls, like fifth graders or seventh

   graders do (child's terminology)?"

3. What is the opinion of girls of how targets and others respond to bullying or

   relational aggression?

   Interview Question: "What do you think that a girl who someone is being

   "mean" to might do? Remember, I don't want to know what you would do but

   what you think a girl might do if others are being mean to her."

4. What is the opinion of girls of what happens if a girl is caught bullying?

Interview Question: "What do you think might happen to the bully if she is caught by an adult bullying another girl?"

5. What is the opinion of girls of what happens to the target of bullying or relational aggression if she reports the behavior to an adult?

Interview Question: "What do you think might happen to the girl who was bullied if the bully finds out she told someone, like a teacher or another (school) adult?"

Response Categories, Operational Definitions, Number/Grade of Responses

Research Question #1 Response Categories: Exclusion behaviors/Ignore, gossip, verbal/saying mean things, physically hurting, not physical.

Operational definitions:

A. Exclusion Behaviors/Ignore-not picking them or partnering with them on school projects or other activities, making them feel left out, trying to take a friend away, pretending they are invisible, not inviting them to birthday parties.

   Total Responses: 7

   Seventh-grade- 3

   Fifth-grade-3

   Third-grade- 1

B. Gossip- saying they are not cool or pretty, spreading rumors, making fun of or talking behind someone's back, stealing friends, telling lies about them.

Total Responses: 6

    Seventh-grade- 3

    Fifth-grade-3

    Third-grade- 0

C. Verbal/saying mean things- making fun of them (weight, dress, who they hang out with, outfits, hair, appearance, wearing glasses or braces, race, athletic ability) name-calling, threatening, teasing, bossing them around.

Total Responses: 14

    Seventh-grade- 5

    Fifth-grade-6

    Third-grade- 3

D. Physically hurting- throwing a ball at them, kicking, pulling hair, tripping her, pushing her in line or off a slide, punching.

Total Responses: 6

    Seventh-grade- 1

    Fifth-grade- 2

    Third-grade- 3

E. Not physical-not too physical or as physical as boys.

Total Responses: 2

    Seventh-grade- 2

    Fifth-grade- 0

Third-grade- 0

Research Question #2 Response Categories -Third graders don't really bully, it increases in severity and meanness, decreases or stays the same, different.

Operational definitions:

A. Third graders don't really bully-third graders are pretending to bully, it is drama.

Total Responses: 3

Seventh-grade- 2

Fifth-grade- 1

Third-grade- 0

B. It increases in severity and meanness from third to seventh grade-third graders tease without trying to hurt, by seventh grade they want hurt others by using harsher and meaner methods, seventh graders know what bullying is and how to do it.

Total Responses: 9

Seventh-grade- 3

Fifth-grade- 4

Third-grade- 2

C. Decreases or stays the same-still bullies but doesn't get caught, maturity decreases the likelihood of bullying and increases the chances of being nice.

Total Responses: 4

Seventh-grade- 1

Fifth-grade- 2

Third-grade- 1

D. Different- it appears they may be nicer as they get older but they continue in a sneakier way (smiling while name-calling)

Total Responses: 1

Seventh-grade- 0

Fifth-grade- 0

Third-grade- 1

Research Question #3 Response Categories- Tell a teacher or other adult, keeps it to herself/ignores it, retaliates, stick up for herself or tells a friend.

Operational definitions:

A. Tell a teacher or other adult-Principal, a teacher, Mom, or parent

Total Responses: 7

Seventh-grade- 4

Fifth-grade- 3

Third-grade- 0

B. Keeps it to herself/ignores it-she tells no one, pretends not to care, doesn't tell friends because she's embarrassed, walks away, she sits there and is quiet, stick up for herself or tells a friend.

Total Responses: 11

Seventh-grade- 5

Fifth-grade- 3

Third-grade- 3

B. Retaliates- seeks revenge, bullies them back, hurts the bully

Total Responses: 5

Seventh-grade- 2

Fifth-grade- 2

Third-grade- 1

C. Stick up for herself or tells a friend- not do anything if the bully is their friend, tells a friend, sticks up for herself, others protect her

Total Responses: 3

Seventh-grade- 2

Fifth-grade- 1

Third-grade- 0

Research Question #4 Response Categories - Bullying gets worse, the bully gets into Trouble and/or detention, bully denies she bullied/ says she was just trying to be nice, bullying lessens or stops, bullying may become worse or lessen.

Operational definitions:

A. Bullying gets worse-becomes more frequent and more severe, more people bully her

Total Responses: 3

Seventh-grade- 3

Fifth-grade- 0

Third-grade- 0

B. The bully gets into trouble/detention-sent to juvie, detention, or suspended from school, has to sit with a counselor, has to apologize, adult will talk to bully about it and make her talk to the victim, sent to the principal, mom is called, is confronted by the teacher, has to clean up the classroom

Total Responses: 9

Seventh-grade- 4

Fifth-grade- 5

Third-grade- 0

C. Bully denies she bullied/ says she was just trying to be nice- makes excuses, indicates her intentions were misunderstood, disguises the bullying as trying to be "nice".

Total Responses: 7

Seventh-grade- 2

Fifth-grade- 2

Third-grade- 3

D. Bullying lessens or stops- she feels bad and stops bullying, the parent gets her to stop

Total Responses: 2

Seventh-grade- 2

Fifth-grade- 0

Third-grade- 0

E. Bullying may become worse or lessen- it stops, it gets worse by becoming physical, it lessens because the bully is embarrassed

Total Responses: 2

Seventh-grade- 0

Fifth-grade- 2

Third-grade- 0

Research Question #5 Response Categories - Bullying gets worse, bully feels bad and stops, victim believes she deserves to be bullied, victim gets blamed as the bully lies, the victim avoids the "mean girls", victim feels scared or sad.

Operational definitions:

A. Bullying gets worse-more threatening, more severe with more exclusion, name-calling, and physical harm, victim labelled "snitch", expands to bullying by bully's friends, bully retaliates,

Total Responses: 10

Seventh-grade- 5

Fifth-grade- 3

Third-grade- 2

B. Bully feels bad and stops- bully gets scared of getting caught or getting into trouble and stops, she may sincerely be sorry and stop

Total Responses: 4

    Seventh-grade- 3

    Fifth-grade- 0

    Third-grade- 1

C. Victim believes she deserves to be bullied- victim believes what is being said about her

Total Responses: 1

    Seventh-grade- 1

    Fifth-grade- 0

    Third-grade- 0

D. Victim gets blamed as the bully lies- the bully blames the victim and is believed by teachers and friends, the bully lies to get out of trouble.

Total Responses: 3

    Seventh-grade- 0

    Fifth-grade- 3

    Third-grade- 0

E. Victim avoids the "mean girls"- the victim learns to recognize "mean girls" and avoids them. Victim changes friendship circles to avoid bullies.

Total Responses: 1

Seventh-grade- 0

Fifth-grade- 1

Third-grade- 0

F. Victim feels scared or sad- afraid of what the bully will do next.

Total Responses: 2

Seventh-grade- 0

Fifth-grade- 0

Third-grade- 2