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School Adult and Student Perceptions of Bullying in Middle School: A Mixed Methods Case Study

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School Adult and Student Perceptions of Bullying in Middle School:

A Mixed Methods Case Study

Michelle L. Barrows

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Education

School Counseling

March 2013

Dedication

To all of the students who are bullied. May they develop the strength to tell someone who can help; and find the hope that things can change for the better.

--Michelle Barrows

Acknowledgments

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of many wonderful advisors. First and foremost, thank you to my committee: chair, Dr. Shawn Bultsma; member, Dr. Claudia Sowa Wojciakowski; and member, Dr. Stephen Worst, for your expert advice, guidance, feedback, and endless patience with me! Thank you to the local school whose principal and assistant principal allowed me to conduct my research there. I am particularly grateful to the school counselors and school secretary who helped tremendously with the logistics of administering the survey in their school. Finally, thank you to my family – I love you so much. To my four-year-old daughter, Laurel, who put up with Mommy working on school work for many, many hours when she wanted Mommy to play; and to my husband, Nathan, who not only listened and offered support and suggestions, but also copied surveys late into the night, entered data late into the night, and guided me through the statistical measures to analyze the data. I am forever grateful, I couldn't have done it without you!

Michelle L. Barrows

“In the best schools, every adult, no matter what the position or job title recognizes and accepts the responsibility of role model and educator. Every adult takes the matter of bullying seriously, and sees it as a responsibility to prevent it when possible and intervene if it arises.”

-The Bully Project
www.thebullyproject.com

Preface

“Sally,” a sixth-grader, came to my office in tears. As a school counseling intern in a middle school, I had seen a fair share of tears so far, but this was different. As we talked, I got the sense that this child was in a great deal of emotional pain. Sally was adamant that she could not go back to class, that she hated being at school, and that she needed to call her mom and go home. She explained that a small group of students, who she had been in school with since second grade, was making her life miserable. She described how she was the target of dirty looks, rumors, name-calling, and exclusion. She said it had been going on for years. When I asked her what other adults had done to help her, she said, “Nothing. They don’t believe me.”

Sally’s grades were in a free fall and her attendance was even worse—she was failing five of seven classes, and had missed over 30 days of school that year. Though I met with her weekly and worked with her through some interventions and exercises to improve her self-esteem, friendship and coping skills, I felt she may be depressed. I recommended outside counseling to her parents, particularly over the summer when the counselors at school would be unavailable to her.

When I talked to a few of the adults at the school who knew Sally well, I was alarmed to discover that she was right. They really didn’t seem to believe her. They essentially told me she was a “drama-queen” who caused trouble for herself. And while that might be true, the lack of empathy for this child, who was clearly in pain and needed

help, shocked me. I began to wonder if these adult attitudes were perhaps at the heart of the problem of bullying in schools. If adults in schools are unaware or refuse to even acknowledge that bullying is going on, how can we expect to extinguish bullying behaviors?

Abstract

This mixed-methods case study examined the perceptions of students and school adults regarding bullying at one urban middle school (grades 6-8) in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Participants completed a two-part survey. Part one contained open-ended questions regarding the respondent's experiences at the school and part two used a questionnaire from Maunder, Harrop and Tattersall, (2010) containing a set of twelve scenarios with questions asking participants to indicate whether or not it is bullying, the frequency seen in the school, and the severity if it happened to a girl or a boy. This study showed that awareness of the school district's anti-bullying policy is limited among both students and school adults. Student and adult descriptions of bullying behaviors and perceptions of frequency were consistent; however, their perceptions of the severity of bullying were not, with students choosing "less severe," in greater percentages than the adults. Regarding the identification of specific scenarios as bullying, students and school adults had some different perceptions of the indirect bullying and ambiguous scenarios. This study confirms Maunder et al.'s finding of significant differences when taking into account the seriousness for gender, with bullying scenarios perceived as more serious when they happen to a girl. Recommendations for further study, practice, and for school counselors are included.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Problem Statement

It is clear that bullying is a major problem in our society. Tragic stories of suicide as a result of bullying (“bullycide”) are common in mass media, and students report experiencing bullying and “cyberbullying” at alarming rates. In 2009, 28% of students ages 12-18 reported being bullied at school; while 39% of sixth graders said they were bullied (Robers, Zhang & Truman, 2012). In a study conducted with a sample of 1,400 adolescents, over 30% reported being victims of cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Research also suggests that students who are bullied regularly have higher rates of depression and suicidality (Kiriakidis, 2011; Smith & Brain, 2000). Despite the proliferation of anti-bullying programs for grades K-12, “zero-tolerance” policies in schools across the country, and anti-bullying laws and policies adopted by 41 states, bullying and cyber-bullying are ongoing problems in and outside of schools (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012).

Importance and Rationale of Study

Research is crucial to designing effective interventions to reduce bullying in schools. While research in the area of bullying and school violence has been ongoing for decades, there seems to be a disconnect between research findings and the practice of prevention and intervention in schools. Anecdotal evidence from a recent documentary, *Bully*, suggests that school districts seem to lack clear policies or consequences for bullying. The movie depicts a school principal completely unaware of what is going on in her school, as she blames the victimized students and takes a “kids will be kids,” *lassiz-faire* approach rather than holding the bullies accountable. Leaders in the field of

bullying research, Jimerson, Swearer and Espelage (2010) said: “Despite the recent increase in the amount of research addressing bullying, much remains to be discovered and understood regarding assessment and measurement of bullying, as well as how to design and implement effective prevention and intervention programs” (p. 1).

Educational researchers need to work hard to partner with schools so that the discussion of research results is understood and can be used to implement appropriate and research-based interventions. Something clearly needs to be done to curb bullying in schools. If the problem continues without being addressed in a significant way, the consequences for individuals and our society as a whole are tremendous. For instance, research shows that being bullied has a significant negative impact on the emotional well-being of students, leading to absenteeism and lower academic performance (Jimerson et al., 2010). It can even lead to violence. The United States (U.S.) Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education conducted a study of 37 incidents of school violence from December 1974 to May 2000 and found that 71 % of the attackers felt “bullied, threatened, or attacked by others” (Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum & Modzeleski, 2002). In addition, for the bullies, we see long-term effects of bullying in school leading further to crime and anti-social behaviors as adults (Swearer & Cary, 2003).

Background of the Problem

In 1999, when the shooting massacre at Columbine High School in Colorado occurred, no state laws addressing bullying existed. However, by 2002, there were 15 state laws. Now, 41 states have laws and policies (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012; Olweus & Limber, 2010). In 2010, the U.S. government held its first summit on bullying prevention and in 2011, launched the website, StopBullying.gov, to

address the issue from the federal level. Though there are no federal laws against bullying, it certainly is a timely topic as states continue to pass laws and/or adopt policies in an effort to prevent bullying, seemingly in reaction to recent high-profile cases. As recently as November 2011, the State of Michigan passed anti-bullying legislation requiring all public school districts to adopt anti-bullying policy.

One alarming concern grown out of the issue of bullying in schools is students committing suicide as a result of being the victims of bullying, or “bullycide.” A number of high-profile cases of bullycide have been reported in recent years. For example, in 2003, at the age of 13, Ryan Halligan, a boy from Vermont, committed suicide by hanging himself after being bullied and cyberbullied with bullies spreading rumors that he was gay (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009). In 2006, Megan Meier, a 13-year-old from Missouri, committed suicide by hanging herself after being cyberbullied on MySpace (Hinduja & Patchin). In 2010, Tyler Clementi, an 18 year old student at Rutgers University, jumped off of a bridge to his death after his roommate and a friend watched him kissing another man on a webcam. Though not charged in relation to the suicide itself, the students were indicted for invasion of privacy (Foderaro, Baker, Gray, Schweber & Stelloh, 2010). Also in 2010, Phoebe Prince, a 15-year-old who had moved to the U.S. from Ireland, hanged herself after being bullied relentlessly in her new school. The teens accused of bullying Phoebe were charged with criminal harassment (Kennedy, 2010).

As recent as July 2012, a nine-year-old boy in Detroit committed suicide, just after another boy, 7, hanged himself in May with his belt after being bullied (Katzenstein & Chambers, 2012). Countless other heartbreaking stories could be added to the list as

well. Though it is difficult to determine how many instances were directly related to bullying, according to the report *Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2011*, there were 1,344 suicides among students ages 5–18 in 2008 alone (Robers et al., 2012).

The problem with these high-profile tragedies in the media is that it is easy to suggest a causal affect between bullying and suicide, when it often is not that simple. While those children who committed suicide may have indeed been bullied relentlessly, and the bullying may have led them to either have (or follow through with) suicidal ideations, we cannot omit other factors that come into play, such as the mental health of the victims. Could the fragile mental health of some bullying targets make suicide more likely for those students? Absolutely; however, not every child who is bullied will commit suicide. The proliferation of newspaper articles on bullycide points to a societal discourse about the subject of which researchers must be wary. While attempting to answer some of the questions potentially posed by mass media reports, researchers must strive to ensure their research serves the common good without adding fuel to the firestorm of implied causation in regard to the topic of bullying in American society today.

Despite the media frenzy and legislation, the bullying continues. On June 19, 2012, video surfaced of boys ruthlessly bullying their 68-year-old bus monitor in Rochester, New York (Mascia, Rayford, Martinez, Zaslow & Truesdell, 2012). Kids are not just bullying kids, but are now also bullying innocent grandmothers. Why, if there are so many laws, policies, and programs to address the heart of the problem, does bullying continue? Clearly there are many factors to consider and it is impossible to point to one particular cause. The cause likely stems from a variety of societal issues.

However, if educators want to get serious about stopping bullying in schools, then it will take a district-wide, concerted effort on the part of all school stakeholders as a whole. Is it possible that bullying continues in schools because a lack of awareness of bullying incidents (or even acceptance among adults that it is going on) is pervasive in many of our schools today? In their survey of middle school students, Swearer and Cary (2010) found that 80% of the middle school participants reported that adults in the school did not know the bullying occurred. It is crucial that researchers and practitioners come together to solve the challenging problem of bullying in schools.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions students have of what constitutes bullying and its severity compared to that of adults who work in schools (teachers, administrators, counselors, psychologists, social workers, paraprofessionals, and behavioral interventionists). Of particular interest is to what extent adults within a school share a common perspective on bullying. Though required by law to have an anti-bullying policy in place, is the policy well-defined? Does the staff at the school know the policy well enough to assure that the policy's tenets are carried out each day? Do the students know the policy? Do they know what the consequences of bullying are at their school? If school adults and students have closely aligned perceptions and attitudes about bullying, is there less bullying in that school? As Olweus and Limber (2010) suggested, "environmental factors such as the attitudes, routines, and behavior of adults in the school environment play a major role in determining the extent to which the problems will manifest themselves in a classroom or school" (p. 125). Determining what student perceptions of bullying are and if they align with the perceptions of adults in the

school will help teachers, administrators, school counselors and other support staff determine what interventions need to take place in order to have the entire school body in agreement regarding how to define and stop bullying.

Research Questions

This study seeks to examine school adult and student perceptions of bullying in schools as it relates to the school's state-mandated bullying policy. First, what degree of awareness do school adults and students have regarding their district's bullying policy? A bullying policy cannot help address the problem if the students and staff do not know there is a policy or if they do not understand the policy. Second, how consistent are the perceptions of consequences for bullying among and between school adults and students? If the students don't know what the consequences for bullying are at their school, or perceive that there are no consequences, then that is a problem—particularly if the adults in the school have different perceptions than the students. Third, how consistent are students' and school adults' descriptions of bullying behaviors? Fourth, how consistent are school adults' and students' perceptions of frequency of bullying within the school and its severity? Fifth, how similarly do students' and school adults' perceive a set of scenarios as bullying? Sixth, will school adults and students rate the severity of the bullying situations similarly? I suspect that they may identify bullying situations similarly, but rate the severity differently, with students finding the bullying situations to be more serious. Based on my own experience as a teacher and school counselor, there seems to be a pervasive attitude among many school adults that the targets of bullying exaggerate the severity of the situation. Much of the behaviors students engage in takes place subversively – when the teacher is working with another group; when students are

in the hallway, at lunch, at recess, or before and after school. This can lead school adults to believe that bullying is less of a problem than it really is. By examining and comparing school adult and student perceptions within one school, the school community can then start a dialogue and begin to address any disparities in perceptions through agreed-upon intervention strategies.

Research Design

This study is called a case study because only one school was examined in detail regarding the phenomenon of bullying. Despite not using some more traditional methods of typical case studies, it can be called a case study nonetheless:

The case could be a child. It could be a classroom of children or a particular mobilization of professionals to study a childhood condition. The case is one among others. In any given study, we will concentrate on the one. The time we spend concentrating on the one may be a day or a year, but while we so concentrate we are engaged in case study (Stake, 1995, p. 2).

Therefore, this case study surveyed students and school adults at one Grand Rapids, Michigan middle school in grades 6-8. This is the age group that researchers have identified as the peak for bullying behaviors (Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000).

Mixed methods were used in the form of a two-part survey that collects both quantitative and qualitative data. Though there are two different surveys for adults and for students, they are identical other than in wording. Part I of the survey (Appendices I & K) asks specific questions about the school itself in open-ended and Likert scale questions. Part II of the survey is a questionnaire involving 12 bullying scenarios that was developed, piloted, and administered in Great Britain by Maunder, Harrop and Tattersall (2010). The scenarios of bullying fall into three categories – direct bullying, indirect bullying, and ambiguous scenarios. For each situation, participants indicate

whether it is bullying by answering, “No,” “Unsure,” or “Yes.” They indicate how often they hear about the situation happening to a girl and then a boy (Never, Once or twice a term, Once a week, Several times a week, or Most Days). They also rate the severity of each incident for either a boy or a girl on a five-point Likert scale (0=Not serious, 1=A little serious, 2=Moderately serious, 3=Serious, 4=Extremely serious). In order to use the scenarios and questionnaire, I obtained permission from Dr. Maunder before proceeding (Appendices A & B). The questionnaires were administered in one subject of each of the three grade-level classes (6-8). Teachers in those classrooms were asked to read an instruction sheet and post or display a notice about how to get help if needed (Appendix H). Students who chose not to participate, or whose parents returned the form saying they did not want their child to participate (Appendix F), were able to quietly read or complete other work while students filled out the survey. Other school adults (including principals, assistant principals, school counselors, psychologists, social workers, behavior interventionists, secretaries, media specialists, classroom aides, cafeteria and custodial staff) were invited to complete the questionnaire, with the intent of having at least 30 adults participate.

In addition to the Maunder survey, open-ended questions were included in order to establish a narrative of perceptions on bullying among students and school adults. This helps to enrich the picture that the quantitative data provide, but also helps establish a narrative pattern to determine to what extent the students and adults in the school understand and follow the district’s stated bullying policy. If perceptions of what the bullying policy entails differ in the narrative among students and school adults, then the bullying policy has little hope of being effective. The results of the two methods

compared and contrasted together should establish a clear picture of bullying within the school. Mixed methods research is defined as “mixing” qualitative and quantitative data in one study to understand a topic more fully than is possible by only using one method (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006).

Further, by mixing quantitative and qualitative data in one study, one gets a richer, broader picture of the situation that is not limited by either numbers or stories. Because bullying is a social phenomenon, it is important to examine perceptions of it in terms of personal experiences and beliefs in addition to quantitative measurements. Bullying researchers have even called for more mixed methods studies in the field (Hong & Espelage, 2012). By incorporating qualitative narrative with quantitative data, one adds a voice to the targets of bullying, and also to the bullies themselves – in order that we may help them to be more productive in social situations and ultimately, society. By incorporating mixed methods into this case study, I will enrich the data to answer my own research questions, as well as add to the field of mixed methods bullying research.

Definition of Terms

Bully. A person who intentionally and repeatedly inflicts negative behavior against another person. “Negative actions can be carried out by physical contact, by words, or in other ways, such as gestures or intentional exclusion from a group” (Olweus & Limber, 2010, p. 124).

Bullycide or Cyberbullycide. “Increase in suicides related to an experience with bullying or cyberbullying” (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009, p. 66).

Bullying. “Intentional, repeated, negative (unpleasant or hurtful) behavior by one or more persons directed against a person who has difficulty defending himself or herself” (Olweus & Limber, 2010, p. 125).

Cyberbullying. “Willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices” (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009, p. 5).

Direct Bullying. Bullying behaviors considered “direct behaviours include face-to-face actions such as hitting, threatening and calling names” (Maunder et al., 2010, p. 265).

Indirect Bullying. Bullying that includes “behaviors that occur through a third party such as social exclusion, rumour spreading and unpleasant emails or text messaging” (Maunder et al., 2010, p. 265).

School Adults. For the purposes of this study, school adults are defined simply as adults employed within the school. Professions or titles of school personnel include, but are not limited to: teacher, principal, assistant principal, school counselor, psychologist, social worker, behavior interventionist, secretary, speech pathologist, classroom aide, media specialist, custodian, cafeteria worker, etc.

Students. For the purposes of this study, references to “students” will refer to students at the middle school in one of three grades – sixth, seventh, or eighth.

Victim. “A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students” (Olweus, 2010, p. 11). Often, “without apparent provocation on the part of the person being targeted” (Olweus & Limber, 2010, p. 125).

Delimitations of the Study

Since this study is focused on one school only, the findings will not be generalizable to broader groups or schools with different demographics. The data and findings are limited to this particular group of participants at this particular school and only generalizable to other middle schools with similar demographics.

Limitations of the Study

This study is subject to a number of limitations. First, teachers have much to accomplish in the limited time they have with their students. Since this study is not part of the instructional curriculum, some teachers may not have found it a priority to spend time on it in their classrooms. Likewise, obtaining enough participation among school adults was difficult, likely due to the competing demands for their time. While 88% of students filled out questionnaires, only 48% of school adults did. Additionally, at 16 pages, the survey is long. This clearly affected some students' responses, as some indicated in comments as the survey went on, that the survey was "too long." Some students did not complete the survey, and some did not take it seriously at all, as indicated by rude or inappropriate comments written. Though many students reported on the survey that they are bullied, some of them may not actually be victims of bullying because they may have misconstrued peer conflicts as a form of bullying (Cornell & Mehta, 2011). All research is subject to human error and bias, therefore, another limitation to this study is that the research findings and interpretations are subject to my own personal bias. Finally, time was a factor in that there was a lot of data to collect and analyze in a relatively short time frame.

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter Two is a review of the pertinent bullying research literature. It includes an introduction to the chapter, followed by a description of the theoretical framework that guided this study. Next, the synthesis of research literature describes the history and pertinent issues of bullying research. The summary focuses on bullying research that, like this study, focuses on perceptions of bullying. Finally, the conclusion explains how this study is intended to address gaps in current research.

Chapter Three, research design, describes the study participants, students and school adults; the instrumentation section discusses the survey being used; data collection and data analysis describe the treatment of the data, followed by a summary. Chapter Four describes the results of the study, including demographic information, findings, and a summary. Finally, Chapter Five concludes the study with an overall summary, conclusions, discussion, and recommendations.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter includes a description of the theoretical framework for this particular bullying mixed methods case study, which is grounded in pragmatism. Next, the synthesis of research literature includes a discussion of current trends and gaps in published studies on bullying as well as identify issues in the bullying research which raise further questions for investigation. The following five sections are included in this literature review: (1) bullying and the role of school counseling; (2) the historical framework of bullying research, including a description of how and when bullying became a prevalent topic of research, who the key researchers in the field are, and what these researchers have discovered about bullying to date; (3) bullying definitions that are used commonly by researchers as well as aspects of those definitions under debate; (4) traditional methods of bullying research that include the most common quantitative and qualitative methodologies typically used, as well as an argument for using mixed methods in bullying research going forward; and (5) current research trends regarding perceptions of bullying in schools that seek to determine whether or not perceptions of what bullying “looks like” are congruent across various school subgroups.

Theoretical Framework

Pragmatism, described as “a method and philosophy that attempt[s] to fit together the insights provided by qualitative and quantitative research into a workable solution,” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) served as the theoretical framework for this study. Since I am examining the perceptions of students and adults within a school regarding the subject of bullying using a mixed methods approach, pragmatism is particularly

applicable because it focuses on practical application of theory. In a school setting that, based on ever-increasing accountability, must rely on research and data to drive instruction, practice requires a close alignment with theory.

Originating in the 1870s, pragmatism has three primary theorists known as “classical pragmatists”: Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey (Hookway, 2008). Peirce described the “pragmatist maxim,” as “a distinctive rule or method for becoming reflectively clear about the contents of concepts and hypotheses: we clarify a hypothesis by identifying its practical consequences” (Hookway, 2008, para. 2). Essentially, pragmatism seems to accept that the world is not black and white, rather, it is gray. Instead of looking through a narrow lens of only two ways of approaching a problem, pragmatism examines and incorporates both ways, in addition to others. It seems like a moderate and deliberate philosophy, focusing on action and adaptation.

Bullying, as a school problem, cannot simply categorize students as either bullies or victims. It is far more complicated than that. Shouldn't we consider that some students bully because perhaps they themselves have been bullied? If so, that adds another category and it is no longer black and white. Human relationships and roles are fluid. We have to take into account other factors that come into play – the school culture, the attitude, perceptions, and awareness of the adults in the school – as well as outside factors. Pragmatism as a theoretical approach, allows us to do that because it “recognizes the existence and importance of the physical world as well as the emergent social and psychological world that includes language, culture, human institutions, and subjective thoughts” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 18). Further, Johnson & Onwuegbuzie

(2004) said pragmatism “views current truth, meaning, and knowledge as tentative and changing over time” (p. 18). This aspect of pragmatism fits well with the educational system’s ever-evolving policies and practices. Educators must be life-long learners and incorporate practices based on theories of education that change and evolve. Examining the patterns and behaviors reported gives a clear picture of the students’ and school adults’ perceptions as it relates to bullying. Further, it gives the school insights into what types of interventions may be needed to address the problem.

Synthesis of Research Literature

Bullying and the role of school counseling. In the profession of school counseling, counselors, as advocates for students, need to be part of the school’s leadership team and help establish a climate of safety and learning. “It has been shown that bullying adversely stratifies educational opportunities for students and establishes a hostile and dangerous climate for the bullied” (Stone & Dahir, 2006, p. 105). In addition to providing support for the bullied, school counselors are responsible for establishing and maintaining preventative programs. They also have a responsibility to work with the bullies – to explore why they bully and guide them to positive alternatives for their behaviors through various interventions.

Though bullying research within the context of school counseling is limited, some educational researchers are focusing on bullying in relation to the role of the school counselor. Cornell and Mehta (2011) explained that though school counselors are becoming more involved in bullying prevention, their role has not been studied much. In the study they described, Cornell and Mehta examined the use of self-report surveys to identify victims of bullying. They pointed out that without verification measures in

place, there is no way to know for sure if the student identifying as a victim is really being bullied. Therefore, at the school where the study took place, the school counselors conducted face-to-face interviews with each student who reported being bullied in order to verify if the student could be classified as a victim. They found that many of the students misidentified themselves as victims, despite the fact that the school has a well-established bullying prevention program that clearly teaches what bullying is (2011).

Carney (2008) conducted a study looking at perceptions of trauma associated with bullying among sixth grade students in one rural school. She found that the frequency of bullying incidents was the most significant factor in determining trauma; however, the sample size was small and bullying scenarios given to the students were hypothetical. She suggested that school counselors are important players in establishing early and universal interventions, in addition to teaching coping skills to students directly affected by bullying. Since bullying research is clearly more ubiquitous in psychological and general educational research literature, searches were conducted more broadly in the social sciences to obtain an adequate literature base for this study.

Historical framework of bullying research. The preeminent researcher in the field of bullying, Dan Olweus, who could be considered the “father” of bullying research for his 40 years of leadership and contributions in the field, recently received the Award for Distinguished Contributions to the International Advancement of Psychology from the American Psychological Association. His book, *Aggression in the Schools: Bullies and Whipping Boys*, published in Scandinavia in 1973 and the U.S. in 1978, was based on research he started in 1970 that is considered to be the first bullying research ever conducted (Anderson, 2011). Olweus also developed the Olweus Bullying Prevention

Program (OBPP) which was selected as one of the top 10 out of more than 600 programs evaluated for preventing violence in the U.S. It is also the only program (as of 2009) to be replicated multiple times with positive results (Anderson, 2011).

Since Olweus's pioneering efforts, research became more systematic and large-scale, but was still primarily completed in Sweden and Norway. However, by the 1980s and 90s, researchers in Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Japan, the Netherlands, and Spain were focusing on the problem as well (Stein, 2001). In the U.S., the research focus has historically been on school violence and aggression from a psychological perspective (Smith & Brain, 2000), with bullying research expanding tremendously only in the past two decades in response to high-profile school violence like Columbine (Olweus & Limber, 2010). In light of the more recent school massacre in December 2012 at Sandy Hook Elementary in Connecticut, the discussion about school violence and the need for early interventions to help prevent these tragedies is once again at the forefront of public discourse.

Researchers continue to focus on bullying in a variety of contexts around the world, and a number of researchers use an ecological perspective which posits that we have to consider the context of bullying behavior in terms of the social structures in which children grow up (Demaray, Malecki, Jenkins & Westermann, 2012; Swearer & Doll, 2001). Many scholars focus their efforts on interventions and their effectiveness in terms of reducing bullying in schools, while much research has also examined and discovered gender differences. It was once concluded that boys were more aggressive than girls and boys bullied with more frequency. However, more recent studies have examined and concluded that boys tend to engage in more physical (direct) forms of

bullying and girls tend to engage in more verbal (indirect) types of bullying (Olweus, 2010).

Bullying definitions. A particularly prevalent issue in the area of bullying research regards the definition. Olweus established the original definition, which states: “A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students” (Olweus, 1993, p. 9).

While Olweus’s definition is the most widely accepted among researchers, some argue that the criteria of repetition or power imbalance are not necessary to define a situation as bullying (Smith & Brain, 2000). In Olweus’s Bully/Victim Questionnaire, the issue of power imbalance in bullying is introduced through the definition given to students taking the survey. Students are then classified based on their answers as either victims or “bully-victims” if they report bullying other students “2 or 3 times a month” in addition to being bullied “2 or 3 times a month” (Olweus, 2010). This is important to note because the term “bully-victims” is used often in the research literature.

Additionally, Olweus (2010) asserted there must be a distinction between aggression and bullying, with bullying emphasizing a power imbalance (size, status, age, etc.). Some researchers have used a “behavior-based” definition that does not include a power imbalance. Therefore, for example, a child being kicked on the bus every day by a smaller child would be considered bullying; whereas under Olweus’s definition, the scenario would not be bullying, but rather aggression (Aalsma & Brown, 2008).

Other researchers use definitions of bullying based on “conceptual elements” or “specific incidents” (Maunder et al., 2010). Maunder et al. (2010) pointed out that some studies have found that teachers’ and students’ definitions differed from research

definitions in that they did not require repetition to define bullying, while yet others have found that teachers and students did not include power imbalance in their definitions. One qualitative study found that the majority of their participants did include a power imbalance in their definition but did not mention repetition (Mishna, Pepler & Wiener, 2006). Another qualitative study found that a victim could provide a definition of bullying but when given a specific scenario, did not identify it as bullying (Aalsma & Brown, 2008).

Aalsma and Brown (2008) described the assessment of bullying as the “Achilles heel” of prevention efforts because data vary based on the definition of bullying used in the particular study. It is difficult to compare results of studies that do not use the same definition of the term. It is also difficult to determine rates at which bullying occurs if participants do not have a common understanding of what bullying is. Examining perceptions and attitudes of bullying can help get to the heart of this problem.

Traditional methods of bullying research. Most research done on bullying to date has been quantitative in the form of surveys (Hong & Espelage, 2012). Typically, quantitative data are collected on bullying using either self-report or peer report to identify bullies, victims, and bully-victims (Olweus, 2010).

Quantitative studies, while giving us important data to examine, eliminate an important element to the social phenomenon that is bullying: the voice of victims and bullies. As Torrance (2000) stated, “If researchers and practitioners are to develop an in-depth understanding of bullying within a social setting, supported by findings which lead to a better understanding of intervention strategies, greater emphasis needs to be placed on qualitative research” (p. 16).

In recent years, individual interviews and focus groups have been conducted with smaller samples to obtain qualitative data. However, a growing number of researchers are now using a mixed methods approach to enrich the quantitative data with qualitative voices (Hong & Espelage, 2012). Further, Torrance argued, “The form and perceived effects of bullying are socially constructed (Gibbs & Stiker, 1996) and there is a danger that when bullying is divorced from its social context, investigations become limited dry questions and answers” (p. 16). In other words, by focusing primarily on quantitative methods in terms of bullying research, one is ignoring the social nature of the phenomenon. Whereas, by using a pragmatic, mixed methods approach, one can get to the more nuanced aspects of the problem’s nature. Hong and Espelage (2012) also outlined the benefits of using a mixed methods approach as including the ability to triangulate for validity (particularly with small samples) and complement numerical results with detailed explanation.

Bullying perceptions research. Again, Olweus pioneered research on students’ perceptions of bullying in some of his earliest work. In a more recent study of perceptions of students, teachers, and parents in rural elementary schools, the authors found that students reported higher levels of bullying than parents or teachers. However, a limitation of the study is that the surveys differed among the three groups (Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Duys, Larson & Sarvela, 2002), making it difficult to accurately compare their responses. In 2003, Swearer and Cary looked at perceptions and attitudes toward bullying in a longitudinal study conducted at one middle school (grades 6-8) but they only looked at student perceptions, not student and adult perceptions. They found that there is definitely a power differential in the bullying at the school across the three years

of the study, with older students bullying younger students. They also found no differences in terms of gender in their study – likely because their definition incorporated both verbal and physical bullying behaviors. In addition, their sample size was small. Interestingly, many of the bullies in the survey indicated that they bullied other students in response to how they were feeling internally (Swearer & Cary, 2003).

Although there has been some work on comparing perceptions among students and teachers (Menesini, Fonzi & Smith, 2002; Naylor, Cowie, Cossin, deBettencourt & Lemme, 2006), much of it was conducted outside the U.S. and used different tools of measurement for each group (Mauder et al., 2010). One such study in Canada used the Safe School Questionnaire to select students who self-reported being bullied. The study collected qualitative data through 60-90 minute interviews on bullying perceptions with students, their parents, and educators. The interviews revealed that adults and students described the same scenarios differently, and that though participants included indirect bullying in their definitions, they saw it as less serious (Mishna et al., 2006).

The Mauder et al. study, that serves as basis of this study, was conducted in the United Kingdom (U.K.) using student participants from “Year 8” (12-13 years old) and “Year 11” (15-16 years old), the equivalent of seventh and tenth grades in the U.S., at four different schools, along with the teachers and support staff at all schools who were invited to participate. This study differs from others conducted on perception research because the authors used the same survey across all groups, allowing for direct comparisons between student and adult responses. The scenarios provided to participants were specific in three categories: direct, indirect bullying, and ambiguous scenarios (Appendix G). The groups’ sample sizes were large enough to support the statistical

findings. The authors determined that teachers and students do have different perceptions of what constitutes bullying and that indirect behaviors were rated as being less serious than direct bullying across all groups (Maunder et al., 2010). The finding that students and adults perceive bullying differently points to a crucial disparity. If students and adults within a school are not on the same page regarding what constitutes bullying, then how are they able to prevent it?

Summary

To recap, bullying research in the realm of educational psychology has increased in the past 30 years; yet bullying has not decreased. A variety of studies on school bullying have been conducted at different grade levels in schools throughout the country. However, though most researchers tend to use one particular definition, there are disagreements about what constitutes bullying from a definitional standpoint among educators and researchers making it difficult to compare and generalize. Direct comparisons of child and adult perceptions are extremely limited, particularly in the U.S. Studies that have compared child and adult perceptions tend to use different measurements for each group, calling the validity of the findings into question. Finally, the new direction of bullying research points towards taking a mixed methods approach in order that we might gather a more complete picture of the situation.

Conclusion

Whereas there are gaps in perceptions data and few truly mixed methods studies of student and adult perceptions data compared, this study has the potential to fill in those gaps with a complete picture of one case. In turn, this study gives that particular school a direction for implementing interventions focusing on preventing bullying that will be

tailored to the specific scenario at that school. Taking a pragmatic approach with a mixed methods model helps bullying research theory and practice come together.

Chapter Three: Research Design

Introduction

This thesis examined the extent to which middle school students' and school adults' perceptions align with each other and with their district's stated anti-bullying policy. The overall research design is a mixed methods case study of one school. By focusing on one school, I am able to examine in detail the perceptions, observations, and behaviors of the individuals within the school. A mixed methods approach is important in this study to gain a complete picture of the bullying phenomena and perceptions of it in the school.

This particular school was chosen because of my familiarity with the school and the adults who work there. Since they already knew me from my internship experience in the school, I anticipated that they would likely be more willing to participate and provide insights into the phenomenon of bullying in their school. As a researcher in a familiar setting, I was able to take the role of a "privileged, active observer," whereby I could assist and interact in the situation as necessary (Gay et al., 2006). This chapter includes a detailed description of the school setting and study participants, justifies the selection of specific data collection and analytical methods, and summarizes the overall research design.

Participants

Participants included the students and adults at the middle school of a low-income, urban school district in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The school currently has 481 students enrolled in grades 6-8. In 2009, the student body consisted of 475 students; these students were ethnically diverse: 45% White, 27% Hispanic, 19% Black, 7%

Asian/Pacific Islander, and 2% American Indian/Alaska Native (U.S. Department of Education, 2009-2010). In Fall 2011, approximately 81% of the students were eligible for free or reduced lunch (Michigan Department of Education, 2011). The students were in either sixth, seventh, or eighth grade and range in age from 11 to 15 years old. Based on my own observations, the adults are less diverse than the students, with the vast majority being White, non-Hispanic. Of the 33 instructional, administrative, and support services staff, 70% are female, and 30% male.

The valid participants, 376 students and 19 school adults, equate to an effective response rate for the survey of 78.2% for students and 47.5% for school adults. The response rate for school adults was much lower than expected. Out of 40 surveys distributed, only half were returned. This caused some difficulty with significance in the data analysis, which is addressed in the findings section. It also leads to some questions which will be raised in the discussion in Chapter Five. Of the valid participants, the average length of tenure is 15.4 years in education, with 14 participants identifying themselves as “Instructional” in the job category question. Two respondents identified as “Student Support Services,” two as “Support Staff,” and one as “Administrative.” Six respondents indicated that they work with students in all three grade levels, while five indicated they work with only eighth grade; four with sixth grade; three work with seventh grade; and one participant indicated that he works with seventh and eighth grades.

Students are represented across all three middle school grades, 6-8, with males and females represented fairly equally in each grade level (Table 1).

Table 1. <i>Participant demographics</i>			
Participants	Male	Female	Total
Grade 6	61	56	117
Grade 7	72	64	136
Grade 8	53	69	122
School Adults	6	13	19

Instrumentation

One survey with two different instruments were used in this study – Part I of the survey included qualitative questions regarding the school itself, and Part II collected quantitative data related to specific bullying scenarios. First, participants answered demographic questions. For the students, they indicated their gender, age, grade, whether they had a cell phone, access to a computer at home, and if they had Facebook and Twitter accounts. The demographic information for adults included: gender, tenure, grades worked with, and job category (administrative, instructional, student support services, or support staff).

The open-ended survey questions asked for experiences and opinions to obtain qualitative data regarding bullying in addition to the questionnaire’s quantitative data. The items were based on the research questions and asked students and adults (through written self-reports) to indicate any school rules about bullying that they were aware of; describe what happens when someone is caught bullying at their school; describe what kinds of bullying have they seen at this school; explain how serious of a problem bullying

is at the school (for adults) and for them personally (students); and what do they think should be done about bullying.

Part II of the survey was a questionnaire involving 12 bullying scenarios that was developed, piloted, and administered in the U.K. by Maunder, Harrop and Tattersall (2010). The scenarios of bullying fell into three categories – direct bullying, indirect bullying, and ambiguous scenarios (Appendix G). For each situation, participants indicated whether it is bullying by answering, “No,” “Unsure,” or “Yes.” They indicated how often they hear about this situation happening to a girl or a boy in the school (“Never,” “Once or Twice a Term,” “Once a Week,” “Several Times a Week,” or “Most Days”) for each gender. They also rated the severity of the incident if it were to happen to either a girl or a boy, each on a five-point Likert scale (0=“Not serious,” 1=“A little serious,” 2=“Moderately Serious,” 3=“Serious,” 4=“Extremely Serious”). Finally, each scenario ended with a question about how often that scenario happens to the participant (“Never,” “Once or twice a term,” “once a week,” “several times a week,” or “most days”). At the end of each scenario, there was a box for adding optional comments.

The questionnaire (Part II) developed by Maunder et al. (2010), determines and compares student and adult perceptions. I chose this particular survey because it is tied directly to the scenarios. Unlike some other comparison surveys for students and adults, there is only one survey for both here, making it easier to compare data for the two groups.

Data Collection

Prior to administering the surveys, a letter explaining the study in English and Spanish (Appendix F) was sent home to parents and guardians, giving them an

opportunity to opt-out of their child participating. The letter explained that there is no compensation, the risk to students is minimal, participation is completely voluntary, and no identifying information would be collected. While it would be ideal to receive informed consent from each student's parent or guardian, it is not practical in this situation, considering that there were 481 students and the response rate from parents is low in this school when documents are sent home. Another issue was the time constraint for completing this thesis in less than one semester. Thirteen forms were returned by parents indicating that their students would not be participating in the survey.

The surveys were administered in one subject of each of the three grade-level classes (6-8). Teachers in those classrooms were asked to read an instruction sheet (Appendix H). No names were to be written on any pages of the survey. Students were to be reminded to keep their eyes on their own paper and not talk during the survey. Students who chose not to participate (or whose parents opted out) had the opportunity to read, complete homework, or do another quiet activity while participants completed their surveys.

Students were made aware that it is possible some of the questions or scenarios may cause discomfort, anxiety, or tension if they have had experiences with bullying (Appendix H). If they became upset from any of the questions at any time, they had access to the two school counselors in the building, or could contact the NineLine, which provides free over-the-phone or via internet confidential counseling (phone number and website was to be written on the board by the teacher or projected). Once students completed the survey, the teacher was instructed to place them in the envelope provided.

When all surveys were complete and inside the envelope, it was sealed by the teacher, in front of the students, and then delivered to me via a labeled box placed in the main office.

Forty school adults (including principals, assistant principals, school counselors, psychologists, social workers, behavior interventionists, secretaries, media specialists, classroom aides, cafeteria and custodial staff) were also invited to complete the survey, with the intent of having at least 30 adults participate. Surveys, along with a sealable envelope and instructions, were placed in their individual mailboxes. A box in the main office was designated for sealed, unmarked envelopes containing completed school adult surveys.

Collected data are stored in a file box marked by grade level or “adult” in my home office. As required by federal regulation, surveys will be kept for three years following closure of the study. Finally, a written report of study findings will be provided to the school for use towards school improvement, development of a bullying prevention and intervention program, or as they see fit.

Data Analysis

Triangulation of the two data collection methods (qualitative data consisting of open-ended questions and qualitative data containing Likert scale responses) is crucial to painting a full picture of the bullying phenomenon in the school (Hong & Espelage, 2012; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The wealth of data collected through this project could be analyzed in any number of ways. That’s why it is crucial to focus and limit the data analysis according to the overall research questions stated in Chapter One.

For the quantitative portion of the study, data was entered into an Excel database with two sheets, one for adults, and one for students. Each sheet contained coded data for

each quantitative question. Demographic data was coded as follows: (Gender: male, 1; female, 2; Yes, 1; No, 0 for whether students have a cell phone, access to a computer at home, and use Facebook or Twitter; Grade level: 6, 7, or 8; and Age: listed numerically). All Likert scale questions were coded as follows: (“Never or Not serious”: 0; “Once or Twice a term or A little serious”: 1; “Once a week or Moderately serious”: 2; “Several times a week or Serious”: 3; “Most days or Extremely serious”: 4).

A total of 20 adult surveys and 422 student surveys were returned. The quantitative data were imported into SPSS for statistical analysis. Some survey data were excluded based on (1) incompleteness (< 80% completed) and (2) meaningless written responses (e.g. “ice cream,” or “This survey sucks”) or (3) classified as “unlikely extreme responses” through the SPSS statistical analysis. After removal, 376 students and 19 school adults remained as valid participants (only one adult respondent was removed due to less than 80 % of the questionnaire completed).

As the Likert-style questions were employed on the survey, the data from these questions were either nominal (e.g. demographics) or ordinal (e.g. ranking). Because interval data were not collected, the analysis focused on chi square analysis to compare patterns of ranking between students and school adults; this approach is consistent with previously-published studies (Maunder et al., 2010). Chi square is defined as “a nonparametric test of significance appropriate when the data are in the form of frequency counts...” (Gay et al., 2006, p. 370).

Likewise, the qualitative data (written answers to open-ended questions) were entered into a Word table by question. Participants whose quantitative portion of the survey were excluded, were also excluded from the qualitative portion. Constant

comparison, which involves coding and comparing incidents in categories (Glaser, 1965), was used to identify common themes for each question. The number of responses within each theme were counted and recorded in a chart (Appendix L).

Summary

To summarize, the research design for this study is a mixed methods case study. This study examined the perceptions of students and adults regarding bullying within their middle school using two instruments to triangulate quantitative and qualitative data. The instruments used will include open-ended questions about bullying experiences and the school's stated bullying policy and implementation, and 12 scenarios with Likert scale questions that correspond to each.

Chapter Four: Results

This chapter focuses on the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data analyses. First, demographic characteristics of the participants and response rate are described. Next, the findings related to the research questions are explained. Finally, the findings are summarized and conclusions introduced.

Context

As discussed in the participant section in Chapter Three, the response rate was about 78% for students and about 48% for school adults. This low response rate from adults certainly affects the results of the quantitative portion of the study. While conclusions can be drawn from the data, they are not generalizable. For the qualitative portion of the study, five open-ended questions were added to the survey. Responses were recorded then scanned for common themes. Themes were then tallied by number of responses from students and school adults.

Findings

Since this is a mixed methods study, the research questions are answered by either the qualitative or quantitative data collected. The first three research questions are based on qualitative data, while the last three questions are based mostly on quantitative data.

Research Question 1: What degree of awareness do school adults and students have regarding their school's bullying policy?

The majority of participants, 129 students and five adults, indicated that no physical contact is allowed at school. Themes mentioned included: hitting, hurting, pushing, shoving, kicking, or the need to keep hands to self. The second theme with the most mentions was verbal, with 94 student mentions and five adult mentions. Words

mentioned included: name calling, teasing, put downs, picking on, making fun, and threats. A very small number of students (3) and five adults mentioned emotional (or indirect) bullying with themes like rumors and intimidation. Sixty students and six adults indicated in general that no bullying or cyber bullying are allowed at school. Fifteen students and two adults indicated that they were not sure or didn't know what the rules are, whereas seven adults (and no students) mentioned a "zero" or "no" tolerance policy for bullying. Looking at the chart (Appendix L, Figure 1) it is apparent that the degree of awareness is wide. One student said there were no rules and one adult mentioned, "We do not have anything specific in our student handbook regarding bullying." Two adults mentioned the district's Board of Education policy: "5517.01: Bullying and Other Aggressive Behavior Toward Students," which was updated in May 2012 and is based on Michigan state law: MCL 380.1310B (Matt's Safe School Law, PA 241 of 2011); and "Policies on Bullying" and "Model Anti-Bullying Policy," from the Michigan State Board of Education. The policy defines bullying as:

any gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts – i.e. internet, telephone or cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or wireless hand held device) that, without regard to its subject matter or motivating animus, is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one (1) or more students either directly or indirectly...Bullying can be physical, verbal, psychological, or a combination of all three. Some examples of bullying are:

- A. Physical – hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, pulling; taking and/or damaging personal belongings or extorting money, blocking or impeding student movement, unwelcome physical contact.
- B. Verbal – taunting, malicious teasing, insulting, name calling, making threats.
- C. Psychological – spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, coercion, or engaging in social exclusion/shunning, extortion, or intimidation. This may occur in a number of different ways, including but not limited to notes, emails, social media postings, and graffiti.

Based on the Board of Education policy, it appears that perhaps students and adults within the middle school are aware of some aspects of the policy. However, there is no school-wide adoption of the policy and its definition based on the wide range of responses. It is interesting that the three examples: physical, verbal and psychological, are in the same order of frequency in the survey as they are listed in the policy (with 134 total mentions of physical themes, 99 total mentions of verbal themes, and only eight total mentions of psychological themes – including rumors and intimidation). This is consistent with the findings from Maunder et al. (2010) who found indirect behaviors were less likely to be defined as bullying. It is also interesting to note that 48 students and one adult mentioned the issue of fighting or play fighting, when these are not typically considered to be bullying behaviors.

Research Question 2: How consistent are the perceptions of consequences for bullying among and between school adults and students?

Most students and school adults consistently mentioned one or more aspects of the school's discipline rubric as consequences for bullying (which is included as an infraction on the rubric). Students are disciplined for infractions based on progressive consequences depending on the severity or frequency of the behavior. Students and adults mentioned many of the consequences used on the rubric (Appendix L, Figure 2), including: a "write up," (105 total mentions), lunch detention (97 total mentions), social probation (where they are unable to participate in field trips or activities, six total mentions), suspension (in school or out of school, 325 total mentions), and expulsion (35 total mentions). Though I asked the school if any students had ever actually been expelled for bullying, I did not get a response. Only two students and six adults actually mentioned the rubric itself as a consequence for bullying. Two students and one adult mentioned talking to the school counselors, and two students said that students who bully go to jail. Eight students reported that "nothing" happens as a consequence of bullying. A sixth grade girl said, "When someone gets caught, they get in trouble, and sometimes they get away with it." An eighth grade girl said, "Nothing. Nobody ever gets caught. Nobody wants to be called a snitch. Some teachers see it but [don't] do anything." Particularly interesting to note: six students indicated that even if the bully does get caught, the bullying situation often continues, or even gets worse. A seventh grade boy said, "They deny it and bully that person more." Finally, rather than discussing the consequences for a bully, an eighth grade girl discussed the emotional consequences for a

victim: “They go to the bathroom and cry for a long time. Or they cut there [sic] wrist because they think they are not worth it.”

Research Question 3: How consistent are students’ and school adults’ descriptions of bullying behaviors?

Students and adults were fairly consistent in descriptions of the bullying behaviors they witness at the school (Appendix L, Figure 3). The majority of student (239) and adult mentions (21) were verbal themes: name calling, teasing, put downs, picking on, making fun of, threats. A sixth grade girl said there is “teasing people on what they wear,” which was also mentioned by six other students. Another sixth grade girl said there are “Fat jokes [and] people call people ugly.” A seventh grade girl said, “It’s hurtful when people say ‘rocks and stones may break my bones, words never hurt me.’ It’s not true, they do hurt.” Finally, an adult said, “This is an aspect of bullying that kids are very secretive/sneaky about.”

The next most frequently mentioned type of bullying behavior was physical themes: hitting, pushing, shoving, kicking, hair pulling, punching, and tripping. A total of 176 students and 13 adults mentioned witnessing physical bullying. Seven students said kids are pushed into lockers, with one sixth grade girl saying: “People shove people into the lockers. They call people bad names. They punch fight after school. Also they push people on the stairs.” A sixth grade boy described physical bullying in shockingly great detail: “Dog poop getting wiped on your face, getting shoved down the stairs, homework getting torn apart, getting shoved on the ground, getting hit by a bicycle.” A seventh grade girl revealed, “Even my friends hurt me and it’s tiring. I already get it at

home.” Addressing the power differential often included in definitions of bullying, one sixth grade girl reported, “8th graders usually mess with the 6th graders.”

Emotional or psychological bullying (rumors, intimidation, exclusion, manipulation, and alienation) was reported (23 times by students, 10 times by adults) though not in the numbers of verbal and physical bullying. This does not necessarily mean that it does not happen as frequently, but may mean that it is not as commonly known or recognized as bullying because it can be so subversive. One adult illustrated this by saying, “Leaving someone out is mean and rude, but is it bullying? I never thought so...” Another adult described leaving someone out as “a middle school/age ‘thing.’”

Cyber bullying received a total of 42 mentions among students (36) and adults (6) within the context of the question about types of bullying seen, but it also came up in regard to the severity of bullying, with 25 students indicating they either are cyber bullied or see it frequently. Only three adults mentioned it in the context of severity. One sixth grade girl said, “Most of the time I get bullied on Facebook,” while a seventh grade boy said, “What if they do it to be funny?”

Other themes regarding bullying behaviors included: 19 students who indicated they had not seen any bullying; three students and three adults mentioned racism; and six students (zero adults) mentioned sexual harassment and being bullied for sexual orientation. It is noteworthy that adults did not mention this at all, when it is well known that students who identify as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgendered, or questioning (GLBTQ) are commonly bullied for their orientation (Berlan et al., 2010). Three other themes were mentioned that would not necessarily be considered bullying: fighting and

play fighting (74 student mentions, one adult mention); cussing, swearing and yelling (12 student mentions, zero adult mentions); and gossiping, arguing, “drama,” and peer pressure (7 student mentions, three adult mentions).

Research Question 4: How consistent are school adults’ and students’ perceptions of frequency of bullying within the school and its severity?

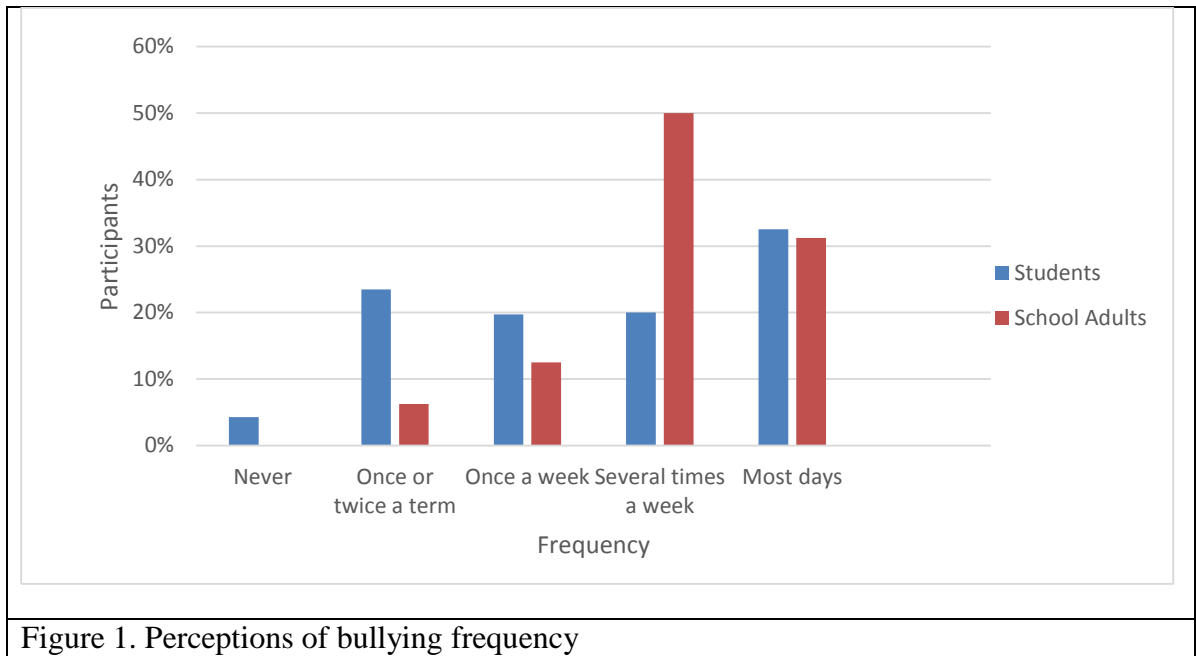


Figure 1. Perceptions of bullying frequency

The frequency plot in Figure 1 suggests that students and school adults have different perceptions of the frequency of bullying. The chi square test indicated a significant difference between students and school adults with respect to frequency of bullying ($\chi(4) = 10.050, p = 0.040$). However, four of the school adult cells had expected counts less than five, which increases the likelihood of Type 1 error (i.e. false positives). This concern led to the inclusion of a Kruskal-Wallis test, the nonparametric version of a one-way ANOVA. The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that students and school adults did not differ significantly in their ratings of bullying frequency ($H(1) = 1.483, p = 0.223$),

which contradicted the qualitative trends observed in Figure 1. As this was likely due to the loss of power inherent in employing nonparametric statistics, the five-point scale was transformed into a three-point scale by collapsing “Never” and “Once or twice a term” into “Rarely,” renaming “Once a week” to “Weekly,” and combining “Several times a week” and “Most days” into “Almost daily” as shown in Figure 2.

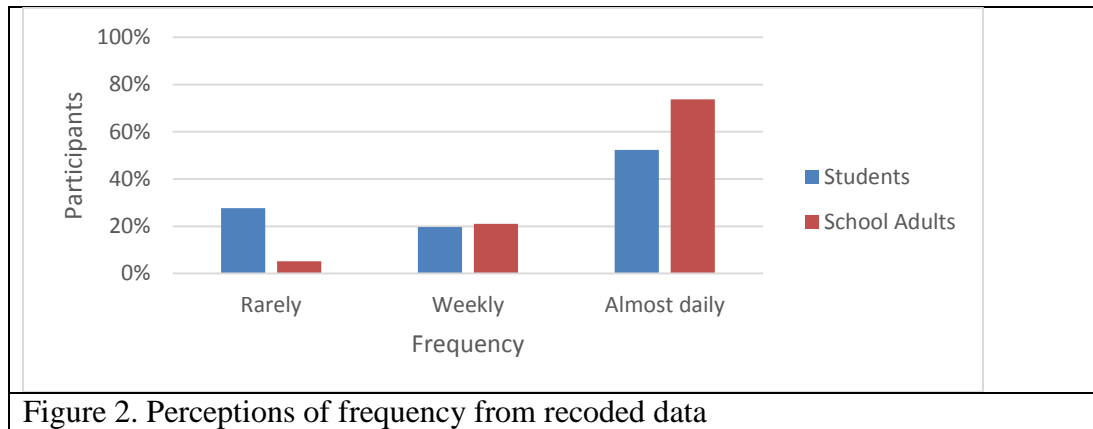


Figure 2. Perceptions of frequency from recoded data

The chi square test on the recoded data revealed no significant difference in the two participant groups’ perceptions of severity, $\chi^2(2, N=394) = 4.953, p = .083$, with one of the six cells having an expected count less than five.

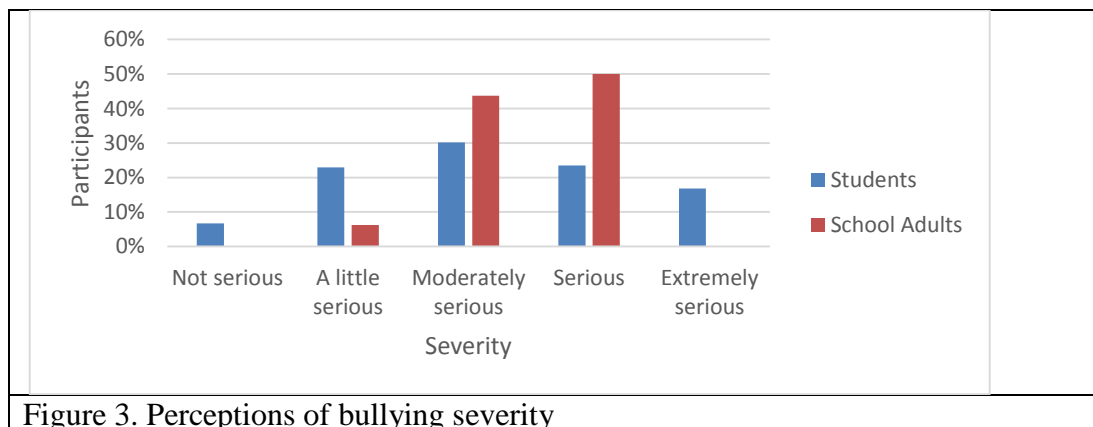
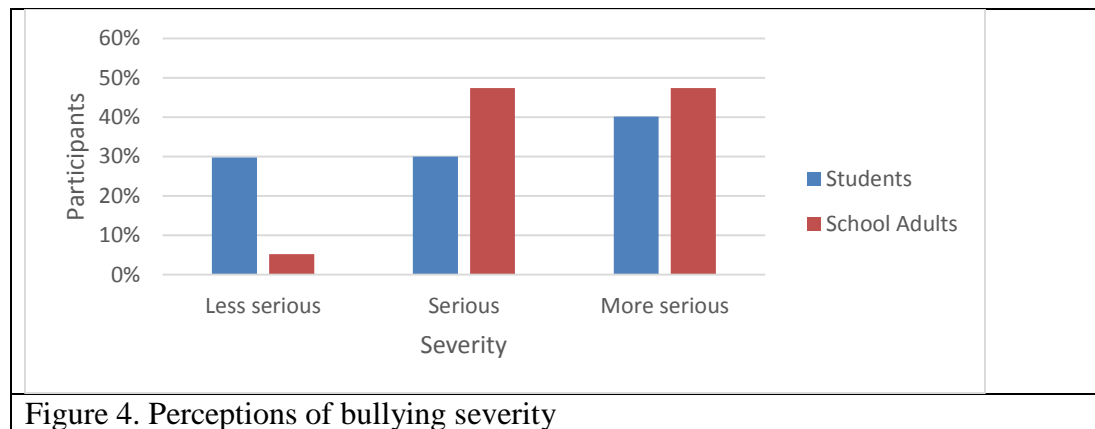


Figure 3. Perceptions of bullying severity

The plot in Figure 3 suggests that students and school adults have different perceptions of the severity of bullying. Although this assertion was supported by a chi square test, $\chi^2(4, N=395) = 13.029, p = .011$, Type I error was a concern due to four of the ten cells having expected counts less than five. The data were recoded into a three-point scale by collapsing “Not serious” and “A little serious” into “Less serious,” keeping “Moderately serious,” and combining “Serious” and “Extremely serious” into “More serious” as shown in Figure 4.



The chi square on the recoded data revealed no significant difference in the two participant groups’ perceptions of severity, $\chi^2(2, N=395) = 5.790, p = .055$, with all cells having an expected count greater than five.

The open-ended question about severity from the qualitative data asked students to explain how severe of a problem bullying is for them, and asked adults to explain how severe of a problem bullying is for students in their school (Appendix L, Figure 4). Many students reported being called names or hearing others being called names (students, 61 mentions; adults, 2 mentions); and being cyberbullied or seeing cyberbullying (students, 25 mentions; adults, 3 mentions). A couple of other interesting trends developed in the

themes mentioned by students and adults in this question. First, some students (14) and adults (5) mentioned that either they or others perceive some of the physical and verbal behaviors to be “playing around.” An eighth grade boy said, “There is a little bullying in school, but it’s nothing to worry about.” Others would beg to differ.

Some of the comments of those students who think it *is* serious would suggest that they do not take it as “playing around.” Thirty students indicated that bullying either hurts them or others, while one adult mentioned hurt feelings. A sixth grade girl said, “I’ve been being bullied by people for being a lesbian and it hurts a lot and I can’t deal with it anymore.” Another sixth grade girl said, “It is extremely serious because it hurts my feelings and it is hard for me to keep it inside and I end up hurting myself.” An adult said, “Some kids get picked on and don’t know how to get help, but they sometimes draw pictures or write notes to teachers about it. I see a lot of crying...” A sixth grade boy said, “Bullying hurts people’s feelings. People don’t deserve that.”

Another trend that developed in this question was that students mentioned cutting and suicide (23 mentions), while adults did not mention that concern at all. Some students admitted to cutting or suicidal thoughts, like a seventh grade girl who said, “I had people make fun of me, so I cut myself.” A sixth grade girl admitted, “I’ve tried to commit suicide before.” A second seventh grade girl said, “I want to die when I get threatened, because it hurts me.” And a third seventh grade girl said, “They hate me I wish I was never born.”

The third interesting theme that developed out of this question is the assertion by four adults that bullying is apparently just a normal part of middle school. The first adult said: “I think many are used to some of it, so they put up with it to a point. Some, I think,

are accepting it as part of school and don't want to 'tell' on others." A second adult said: "I think it occurs a lot, but I also think that many students have developed skills to deal with it." A third adult said: "Seems to be expected/accepted." Finally, a fourth adult said: "I feel...our students (because of their diverse backgrounds) are very welcoming and accepting of students. There always appears (every year) to be the obvious bullies. I think students are very quick to use "bullying" even in instances where it isn't bullying." A fifth adult even seemed to be blaming the victims of bullying by saying, "Some students are picked on because of the way they act."

As students and adults often perceive situations differently, each group was asked to predict how the other group would rate the frequency and severity of bullying at the school. Chi square tests were used to compare students' predictions of adults with the adults' actual responses and adults' predictions of students with the students' actual responses. As before, when data from the original five-point scale were used, the tests were significant but had many cells with unacceptably low expected counts. After recoding the data into the same three-point scale used in the previous analyses, the number of problematic cells dropped to either one or zero as shown in Table 2.

Table 2.		
<i>Perceptions of the other group.</i>		
Comparison	five-point scale *	three-point scale*
frequency		
Students' Perceptions	$\chi^2(4, N=394) = 12.112 p = .017$ (40%)	$\chi^2(2, N=394) = 11.966 p = .003$ (10%)
Adults' Perceptions	$\chi^2(4, N=395) = 13.001 p = .011$ (40%)	$\chi^2(2, N=395) = 10.684 p = .005$ (10%)
severity		
Students' Perceptions	$\chi^2(4, N=393) = 12.466 p = .014$ (30%)	$\chi^2(2, N=393) = 5.729 p = .057$ (10%)
Adults' Perceptions	$\chi^2(4, N=395) = 11.836 p = .014$ (40%)	$\chi^2(2, N=395) = 5.464 p = .065$ (0%)

**Parentheses contain percentage of cells with expected counts less than five.*

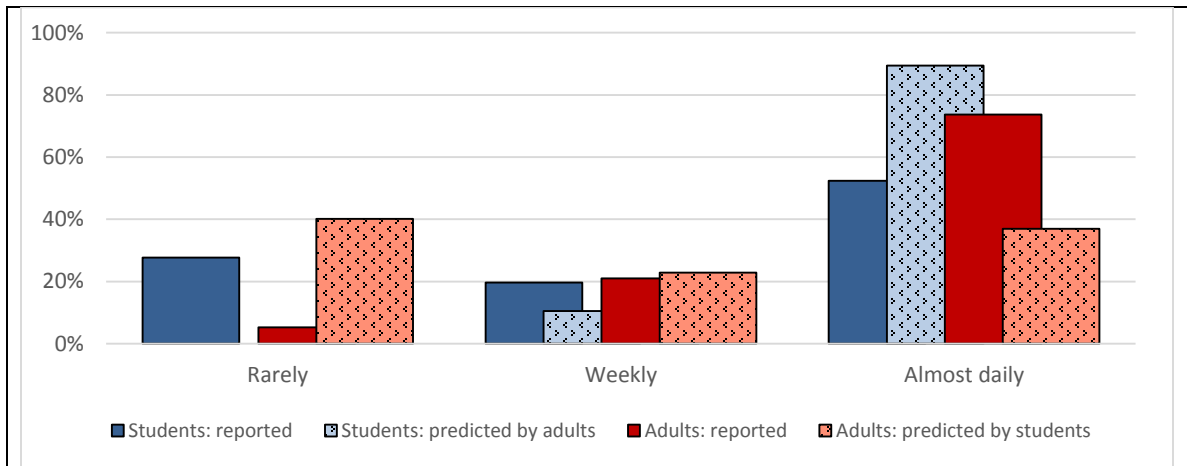


Figure 5. Perceptions of frequency from recoded data

Figure 5 clarifies the significant difference found in the chi square test between students' and adults' perceptions of one another with respect to frequency. The adults predicted that almost 90% of the students would report bullying as an almost daily event whereas just over 50% of the students actually did so. Conversely, students predicted that 40% of the adults would report near-daily bullying whereas over 70% of adults

actually did so. Similar trends appeared for the low frequency category of bullying as well.

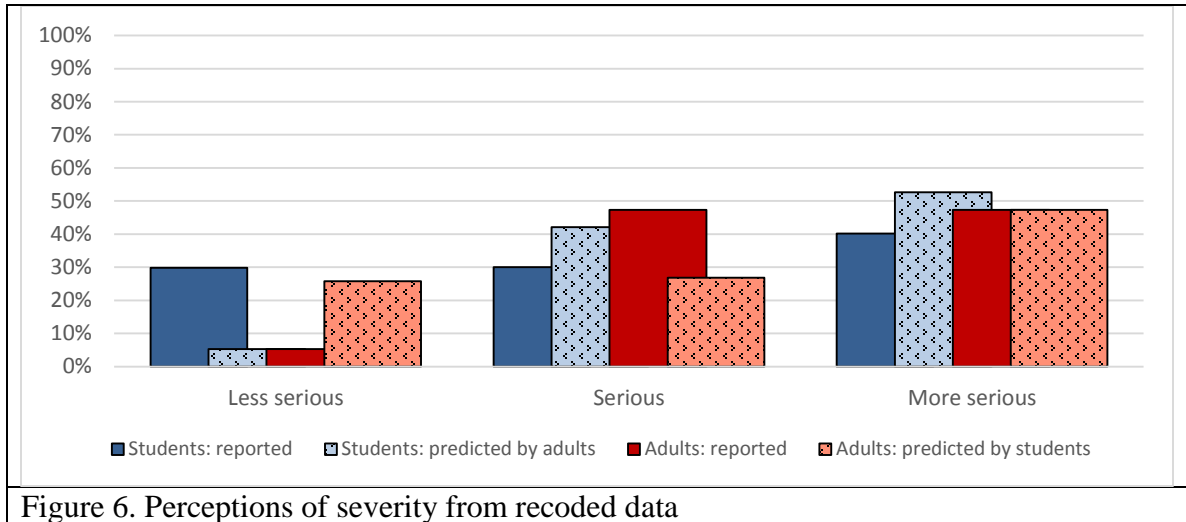


Figure 6. Perceptions of severity from recoded data

Although the chi square analyses of predicted severity (Figure 6) indicated no significant difference at $\alpha = .05$ between the groups, both p values were close to .05. The small number of adults in the study may have reduced the power of the chi square tests to detect a significant difference between the groups; this would lead to a Type II error (failure to reject the null hypothesis of “no difference”). The presence of a Type II error is supported by the participant groups’ ratings of severity in Figure 6; the groups clearly did not accurately predict the other group’s severity rankings. Both groups’ predictions of one another at the “More serious” level were fairly accurate, but at the “Less serious” level, they were mirror opposites. In the middle category, adults predicted students would perceive bullying as being more severe than they actually did, and students predicted adults would perceive bullying as being less severe than they actually did.

Research Question 5: How similarly do students and school adults perceive a set of scenarios as bullying?

Table 3.

Identification of bullying

Scenario	Students & Adults *
1	$\chi^2(2, 393) = 0.934, p = .627$ (33%)
2	$\chi^2(2, 393) = 5.168, p = .075$ (17%)
3	$\chi^2(1, 394) = 0.001, p = .970$ (17%)
4	$\chi^2(2, 393) = 4.147, p = .126$ (17%)
5	$\chi^2(2, 393) = 8.723, p = .013$ (17%)
6	$\chi^2(2, 391) = 17.877, p < .001$ (17%)
7	$\chi^2(2, 395) = 2.580, p = .275$ (33%)
8	$\chi^2(2, 389) = 3.359, p = .186$ (33%)
9	$\chi^2(2, 393) = 2.389, p = .303$ (33%)
10	$\chi^2(2, 391) = 1.344, p = .511$ (50%)
11	$\chi^2(2, 392) = 4.609, p = .100$ (17%)
12	$\chi^2(2, 392) = 30.368, p < .001$ (33%)

* Parentheses contain percentage of cells with expected counts less than five

Chi square tests were used to compare student and adult classifications of bullying for each of the twelve scenarios (Table 3). Three of the chi square tests were significant and the responses by percentage for those three questions are shown in Table 4. In

Scenario 5 a student is deliberately left out and his or her classmates won't hang around with him or her. About 79% of school adults reported that this is indeed bullying, whereas only about 44% of students said that it is. In Scenario 6, where a student chooses to spend lunchtime alone, about 68% of adults were not sure if this was bullying, whereas only 25% of students were unsure compared to about 64% of students who said it was not bullying. Only 21% of adults said it was not bullying. In Scenario 12, a student's classmates keep asking him or her if they can copy his or her homework. Here, about 47% of adults said that yes, this is bullying, whereas only about 8 percent of students did. Fifty-five percent of students correctly said that asking to copy homework is not bullying, while only about 26% of adults said the same. There may be more significance than was found here, but without the power from a larger sample of adults, it is impossible to tell.

Table 4.									
<i>Scenarios with significant difference</i>									
	Scenario 5			Scenario 6			Scenario 12		
	No	Unsure	Yes	No	Unsure	Yes	No	Unsure	Yes
Students	22.61%	32.45%	44.41%	64.36%	25.00%	9.57%	55.05%	35.90%	8.24%
Adults	5.26%	15.79%	78.95%	21.05%	68.42%	10.53%	26.32%	26.32%	47.37%

Research Question 6: Will school adults and students rate the severity of the bullying situations similarly?

Table 5.

Classification of severity: Direct bullying

Scenario	Severity for Girls	Severity for Boys
1	$\chi^2(2, 309) = 2.605, p = .272$ (33%)	$\chi^2(2, 311) = 9.210, p = .010$ (33%)
2	$\chi^2(2, 222) = 5.883, p = .053$ (33%)	$\chi^2(2, 222) = 7.549, p = .023$ (33%)
3	$\chi^2(2, 373) = 4.322, p = .115$ (33%)	$\chi^2(2, 373) = 9.039, p = .011$ (33%)
7	$\chi^2(2, 318) = 5.624, p = .060$ (33%)	$\chi^2(2, 318) = 10.718, p = .005$ (17%)
10	$\chi^2(2, 365) = 2.869, p = .238$ (33%)	$\chi^2(2, 365) = 4.309, p = .116$ (33%)

* Parentheses contain percentage of cells with expected counts less than five

Table 5 shows the chi square for the scenarios classified as direct bullying. There was no significant difference between students' and school adults' responses regarding the severity for girls, however, in four of the cases for boys, there was a significant difference. Tables 6-9 shows how students and school adults rated the severity if the situation had happened to a girl, versus if it had happened to a boy for the four cases with significant difference. Once again, the five-point scales were condensed to three-point: less severe, severe, and more severe. In each scenario, students rated the situations as less severe for boys and girls than the adults did, with the scenarios being slightly less severe for boys than for girls.

Table 6.

Scenario 1: A student in school gets hit, kicked and punched by his/her classmates

	Girls			Boys		
	Less severe	Severe	More severe	Less severe	Severe	More severe
Students	8%	18%	74%	14%	27%	60%
School Adults	0%	7%	93%	0%	0%	100%

Table 7.

Scenario 2: A student keeps getting his/her belongings stolen by other young people in school

	Girls			Boys		
	Less severe	Severe	More severe	Less severe	Severe	More severe
Students	19%	25%	56%	22%	27%	51%
School Adults	0%	13%	87%	0%	13%	87%

Table 8.

Scenario 3: A student keeps getting called nasty names and made fun of by his/her classmates

	Girls			Boys		
	Less severe	Severe	More severe	Less severe	Severe	More severe
Students	12%	21%	67%	23%	23%	54%
School Adults	12%	21%	68%	0%	11%	89%

Table 9.

Scenario 7: A student's belongings keep getting damaged deliberately by other young people in school

	Girls			Boys		
	Less severe	Severe	More severe	Less severe	Severe	More severe
Students	20%	26%	53%	26%	29%	45%
School Adults	0%	22%	78%	0%	17%	83%

Table 10 shows the chi square for the scenarios classified as indirect bullying. In each of the four cases the two groups had significantly different ratings of the severity for both boys and girls. Tables 11-14 show the three-point scale results for girls and boys as rated by students and school adults.

Table 10.

Classification of severity: Indirect bullying

Scenario	Severity for Girls	Severity for Boys
5	$\chi^2(2, 182) = 9.897, p = .007$ (33%)	$\chi^2(2, 182) = 12.517, p = .002$ (17%)
8	$\chi^2(2, 331) = 7.528, p = .023$ (33%)	$\chi^2(2, 330) = 12.452, p = .002$ (33%)
9	$\chi^2(2, 351) = 7.454, p = .024$ (33%)	$\chi^2(2, 351) = 14.475, p = .001$ (33%)
11	$\chi^2(2, 241) = 10.632, p = .005$ (33%)	$\chi^2(2, 241) = 11.290, p = .004$ (33%)

* Parentheses contain percentage of cells with expected counts less than five

Table 11.

Scenario 5: A student in school is deliberately left out and his/her classmates won't hang around with him/her

	Girls			Boys		
	Less severe	Severe	More severe	Less severe	Severe	More severe
Students	26%	29%	44%	37%	29%	34%
School Adults	7%	7%	87%	7%	13%	80%

Table 12.

Scenario 8: A student keeps being sent nasty text messages and Facebook posts from someone in school

	Girls			Boys		
	Less severe	Severe	More severe	Less severe	Severe	More severe
Students	11%	18%	71%	19%	21%	60%
School Adults	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%

Table 13.

Scenario 9: A student's classmates keep spreading rumors about him/her that are not true

	Girls			Boys		
	Less severe	Severe	More severe	Less severe	Severe	More severe
Students	10%	19%	71%	19%	25%	56%
School Adults	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%

Table 14.						
<i>Scenario 11: A student keeps getting into trouble with the teacher because classmates keep blaming him/her for things he/she hasn't done</i>						
	Girls			Boys		
	Less severe	Severe	More severe	Less severe	Severe	More severe
Students	22%	26%	52%	25%	24%	51%
School Adults	0%	6%	94%	0%	6%	94%

Summary

The lack of school adult participants really complicated the data analyses. Though a number of significant differences were found, the power of the statistics is weakened by the low response rate. Chapter Five explains in detail the conclusions drawn from each research question finding; discusses the findings in term of theoretical framework and the Maunder et al. (2010) study; and gives recommendations for further study, practice, and school counselors.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Summary of the Study

Bullying continues to be an ongoing problem within U.S. schools. This mixed methods case study began as an effort to examine perceptions of bullying within one middle school (grades 6-8) among the students and the adults who work there. Participants were asked to complete a two-part questionnaire in order to collect qualitative and quantitative data. The first part includes qualitative and quantitative questions about the school and the participant's experiences with bullying within the school. The second part of the survey (developed by Maunder et. al, 2010) is a series of 12 scenarios each with five questions about whether the situation is bullying or not.

This study found that awareness of the school district's anti-bullying policy is limited among both students and school adults (Research Question 1). While students and school adults have a general idea of some of the consequences for bullying, very few in either group identified all of the possible consequences on the school's discipline rubric (Research Question 2). Student and adult descriptions of bullying behaviors (Research Question 3) and perceptions of frequency were consistent, however their perceptions of the severity of bullying was not, with students more equally split among the categories: "less severe," "severe," and "more severe," whereas the adults were heavily weighted toward "severe," and "more severe" overall (Research Question 4). Regarding the identification of specific scenarios as bullying, students and school adults had some different perceptions of the indirect bullying and ambiguous scenarios (Research Question 5). Finally, students and school adults rated the severity of bullying

situations similarly if it happened to a girl, but students rated four of the situations as less severe for boys than adults did (Research Question 6).

Conclusion

Research Question 1: What degree of awareness do school adults and students have regarding their school's bullying policy?

Since only two adults mentioned the school district's anti-bullying policy, apparently the awareness of the policy at the school is limited. Only two people correctly mentioned that there really are no stated school rules against bullying. One adult pointed out that there is nothing in the student handbook about it, and one student said that there are no rules. Plenty of students and adults do have a level of awareness of some of the behaviors that constitute bullying, but because the answers were so varied, it's clear that the school should clarify what bullying is (and is not – many students mentioned fighting and play-fighting in general) and establish clear and concise school rules about bullying that follow the district policy so that everyone in the school is on the same page about what is expected.

Research Question 2: How consistent are the perceptions of consequences for bullying among and between school adults and students?

Like the school adults' and students' awareness of bullying policy, they seem to have an idea about consequences but are not very consistent in their answers overall. Only two students and six adults correctly mentioned the school's discipline rubric itself as a consequence for bullying. Virtually everyone else mentioned some aspect of the rubric – which is progressive – so some students mentioned consequences at the beginning of the rubric, or the more severe consequences (suspension, expulsion), but

very few mentioned all of the potential consequences. Again, a clear and concise bullying policy for the school (based on the school district's policy) would include clear consequences for bullying – or explain the discipline rubric clearly if that continues to be the chosen consequence.

Research Question 3: How consistent are students' and school adults' descriptions of bullying behaviors?

Students and school adults consistently identified verbal and physical aspects of bullying behaviors witnessed at the school, including cyber bullying. However, emotional or psychological bullying was identified far less (23 student mentions, and 10 adult mentions). In addition, a number of behaviors that would not be considered bullying were identified, such as cussing, swearing or yelling (12 student mentions, zero adult mentions); gossiping, arguing, drama and peer pressure (7 student mentions, three adult mentions); and fighting or play fighting (74 student mentions, one adult mention). Again, clear and concise rules and definitions would be helpful for students and adults to be able to better identify emotional or psychological bullying behaviors (such as exclusion, rumor spreading, intimidation, manipulation, alienation) and understand that two or more people fighting, arguing or play fighting is not, in and of itself, bullying.

Research Question 4: How consistent are school adults' and students' perceptions of frequency of bullying within the school and its severity?

After recoding the frequency data from a five-point scale into a three-point scale ("Rarely," "Weekly," or "Almost Daily"), it became apparent that students' and school adults' perceptions of frequency in the school are fairly consistent. The majority of students (52.39%) and adults (73.68%) see bullying in the school almost daily. About

21% of school adults and 19.68% of students reported seeing bullying weekly. Whereas only 5.26% of adults reported seeing bullying rarely, 27.66% of students reported seeing bullying rarely. Though the chi square test on the recoded data showed no significant difference, this is likely due to low power, because the response rate from the adults was so low (47.5%).

For severity, the data were also converted from a five to three-point scale (“Less Serious,” “Serious,” or “More Serious”). Again, the chi square test on the recoded data showed no significant difference, however the students were more equally split across the three categories (more serious=40.16%, serious=30.05%, and less serious=29.79%), whereas the adults were weighted more heavily to the serious and more serious side (more serious=47.37%, serious=47.37%, and less serious=5.26%). From the qualitative data regarding severity, it appears that adults don’t seem to be aware of the potential of cutting and suicide as a result of bullying. They also do not seem to have victims’ hurt feelings on their radar (with the exception of the one adult who did mention it). This is consistent with the results from Question 3, where emotional and psychological bullying was mentioned far less frequently than verbal and physical bullying behaviors by both students and adults. Also, about 21% of the adult participants seem to think that bullying is just accepted as a part of school and that students have “developed skills to deal with it.” Clearly, some education for students and adults about all aspects of bullying and the experiences of the victims would be helpful at this school.

The results of the groups’ perceptions of each other regarding frequency of bullying are interesting. The adults predicted that almost 90% of the students would report bullying as an almost daily event whereas just over 50% of the students actually

did so. Conversely, students predicted that 40% of the adults would report near-daily bullying whereas over 70% of adults actually did so. The groups' perceptions of the frequency are fairly consistent, however, they do not seem to realize that they are virtually on the same page. Students perceived that adults would not see the frequency of bullying as high as adults do, while adults predicted that students would see bullying more frequently than students actually do. This suggests that some dialogue between students and adults needs to occur because their perceptions of each other are inaccurate.

Regarding their perceptions of each other for the severity of bullying, both groups' predictions of one another at the "More serious" level were fairly accurate. Students predicted about 47% of adults would rate bullying severity as more serious, and about 47% actually did. Adults predicted that about 53% of students would rate bullying severity as more serious, and about 40% actually did. At the "Serious" level, students predicted 27% of adults would rate bullying as serious, which 47% of adults did. Adults predicted that 42% of students would rate bullying as serious, which 30% of students actually did. However, at the "Less serious" level, their perceptions of each other were converse to the reality. About 30% of students reported that bullying is less serious, but adults predicted that only 5% of students would say that. About 5% of adults reported that bullying is less serious, but students predicted that about 26% of adults would say that. There is apparently a group of students (about 30%) who are not bullied, but adults seem to think that the majority of students would say that they are indeed bullied. Once again, their perceptions of each other are off and dialogue between the groups is clearly warranted.

Research Question 5: How similarly do students and school adults perceive a set of scenarios as bullying?

Based on the scenario results, students and school adults do not seem to perceive all situations as bullying at the same rates. Three of the situations had significant differences. While about 79% of adults indicated that deliberately leaving someone out and not hanging out with him or her is bullying (Scenario 5), apparently fewer students realize this, as only 44% of students identified it as bullying. Since this scenario is considered to be an indirect bullying situation, it is not surprising that more students did not identify it as such. Indirect bullying is much more subversive and is not as obvious as direct bullying behaviors. This is consistent with Maunder et al.'s study that also found indirect bullying behaviors were less likely than direct bullying behaviors to be identified as bullying (2010).

In Scenario 6 (classified as ambiguous, where a student chooses to spend lunch alone) students were able to correctly identify the situation as “not bullying,” (64%) whereas far fewer adults said it was not bullying (21%). The majority of adults chose “not sure” (68%). Perhaps the adults read more into the situation than was included. They may have assumed that the student is sitting alone because they are being isolated or alienated from the peers, which certainly can happen and would be considered bullying, however, in this case, the scenario stated that the student “chooses” to eat alone, not that they were alienated. A student could choose to eat alone for any number of reasons, but it doesn't necessarily mean they are being bullied. A number of students who indicated that the scenario was not bullying, underlined, circled or mentioned the key word, “chooses.”

The same thing happened with another scenario classified as ambiguous (Scenario 12, where a student's classmates keep asking him or her if they can copy his or her homework). Again the adults (47%) seemed to assume that the student is being coerced or forced to give up their homework by stating that yes, it is bullying. Only about 8% of students did said it was bullying. The majority of students (55%) correctly said that asking to copy homework is not bullying.

Research Question 6: Will school adults and students rate the severity of the bullying situations similarly?

Interestingly, students and school adults rated the severity of bullying situations similarly in some instances and not in others. The first four scenarios discussed are classified as direct bullying, whereas the last four scenarios discussed are considered to be indirect bullying. In Scenario 1 (Table 7), a student is hit, kicked and punched by his or her classmates. School adults rated this as more severe than students, with 0% of adults rating it as "less severe" for both boys and girls. The students rated this situation as "less severe" at 14% for boys and 8% for girls. Is this because it is such a common occurrence? Physical bullying was reported as the second most frequent bullying behavior seen (176 student mentions) in the qualitative descriptions (Appendix L, Figure 3). Curiously, 100% of adults rated it as "more severe" for boys, whereas 93% rated it "more severe" for girls and 7% rated it "severe" for girls. Perhaps adults are suggesting that the boys are more aggressive when they hit, kick or punch than girls are when they get physical?

In Scenario 2 (Table 8), a student keeps getting his or her belongings stolen. Like in Scenario 1, 0% of school adults rated this as "less severe," whereas students rated it as

“less severe” for boys at 22% and “less severe” for girls at 19%. Again, this could be due to the frequency with which this occurs that students find it to be less severe. Many students mentioned in the comments section of this scenario that pencils being stolen is a daily occurrence.

Scenario 3 (Table 9) in which a student keeps getting called nasty names and made fun of, follows a similar pattern for boys with 0% of school adults rating it as “less severe” and 23% of students rating it as “less severe.” But for girls, the results are a bit different and somewhat puzzling. Students (12%) and school adults (12%) both rated this scenario as “less severe” for girls. The adults, so far, have consistently rated boys and girls about the same, except in this instance. Could it be, perhaps, because school adults expect girls to name call and make fun of each other more, so that it is less severe for them than boys?

In Table 10 (Scenario 7: A student’s belongings keep getting damaged deliberately) 0% of the school adults rated the situation as “less severe” for boys and girls, but students again rated the situation as less severe for boys (26%) and girls (20%). The consistent ratings from the students as “less severe” leads one to conclude that this is such a common occurrence that it is not considered a big deal by some students. This is clearly a misconception on the students’ part that needs to be corrected with bullying education.

For the indirect bullying scenarios (Tables 12-15) a similar pattern emerges. The students rated all four of the scenarios as “less serious” for boys and girls at a higher percentage than school adults did. There are likely two reasons for this: (1) the frequency with which they see these behaviors taking place, as mentioned for the direct behaviors,

and (2) that they may not identify some of these behaviors as bullying at all (like being left out, as described in the conclusion for Question 5). Another interesting thing to note is that in all cases (direct and indirect) students rated the scenarios as slightly “less severe” for boys than for girls. One hypothesis for this could be that the students perceive the boys as “tougher” or more able to handle being bullied than girls are. As an eighth grade girl said, “most girls are more emotional than guys.”

Discussion

Theoretical Framework. Examining the findings and conclusions of this study in light of the theoretical framework, pragmatism, the school’s leadership would be advised to take the information gleaned from this data and update its policies and practices related to bullying. Pragmatism connects theory and practice, which is relevant in this case, because this study indicates that there are gaps in student and adult understandings of what bullying is, as well as problems with communication between the two groups regarding their perceptions of the issue within the school. By putting into practice an educational program that addresses the gaps and miscommunications will help the school adults curb the bullying behaviors that are taking place, as well as offer needed support to the victims and interventions and remediation for the bullies.

It cannot be concluded that bullying is a huge problem at this school because there is no way to verify that those who state that they are victims of bullies truly are; we do know that over half of the students and adults surveyed reported seeing bullying within the school almost daily. This is significant because clearly there is bullying taking place despite there being a district policy against those behaviors. Many adults used the term “zero-tolerance” when describing the rules the school has, in which case, there need to be

procedures and programs put in place to curb the bullying that is taking place almost daily. One eighth grade girl said, “There’s a lot of bullying in the school especially in my grade.” A small number of students reported that bullies rarely get caught, and those that do often continue or increase the amount of bullying because they got caught and assume that someone “snitched.” Students in a similar bullying perceptions study also reported that telling an adult often makes the bullying worse (Mishna, Pepler & Wiener, 2006).

Maunder et al. study findings. The 12-scenario questionnaire that served as the basis for this study was originally used in the U.K. What made it different from other bullying perceptions surveys is that the questionnaire was identical (with the exception of minor wording changes for each group) for students and school adults. Most bullying perceptions research that compares students to adults uses different instrumentation for each group. By using the same questionnaire for both, the findings can be more accurately compared.

Three major differences between this study and the Maunder et al. study are important to note. First, the sample size from Maunder et al. was much larger and therefore more generalizable to a larger population. Next, this study focused solely on one middle school, whereas Maunder et al. had participants from four different schools and compared data between schools in addition to between students and adults. Finally, this study used a mixed methods approach as opposed to a strictly quantitative one. By adding open-ended questions in Part I of the survey, specific and detailed information about perceptions was obtained. The research questions from this study that directly relate to the Maunder et al. study are: Research Question 5 (How similarly do students’

and school adults' perceive a set of scenarios as bullying?); and Research Question 6 (Will school adults and students rate the severity of the bullying situations similarly?)

In this study, findings for Research Question 5 show that the majority of students' and school adults' identified the direct and indirect scenarios as bullying. However, the students seemed to not realize that Scenario 5 (deliberately leaving someone out) was actually bullying, whereas the adults did. Maunder et al. also found that a large number of respondents in both groups defined direct and indirect scenarios as bullying, but that indirect bullying behaviors were less likely to be perceived as bullying – especially by students (2010). In this study, the students seemed to be more aware than adults for two ambiguous scenarios: Scenario 6 (where a student chooses to eat lunch alone) and Scenario 12 (where classmates keep asking to copy a student's homework). In those two cases, the adults seemed to rate this as bullying more frequently than the students did. Maunder et al. found that very low percentages of respondents rated the ambiguous behaviors as bullying. This difference could be a cultural one – perhaps the definition of bullying is more clearly defined in the U.K. schools than it is in this particular U.S. school.

For the severity ratings of the bullying scenarios, (Research Question 6), this study found that in general, for direct and indirect behaviors, students tended to rate the situations as less severe than adults did. Maunder et al. found that direct bullying behaviors were rated as more serious than the indirect bullying behaviors and the ambiguous scenarios were rated as the least serious (2010). Both studies did find significant differences when taking into account the seriousness for gender, with bullying scenarios perceived as more serious if they happen to a girl. Maunder et al. found this

across all groups (2010), whereas this study only found that to be the case among the students.

Recommendations for Further Study

A delimitation of the study is that the results only pertain to the school where the study was conducted. A broader study incorporating more middle schools which takes a look at bullying perceptions of students and adults that would be generalizable is encouraged. Another aspect that may affect bullying perceptions of students and adults that would be interesting to look at in future studies would be school climate. Do schools with a positive school climate perceive less bullying? Likewise, do schools with a more negative school climate perceive more?

This study was limited by the lack of participation by the adults within the school. Over 40 surveys were handed out and only about half came back. This could be due to a number of reasons – a couple of likely reasons would be teachers' limited time, work load, and stress level. Though one cannot help but wonder if the teachers care about collecting data on bullying within the school? Their silence is deafening. Particularly when students said things like, "It happens every day most teacher[s] ignore it when they hear it happen" (seventh grade boy); "Name calling is like a tradition for our school. I've been called mean names by some teachers!" (seventh grade girl); "The teachers don't really show consequences" (eighth grade boy). Expanding the study to multiple schools may yield more adult participants and therefore be more generalizable.

Another limitation of this study was the length of the survey. The Maunder et al. survey was already 12 pages long and I added four pages with my additional qualitative questions. Some participants were removed from the study due to completing less than

80 % of the survey. Some students started the survey answering the questions, but in some cases, their participation would deteriorate into rude comments (such as, “This survey is stupid,” “Why are you asking this?” “This is a waste of time,” etc.); irrelevant comments (e.g. “ratchet,” “ice cream,” etc.); or circling answers in a specific pattern (all one category for instance or every other category). Future studies may try to find a way to limit the survey to fewer pages without losing the content from the included questions.

This study was also limited by the lack of verification of reported victims of bullying. There is no way to know if the students who reported being bullied are actually being bullied. In another study that used school counselors to verify reports of bullying victimization, the authors found that only 24 of 43 students in one middle school who identified as victims actually were (Cornell & Mehta, 2011). Further study may warrant employing a school counselor verification system in order to get more accurate depictions of bullying victims.

Recommendations for Practice

The final open-ended question that students and adults were asked on the survey was what they think should be done about bullying. The majority of students (100 mentions), said simply that it should stop. One seventh grade girl said, “Stop it. It really hurts. No one deserves to be treated this way. No one! People commit suicide over it! And no one cares until they really are gone.” The second-largest number of recommendations from students (20) were for more teachers paying attention, looking out for bullying, and more monitoring of the hallways in between classes. Many of the students indicated that much of the bullying behavior happens during passing time. One student said there should be less passing time. The majority of adult responses (10) had

to do with a prevention or education program. One said, “An ongoing program – not just a mention now and then.” Sixteen students also mentioned this as something they think would help. A sixth grade girl said the school adults, “should have an assembly for us about it. To show us how serious it is & what can happen.” Some kids mentioned making “No Bullying Zone” posters and hanging them in the hallways. A sixth grade girl suggested, “We could have a “see and write” box where you anonymously report things.” Another student suggested having an “anti-bullying club.” And others suggested having classes for bullies about not bullying, and classes for victims to talk about their experiences. An eighth grade boy said, “The school should make a rule about bullying.”

Cyber bullying was mentioned a lot among students and adults. Though educators cannot often directly monitor the technology that students use to bully, they can have discussions with students about expectations for technology use and how to be safe. Perhaps an assembly on cyber bullying would be helpful. The school can also use the demographic data collected for students regarding technology (Table 15) to establish

Table 15.						
<i>Student participants' technology use</i>						
Technology	Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cell Phone	77	40	96	40	102	21
Home Computer	105	11	119	16	103	20
Facebook	80	37	111	25	108	15
Twitter	36	81	62	74	66	55

communication with students the way that they communicate with each other. It appears that the majority of students across all three grades do have access to a home computer, so providing information on bullying and other resources for students via the school website, and then directing students there would be helpful. It seems that more seventh and eighth graders have access to cell phones than sixth graders do. If the school were to establish an anti-bullying campaign, students could sign up to receive text updates and tips on bullying. A school presence on Facebook would also be a good way to reach students, as it appears the majority of them do use Facebook. Despite the apparent popularity of Twitter, students do not seem to use it in the same numbers.

Ultimately the school adults need to address the problem of bullying within the school. An ongoing prevention and awareness program would be a great place to start. Assemblies, posters, and anonymous reporting could be a part of that. Getting the students and adults involved and on the same page is key.

Recommendations for School Counselors

Not only are school counselors well-equipped to take leadership roles in establishing bullying rules, prevention and intervention programs within schools, but they have a responsibility to do so. As advocates for all students, it is imperative to help students navigate the difficulties they face in school. This includes bullying. Bullying demeans and degrades students' self-esteem and they need guidance. The bullying phenomenon in our schools will not decrease without increased awareness and education. Early intervention and prevention is key. School counselors are uniquely qualified to intervene and take leadership roles in helping all students be successful and *safe* in school. Our students' lives depend on it.

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Appendix A
Permission Request for use of Questionnaire

Rachel E. Maunder
Rachel.maunder@northhampton.ac.uk

Dear Ms. Maunder:

I am a graduate student in the United States, currently writing a thesis for the completion of my Masters of Education in School Counseling at Grand Valley State University (GVSU). My thesis is tentatively entitled, "Adult and Student Perceptions of Bullying," and I would like to replicate the study you describe in your paper, "Pupil and staff perceptions of bullying in secondary schools: comparing behavioural definitions and their perceived seriousness."

May I receive permission to use your questionnaire and scenario design for replication of your research in the U.K.? My goal is to administer the questionnaire in classrooms at one middle schools (grades 6-8) in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area.

Your signature at the bottom portion of this letter confirms your ownership of the above items, and grants me permission to use them in my thesis. The inclusion of your copyrighted material will not restrict your republication of the material in any other form. Please advise if you wish a specific copyright notice to be included on each page. My thesis will be cataloged in the GVSU library and will be available to other students and colleges for circulation.

Sincerely,

Michelle L. Barrows
8144 Briar Lane
Jenison, MI 49428
616-808-1581 (cell)
616-797-6612 (home)
mlkbarrows@yahoo.com

PERMISSION IS GRANTED to Michelle L. Barrows, to include the requested materials (bullying scenarios and questionnaire – copies attached) in her GVSU Masters of Education thesis.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B Permission Granted for Use of Questionnaire

From: Maunder Rachel <Rachel.Maunder@northampton.ac.uk>
To: Michelle Barrows <mlkbarrows@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 6, 2012 1:10 PM
Subject: RE: Permission Request

Hi Michelle,

Thanks for your e-mail and for explaining the work you would like to do.

I'm happy for you to use my questionnaires, providing you credit them appropriately with a reference to the paper where they are described (i.e. the article published in Educational Research). I deliberately included a detailed description of the questionnaire, along with the scenarios at the end, in order for other researchers to use them and/or adapt them if they so wish. All I ask is that you cite the source so others know where you got the materials from.

I'd be very interested in hearing about your study if you would be willing to e-mail me a summary of your research when its completed?

Best of luck with it, and feel free to contact me with any further queries.

Rachel

Dr Rachel Maunder
Senior Lecturer in Psychology
University of Northampton
Park Campus
Boughton Green Road
Northampton NN2 7AL

E-mail: rachel.maunder@northampton.ac.uk
Tel: 01604 89 3727

Appendix C
Permission Request to Conduct Research at School

December 11, 2012

Mr. [REDACTED], Principal
Mr. [REDACTED], Assistant Principal
[REDACTED] Middle School
[REDACTED]
Grand Rapids, MI 4 [REDACTED]

Dear Mr. [REDACTED] & Mr. [REDACTED]:

I am writing to request your permission to conduct research for my master's thesis at [REDACTED] Middle School ([REDACTED]). As you know, I am working towards my master's degree in school counseling at Grand Valley State University (GVSU). Upon completion of my thesis, I will graduate in April 2013.

I had a wonderful experience as Mrs. [REDACTED]'s and Ms. [REDACTED]'s intern last year, and learned a great deal about counseling middle school students. I understand that bullying behavior is an ongoing issue in schools – particularly at the middle level. Therefore, I am interested in examining student and school adult perceptions of what behaviors constitute bullying and their perceptions of the severity of the behaviors as they relate to the district's bullying policy.

I would like to conduct a survey in grades 6-8 and also invite all adults in the school to complete the survey as well. It should take as little as 15 minutes to no more than one half hour to fill out (depending upon the length of answers to the open-ended questions). I will be happy to provide you with a copy of the survey to review ahead of time if you wish. I will also send home a letter to parents (in English and Spanish) explaining the study and giving them an opportunity to opt out of having their student participate. In addition, filling out the questionnaire is completely voluntary. Students who do not want to participate will be able to read, do homework, or another quiet activity while participants are filling out their surveys. All answers will be private. Questionnaires will not have names or any identifying information on them, and they will be collected and sealed in an envelope once completed.

Since I will need to receive approval from GVSU's Internal Review Board to conduct this research, it would not take place until final approval is received – probably mid-January at the earliest. My findings and report will be published by GVSU, but will not include the name of the school. I will also provide you with a summary of my findings for you to use in school improvement plans or however you see fit.

If you agree to grant me permission to conduct this research at [REDACTED], please fill out the approval form below and return it to me at your earliest convenience. If you have any questions about the human subjects' rights in the study, you may contact the Chair of

Grand Valley State University Human Research Review Committee at 616-331-3197 or email: hrrc@gvsu.edu.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Best Regards,

Michelle Barrows

Michelle Barrows
8144 Briar Lane
Jenison, MI 49428
616-808-1581
barrowsm@mail.gvsu.edu

Date: _____

To Whom It May Concern:

Michelle Barrows has the permission of the [REDACTED] District to conduct research at [REDACTED]. She may use and include the following materials in her Master's Project for Grand Valley State University:

1. A copy of the district's and/or school's bullying policy.
2. Materials created by [REDACTED] staff which are pertinent to this body of work.
3. Materials developed by Michelle Barrows for this study.
4. Surveys completed by students and staff of [REDACTED].

All materials pertaining to [REDACTED] as well as all materials produced by employees of [REDACTED] district may NOT be reproduced without written permission from the district.

Sincerely,

Name (printed): _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____

Name (printed): _____ Title: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix D
Permission Granted to Conduct Research at School

Date: 1/2/13

To Whom It May Concern:

Michelle Barrows has the permission of the [redacted] **Public Schools** District to conduct research at [redacted] **Middle School**. She may use and include the following materials in her Master's Project for Grand Valley State University:

1. A copy of the district's and/or school's bullying policy.
2. Materials created by [redacted] Middle School staff which are pertinent to this body of work.
3. Materials developed by Michelle Barrows for this study.
4. Surveys completed by students and staff of [redacted] Middle School.

All materials pertaining to [redacted] Public Schools as well as all materials produced by employees of [redacted] Public Schools district may NOT be reproduced without written permission from the district.

Sincerely,

Name (printed): [redacted] Title: Principal

Signature: [redacted]

Name (printed): [redacted] Title: Asst. Principal

Signature: [redacted]

Appendix E Human Research Review Committee Approval



DATE: February 7, 2013

TO: Michelle Barrows, M.Ed.
FROM: Grand Valley State University Human Research Review Committee
STUDY TITLE: [407175-1] School Adult and Student Perceptions of Bullying in Middle School: A Mixed Methods Case Study
REFERENCE #: 13-095-H
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: February 7, 2013
EXPIRATION DATE: February 7, 2014
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of materials for this research study. The Human Research Review Committee has approved your research plan application as compliant with all applicable sections of the federal regulations, Michigan law, GVSU policies and HRRC procedures. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The study surveys faculty and students in grades 6-8 at one school. The protocol states in part, *While it would be ideal to receive informed consent from each student's parent or guardian, it is not practical in this situation, considering that there are 483 students and the response rate from parents is low in this school when documents are sent home.* This seems to implicitly request a waiver of parental permission and rely on student assent only for study enrollment.

An opt-out form (expressed refusal to permit participation) is for parents to return if they do not want their child to participate. Failure to so respond is taken as implied permission to enroll the children.

Given (i) the potential social benefit of the study results (more effective anti-bullying in-school programs) and (ii) that it is an anonymous survey that would otherwise qualify as exempt except for the involvement of minors, the waiver of parental permission for minors to participate is granted. The HRRC does require affirmative assent from each of the students. Since the study is anonymous, the home storage & security of the collected data is not a concern.

The study description is silent re: evaluation of the qualitative and quantitative data. Class, poverty, race/ethnicity, residence, and religion are known to play an important role in behavior and attitudes, so it is recommended (but not required) that you consider including those questions. The HRRC also recognizes that the subsequent length of the surveys may lead to increased premature drop-out and/or superficial responses by a significant number of respondents which may compromise the reliability of the findings. You therefore may wish to consider incorporating incentives to complete the survey.

This approval is based on no greater than minimal risk to research participants. This study has received expedited review, category 2-7, based on the Office of Human Research Protections 1998 Guidance on Expedited Review Categories.

Please insert the following sentence into your information/consent documents as appropriate. All project materials produced for participants or the public must contain this information.

This research protocol has been approved by the Human Research Review Committee at Grand Valley State University. File No. 13-095-H Expiration: February 7, 2014.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note the following in order to comply with federal regulations and HRRC policy:

1. Any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the *Change in Protocol* forms for this procedure. This includes, but is not limited to, changes in key personnel, study location, participant selection process, etc.
2. All UNEXPECTED PROBLEMS and SERIOUS ADVERSE EVENTS to participants or other parties affected by the research must be reported to this office within two days of the event occurrence. Please use the UP/SAE Report form.
All instances of non-compliance or complaints regarding this study must be reported to this office in a timely manner. There are no specific forms for this report type.
3. All required research records must be securely retained in either paper or electronic format for a minimum of three years following the closure of the approved study. This includes signed consent documents from all participants.
4. This project requires continuing review by our office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate *Continuing Review* forms when applying for approval extension.
 - Protocols that are active and open for enrollment require both the Primary Investigator and Authorizing Official to electronically sign the Continuing Review submission in IRBNet.
 - Protocols that are open for data analysis ONLY, require the Primary Investigator's signature.

If you have any questions, please contact the HRRC Office, Monday through Thursday, at (616) 331-3197 or hrrc@gvsu.edu. The office observes all university holidays, and does not process applications during exam week or between academic terms. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

cc:

Appendix F
Parent Information Letter – English and Spanish

February 14, 2013

Dear [REDACTED] Middle School ([REDACTED]) Parents and Guardians,

Mr. [REDACTED] granted me permission to survey staff and students at [REDACTED] regarding bullying in middle school for my final thesis project towards a master's degree in school counseling at Grand Valley State University (GVSU).

I am requesting your permission to learn more about your child's thoughts on bullying behaviors. The results of the survey will be used in my final thesis submitted to GVSU, but will not identify the school or the names of any participants. I will also submit a written report to the school when the study is complete. There is no compensation for participating. However, this information will help [REDACTED] students, teachers, administrators, and staff, determine if bullying is a problem at [REDACTED] and establish interventions to prevent it if needed.

Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. Students who choose not to participate will be able to read, do homework, or another quiet activity while participants are filling out their surveys. **All answers will be private.** Questionnaires will not have names or any identifying information on them, and they will be collected and sealed in an envelope when completed.

Participants will fill out a two-part survey. The first part asks for information about rules and consequences at the school for bullying and personal experiences with bullying. The second part is a series of 12 situations (for example, a student having belongings stolen by classmates). Participants will then answer whether they think the situation is bullying, how often they hear about something like that happening in their school, and how bad they think that situation is.

Though the risk is small, some of the questions may cause discomfort, anxiety or tension in participants who have experienced similar bullying situations. If at any time your student becomes upset by any of the issues raised in the questionnaire, he or she can speak to one of the school counselors, Ms. [REDACTED] or Mrs. [REDACTED]. Students can also call or visit the NineLine at 1-800-999-9999, www.nineline.org for free and confidential help.

If you are willing to have your child to participate, you do not need to respond. **If you do NOT want your child to participate, please fill out the form below and return it to school as soon as possible – before Wednesday, February 20.** Please address any questions or concerns to [REDACTED], or email me directly at the address listed below. If you have any questions about the human subjects' rights in the study, you may contact the Chair of Grand Valley State University Human Research Review Committee at 616-331-3197 or email: hrrc@gvsu.edu. Thank you for your cooperation.

Best Regards,



Michelle Barrows
School Counseling Student, College of Education
Grand Valley State University
barrowsm@mail.gvsu.edu

I do NOT want my child to participate in this project.

Child's First and Last Name _____

Child's Grade (please circle): 6th 7th 8th

Signed _____ (parent or guardian) Date _____

This research protocol has been approved by the Human Research Review Committee at Grand Valley State University. File No. 13-095-H Expiration: February 7, 2014.

14 de Febrero 2012

Querido [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) Los padres y tutores:

Sr. [REDACTED] me ha dado permiso para inspeccionar el personal y los estudiantes de [REDACTED] con respecto a la intimidación en la escuela media para mi proyecto de fin de carrera hacia un título de maestría en consejería escolar en el Grand Valley State University (GVSU).

Estoy solicitando su permiso para aprender más acerca de los pensamientos de su hijo en las conductas abusivas. Los resultados de la encuesta serán utilizados en mi tesis final presentado a GVSU, pero no identificará a la escuela o los nombres de los participantes. También voy a presentar un informe escrito a la escuela cuando el estudio esté completo. No hay compensación por su participación. Sin embargo, esta información ayudará a los estudiantes [REDACTED], maestros, administradores y personal, determinar si la intimidación es un problema de [REDACTED] y establecer intervenciones para prevenirlo si es necesario. La participación en este estudio es completamente voluntaria. Los estudiantes que opten por no participar será capaz de leer, hacer los deberes, u otra actividad tranquila mientras los participantes están completando sus estudios. Todas las respuestas serán privadas. Los cuestionarios no tienen nombre o cualquier otra información de identificación en ellos, y ellos serán recogidas y selladas en un sobre cuando esté terminado.

Los participantes completarán una encuesta de dos partes. La primera parte se solicita información acerca de las reglas y las consecuencias de la escuela de la intimidación y las experiencias personales con la intimidación. La segunda parte es una serie de 12 situaciones (por ejemplo, un estudiante con pertenencias robadas por los compañeros de clase). Luego, los participantes responderán si piensan que la situación es la intimidación, con qué frecuencia se enteran de algo así sucede en su escuela, y lo mal que piensan que la situación es.

Aunque el riesgo es pequeño, algunas de las preguntas puede causar malestar, ansiedad o tensión en los participantes que han experimentado similares situaciones de acoso escolar. Si en algún momento su hijo se molesta por alguna de las cuestiones planteadas en el cuestionario, él o ella puede hablar con uno de los consejeros de la escuela, la Sras. [REDACTED] o [REDACTED]. Los estudiantes también pueden llamar o visitar la Ninline en 1-800-999-9999, www.ninline.org ayuda gratuita y confidencial.

Si no está dispuesto a que su hijo participe, no es necesario responder. Si usted NO desea que su hijo participe, por favor llene el siguiente formulario y devolverlo a la escuela tan pronto como sea posible - antes del miércoles, 20 de Febrero. Por favor, dirija cualquier pregunta o preocupación al señor [REDACTED], o envíeme un correo electrónico directamente a la dirección indicada a continuación. Si usted tiene alguna pregunta acerca de los derechos de los sujetos humanos en el estudio, puede comunicarse con el presidente de GVSU Humanos de Investigación Comité de Revisión en 616-331-3197 o por correo electrónico: hrrc@gvsu.edu. Gracias por su cooperación.

Saludos cordiales,

Michelle Barrows

Michelle Barrows, School Counseling Student
College of Education, Grand Valley State University
barrowsm@mail.gvsu.edu

Yo no quiero que mi hijo participe en este proyecto.

Niño Nombre y Apellido _____

Niño de Grado (marque con un círculo): 6th 7th 8th

Firma _____ (Padre, madre o tutor) Fecha _____

Este protocolo de investigación fue aprobado por el Comité de Revisión de Investigaciones Humanas de Grand Valley State University. Archivo Numero: 13-095-H Vencimiento: 7 de febrero de 2014.

Appendix G

Summary of Scenarios included in Questionnaire

Direct Bullying

- Scenario 1 A student in school gets hit, kicked and punched by his/her classmates
- Scenario 2 A student keeps getting his/her belongings stolen by other students in school
- Scenario 3 A student keeps getting called nasty names and made fun of by his/her classmates
- Scenario 7 A student's belongings keep getting damaged deliberately by other students in school
- Scenario 10 A student keeps getting threatened by other people in school

Indirect Bullying

- Scenario 5 A student in school is deliberately left out and his/her classmates won't hang around with him/her
- Scenario 8 A student keeps being sent nasty text messages and Facebook posts from someone in school
- Scenario 9 A student's classmates keep spreading rumors about him/her that are not true
- Scenario 11 A student keeps getting in trouble with the teacher because people in class keep blaming him/her for things he/she hasn't done

Ambiguous Scenarios

- Scenario 12 A student's classmates keep asking him/her if they can copy his/her homework
- Scenario 4 A student keeps arguing with his/her friends in school
- Scenario 6 A student chooses to spend lunchtime alone

Appendix H
Information Sheet – Student Questionnaires

Information Sheet – Student Questionnaires

If you are supervising students completing questionnaires, please summarize this information to them before they begin.

- This school has agreed to participate in a project investigating students' behaviors in middle school.
- The aim is to find out what young people think about different behaviors and compare this to what the adults in the school think.
- As part of the project, you are being asked to fill in a questionnaire.
- You do not have to fill in the questionnaire if you do not want to.
- If you choose not to participate, you may quietly read, or complete homework during this time.
- You do not have to put your name on the questionnaire. No one in the school will know your answers.
- When you are filling in the questionnaire, please do not talk to each other or look at what other people are writing.
- When everyone has finished, your teacher will collect the questionnaires and put them into an envelope.
- The envelope will be sealed in front of you.

(Please write the following on the board, or display the attached on a projector):

- If at any time you become upset by any of the issues raised in this questionnaire, you can speak to one of the school counselors, Ms. [REDACTED] or Mrs. [REDACTED]. You can also call or visit the NineLine at 1-800-999-9999, www.nineline.org for free and confidential help.

Thank you for taking part in this project!

If at any time you become upset by any of the issues raised in this questionnaire, you can speak to one of the school counselors, Ms. [REDACTED] or Mrs. [REDACTED].

You can also call or visit the NineLine at 1-800-999-9999, www.nineline.org for free and confidential help.

Thank you for taking part in this project!

Appendix I
Questionnaire for Middle School Students

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

This questionnaire is about life in your school. There are two parts.

You do not have to put your name and all of your answers will be private.

Part I Instructions

Part I contains questions about your school.

Please read the questions carefully. For some questions you will choose one answer to circle. Other questions will ask you to write your opinion in a blank box.

There are no right or wrong answers.

Part II Instructions

In Part II you will see a number of situations that may happen to students in your school.

Please read each of the situations and answer the questions by circling your chosen answer.

There are no right or wrong answers.

ABOUT YOU

Before you start the questionnaire, please fill in some details about yourself:

Are you a: boy / girl (please circle)

How old are you? _____

What grade are you in at school? (please circle)

6th grade

7th grade

8th grade

Do you have a cell phone? Yes / No (please circle)

Do you have access to a computer at home? Yes / No (please circle)

Do you have a Facebook account? Yes / No (please circle)

Do you have a Twitter account? Yes / No (please circle)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Part I: Your School

1. In the box below, please list any school rules about bullying that you are aware of.

2. In the box below, please describe what happens when someone is caught bullying at your school.

3. What kinds of bullying have you seen at this school?

--

4. How common do **you think** bullying is at this school? (please circle)

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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5. How common do you think **school adults would say** bullying is at this school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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6. How serious of a problem do **you think** bullying is at this school? (please circle)

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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7. How serious of a problem do you think **school adults would say** bullying is at this school? (please circle)

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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8. How serious of a problem is bullying for you at this school? (please circle)

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

Please explain:

9. What do you think should be done about bullying?

Part II: Scenarios

1. A student in school gets hit, kicked and punched by his/her classmates.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
----	--------	-----

How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do you get hit, kicked or punched by your classmates?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

2. A student keeps getting his/her belongings stolen by other students in school.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
----	--------	-----

How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do your belongings get stolen in school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

--

3. A student keeps getting called nasty names and made fun of by his/her classmates.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
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How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do you get called nasty names and made fun of by your classmates?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

4. A student keeps arguing with his/her friends in school.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
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How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do you argue with your friends in school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

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5. A student in school is deliberately left out and his/her classmates won't hang around with him/her.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
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How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do you get left out of things on purpose?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

6. A student chooses to spend lunchtime alone.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
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How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do you choose to spend lunchtime alone?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

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7. A student's belongings keep getting damaged deliberately by other students in school.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
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How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do other students in school damage your belongings deliberately?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

8. A student keeps getting nasty text messages and Facebook posts from someone in school.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
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How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often are you sent nasty text messages or Facebook posts from someone in school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

9. A student's classmates keep spreading rumors about him/her that are not true.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
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How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do your classmates spread rumors about you that are not true?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

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11. A student keeps getting into trouble with the teacher because classmates keep blaming him/her for things he/she hasn't done.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
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How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do classmates get you into trouble with the teacher for things you haven't done?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

12. A student's classmates keep asking him/her if they can copy his/her homework.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
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How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do your classmates ask if they can copy your homework?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!

Appendix J

Information Sheet – School Adult Questionnaires

Information Sheet – School Adult Questionnaires

- This school has agreed to participate in a project investigating students' behaviors in middle school.
- The aim is to examine student perceptions of various disruptive behaviors and compare these to views of teaching, support, and administrative staff.
- As part of the project, it would be appreciated if you would take the time to complete the attached questionnaire.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary and there is no obligation to take part.
- You will not have to give your name at any stage and the identity of the school will also remain confidential.
- If you would be willing to participate, please fill in the questionnaire and seal it in the envelope provided.
- A box has been placed in the main office area for completed questionnaires.

Thank you for your participation in this project!

Appendix K
Questionnaire for School Adults

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL ADULTS

This questionnaire is about student experiences in your school. There are two parts.

You do not have to put your name and all of your answers will be confidential.

Part I Instructions

Part I contains questions about your school.

Please read the questions carefully. For some questions you will choose one answer to circle. Other questions will ask you to write your opinion in a blank box.

There are no correct or incorrect answers.

Part II Instructions

In Part II you will see a number of situations that may happen to students in your school.

Please read each of the situations and answer the questions by circling your chosen answer.

There are no correct or incorrect answers.

ABOUT YOU

Before you start the questionnaire, please fill in some details about yourself:

I am: male / female (please circle)

I have been working in education for _____ years.

What grades do you teach or work with? (please circle)

6th grade

7th grade

8th grade

What is your job category within the school? (please circle one)

Administrative

Student Support Services

Instructional

Support Staff

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL ADULTS

Part I: Your School

1. In the box below, please list any rules about bullying that your school has.

2. In the box below, please describe the consequences for bullying at your school.

3. What kinds of bullying have you seen at this school?

--

4. How common do **you think** bullying is at this school? (please circle)

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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5. How common do you think **students would say** bullying is at this school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

6. How serious of a problem do **you think** bullying is at this school? (please circle)

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

7. How serious of a problem do you think **students would say** bullying is at this school? (please circle)

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

8. How serious of a problem is bullying for students at this school? (please circle)

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

Please explain:

9. What do you think should be done about bullying?

Part II: Scenarios

1. A student in school gets hit, kicked and punched by his/her classmates.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
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How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do students get hit, kicked or punched by classmates in this school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

--

2. A student keeps getting his/her belongings stolen by other students in school.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
----	--------	-----

How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do student belongings get stolen in this school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

--

3. A student keeps getting called nasty names and made fun of by his/her classmates.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
----	--------	-----

How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do students get called nasty names and made fun of by classmates at this school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

4. A student keeps arguing with his/her friends in school.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
----	--------	-----

How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do students argue with their friends in school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

5. A student in school is deliberately left out and his/her classmates won't hang around with him/her.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
----	--------	-----

How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
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How often do students get left out of things on purpose?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

6. A student chooses to spend lunchtime alone.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
----	--------	-----

How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do students choose to spend lunchtime alone?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

--

7. A student's belongings keep getting damaged deliberately by other students in school.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
----	--------	-----

How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do students in school damage others' belongings deliberately?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

8. A student keeps getting nasty text messages and Facebook posts from someone in school.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
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How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often are students sent nasty text messages or Facebook posts from someone in school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
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If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

9. A student's classmates keep spreading rumors about him/her that are not true.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
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How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do students spread rumors about classmates that are not true?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

--

10. A student keeps getting threatened by other students in school.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
----	--------	-----

How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do students in school threaten other classmates?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

--

11. A student keeps getting into trouble with the teacher because classmates keep blaming him/her for things he/she hasn't done.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
----	--------	-----

How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do students get into trouble with the teacher for things they haven't done?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

12. A student's classmates keep asking him/her if they can copy his/her homework.

Do you think this student is being bullied?

No	Unsure	Yes
----	--------	-----

How often do you hear about this happening to a GIRL in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a GIRL in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do you hear about this happening to a BOY in your school?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If this happens to a BOY in your school, how serious do you think it is?

0 Not serious	1 A little serious	2 Moderately serious	3 Serious	4 Extremely serious
------------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	--------------	------------------------

How often do students in this school ask classmates if they can copy homework?

Never	Once or twice a term	Once a week	Several times a week	Most days
-------	----------------------	-------------	----------------------	-----------

If you have comments about this section, please make them here:

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Appendix L
Qualitative Analysis Themes by Question
 (Figures 1-5)

Figure 1.

1_1 School rules about bullying that you are aware of		
Theme	# Student Mentions	#Adult Mentions
No Physical (hitting, hurting, pushing, shoving, kicking, hands to self)*	129	5
No Verbal (name calling, teasing, put downs, pick on, making fun, threats)*	94	5
No Emotional (rumors, intimidation)*	3	5
No Bullying/Cyberbullying/harassment	60	6
Be Respectful/Golden Rule	16	0
Don't Know/not sure	15	2
Tell/Report if you see it	13	2
There are no stated rules	1	1
Zero or No Tolerance	0	7
Board Policy	0	2
<i>Not Bullying</i>		
No Fighting or Play Fighting	48	1

**These three headings: "physical, verbal, and psychological," are included in the school district's Board of Education Policy on "Bullying and Other Aggressive Behavior Toward Students."*

Figure 2.

1_2 What happens when someone is caught bullying at your school		
Theme	# Student Mentions	#Adult Mentions
Suspended (ISS-In School Suspension/OSS-Out of School Suspension)	308	17
Write Up	100	5
Detention (Lunch)	90	7
Expelled	34	1
Sent to Principal	19	1
Call Home	15	1
Warning	13	0
Don't Know	13	0
Yelled at	8	0
Nothing	8	0
Even if caught, bully continues behavior (or gets worse)	6	0
Social Probation (SRR)	3	3
Rubric	2	6
Talk to school counselor	2	1
Jail/cops	2	0

Figure 3.

1_3 What kinds of bullying have you seen at this school

Theme	# Student Mentions	#Adult Mentions
Verbal (name calling, teasing, put downs, pick on, making fun of, threats)*	239	21
Physical (hitting, pushing, shoving, kicking, hair pulling, punching, tripping)*	176	13
Emotional/Mental (rumors, intimidation, exclusion, manipulation, alienation)*	23	10
Cyberbullying	36	6
None	19	0
Sexual / Sexual Orientation Harassment	6	0
I don't know	5	0
Racial	3	3
Rarely/Not much	2	0
<i>Not Bullying</i>		
Fighting/play fighting	74	1
Cussing/swearing, yelling	12	0
Gossiping, arguing, drama, peer pressure	7	3

**These three headings: "physical, verbal, and psychological," are included in the school district's Board of Education Policy on "Bullying and Other Aggressive Behavior Toward Students."*

Figure 4.

1_8 How serious of a problem FOR YOU at this school (please explain) [STUDENTS] & How serious of a problem at this school (please explain) [ADULTS]

Theme	# Student Mentions	#Adult Mentions
I am physically bullied/see kids physically bullied*	20	0
I am verbally bullied/hear kids getting picked on*	67	4
I am cyberbullied / see cyberbullying	25	3
Can lead to cutting/suicide (emotional/psychological)*	23	0
It hurts me / It hurts others (emotional/psychological)*	30	1
I don't get bullied	47	0
Perceived as playing	14	5
Don't (or rarely) see bullying	13	0
Not Serious	5	0
Accepted as part of school/developed skills to deal with	0	4

**These headings: "physical, verbal, and psychological," are included in the school district's Board of Education Policy on "Bullying and Other Aggressive Behavior Toward Students."*

Figure 5.

1_9 what do you think should be done about bullying?		
Theme	# Student Mentions	#Adult Mentions
Needs to stop	100	0
More hall monitoring/teachers watching	20	0
Don't Know/Not Sure	19	0
Tell someone/report	18	2
Expulsion	17	0
Education/classes/awareness/prevention/assembly	16	10
Nothing/there's nothing you can do	16	0
Suspension	15	1
Detention/Write Up	13	0
Serious Consequences/severe punishment	11	6
Jail	7	0
Anti-bullying group/posters	5	0
Clear policy/rules	2	2

**GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
ED 695 Data Form**

NAME: Michelle L. Barrows

MAJOR: (Choose only 1)

<input type="checkbox"/> Adult/High Ed	<input type="checkbox"/> Elem Ed	<input type="checkbox"/> SpEd Admin
<input type="checkbox"/> CSAL	<input type="checkbox"/> G/T Ed	<input type="checkbox"/> SpEd ECDD
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Child	<input type="checkbox"/> Mid & H.S.	<input type="checkbox"/> SpEd EI
<input type="checkbox"/> Ed Tech	<input type="checkbox"/> Read/Lang Arts	<input type="checkbox"/> SpEd LD
<input type="checkbox"/> Ed Leadership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School Counseling	<input type="checkbox"/> TESOL

TITLE: School Adult and Student Perceptions of Bullying in Middle School: A Mixed Methods Case Study

PAPER TYPE: (Choose only 1) **SEM/YR COMPLETED:** Winter 2013

Project
 Thesis

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE OF APPROVAL _____

Using key words or phrases, choose several ERIC descriptors (5 - 7 minimum) to describe the contents of your project. ERIC descriptors can be found online at <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?nfpb=true&pageLabel=Thesaurus&nfls=false>

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|---|---------------|
| 1. Educational Process: School Perspectives | 6. Counseling |
| 2. Students, Teachers, School Personnel | 7. |
| 3. Learning and Perception | 8. |
| 4. Social Problems | 9. |
| 5. Social Processes and Structures | 10. |