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Digital Object Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.13023/etd.2019.124>

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SOCIAL WORKERS' AND TEACHERS' FEELINGS OF SELF-EFFICACY IN
DEALING WITH SCHOOL BULLYING

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Social Work at the University of Kentucky

By

Sharon Lynn Simmons

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. David Royse, Professor of Social Work

Lexington, Kentucky

2019

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

SOCIAL WORKERS' AND TEACHERS' FEELINGS OF SELF-EFFICACY IN DEALING WITH SCHOOL BULLYING

Bullying continues to be a serious problem in schools. School social workers and teachers face challenges daily to deal with bullying. This author examined school social workers' and teachers' perceptions about their feelings of efficacy to deal with bullying and what may account for those feelings in a population of 71 teachers and 26 social workers employed in Kentucky schools. Research was gathered using a self-report, electronic survey consisting of subscales of the Teachers' Attitudes about Bullying Questionnaire (Beran, 2005), the School Bullying Questionnaire (Nicolaidis, Toda & Smith, 2002), the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (Spreng, McKinnon, Mar & Levine, 2009) and questions designed by the researcher. This study examined the influence of demographic variables as well as the amount and type of professional education and/or training, the professionals' perceptions of the level of bullying present and how much of a problem it is in their schools, perceived levels of administrative support, the professionals' personal experiences with bullying and the professionals' level of empathy. Finally, this study explored the role of school social workers as bullying educators within the school environment by self-report and by teacher reports.

The results of the study revealed that social workers reported significantly greater efficacy than did teachers. Additionally, when compared with teachers social workers reported higher levels on all measures of comfort. Other differences between the two professional groups included that social workers reported higher levels of working in urban schools, a higher level of empathy, a greater desire for additional training and a higher incidence of personal experience. Teachers reported higher levels of working in their own school districts, and working in suburban and rural schools and a higher level of believing bullying is a big problem in their school. With regard to the dependent variable of efficacy the independent variables of empathy, the extent of bullying, bystander and additional training trended toward significance.

Results regarding social workers as bullying educators revealed that the majority of social workers identified bullying prevention and intervention programming as part of their responsibilities and reported feeling comfortable in this role. Teachers' responses closely aligned with school social workers' self-assessments with the majority of teachers

reporting social workers in their schools as supportive and helpful in addressing bullying. However, these variables did not have a significant effect on the dependent variable of efficacy. Professional teacher education programs, school social work programs and professional development trainings should incorporate trainings that focus on the role of empathy in managing bullying into their curriculums. Additionally, graduate educational offerings and professional development opportunities for school social workers should incorporate additional trainings to prepare social workers as bullying educators for other school professionals. Finally, additional research efforts that explore school professionals' efficacy for dealing with bullying may be an important factor in addressing this problem.

KEYWORDS: Bullying, Social Workers, Teachers, Schools, Self-Efficacy in Bullying, Empathy in School Personnel

Sharon Lynn Simmons

04/18/2019

Date

SOCIAL WORKERS' AND TEACHERS' FEELINGS OF SELF-EFFICACY IN
DEALING WITH SCHOOL BULLYING

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04/18/2019

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family and friends,
Who will never have to hear “it’s almost finished” again,
Thank you for your loving patience throughout,
For tolerating the negligence, obsession and doubt,
Your gentle prodding and support fueled my motivation,
To finally finish this darn dissertation!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following dissertation, while an individual work, benefited from the insights and direction of several people. First, my Dissertation Chair, Dr. David Royse, exemplifies the high quality scholarship to which I aspire. In addition, Dr. Royse provided timely and instructive comments and evaluation at every stage of the dissertation process as well as an abundance of patience. Next, I wish to thank the complete Dissertation Committee, and outside reader, respectively: David Royse, PhD, Janet Ford, PhD, Karen Badger, PhD, Katherine McCormick, PhD, Bibhuti Sar, PhD and Leslie Woltenberg, PhD. Each individual provided insights that guided and challenged my thinking, substantially improving the finished product.

In addition to the technical and instrumental assistance above, I received equally important assistance from family and friends. First, my husband Bob, who made me believe I could go to college and children, Will, Amanda, Caleb and Trevor. They all supported and tolerated me through the years this work consumed. I truly appreciate their dedication and sacrifices through the times I could not do something with them, locked myself away in a room, or kicked them out of the house so I could work. For their teasing and nudging, I am equally grateful. My newly acquired family, son-in-law Matt and grandson Conor helped to inspire me toward completion. I look forward to one day showing Conor his name in this work. My family of origin always believed in me and cheered me on. My mom, Sally, instilled in me a lifelong love of reading that has served me well through this process. My dad, Gene, fostered in me a strong work ethic and determination that kept me going. My twin, Dr. Karen Smith, provided unique inspiration with her own accomplishments, encouragement and advice throughout this process. My big sister, Regina provided support and encouragement as she has done all my life. My baby sister, Mel provided support and the distraction of fun when I needed it. To all of their husbands, children and grandchildren I am also grateful for the joyful distractions a fun-loving family can provide through a tiring process. To the Simmons family I am grateful for their unwavering love, support and encouragement over the years. They too have provided opportunities to relax and regroup when needed. Additionally, I have a host of friends who have provided encouragement over the years. To the Nuts, I am grateful for their unwavering friendship and encouragement. The Lake gang I could always count on to provide encouragement and share in my minor victories along the way. My BTR friends inspired me to escape into nature when I needed to rejuvenate and get my thoughts together. My dear friend Julie made me believe I could do it when I did not -she was a great cheerleader. To all of my friends and colleagues who provided encouragement along the way, I am grateful. Finally, I wish to thank the respondents of my study (who remain anonymous for confidentiality purposes). Their comments and insights created an informative and interesting project with opportunities for future work.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Problem Statement

Bullying in schools is not a new phenomenon but is a problem that has changed over time and creates challenges for school personnel, particularly school social workers and teachers. Experts estimate that as many as 35% - 60% of our children are bullied in school (Modecki, Minchin, Harbaugh, Guerra, & Runions, 2014). Additionally, Modecki and colleagues (Modecki, Minchin, Harbaugh, Guerra, & Runions, 2014) found that 15% of students also reported being bullied online. Definitions of bullying vary but most experts agree that bullying consists of repeated negative actions, which can be physical, emotional or relational directed toward a student by one or more other students rather than one isolated incident (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger & Lumpkin, 2014, Smith & Brain, 2000).

School social work is an advanced practice specialization in which specially trained social workers practice within a host educational environment. School social workers encounter many challenges in the educational environment. School social workers often work in underfunded host environments that may assign them to work in multiple schools. Many states require additional coursework and licensing for school social workers in order for them to practice in schools.

Coursework beyond the Master's degree usually includes classes related to working with special education students and diverse populations of children. The purpose of school social work is to work within the school environment to eliminate barriers to educational achievement. School social workers assist other school personnel in facilitating learning (the primary goal of education). According to the School Social Work Practice Model, (Frey et al., 2013) school social workers play multiple roles within school environments. "The practice model encourages school social workers to (1) provide evidence-based education, behavior, and mental health services; (2) promote a school climate and culture conducive to student learning and teaching excellence; and (3) maximize access to school-based and community-based resources" (Frey et al., 2013 p. 2). Additionally, school social workers are instrumental in assessing and addressing issues related to school safety, including school violence and bullying. Reid, (2002) stated, "Social workers at all levels of intervention are critical in developing a comprehensive response to school violence, thereby creating safe schools" (Reid, 2002, p.2.).

Teachers are central figures in the educational environment and are often the first to encounter problems with bullying in schools (Elledge, Elledge, Newgent & Cavell, 2016; Shore, 2009). School social workers and teachers are at the forefront of bully prevention and intervention efforts in schools. According to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 2008), "School social workers can act as advocates for students who are victimized and identify a support network of caring adults" (p. 2). Additionally, school social workers may address issues of school bullying and often attend to the task of educating other school personnel about how to deal with bullying in schools (Frey et

al., 2013, Biggs, Simpson & Gaus, 2009). However, some school social workers and teachers report feeling unprepared to carry out their roles with regard to bullying (Slovak & Singer, 2011, Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan, 2007).

A review of the extant literature regarding the level of preparedness of school social workers and teachers regarding efficacy for dealing with bullying revealed the need to examine the causes for school social workers' and teachers' feelings of efficacy.

Because of the important roles that school social workers and teachers play in the fight against bullying, an exploration of what accounts for feelings of preparedness among these professionals is necessary to inform practice. Furthermore, any lack of efficacy in dealing with bullying felt by teachers and school social workers may suggest the need for the inclusion of bullying education into school social work and teacher education curriculums. The following research represents an exploration of what accounts for school social workers' feelings of efficacy and teachers' feelings of efficacy regarding bullying.

Bullying

Bullying is a term that most Americans have become familiar with over the past couple of decades. A number of different definitions exist for bullying but the most universally accepted definitions are in the work of Smith and Brain (2000). Both the Olweus and Smith and Sharp definitions describe bullying as follows:

Bullying is usually defined [e.g., Olweus, 1999, Figure 1.1] as a subset of aggressive behavior characterized by repetition and an imbalance of power. The

definition “a systematic abuse of power” [Smith and Sharp, 1994, p.2] also captures these two features. The behavior involved is generally thought of as being repetitive, i.e., a victim is targeted a number of times. Also, the victim cannot defend himself or herself easily, for one or more reasons: He or she may be outnumbered, smaller or less physically strong, or less psychologically resilient than the person(s) doing the bullying (Smith & Brain, 2000, p. 1).

More recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Department of Education released the first federal uniform definition of bullying for research and surveillance (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger & Lumpkin, 2014) which closely resembles the Smith and Brain definition. The federal uniform definition, “Bullying is any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm” (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger & Lumpkin, 2014, p.7) contributes to a more standardized definition of bullying. The researcher used the combination described above by Smith and Brain (2000) of Olweuss (1999) and Smith and Sharp (1994) when referring to bullying in general in this study. Chapter 2 identifies and defines the various types of bullying as they relate to the research. Specifically, direct bullying often referred to as that which is observable (such as physical bullying and name calling or taunting) and indirect bullying (often more difficult to observe such as spreading rumors).

Trends in Bullying

Bullying in American schools is not a recent phenomenon. Frederick Burk first wrote about bullying in 1897 but investigation of the subject did not begin again in earnest until Dan Olweus, a Scandinavian researcher, began to study the phenomenon in the 1970's. Koo (2007) suggests that bullying has always been present but that how we look at it has changed. Similarly, Smith and Brain (2000) refer to bullying behaviors as "normative in the sense that they can be routinely expected to occur" (p. 2) but also socially unacceptable. Our parents and adults used the "sticks and stones" idiom when we were children as a way of instructing us to ignore teasing and tormenting by other children. Children even used the saying as a retort to attempt to stop the verbal abuse. Today we know that words can and do hurt. They did then and they do now. Sometimes the hurt can cause devastation and tragedy.

The following examples portray the harms that victims have suffered and highlight the need to address bullying in its current state.

Jodee Blanco's (2003) powerful account of her experiences growing up in suburban Chicago over two decades ago, are outlined in her book, *Please Stop Laughing at Me*. Blanco, (2003) shares the horrors of growing up as a victim of bullying and its devastating effects.

I was being chased down the hall. I bolted out the door, thinking my mom would be there. She wasn't. Four of the boys restrained me, two of them forced open my jaw and others began shoving fistfuls of snow into my mouth. I couldn't breathe. I flailed my arms furiously, trying to fend them off. They were laughing so hard that they didn't hear me choking for air. I couldn't speak to let them know they had gone too far (Blanco, 2003, p. 119).

While Ms. Blanco's experiences with bullying in the 1980's were face to face, today American youth are increasingly turning to social networking sites and text messaging as their mode of communication (Marx, 2010). The use of words in this modality can be particularly damaging when those words intend to humiliate and demoralize their victims. Words were the primary weapon used against Phoebe Prince, the 15-year-old Irish immigrant who took her own life in January 2010. Phoebe experienced both traditional bullying and cyberbullying. A number of different definitions exist for cyberbullying but they all have in common the use of electronic means to cause harm (Slovak & Singer, 2011).

Phoebe and her family moved to South Hadley, Massachusetts in the fall of 2009 from a small seaside community in Ireland. Phoebe was a freshman at South Hadley high school. During her first few weeks at the school, she dated a popular senior football player. This apparently caused some jealousy among a group of girls at the school who became angry about Phoebe's romantic involvement with this boy. The group of girls, dubbed by the media as the "mean girls" began to bully Phoebe. Witnesses to the bullying revealed that the girls called Phoebe "Irish slut" and "whore" on a number of different social networking sites. However, this was not the only form of torment visited upon Phoebe. Witnesses' reported that her persecutors routinely knocked books out of her hands at school, things were thrown at her and her face was marked out of pictures on school walls. The bullies also sent threatening text messages to her. The abuse went on relentlessly for 3 months until Phoebe tragically took her own life. On January 14, 2010, Phoebe was harassed and threatened in the school library and in a hallway at school. As she walked home that day one of her tormentors drove by and threw a canned beverage at

her from the car window. When Phoebe arrived home that day, she hung herself. Her little sister found her (Kennedy, 2010).

Initially, charges in this case against nine teenagers ranged from statutory rape, violation of civil rights with bodily injury, criminal harassment and stalking. Five of the nine received sentences of probation and community service in May 2011 (Khadaroo, 2011). District Attorney, Elizabeth Scheibel told reporters that an investigation into the events leading up to Phoebe's death, "revealed relentless activity directed toward Phoebe designed to humiliate her and make it impossible for her to remain at school. This group continued their onslaught after Phoebe's death by posting nasty comments on her memorial page" (Kennedy, 2010, p. 2). After the sentencing of the five teens, Barbara Colorosa, an educator and author on bullying, called upon the teens to go beyond their required sentences and work to undo some of the harm. Colorosa said, "While they can't undo Ms. Prince's death, they should take steps to remove from the Internet the hurtful comments they made about her" (Khadaroo, 2011, p. 2).

Additionally, officials began an investigation into the role that adults in the school may have played in Phoebe's death. Phoebe's mother had asked school administrators to help her daughter on two separate occasions. The administrators have conflicting responses about their actions following the complaints of Phoebe's mother. On one occasion, they claimed to have addressed the issue, on another occasion they claimed to be unaware of the issue. The District Attorney's investigation did reveal that a number of faculty members, staff members and administrators were aware of the bullying and even witnessed some physical abuse but did nothing to intervene. The District Attorney did

not identify this behavior as criminal and the adults were not charged. However, there is widespread concern about how a school staff responds to bullying issues and who is responsible for protecting youth in schools (Kennedy, 2010).

Tragically, Phoebe's case is not an isolated one. Brandon Meyers, a fifth grader, committed suicide after repeated bullying in 2007. Alexis Pilkington, a 17-year-old victim of cyberbullying, took her own life in March of 2011. These are just a few of the cases that garnered media attention because of their tragic outcomes (O'Toole, 2010). Although these examples have highlighted victims who committed suicide, researchers believe school bullying also has links to homicides in schools.

American researchers began an earnest study of the problem of school violence in the 1990s in response to a series of school shootings that rocked the nation. With unprecedented media attention, events such as those that occurred at Heath and Columbine High Schools struck fear in the American populace who began to question the safety of our schools and call for investigations into the causes of such tragedies. Research supports the connection between bullying and violence at school. Youth who have mental disorders are particularly susceptible to committing acts of targeted violence when their peer groups marginalize and bully them. According to Burgess, Garbarino & Carlson (2006);

Children and adolescents suffering from mental disorders often express their symptoms by internalizing or externalizing behaviors. Children with internalizing disorders express fears, physical complaints, worrying, shyness, and anxiety because they deal with their problems internally. Those suffering from externalizing disorders will exhibit aggression, disobedience, substance abuse, and temper tantrums by directing their emotional response outward toward others (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000) (p. 3).

The following examples highlight the connections between youth who may have suffered from mental illness and experienced bullying and targeted acts of violence.

Michael Carneal, 14-years-old, opened fire into a group of students engaged in an early morning prayer circle at his Paducah, Kentucky high school in 1997. Carneal's rampage killed three people and wounded five others. Investigators subsequently found that Carneal had been the victim of bullying at school. Carneal experienced a humiliating incident during his 8th grade year that began an onslaught of teasing and ridicule by other students. According to Newman, et al. (2004) a student 'gossip columnist' had written in the school newspaper an item that implied that Carneal was involved in a homosexual relationship (as cited in Burgess, Garbarino & Carlson, 2006).

According to numerous reports, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were also victims of bullying at their Colorado high school. On April 20, 1999, Klebold and Harris, seniors at Columbine High, entered the school armed with an arsenal of weapons. They killed 12 students and 1 teacher before taking their own lives. Twenty-four additional persons sustained injuries either directly or when trying to escape (Lamb, 2008).

Subsequent research efforts confirmed the connection between school bullying and school violence. Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski (2002), cite a Secret Service investigation of targeted school violence, which occurred in 37 schools in the United States between 1974 and 2000 that revealed 71% of school shooters reported a history of persistent victimization by bullies.

Lenhardt, Farrell & Graham (2010) conducted a study of 15 school shooters in which they found that, “A pervasive trend in bullying, marginalization, and persecution is evident in 73 percent of the cases. Shooters indicated that this form of nonfatal, but persistent and insidious teasing actually led to their attack” (Lenhardt et al., 2010, p. 110). Additionally, 40% of the shooters studied indicated that school staff did not recognize or respond to bullying (Lenhardt et al., 2010).

Effects of Bullying

In addition to targeted acts of violence related to bullying, the connection between suicides and bullying is an increasing concern. The term was first implemented by Marr and Field in their book, *Bullycide, Death at Playtime* (2001) and is defined as suicide which may be partly caused by harassment or bullying (Hyatt, 2010). Research into this phenomenon is limited but suggests that the combination of traditional bullying and cyberbullying has particularly devastating effects on victims. Kessel, Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve & Coulter (2012) found that students who were victims of both types of bullying were more likely to experience depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation. Of the 884 students in their survey who reported both types of victimization, 15.2% reported actual suicide attempts (Kessel Schneider et al., 2012, p. 175). With increased media attention directed toward the issue of bullycide, questions have arisen as to whether acts of suicide or homicide are caused by the bullying itself or if depression or mental illness in victims is simply exacerbated by the bullying. These questions remain unanswered but existing research suggests a strong connection between victimization, depression, suicide, and acts of violence. According to a National Institute of Health

(2003) news release, victims of bullying are also more likely to carry weapons to school than other students are. The NIH (2003) release cited a 2001 National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)-funded survey of 15,686 public and private school students in grades 6-10 in the United States. The survey revealed that 28.7% of boys who said they were victims of bullying in school every week had carried a weapon in school compared to 12.2% of boys who were never victims of bullying in school carrying a weapon in school. As mentioned previously, victims of bullying can react in devastating ways.

While acts of violence are the most devastating effects of bullying whether directed inwardly by victims or outwardly towards others, bullying can have profound effects on all connected to it. Victims are often anxious, depressed, lonely, and exhibit low self-esteem. Olweus (1993) found that victims of bullying reported more physical and psychological problems than others do. Additionally, many victims had attendance and academic difficulties that they attributed to their experiences with bullies. Rigby (1997) found that 16% of boys and 31% of girls who had been bullied reported being absent from school in order to avoid being victimized. Victims also experience an increase in psychosomatic complaints. According to Gini (2008) victims of bullying report multiple symptoms, including sleep disturbances, dizziness, tiredness, and feeling tense. Williams & Kennedy (2012) cite the association between peer victimization and internalizing symptoms, “Specifically, peer victimization has been linked to emotional dysregulation (McLaughlin et al., 2009), loneliness, and anxiety (Bellmore, Witkow, Graham & Juvonen, 2004)” (p. 321).

There are also lasting effects of bullying on the bullies. Bullies experience increased risk of problems such as fighting, truancy, theft and arrests (Olweus, 1993). Bullies are also more likely to carry weapons to school and sustain injuries at school. According to a study conducted by Kerlikowske (2003), 43% of bullies reported carrying weapons to school weekly, compared to 8% of bullies not carrying weapons. The rate of injuries reported was 46% of bullies being injured compared to 16% of nonbullies sustaining injuries at school (as cited in Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike & Afen-Akpaia, 2008). Additionally, research suggests that bullies often maintain negative behaviors into adulthood and have difficulty developing and maintaining positive relationships. Bullies are also more likely to become involved in criminal activity and drug use. According to Galinsky and Salmond (2002), bullying in adolescence can lead to legal problems in adulthood. Sixty percent of males identified as bullies in grades 6-9 have convictions of at least one crime as adults compared to 23 percent of non-bullies. Additionally, forty percent of previously identified bullies had three or more convictions by their 24th birthday as compared to 10 percent of non-bullies. Not only do these figures raise concern about how the bully is affected but how they affect society as well. The most devastated group was those who were both victims and bullies. Commonly referred to as the bully-victim, these students reported being lonely and having difficulty making friends in addition to poor academic performance and engaging in risky behavior (Greenya, 2005). Gini (2008) also found that bully-victims were at greater risk for conduct problems and hyperactivity than uninvolved peers were. Bystanders, those who stand by and watch the bullying, also experience negative consequences. Colorosa

(2005) proposes that bystanders often experience an erosion of self-confidence and self-respect as well as fear and guilt.

Bullying has devastating effects on our society as well. In addition to an increased rate of incarceration among former bullies (Galinsky & Salmond, 2002), additional costs are incurred by schools, healthcare providers and social service agencies. While specific statistics are rare, estimates regarding costs associated with bullying are staggering. According to Phillips (2010), costs to schools alone are potentially devastating. Schools incur losses in a number of ways, including: truancy and low attendance, suspensions, expulsions, students dropping out of school, vandalism, and costs associated with alternative education placements. The issues related to bullying drastically affect schools' Average Daily Attendance (ADA) rates. Phillips (2010) uses a hypothetical school to estimate potential costs. Using his example of a typical high school with a student population of 1000 students, estimates of costs incurred by bullying are greater than 2 million dollars annually. Schools can use the calculator available to estimate for their population. However, it is important to mention that the calculator does not account for additional expenses such as metal detectors and school resource officers as well other programs or policies that schools may implement to address the issue and the associated costs.

While few states or schools have published findings about costs associated with bullying, the state of California's Safe Schools Coalition, estimated that harassment based on actual or perceived sexual orientation costs California school districts at least \$39.9 million dollars each year (Russell, Talmage, Laub & Manke, 2009).

While it is impossible to know the true costs of school bullying, the effects clearly extend well past schools themselves. In fact, several sources of information suggest that work place bullying may be a result of our nation's failure to address bullying in schools effectively. As mentioned previously, research indicates that school bullies continue to have difficulty in their adult lives. One study, conducted by the National Institute of Occupational Safety Health (NIOSH) found that over \$19 billion dollars was associated with workplace bullying (Sauter, Murphy & Hurrell, 1990). According to Greenya (2005), "some experts say American culture in some ways may condone, or even support, abusiveness as an acceptable way to get ahead- and not just on the playground. Television shows like "Scrubs," "House," and "ER," for instance, feature successful- albeit arrogant and rude-doctors frequently verbally humiliating and abusing underlings" (Greenya, 2005, p. 3).

The Extent of the Problem of Bullying

Previous examples in this chapter highlight events that have helped to raise awareness about the issue of bullying as well as the effects bullying can have. However, it is equally important to provide the reader with information about the extent of the problem of bullying. Statistics regarding the prevalence of bullying and victimization vary from study to study depending upon definitions used for bullying, victimization, and data collection methods. Still, there is considerable agreement that bullying in American schools remains a serious problem.

According to a recent Meta analysis (Modecki, Minchin, Harbaugh, Guerra, & Runions, 2014) others bully as many as 35% of our children in school and 15% are

bullied online. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development report that more than 3 million children (6th-10th grade) are victims of bullying each year. Greenya (2005) reports, “on a typical school day today three out of 10 American youngsters are involved in bullying as perpetrators, victims or bystanders, and an estimated 160,000 children skip school for fear of being harassed” (Greenya, 2005, p.1).

Nongovernment researchers suggest similar findings. Oliver, Hoover and Hazler (1994) found that of middle school and high school students surveyed, 77% reported a history of victimization by a bully. In a similar study, following younger children from kindergarten through third grade, Kochenderfer-Ladd and Wardrop (2001) found that approximately 60% of children studied classified themselves as having been a victim of bullying at least once during the four-year study. Frisen, Jonsson, & Persson (2007) found that 39% of adolescent respondents reported experiencing victimization at some time in their school years.

Additionally, research suggests that subpopulations are at even greater risk of victimization. A 2002 National Mental Health Association survey found that overweight children experience victimization most often with 85% of students answering in the affirmative. The second most victimized were children who are gay or thought to be gay at 78%, followed by students who dress differently at 76%, and students with disabilities at 63% (Greenya, 2005). In a recent study comparing bullying rates among typically developing students and students with disabilities researchers found that while rates of verbal and relational victimization were similar, special education students were 1.56 times more likely to report being physically threatened (Hartley, Bauman, Nixon and

Davis, 2015). Garofalo, Wolf, Kessel, Palfrey & DuRant, (1998) found that gay, lesbian and bisexual youths (GLB) are five times more likely to miss school than other students because they are afraid of what may happen to them at school. Greenya (2005) puts forth, “one-third of gay students are physically harassed due to their sexual orientation, one in six is beaten badly enough to need medical attention and gay teens are four times more likely to be threatened with a weapon at school than straight kids” (Greenya, 2005, p. 2).

Finally, statistics regarding cyberbullying are beginning to appear in the literature. Kessel Schneider, O’Donnell, Stueve & Coulter (2012) found that of 20,406 ninth through twelfth graders surveyed, 15.8 % of students reported being victims of bullying online. Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) surveyed 10-17 year old internet users and found that 7% reported online victimization and 15% reported having harassed others online (as cited in Wong-Lo & Bullock, 2011). Hinduja & Patchin (2010) found that with regard to cyberbullying, “prevalence rates for individual behaviors ranged from 9.1% to 23.1% for offending and from 5.7% to 18.3% for victimization” (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010, p.1). More recently, Brochado, Soares and Frago (2016) conducted a scoping review on cyberbullying prevalence in adolescence and found that in 159 previous studies of the prevalence of cyberbullying there was a high variability due primarily to different definitions and different recall periods used in the research. They found that depending on the definition used and the recall period, cyber victimization ranged from 1.0% to 61.1%.

Bullying continues to be a problem for America's youth and the availability of electronic media makes it easier for some kids to fall victim. In many cases, victims accuse school professionals of knowing about the incidents and doing nothing to stop the bullying or prevent further attacks (O'Toole, 2010). According to Hyatt (2010), leading researchers, Field and Marr, are critical about "the lack of intervention on the part of adults, particularly in schools, these researchers acknowledge that once a child dies by suicide, parents often find out that the bullying has been going on for months. Even though school officials knew about the bullying, they did nothing to intervene" (Hyatt, 2010, p. 2). Previous research efforts indicate that teachers believe they intervene more often than students believe teachers intervene (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007). Additionally, students often report that teachers make the situation worse when they do intervene (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007).

Statement of the Research/Relationship to Social Work

The purpose of this study was to explore the reasons for school social workers' and teachers' feelings of preparedness and effectiveness in recognizing and intervening in bullying situations. Specifically, social workers who work in host educational environments (school social workers) along with teachers took the survey. Because of the crucial role that educators play in the school environment, the inclusion of teachers in the study was necessary to examine their training and reasons for their feelings of preparedness to recognize and effectively deal with all forms and dynamics of bullying.

The study asked school social workers and teachers to rate their perceived efficacy level for recognizing and intervening in bullying situations. Additionally, school

social workers and teachers identified the types of preparation received or sought to address school bullying. Preparation may include bachelors or masters level college preparation programs, courses or curricula specific to bullying or school violence education, professional development or in-service training, reading materials sought out by the professional or provided by the school administration or other types of preparation. The socio-demographic variables examined in the study were age, gender, ethnicity, geographic location of the school in which they are employed, the type of school and the professionals' years of experience. Teachers and school social workers also provided information about their childhood and adult experiences with bullying and identified their perceived roles in bullying scenarios. Additionally, they answered questions about certain organizational variables that may indicate the support they feel to address bullying. School social workers answered questions about their perceived level of preparedness to act as educators and sources of support for teachers in dealing with bullying. Likewise, teachers answered questions about if they perceive school social workers as supporting them and providing resources regarding dealing with bullying situations. Finally, teachers and school social workers completed an empathy questionnaire to include empathy as an explanatory factor in perception of preparedness or likelihood to intervene.

Whether or not school staff intervenes in instances of bullying and *how* they intervene seems to have the potential for making the most impact on the problem of bullying. Identifying what accounts for these actions may help to address the problem. Bradshaw, Sawyer and O'Brennan (2007) found that "Staff with greater efficacy for handling bullying situations were more likely to intervene and less likely to make the

bullying situation worse” (Bradshaw et al., 2007, p. 361). Dr. Allan Beane, president of Bully Free Systems, LLC. (2011) perhaps provided the best rationale for this study when in his response to an interview question regarding the Virginia Tech massacre he said, “The truth is, bullying is destructive to the well being of individuals and creates unsafe environments. It must stop. If we don’t examine all possible contributing factors, tragedy (suicides and shootings) will continue to happen on our campuses” (p. 2). Teachers and social workers who do not intervene or who are ineffective in their interventions do not stop the problem.

The researcher conducted this study because there is a lack of information on school social workers and teachers about their feelings of preparedness to deal with school bullying and what accounts for those feelings. Of particular interest are school social workers’ and teachers’ perceptions of how their educational preparation has affected their ability to intervene appropriately in bullying situations or whether their perceptions about their abilities are accounted for by other factors. Generalist social work education intends to prepare social workers to work across all levels of practice (i.e., micro, mezzo and macro) and attend to a variety of roles within those environments using the ecological model. Consequently, it is important to determine whether school social workers feel their educational preparation was adequate to prepare them for practice with regard to bullying intervention and prevention.

Organization of the Chapters

This dissertation arrangement contains five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the problem explored in the study, the significance and purpose of the study and the

relevance to social work practice. Chapter 2, the literature review, provides definitions of bullying and types of bullying and the characteristics of bullies and victims as this relates to solutions for the problem. Additionally, it provides the reader with a historical perspective of bullying research and practice and current trends in addressing the problem. A review of how school social workers and teachers are prepared to deal with bullying and the gaps in current literature provides the rationale for the study. It discusses applicable social work theory and its relevance to social work practice in school environments. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, selection of populations surveyed and data collection process. Chapter 4 reports the results of the study. Chapter 5 contains a discussion of the results and recommendations for future research and practice implications.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review provides the reader with a brief overview of the history of bullying and bullying research, definitions of bullying, types of bullying and characteristics of bullies and victims. Additionally, an examination of current trends in addressing the problem and how school social workers and teachers are prepared is examined. It discusses the theoretical framework and positions it within the field of social work, specifically, the specialization of school social work.

Historical Overview

A comprehensive literature review that outlines a timeline of the evolution of school bullying traced bullying and bully-like behaviors from the mid 1800's to contemporary times. The author proposes that the phenomenon of bullying is not a new one but historical definitions of bully-like behavior are quite different from current definitions (Koo, 2007). Additionally, Koo (2007) suggests that the study of bullying has taken a variety of approaches and differs with regard to social contexts.

The first significant journal article identified by Koo was that of Burk (1897). Frederic L. Burk of Clark University, a small liberal arts school in Massachusetts, was the first to conduct a systematic study of bullying in the United States. Following Burk's work, a neglect of the problem of bullying in schools exists in the professional literature

until the 1970s by Scandinavian researchers (Koo, 2007). The most prominent among those was a Norwegian researcher, Dan Olweus. Olweus conducted a systematic study of the phenomenon of bullying, which he incorporated into his book, *Aggression in the Schools – Bullies and Whipping Boys* (1978). Olweus's work, as well as that of other European researchers, has informed practice and provided implications for additional research into the nature and extent of bullying.

European researchers continued their study of the phenomenon following Olweus's work but American researchers lagged considerably behind (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). In, *Bullying in American Schools*, (Espelage & Swearer, 2004) the authors explain this lag. In the forward, written by James Garbarino, the author compares the phenomenon of bullying and our ability to recognize it as a serious problem to beliefs once commonly held about child sexual abuse. Garbarino incorporates a quote from Susan Sgroi, researcher and clinician, who once said, "You can't diagnose something if you don't believe it exists" (as cited in Espelage & Swearer, 2004, p. xi). Garbarino, goes on to explain that Sgroi, "was referring to the fact that five decades ago most professionals estimated the frequency of child sexual abuse on the order of one in a million, whereas now the figure commonly cited is one in ten" (cited in Espelage & Swearer, 2004, p. xi). Garbarino, further proposes that the massacre at Columbine, "offered an opportunity to open our nation's eyes to the pain so many of our kids feel as they confront emotional violence at school" (cited in Espelage & Swearer, 2004, p. xi). Similarly, Koo, explains, "the attitude towards it has been changing; it used to be considered as a part of children's growing up but now is considered to be a social problem which has to be controlled" (Koo, 2007, p. 114).

While extreme violence in schools may have been the impetus for American research efforts, it is relatively rare (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome & Nay, 2003). However, increased media attention perpetuated by extreme acts of violence has helped raise public awareness about the dangers of bullying and the potential for devastating outcomes (Furlong, Morrison & Greif, 2003). This has propelled American researchers in the quest to examine bullying within our unique social context.

Bullying is a type of school violence that has been going on for centuries. There exist a number of definitions of violence but all generally include that it is intentional and involves creating harm or damage to another person or persons (Koo, 2007). Violence is such a prolific part of our society that it commands the devotion of entire journals, particularly youth violence and school violence, including bullying. A search of a number of selected data bases using key words in the source box as well as the subject box to locate journals with a focus on violence revealed numerous journals dedicated to the subject of violence, some specifically devoted to youth violence. Journals found were; *Human Aggression and Violence*, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *Aggressive Behavior*, *Violence Against Women*, *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, *Journal of Family Violence*, *Journal of School Violence*, *Violence and Victims*, *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, *New Directions in Peer Victimization Research*, *Workplace Mobbing and Bullying*, *Journal of Aggression*, and *Aggression and Violent Behavior*. Additionally, a substantial number of researchers from a variety of professions have devoted their efforts to studying the concept of violence, particularly violence in schools and bullying. Among the experts in the field are social workers, psychologists, school counselors, educators, criminologists, public health officials and sociologists. Multiple disciplines

address the subject of bullying and it emerges in the literature as a multidisciplinary problem.

Bullying Defined

The term, ‘bullying’ has evolved in the literature over time and continues to include a number of different definitions. There are also multiple terms used in the literature to encompass bullying or bully-like behaviors. Researchers include bullying, mobbing, aggression, school violence (Koo, 2007), peer victimization (Card & Hodges, 2008), and harassment (Greenya, 2005). Bullying in some instances may be part of a subset of other forms of aggression (Koo, 2007). Actions that some define as bullying (Olweus, 1993) others define as peer victimization (Card & Hodges, 2008). For the purpose of this literature review, the researcher employed all of the above terms in the search for literature regarding the problem of bullying.

The most widely used and accepted definition of bullying is that of Olweus whose definition (as cited in Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike & Afen-Akpaída, 2008) states that:

a person is being bullied when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. Negative actions are considered to be when someone purposefully inflicts, or tries to inflict injury or discomfort on another person. Negative actions may be both verbal (e.g. threatening, degrading, teasing) and non-verbal (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping, pushing, vandalizing property, rude gestures, and making faces) (Aluede et al., 2008, p. 152).

Similar definitions include those by “Farrington (1993), bullying is repeated oppression of a less powerful person, physical or psychological, by a more powerful person: (Smith & Sharp, 1994), the systematic abuse of power; Rigby (2002), bullying

involves a desire to hurt another, a harmful action, a power imbalance, repetition, an unjust use of power, evident enjoyment by the aggressor and generally a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim” (as cited in Koo, 2007, p.108). Most experts agree that bullying involves repetition and an imbalance of power and is not limited to physical actions (Koo, 2007).

Government agencies and legislators also have opted for a variety of definitions to describe bullying and bully-like behaviors. Most recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Department of Education released the first federal uniform definition of bullying for research and surveillance (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger & Lumpkin, 2014). The definition includes many previously used core components while attempting to place it within the current context, “Bullying is any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm” (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger & Lumpkin, 2014, p.7). Similarly, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools defines bullying as: “intentional efforts to harm one or more individuals may be direct or indirect, is not limited to behaviors that cause physical harm, and may be verbal (including oral and written language) or non-verbal” (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, 2011).

While many states have enacted legislation to address bullying in schools, the legislation often includes limited or inconsistent definitions of bullying and the activities associated with it. However, most definitions include the following: intentional infliction of harm, it is repetitious, involves an imbalance of power, and can be physical, emotional, verbal, relational or sexual. Additionally, most definitions specifically mention exclusion, vandalism of property, and name calling or teasing.

Because of the tremendous forms, that bullying may entail, from mild teasing to extreme physical or mental anguish, some researchers have conceptualized bullying as existing on a scale. Espelage & Swearer (2004) conceptualized bullying as being on a continuum of verbal and nonverbal aggressive behaviors that are common among students. They proposed that most students engage in some form of peer victimization and that true bullying (repeated victimization of others) lies at the extreme end of that continuum.

Bullying also includes distinctions between direct and indirect forms. The National Education Association (NEA, 2013) describes direct bullying as something that someone directly does to another such as hitting, kicking, teasing, destruction of property, threatening or forcing someone to do something against their will. The NEA describes indirect bullying as behaviors that are covert and include spreading rumors, manipulation and exclusion (2013). According to a National Institute of Health and Human Development (NICHD) study (2003), girls were more likely to spread rumors or make sexual remarks, while boys were more likely to slap, hit or push others.

Physical Bullying

Physical bullying is the type of direct bullying that was traditionally associated with bullying in early studies of the phenomenon. Physical bullying is any act that requires the perpetrator to do something that involves physically hurting another person. Koo (2007) highlights examples of some of the earliest reports of bullying in literature. One particular incident described by Koo (2007) involved a 12-year-old boy who died because of a beating by a group of older boys in a UK boarding school in 1885.

Because of the self-explanatory nature of the term “physical bullying,” the literature includes no separate definitions. However, in Olweus’s popular definition, he includes physical bullying in what he refers to as ‘non-verbal’ and uses examples such as “hitting, kicking, slapping, pushing, vandalizing property, rude gestures and making faces” (as cited in Aluede et al., 2008, p. 152).

The most prevalent aspect of physical bullying mentioned in the literature is that it is more recognizable as bullying by teachers and other school professionals. Bauman and Del Rio (2006), studied preservice teachers’ responses to bullying scenarios and found that school staff are more likely to identify physical aggression as bullying. This is mostly due to the fact that acts of physical aggression are more observable and teachers are more likely to intervene in situations that they are sure are bullying. Name-calling and verbal taunting is also more likely to garner a response from teachers if they witness the act (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Bradshaw, Sawyer & O’Brennan, 2007). Furthermore, schools are more likely to have policies that address these types of

behaviors and therefore school staff knows how to respond. Bauman & Del Rio (2006)

proposed the following explanation;

When a teacher observes an incident of physical bullying, the teacher may feel that the duty to intervene is clear. Many schools now have zero tolerance for violence, providing guidelines for this type of behavior. Thus, the teacher is not faced with uncertainty about the best course of action. This is likely to be the case with verbal bullying (name-calling or threats), as most schools have policies that define those behaviors as unacceptable. The teacher can then rely on standard policies and procedures to respond to overt forms of bullying (Nishina, 2004, as cited in Bauman & Del Rio, 2006, p. 226).

Finally, physical aggression tends to decline and be replaced by non-physical forms of bullying as students move from childhood to adolescence (Craig & Pepler, 2003), and is more likely to be used by boys than girls (Williams & Kennedy, 2012).

Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying is another type of direct bullying and includes things like name calling and teasing (Mishna, 2003). Previous researchers have found that name-calling is the most common form of bullying (Whitney & Smith as cited in Mills & Carwile, 2009). Kowalski (2003) (as cited in Mils & Carwile, 2009), argues that;

... teasing through name-calling can be as painful to the recipient as a physical injury. In one article, she reports a student who says, "Whoever said 'sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me' must have been deaf" (p. 53). In this conceptualization of verbal bullying, teasing is a bullying strategy: a way to intentionally inflict harm on another (p. 280).

Although teasing is sometimes used as a positive communication device (Mills & Carwile, 2009), when used with the intention of hurting another individual it can be very harmful and has often been associated with negative effects for victims such as poor self-

esteem and attendance problems. Verbal bullying, like physical bullying is often easier for teachers and school professionals to identify as bullying if they witness such acts but researchers have found that teachers believe verbal bullying is less harmful and are not as likely to respond to this form of aggression (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan, 2007).

Relational Aggression & Bullying

Relational bullying is a type of indirect bullying described by Crick (1996) as damaging peer relationships through purposeful manipulation. Bauman & Del Rio (2006) describe relational bullying as including, "...social exclusion ("You can't play with us"), spreading rumors, ("Did you hear ...?"), or withholding friendship ("I won't be your friend if you..."). Relational aggression becomes relational bullying when it is repeated and directed toward a victim with less power" (p. 220). While this type of bullying traditionally garnered less attention than other types of bullying, it is becoming an increasing concern to researchers and practitioners. Readers may be familiar with a popular 2004 movie, "Mean Girls", which depicted a group of girls involved in relational aggression and bullying.

While relational bullying is becoming a more recognized problem, researchers (Harachi, Catalano & Hawkins, 1999) believe that it may be perceived by educators as less harmful or considered "normative female behavior" (as cited in Bauman & Del Rio, 2006 p. 220) but may actually be more devastating to victims than physical or direct bullying. Hawker (1998, as cited in Mills & Carwile, 2009) found that "victims of

relational bullying report more emotional distress than victims of physical bullying” (p. 280).

Mills & Carwile (2009) propose that an explanation for the lack of attention toward relational bullying may be that this form of bullying may be harder for teachers to recognize but is “certainly observable if educators pay close attention to the social dynamics of their students” (p. 279). Another characteristic of note regarding relational bullying is that as children get older and peer relationships are more important to them, this type of bullying becomes more prevalent as physical bullying declines (Mills & Carwile, 2009).

Cyberbullying

Researchers, government agencies and legislators are now increasingly including cyberbullying in their definitions of bullying. Cyberbullying can take the direct form (name-calling and teasing) and the indirect form (spreading rumors and intentional sabotage of peer relationships) and often includes relational aggression. Cyberbullying increases opportunities for abuse and teasing, in turn creating more incentive to retaliate or create serious harm at school. Hinduja & Patchin (2010) define cyberbullying as; “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices” (p. 1). Instant messages, texts, Twitter, Facebook and MySpace all opened new lines of bullying that did not exist in the past (Marx, 2010, p. 2).

Cyberbullying was instrumental in the case of Phoebe Prince and more recently in the case of Tyler Clementi, a Rutgers University freshman, who took his own life after two

fellow students posted a live streaming video of him engaged in a homosexual sex act on an internet site (Friedman, 2010).

Researchers report that the unique characteristics of cyberbullying, including anonymity and the ability to reach a large audience instantaneously, can be psychologically harmful for victims (Kessel Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, Coulter, 2012; Couvillon & Ilieva, 2011; Wong-Lo & Bullock, 2011; Smith, Mahdavi, Carvallo, Fisher, Russell & Tippett, 2008). While it is a belief that cyberbullying is less prevalent than school bullying (Kessel Schneider et al., 2012), the harm suffered by victims may be more substantial. Kessel Schneider et al. (2012) found that students who were surveyed about their experience with bullying over the previous 12 months reported lower levels of cyberbullying (15.8%) than school bullying (25.9%) but that a majority (59.7%) of cyberbullying victims were also victims at school. Other studies, however, report higher levels of cyberbullying victimization. One study conducted by the National Crime Prevention council (as cited in Sbarbaro, Enyeart & Smith, 2011) found that 40% of teens in the US are victims of cyberbullying. It is also important to note that a limited number of studies exist that investigate the incidence of cyberbullying and the overlap between school and cyberbullying (Kessel Schneider et al., 2012).

Juvonen & Gross conducted research that showed that students victimized by bullies at school were seven times more likely to be victims of bullies online, suggesting that youth targeted at school are online targets as well and that cyberbullying is not a separate activity but one that extends beyond the schools (2008). Similarly, Couvillon & Ilieva (2011) propose that while cyberbullying may occur outside of the school

environment, it has become a concern that school personnel should address, "...the school and the learning environment are now expanding beyond a physical campus because of advances in technology. Therefore, educators must be able to provide the same level of safety and guidance for students in outreaching areas" (p. 100). Further, Fanti, Demetriou & Hawa (2012) found that characteristics associated with traditional school bullies (callous-unemotional traits) predict youths' likelihood to participate in cyberbullying thus supporting the need for teaching and modeling empathy in schools.

More recently, Modecki, Minchin, Harbaugh, Guerra, & Runions, 2014 conducted a meta-analysis of 80 studies that reported corresponding prevalence rates of traditional and cyberbullying. This was the first study of its kind and the authors found overall prevalence rates of 35% for traditional bullying and 15% for cyberbullying, indicating that the victimization often happens at the same time. However, as mentioned previously, the variety of definitions used for cyberbullying (as with traditional bullying) and the variety of recall periods used by researchers provide a lot of variance in prevalence rates Brochado, Soares and Frago (2016).

Characteristics of Bullies and Victims

Researchers have taken a variety of approaches in identifying characteristics associated with bullies and victims. Frisen, Jonsson & Persson (2007), surveyed Swedish adolescents to gather information about their perception of whom the victims are and who the bullies are. The most common response as to why individuals become victims of bullies was that they have a different appearance (i.e., thin, fat, and/or ugly). The second most common response was related to the victim's behavior (i.e., behaves strangely,

speaks differently or with an accent, shy, and/or insecure); the third most common response was related to the behavior of the bully (i.e., think their cool, want to feel superior, and/or want to show they have power). In response to the question, “why do some children and adolescents bully others?” 28% of respondents answered that “the bully has low self esteem”; 26% of respondents answered that “the bully feels cool”; and 15% answered that “the bully has problems” (Frisen et al., 2007, p. 754).

Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike & Afen-Akpaida (2008) proposed that;

Bullies frequently target people who are different from themselves and seek to exploit those differences. They select victims they think are unlikely to retaliate such as persons who are overweight, wear glasses, or have obvious physical differences like big ears or severe acne. Such victims are common subjects of ridicule in the hands of bullies. However, these differences do not necessarily need to be physical, as students who learn at a different pace or are anxious or insecure can also be targets for bullies (p. 151).

Research also supports that victims themselves may inadvertently perpetuate their victimization through the way in which they interpret their role as a victim, “...bullying is also supported by victims, by a sort of self-reproducing mechanism, i.e., a scheme of interpretation that reproduces itself” (Smorti & Ciucci, 2000, p. 45).

Additionally, Smith, Talamelli, Cowie, Naylor & Chauhan (2004) found that when asked why they thought they were victimized, victims’ often blamed themselves and cited differences in the way they looked or doing something that annoyed the bully.

Conversely, Olweus (as cited in Frisen, Holmqvist & Oscarsson (2008), described bullies as those who, “tend to be aggressive and impulsive in their actions, have a strong need to dominate others and appear to have little empathy with their victims” (p. 106).

Rodkin & Hodges (2003) who studied bullying from the context of peer ecology and school culture found that many bullies are in fact popular students who do well academically and their peers and teachers like them. Espelage, Bosworth & Simon (2000) similarly concluded that most bullies are male, popular, have well-developed social skills and are often athletes. Espelage & Swearer (2004) caution that practitioners should be aware that victims and bullies are not a dichotomous group but rather there is a varying level of involvement in bullying activities. While Espelage & Swearer (2004) recognize a continuum on which bullying behaviors exist, there is also a particular type of child referred to in the literature as the bully-victim.

The child or adolescent described as the bully-victim are at times the victim and at times the bully. Researchers also refer to these children as the aggressive/provocative victims. Solberg, Olweus & Endresen (2007), investigated the prevalence of bully-victims across grade levels. Their findings suggest that overall, this group comprises a fairly low number (only 10-20%) but that the prevalence was much higher in younger children (30-50%) possibly indicating that as children get older they are more likely to adopt one role or the other or may not report them both. Schafer, Korn, Brodbeck, Wolke and Schulz (2005) had previously found this in their study of the stability of victim and bully roles from primary to secondary school in Munich. Schafer et al. (2005) found that, “Irrespective of the particular role held in primary school, the majority of children (64%) change their roles from primary to secondary school. Most of them change towards a neutral status (59%)” (p. 330). Other researchers, however, found that bully/victims are more likely than passive victims, bullies, or uninvolved children to display social, emotional, behavioral, academic and family problems (Hanish & Guerra, 2004). Olafsen

& Viemero (2000) also found that bully/victims tend to employ more aggressive and self-destructive strategies in coping with stress at school than did any other group.

In a study by Menesini, Modena and Tani (2009) researchers investigated the effects of the stability of bullying roles across time and found that youth that were bullies, victims or bully/victims as young children and maintained these roles into adolescence had greater psychological difficulties than those that experienced bullying later in their educational careers. Again, bully/victims were the most troubled among the groups compared to uninvolved students and the other groups and exhibited both externalizing symptoms such as rule breaking and risk taking behavior as well as internalizing symptoms such as anxiety and depression. The results of this study emphasize the need for early intervention into bullying behaviors in schools.

Bystanders

Bullying research has traditionally focused on the effects of bullying on victims and bullies but recent efforts have begun to highlight the role of bystanders in bullying situations and the effects that bullying has on bystanders. Bystanders are those who are involved in bullying situations who are neither the bully nor the victim and may encourage the bully, discourage the bully through intervention or do nothing (Twemlow, Fonagy & Sacco, 2005). The prevalence of bystanders in bullying incidents is well established. Researchers (Pepler & Craig, 1995) have documented that bystanders are present in the majority (85%) of bullying episodes.

The bystander who witnesses bullying often feels anxious and insecure and report that fear of the bully prevents them from intervening (Swearer, Espelage,

Villiancourt & Hymel, 2010). Additionally, peers who witness bullying can experience helplessness and guilt, nightmares and anger as well as a fear of associating with the victim or reporting incidents to school staff (Garrett, 2003). Other negative effects on bystanders include being drawn into bullying others and desensitization to violence thereby contributing to the likelihood that they will act aggressively in the future (Garrett, 2003). Dupper (2013) stresses that using the context of peer group affiliation to understand bullying aides in understanding how bystanders influence bullying episodes in either positive or negative ways. The ability of school staff to recognize the importance of bystander behaviors is essential in prevention and intervention efforts. An examination into teachers and school social workers level of preparation with regard to bystander dynamics is absent from the literature although many best practice programs emphasize the importance of bystanders in the peer ecology.

How America is Addressing Bullying

Since the ‘eye opening’ experiences of Columbine and similar incidents in the 1990s, American’s have responded to the issue of bullying in a number of ways. Parents, researchers, social scientists, educators, and politicians have begun a variety of initiatives to address the problem which is now considered a “public health problem that merits attention,” according to Duane Alexander, director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) (as cited in Greenya, 2005, p. 5).

Parents, increasingly becoming proactive, have begun a variety of groups designed to protect kids against bullying and increase awareness of the issue. Parent organizations involved in the movement include the national Parent Teacher Association

(PTA) and the Champions against Bullying organization. Parents are also increasingly seeking redress for their children and holding schools accountable for being apathetic or unresponsive to bullied children. Legal action against schools charged with failing to protect students is becoming commonplace (Greenya, 2005). A 2008 report of the Office of the Educational Ombudsman (OEO) for Washington state schools revealed that 28% of all Ombudsman interventions in the previous school year (2007-2008) involved student bullying or harassment (Kester & Mann, 2008). Additionally, when parents or students contacted the OEO about bullying concerns, 61% cited “Lack of school response to bullying concern” as their reason for the contact (Kester & Mann, 2008)).

Researchers, social scientists and experts in the area of bullying have designed a number of products and intervention programs aimed at addressing the problem of bullying in schools. According to Greenya (2005), “A wide range of anti-bullying information has become available over the last five years, including self-help books, parents’ guides, teachers’ manuals, informational pamphlets, Web sites and even interactive CDs” (p. 109). Many bully prevention programs implemented in schools show potential for reducing the problem but few are research based.

Espelage and Swearer, researchers, considered leading experts in the area of bullying, have identified several programs that they believe to be effective prevention and intervention programs. These include the Elementary School Bully Busters Program, the Expect Respect Program, and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). Greenya (2005) also identifies promising programs including the Olweus program, the LIFT (Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers) program, the

Incredible Years program, the Aggressors, Victims and Bystanders program and the Operation Respect program. Again, while identified as promising, many programs have simply not been around long enough for proper evaluation. One exception to that is the Olweus program, which started in the 1980s prior to the time when American interest in the issue reached its peak. The Olweus program, the most widely researched program, demonstrates significant reductions in self-reported bullying and victimization in both European and American studies. The greatest reductions occurred in the Norwegian studies conducted by Olweus (1993) that reported reductions in bullying of approximately 50 percent. The program, implemented in several hundred US schools, shows a reduction in bullying behavior of 20% compared to schools without the program (Greenya, 2005). Early American research efforts focused primarily on program evaluations and identifying particular characteristics of bullies and victims. However, inconsistencies with regard to program evaluations suggest the need for additional research in this area.

The lack of consistency in program evaluations highlighted in a 2008 meta-analysis of the effectiveness of school bullying intervention programs demonstrates the problem. Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, and Isava (2008) examined 16 studies that spanned a 25-year period from 1980 through 2004. The studies included programs in the United States as well as Europe and involved over 15,000 students in grades K-12. Researchers found that the original studies produced clinically significant positive effects for only one third of the outcome variables. The authors (Merrell et al., 2008) further concluded that the bullying programs examined in the study were more likely to influence knowledge, attitudes and self-perceptions than actual bullying behaviors. However, there were

numerous limitations with this meta-analysis, particularly when applied to bullying programs in the United States. Among the study's limitations as applied to American schools were the geographic locations of the programs studied. Of the 16 studies chosen for the meta-analysis, only six included took place in the United States (Merrell et al., 2008). The studies also varied widely with regard to measurement type, research design, intervention models and intensity of interventions. In other words, researchers were not comparing like entities. This meta-analysis (Merrell et al., 2008) emphasizes the need for additional research in the United States to examine the effectiveness of school based bully prevention programs. Research regarding the consistency with which school professionals implement bullying programs is scarce. Further attention to bully prevention programs will be given in the 'Best Practices' section of this work.

Additionally, researchers have begun to search for comprehensive explanations for the phenomenon of bullying. Espelage and Swearer, in their book, *Bullying in American Schools* (2004), make the case for a social-ecological framework for understanding bullying. The authors propose that bullying is not a phenomenon that operates in isolation but rather represents a complex relationship among the individual, family, peer group, school, community, and culture that either encourage or inhibit the activities associated with bullying.

American legislators and educational policy makers have also taken a variety of approaches to dealing with the problem of bullying in schools. While there is not a specific federal law addressing bullying, bullying based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability or religion may be harassment and schools are legally bound to address it

(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). Forty-Four states have now enacted both law and policy to address the problem and eight additional states have law only (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). Most legislatures have made an effort to define bullying, peer victimization or harassment, charged schools with communicating the definitions to students, parents and school staff, and mandated that schools address the problem (Ferrell-Smith, 2003).

Schools have likewise addressed the problem in a variety of ways in response to state legislation and federal initiatives that encourage schools to act. Many have enacted zero tolerance policies that remove students found to be in violation of school policies regarding bullying through suspension or expulsion. Experts believe these policies are ineffective (Greenya, 2005). Many schools have adopted policies to deal with bullying but also implemented school wide bully prevention programs as well as other safety features such as anonymous reporting mechanisms for students. As mentioned previously, many programs lack proper evaluation and this creates confusion for school administrators in choosing a program for their school. According to Greenya, (2005) “[schools are] faced with confusing data on the effectiveness of various programs and vague anti-bullying laws that don’t tell schools what they should do” (2005, p. 10).

Schools in areas where targeted acts of violence have occurred seem to be more responsive than schools where none has occurred. Crepeau-Hobson, Filaccio & Gottfried (2005), did a comparison of school safety programs and interventions of Colorado high schools prior to the 1999 Columbine incident and after the incident. The biggest change that researchers found was in the percentage of schools implementing a crisis plan with

58.9% having a plan in place before the Columbine massacre and 79.1% after. The area of 'other services' which included bullying prevention programs had an increase of 9.4%.

Best Practice Programs for Bully Prevention/Intervention

Researchers have looked at a number of different intervention efforts employed by schools to address bullying. As with any social problem, some strategies have proven more helpful than others have but both ineffective and effective strategies can inform practitioners and researchers about how to proceed when designing and implementing new ways to address bullying.

Researchers once believed Peer support programs, also referred to as peer mediation programs, an effective means to address peer relationships and decrease bullying in schools. However, subsequent research in this area has revealed that while peer support programs may have positive implications for school climate, they do not effectively reduce bullying. Cowie & Oztug (2008) surveyed students in the United Kingdom about perceptions of safety in school. They surveyed students in schools with peer support (PS) systems and compared them to students in schools without peer support systems (NPS). Their findings indicated, "With specific regard to bullying, there was no difference between PS and NPS. Around one-fifth of both PS and NPS pupils reported that the reason for feeling unsafe was because of bullying" (p. 65). However, although peer support alone may not specifically impact bullying in schools, it has been shown to have a substantial impact on school climate which recent research (Espelage & Swearer, 2004) suggests is intricately connected to school bullying.

In a recent evaluation conducted by Brown, Low, Smith and Haggerty (2011), researchers investigated the effectiveness of the Steps to Respect, bullying prevention program. The study incorporated a rigorous experimental design and utilized appropriate multi-level analyses (as suggested by previous research) and found, “significant positive effects ($p < .05$) of the program on a range of outcomes (e.g., improved student climate, lower levels of physical bullying perpetration, less school bullying-related problems). Results of this study support the program as an efficacious intervention for the prevention of bullying in schools” (p. 424). The Steps to Respect program, referred to as a social-ecological program, targets multiple aspects of the school environment by using interventions directed toward the individual, peer and school levels. Brown et al. (2011), explain the underlying theory of the program as,

The underlying theory of the STR program is that peer attitudes, norms, and behaviors play an important role in determining and maintaining rates of bullying behavior. Because bullying is a social process strongly influenced by the reactions and behaviors of peers (Atlas & Pepler, 1998), the program seeks to change attitudes about the acceptability of bullying through clearly labeling bullying behavior as unfair and wrong, increasing empathy for students who are bullied and educating students about their responsibility as by-standers to bullying (p. 425).

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP), also found by a number of researchers to be a best practice program, is the most evaluated bullying prevention program in both the United States and Europe. Dan Olweus, perhaps the best-known researcher in this field, designed, revised and implemented the program. According to a report by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (2002), the original OBPP study evaluated the effectiveness of the program with 2,500 elementary and junior high

students between 1983 and 1985 and found reductions of student reports in bullying behaviors of 50 percent and sometimes higher. Subsequent studies have yielded results ranging from 20 percent to greater than 50 percent. In a recent evaluation by Bowllan (2011), one group of students reported a 34.4 percent decrease in exclusion by peers and a 31.1 percent decrease in reports of bullying compared to the control group. The OBPP is “a nationally recognized Blueprint, ‘Best Practice’ Model Program by the US Department of Juvenile Justice and the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the OBPP has been shown through evidence-based research to significantly reduce the incidence of bullying in schools” (Bowllan, 2011, p. 168). The underlying premise of the OBPP is that bullying is a social-ecological problem that encourages a holistic manner of addressing it. The program emphasized interventions at all levels, individual, classroom, school and community. According to Bowllan (2011),

The main goal is to reduce the prevalence of bully/victim problems that exist within the school setting while improving the overall school climate. A further significant objective of the OBPP is to shift attitudes away from acceptance and/or support of bullying behaviors by bystanders to one of the support for defenders of those who are bullied. Other empirical studies have also noted the influence of bystanders on prevalence and degree of bullying (p. 168).

A research effort in Finland provides support for the KiVa program, developed there in 2007-2008 (Karna et al., 2011). According to Karna et al., (2011) the acronym KiVa stands for Kiusaamista Vastan or “against bullying”. The program development occurred at the University of Turku (2011). Karna and colleagues studied 8,237 youth from grades 4 – 6 and found that compared to youth in control schools, students in the

KiVa program experienced a reduction of victimization of 30% and bullying others of 17% (2011).

Like the OBPP, KiVa also has targeted interventions at all levels throughout the school. In addition, the program has three characteristics, identified by Karna et al, (2011) as unique; a) it provides for the use of professionally prepared materials for students, parents, and teachers rather than ‘guiding principles’ and b) uses virtual learning environments to provide for powerful information in a mode that students prefer. Finally, KiVa emphasizes the role of the bystander, “...by actually providing ways to enhance empathy, self-efficacy, and efforts to support the victimized peers” (Karna et al., 2011, p. 314). According to Karna et al., (2011), the underlying theory of the program focuses on bullying behavior motivated in part by pursuit of a higher social status within a peer group, supported and maintained by bystanders. The KiVa program design focuses on changing the behaviors of bystanders as well as others. Karna et al., (2011), explain the underlying philosophy in the following way,

KiVa is predicated on the idea that a positive change in the behaviors of classmates can reduce the rewards gained by bullies and consequently their motivation to bully in the first place. KiVa places concerted emphasis on enhancing the empathy, self-efficacy, and anti-bullying attitudes of onlookers, who are neither bullies or victims (p.313).

WITS (Walk away, Ignore it, Talk it out and Seek help) is another program that uses targeted interventions in elementary schools (grades 1-3) in an effort to increase children’s socially competent behaviors and decrease their risks for peer victimization

(Hoglund, Hosan & Leadbeater, 2012). WITS is a community-based, whole-school peer victimization, prevention program. Hoglund, et al., (2012) followed 432 children in 11 schools with the program and 6 control schools over a six-year period and found the program promising in its ability to decrease children's risks for peer victimization and aggression and in advancing their social competence in elementary school. According to the researchers, "the theoretical framework of the WITS Primary Program is informed by a developmental science emphasis on supporting the social ecologies that can directly and indirectly influence children's developmental competencies (Bronfenbrenner, 1989), as well as on children's social perspective coordination (Selman, 2003)" (Hoglund et al., 2012, p. 195). Additionally, Hoglund et al., (2012) describe WITS as,

.... guided by a theory of change that proposes to reduce children's risks for peer victimization directly through its program messages and activities that enhance adults' responsiveness and indirectly through focus on enhancing all children's conflict resolution skills and social competencies (Leadbeater & Hoglund, 2009; Troop-Gordon & Ladd, 2005), (p. 195).

A commonality among best practice or promising programs seems to focus on bystander behavior and building social competency in children and youth. Some schools have adopted anonymous reporting systems that make it easier for students to report activities that concern them. One such method is the SAFE2TELL reporting system described by Payne & Elliott (2011). After the Columbine shooting, investigators found a code of silence that prevailed within the school, which may have prevented people who knew about dangerous behavior from reporting it. The state of Colorado implemented the SAFE2TELL program in September of 2004. Although the program lacked previous evaluation, follow up data of thousands of reports made between September 2004 and

November 2010, “indicate that 83% of reported SAFE2TELL incidents resulted in a positive intervention or action” (Payne & Elliott, 2011, p. 108-109).

Teachers Key in Bullying Prevention

While bullying prevention and intervention programs vary with regard to program goals and objectives, there are commonalities among them. Among the programs mentioned above as well as those identified by Espelage & Swearer (2004) as effective prevention and intervention programs, several strategies emerge as central to reducing bullying behaviors and improving school climate. These include; increasing awareness of the problem and implementing a comprehensive approach to reducing bullying which includes working with the entire school community and educating teachers and staff about how to manage the school environment, including the classroom. Most programs identify teachers as key to changing the school climate. Likewise, previous examples regarding extreme reactions to school bullying, including bullycide, emphasize lack of teacher and administrator response as a concern. Cooper & Snell (2003) highlight the myths associated with bullying. One of those myths is that “Adults are already doing all they need to do” (p.23). The literature consistently disproves this myth and proves that teachers believe they are intervening more often than they actually are and “students believe that they need more help from adults than they are getting” (Cooper & Snell, 2003, p. 23). There are a number of possible explanations for this disconnect between perceptions but the most obvious among them is that teachers are not being adequately prepared to deal with bullying situations.

Teacher preparation for dealing with bullying prevention. While teachers are considered key to violence prevention in schools, and school staff training is considered central to reducing bullying behaviors (Holt & Keyes, 2004), teachers report a desire for additional training. For instance, Boulton (1997) found that 87% of teachers desired additional training in bullying prevention. The literature regarding the level of preparation teachers received in their teacher education programs is sparse. One study in the early 1990s conducted by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing School Advisory Panel noted only 4% of 362-college and university teacher and administrator preparation programs in the United States reported that their students leave their preparatory programs prepared to deal with violence in schools (Dear, 1995). Additionally, nearly 90% of recently credentialed teachers in the California Commission study reported a need for additional training. Because of this groundbreaking research, California mandates school safety training in preparatory programs for teachers and other educational professionals (Dear, 1995). It is important to note, however, that researchers did not identify bullying separately from other forms of school violence. Several other states have adopted similar legislation or strong recommendations for teacher education programs. However, recent research in the United States, which evaluates the actual implementation and the outcomes of such programs, is sparse. A more recent study (Kandakai & King, 2002) involving 6 Ohio universities and 800 undergraduate and graduate students examined preservice teachers' perceived confidence in teaching school violence prevention. Results of the study indicate that less than one fourth of preservice teachers reported having had some form of violence-prevention training. However, 94% believed that preventing school violence was important and just a little more than half

reported that they felt confident in their abilities to teach students how to resolve conflict using nonviolent means (Kandakai & King, 2002). The newest research regarding preservice teacher's preparation examined Canadian preservice teacher's beliefs on the antecedents to bullying (Lopata & Nowicki, 2014) and found that while Canadian preservice teachers could accurately identify many of the antecedents to bullying they also had inaccurate beliefs about bullying characteristics and were not able to identify several important antecedents. Omitted antecedents included, "parental attachment, teachers' attitudes about aggression, teachers' ability to identify bullies, school location, quantity of pro-social behaviors, beliefs about aggression, and internalizing and externalizing emotional states" (Lopata & Nowicki, 2014 p. 19). This research highlights the need for teacher preparation in their professional programs and raises questions about the likelihood of these teachers' responses to violence.

In a study conducted by Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan (2007), researchers surveyed both school staff (including teachers, school psychologists and guidance counselors) and students. The goal of the study was to assess whether there was a difference between staff and student perceptions about bullying in their schools. The results of the study indicated a significant discrepancy between students and school staff perceptions about the amount of bullying that occurred in their school and whether or not staff intervened or made the situation worse. While over 49% of the students surveyed reported having been bullied at least once during the past month and 40.6% reported frequent (two or more times within the past month) involvement with bullying, over 71% of staff reported that 15% or less of their students had been frequently bullied. Additionally, while over 67% of middle school students and 60% of high school students

felt their school was not doing enough to prevent bullying, most staff members (81.7% ES; 52.8% MS; 65% HS) believed their efforts were adequate (Bradshaw et al., 2007). Among the most significant disagreements between student and staff reports was the difference in perceptions regarding the effect of staff intervention in bullying situations. While fewer than 7% of all staff believed their interventions made the bullying situation worse, most students (61.5% MS; 57% HS) believed school staff made the situation worse. While over 86% of staff surveyed believed they had effective strategies for dealing with bullying situations, they were less likely than students were to believe bullying occurred in their schools. The Bradshaw et al., 2007 research effort represents an initial investigation into teacher's perceptions about bullying at school and their perceived efficacy for handling bullying situations. While a large majority of staff reported efficacy for dealing with bullying situations, a limitation of the study revealed a potential for social desirability due to the district collecting the data by self-report. There is a need for additional research in this area to determine feelings of efficacy by teachers and what accounts for those feelings. The current study will be different from the Bradshaw et al., (2007) contribution in that it is an investigation into what accounts for teachers and school social workers feelings of efficacy. An explanation of what does and does not contribute to feelings of efficacy may contribute to the current knowledge base and inform research and practice.

While little knowledge exists about teachers' perceived levels of preparation to deal with bullying situations in schools, research has consistently emphasized the need for additional training for teachers (Hazler, Miller, Carney & Green, 2001; Ellis & Shute, 2007; Yoon, 2004; Lawrence & Green, 2005; Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007).

The apparent lack of training in teacher education programs to deal with bullying in schools subsequently creates a need for school-based professional development, leadership, and support, which school social workers may be able to provide.

School Social Workers Key in Bully Prevention

School social workers can be instrumental in assessing and addressing issues related to school safety, including school violence and bullying. Strategies previously identified in effective prevention and intervention programs are those in which school social workers can be influential in implementing in schools.

School social work as a graduate level specialty is defined by NASW (as cited in Biggs, Simpson & Gaus, 2009) as “oriented toward helping students make satisfactory adjustments and coordinating and influencing the efforts of the school, the family, and the community to achieve this goal” (Biggs et al., 2009, p.39) . School social workers may often face the task of educating other school personnel about how to deal with bullying in schools (Biggs et al., 2009). Bye (2009) also cites the provision of training and consultation services by school social workers as a key role (as cited in Slovak, 2006). Similarly, Astor, Benbenishty & Marachi, note that “an increasing focus of school social work is violence because this profession plays a key role in the development and implementation of policies, interventions and practices to enhance the safety of schools” (as cited in Slovak, 2006, p. 31). Washington and Avant (2001), proposed that “social workers, because they are uniquely trained to understand and mitigate the ill effect of those conditions that breed poverty, ignorance and violence, must therefore provide stronger leadership in advocating the elimination of these conditions” (Washington &

Avant, 2001, p. 206). Bronstein & Abramson (2003) suggest that school social workers offer information and assistance to teachers on an ongoing basis. Mishna, (2003) has argued that social workers in schools need to take a leadership role in coordinating with other school professionals to combat bullying. However, little knowledge exists about how school social workers' view their roles and that of other school professionals with regard to bully prevention. Argresta (2004) found that school social workers identified individual counseling occupied the majority of their time (17.45%) and that administrator and teacher consultation rated second at 11.26% of their time spent in this capacity. A separate category of bullying prevention and intervention roles was absent from the research. A 2009 national study of school social workers (Kelly et al.), the first of its kind since Astor's 1998 work, found that teachers were the most common referral source for school social workers (47%). However, school social workers reported the majority of their time spent with individual student problems (59%) as opposed to a much lesser amount (28%) of their time devoted to prevention and intervention efforts at the school or community level. Although what the authors termed, *primary prevention* may include bullying prevention and intervention efforts, the authors did not address this separately. Additionally, whether school social workers identified educating and supporting teachers in bullying prevention and intervention efforts as a role they feel prepared to carry out was not an object of inquiry. In fact, Astor's 1998 work is the only research to date that has investigated school social workers' feelings of efficacy regarding school violence and it did not examine bullying as a distinct entity. Neither was the school social workers' unique role in providing support and assistance to teachers examined.

Social work preparation for dealing with bullying prevention. A survey of school social workers conducted by Astor, Behre, Wallace and Fravil (1998) revealed that while most school social workers (68%) reported feeling adequately prepared to deal with issues related to school violence, only 5% of respondents reported university training as their source of violence education. Conversely, 59% of practicing school social workers reported the need for immediate in-service training and 89% advocated for additional violence education in social work graduate programs. There was no distinction made between bullying and other forms of school violence. Another finding of interest in the study was that one-third of school social workers fear for their personal safety, indicating a need for specific training to address issues of personal safety.

Following Astor's work, Slovak, Joseph & Broussard (2006) found that school social workers who had violence education as a part of their graduate school training felt better trained. However, their research was not specific to bullying or school social workers' feelings of efficacy about the various roles they play within the school environment. Subsequent efforts that specifically investigated school social workers' perceptions about bullying or their respective roles within the school environment are again absent until Slovak & Singer's (2011) inquiry into cyberbullying. The researchers surveyed 339 school social workers who were members of the Mid-west School Social Work Council (MSSWC). Most of those surveyed (67%) agreed that cyberbullying could create psychological harm; over half agreed that cyberbullying is more harmful than traditional bullying, and 93% agreed school social workers should address cyberbullying. However, only 54.8% agreed that cyberbullying was something they were prepared to deal with. Additionally, researchers reported that the high percentages of 'do

not know' responses indicated that school social workers are uncertain about many aspects of cyberbullying, including whether or not it's a problem in their schools or as pervasive as traditional bullying (Slovak & Singer, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

This section provides a discussion of social work practice theory as it applies to bullying. Also presented is a discussion of theories, models and perspectives as they apply to school social work and bullying.

Practice Theory

Social work incorporates practice into much of the profession's knowledge. The concept of practice wisdom is rooted in the history of social work practice. Boehm describes it as early as the 1950's. Boehm (as cited in Dybicz, 2004) described the concept in the following way with regard to social work;

The scientific base of social work consists of three types of knowledge: (a) tested knowledge, (b) hypothetical knowledge that requires transformation into tested knowledge, and (c) assumptive knowledge (or "practice wisdom") that requires transformation into tested knowledge (Dybicz, 2004, p. 198).

Schon (1995) suggests, "We should think about practice as a setting not only for the application of knowledge but for its generation" (p. 29). He further explains the process of acquiring practice wisdom through a surprise in the application of skills that leads to success in a problem-solving situation.

The process of reflection-in-action begins when a spontaneous performance- such as riding a bicycle, playing a piece of music, interviewing a patient, or teaching a lesson-is interrupted by surprise. Surprise triggers reflection directed both to the surprising outcome and to the knowing-in-action that led to it. It is as though the

performer asked himself, “What *is* this?” and at the same time, “What understandings and strategies of mine have led me to produce this?” (p. 30).

This study, conducted within the realm of practice theory, examines what factor or combination of factors account for school social workers’ feelings of efficacy and teachers’ feelings of efficacy regarding dealing with bullying situations. Chapter 5 outlines and discusses implications for more effective practice. According to Simon (1994), “Practice theory provides a conceptual screen with which to sift for relevant knowledge, select pertinent interventions, and isolate criteria with which to evaluate interventive efficacy” (p. 146).

School Social Work Practice Models

There are a number of different practice models identified by experts utilized by social work practitioners in the school environment. Allen-Meares, Washington & Welsh (2000), cite four primary models, originally identified by Alderson, which school social workers use. According to Alderson (as cited in Allen-Meares et al., 2000), the four models of school social work practice is: “the traditional clinical model, the school change model, the social interaction model, and the community school model” (p. 40). Employment of a combination of these models allows school social workers to address the issues of bullying within the ‘system’ of a school.

Systems Theory

School social workers work in organizational systems in which the primary goal or focus is on educating the students who attend the school. School social workers are

just one subsystem operating within the organizational system to obtain its goals. An understanding of systems theory includes defining the system as a “whole consisting of interacting parts. These parts are so interrelated that a change in any one part affects all the others” (Suppes & Wells, 2009, p. 57). A school as an organizational system operates as a “person-directed and multi-goal-oriented network of interacting administrative and operational processes whose facilitating subsystems (including teachers, social workers, supervisors and principals) are a part of a broader network of processes and systems (local, community or state education system) with which it interacts” (Allen-Meares, Washington & Welsh, 2000, p. 61). The school as an organizational system also operates within its larger environmental system. In other words, the city, town, neighborhood or community in which the school is located. External influences such as the population, culture, social class and economic stability of the environment of which it is a part affect the school (Allen-Meares et al., 2000).

Ecological framework and bullying. Timm & Eskill-Bloland (2011) explain, “The ecological influence emphasizes the importance of relationship between the many people who are involved in a situation, problem or constructed reality, through their conversations with or about each other in relation to it” (p. 342). Unique to social work is the person-in-environment or ecosystems perspective which has a dual focus on the person and the environment, thus providing social workers with a model for understanding how a person effects his or her environment and how that environment and all of its subsystems effect the person interacting within it (Suppes & Wells, 2009). By utilizing the person-in-environment or ecosystems perspective (ecological framework), school social workers can be instrumental in bullying situations by assisting students and

teachers in developing skills to interact effectively within their environment while simultaneously working to change environmental circumstances that influence student behavior (Allen-Meares et al., 2000). Garrett (2006) proposes that, school social workers attend not only to the student but also to the family, the teachers, and the administrators, as well as the classroom, school, and community environments. The school social worker has the unique position to work with all of the actors within a student's ecological framework, including that of the parents and the family. Research supports that attachments to parents may have an impact on the roles that children play in bullying situations and subsequently influence their ability to cope in these situations (Williams & Kennedy, 2012). An investigation into what accounts for school social workers' feelings of preparedness to interact in this way has important implications for school social work practice.

Bystander Theory

Recent research regarding bullying has highlighted the effects that bystanders have on the phenomenon (Twemlow, Fonagy & Sacco, 2005). Polanin, Espelage & Pigott (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of school based bullying prevention programs' effects on bystander intervention behavior and found that school-based programs that focused on changing the bystander's intervention behavior increased intervention behavior of students in bullying episodes ($g=.20$) compared to control groups. Indeed, researchers suggest that implementing programs that focus on bystander behavior may help schools to decrease bullying (Polanin, Espelage & Pigott, 2012).

Recognizing bullying as a group process is an important shift in the way researchers, practitioners and policy makers look at the problem. Latane and Darley (1968) originally researched what they called the bystander effect after 38 of her neighbors witnessed the brutal murder of Kitty Genovese in 1964. None of the 38 witnesses intervened in the vicious crime and public outcry labeled them as apathetic.

Latane and Darley (1968) convinced that there must be some other explanation constructed a model of the intervention process and conducted experiments in an attempt to explain the phenomenon. In a series of experiments designed to replicate various emergencies, the researchers found that bystanders were more likely to interpret situations as serious and to intervene when alone than in the presence of others (Latane & Darley, 1968). Additionally, as the numbers of people present in a group increased, the less likely they were to intervene or interpret a situation as serious (Latane & Darley, 1968). Another finding of interest was that bystanders who knew each other rather than strangers were more likely to intervene (Latane & Darley, 1968). Latane and Darley (1968) explain this phenomenon by both 'social influence' and the 'diffusion of responsibility', which can lead to a state of 'pluralistic ignorance'.

Social influence is the idea that people may be reluctant to intervene for fear of appearing to be overreacting or fear of embarrassment. This phenomenon is less likely to occur amongst bystanders who know each other than strangers (Latane & Darley, 1968). Latane and Darley explain diffusion of responsibility in terms of the number of bystanders who witness an event. If a single person witnesses an event, he or she is more likely to respond because they feel singularly responsible to do so, if they are with others,

the assumption that someone else can intervene relieves them of some of the responsibility and potential for guilt or blame for the lack of response (1968). While the work of Latane and Darley was not specific to school bullying, much of what they found may help to explain the role that bystanders play and how school officials can address it. Of particular interest, for the current research is the decision making model for intervention that Latane and Darley (1968) proposed that might apply to teachers and school social workers as well as other bystanders. The model proposes that in order for a person to intervene he must first *notice* that something is happening then *interpret* the seriousness of the event then decide he has a *responsibility* to act then decide what *form of assistance* he can give and finally to *implement* his choice.

Although Latane and Darley (1968) reported on the differences in behavior between bystanders who knew each other versus those who did not, Levine, Cassidy, Brazier and Reicher (2002) expanded on the earlier work of Latane and Darley (1968) by looking more closely at ‘who’ the bystanders were and how they identified with victims and other bystanders. Levine et al., (2002) argue that the work of Latane and Darley did not contribute to a solution to the problem of bystander inaction and that research in the area of bystander theory has become stagnant because of the lack of emphasis on social category relations among all in emergencies. Levine and colleagues (2002) draw upon the work of Dovidio, Gaertner, Validzic, Matoka, Johnson and Frazier (1997) and Neuberg, Cialdini, Brown, Luce, Sagarin and Lewis (1997) who studied helping behaviors and emphasized the importance of connectedness or the categorization of another person as belonging to one’s own group. Levine et al., (2002) propose a theoretical framework that uses self-categorization theory (SCT); (Hogg, Turner, &

Davidson, 1990) to understand bystander intervention behavior. Self-categorization theory (Hogg, Turner & Davidson, 1990) uses the concept of categorization of self with others in which individuals tend to define themselves as being a part of a group that shares similar needs, characteristics and goals and others are perceived as in-group members or out-group members.

Using SCT and building upon the work of earlier researchers, Levine et al. (2002) studied the bystander effect in situations where a perpetrator physically assaulted a victim. The researchers found those categorical relationships between fellow bystanders and the bystander and the victim significantly influences bystander intervention. In one experiment, the researchers studied the effect that bystanders had on one another and found that other bystanders, perceived as in-group members, (Levine et al., 2002) only significantly influenced bystanders. In the second experiment, Levine et al., (2002) found that bystanders were significantly more likely to intervene on the behalf of victims they perceived as in-group members.

Recently Pozzoli & Gini (2013) tested Latane and Darley's model on primary and middle school students to determine why some children act as defenders in bullying situations and why others act as passive bystanders. The researchers (Pozzoli & Gini, 2013) found that children felt a higher responsibility to intervene when their attitudes toward victims were more positive and that the combination of attitudes and a feeling of responsibility were positively associated with defending a victim.

The above studies may have implications for the current study in that teachers and school social workers who feel prepared to carry out their roles with regard to bullying

have the potential to influence whether students perceive each other as in-group or out-group members. Additionally, school staff has the greatest potential for influencing students' attitudes towards bullying as well as encouraging students to feel a responsibility for victims. Finally, school personnel who fail to recognize the importance of bystander dynamics may focus their attentions only on the bully or the victim and have little influence in bullying situations.

Explanation for the Inclusion of Training

A number of studies have addressed the need for additional training for teachers and school social workers with regard to addressing bullying situations in schools (Woodrow, 1994; Jenkins, 2007; Hazler, Miller, Carney & Green, 2001; Ellis & Shute, 2007; Yoon, 2004; Lawrence & Green, 2005; Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007; Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Slovak & Singer, 2011; Phillipio & Stone, 2011; Astor, Behre, Fravil & Wallace, 1997; Astor, Behre, Wallace & Fravil, 1998). Additionally, research supports the idea that teachers and school social workers who feel better prepared to deal with bullying are more likely to take action. Bystander theory (Latane & Darley, 1968) may also have implications for explaining why some people intervene and others do not. Bauman & Del Rio (2006) examined preservice teachers' responses to bullying scenarios and compared them to an earlier study of seasoned teachers' conducted by Yoon & Kerber (2003). The authors found that preservice teachers had significantly higher scores on empathy, and likelihood of intervention for all bullying types (with one exception), but no significant differences were found between the two groups on actions towards the bully. This may reflect idealism on the part of the preservice teachers. However, even

though the preservice teachers recognized the importance of bullying as a problem more than did the seasoned teachers, they did not have better ideas about how to cope with bullying in school.

The authors (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006) concluded that while an increase in awareness of the seriousness of bullying in schools was evident in preservice teachers' responses, "there were no differences in their proposed actions toward the perpetrators. This suggests that methods of responding to bullying require direct training and are not intuitive" (p. 226). Additionally, a number of researchers have found that teacher commitment, beliefs and attitudes (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Craig, Henderson & Murphy, 2000; Dake, Price, Telljohann, & Funk, 2003), and teacher uncertainty about how to intervene in bullying situations has tremendous impact on the success of programs within their schools. Bauman & Del Rio (2006) suggest the following,

If reduction of all types of bullying is crucial, and teachers are key to effective program and policy implementation, it is logical to include such training in teacher preparation programs, so that newly trained teachers arrive on the job equipped with the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to make a difference (p. 227).

In a more recent study assessing the knowledge and attitudes of preservice teachers about school-based bullying, Craig, Bell & Leschied (2011) found that preservice teachers with prior violence prevention training reported higher levels of confidence in identifying and managing bullying behaviors. Similarly, Benitez, Garcia-Berben & Fernandez-Cabezas (2009) found that pre-service teachers participating in an elective course about bullying demonstrated an increased knowledge about the phenomenon and "perceived themselves as more capable of dealing directly with victims

and bullies, as well as dealing with their parents, or working with spectators in order to prevent and/or address the bullying issue” (p. 204).

Additionally, school social workers are identified as instrumental in disseminating accurate information about school violence and helping in the development and implementation of effective school policies and programs (Slovak & Singer, 2011), yet they report an ambivalence about their ability to intervene and address bullying situations (Astor, Behre, Wallace & Fravil, 1998; Slovak, Joseph & Broussard, 2006; Slovak & Singer, 2011). Covert forms of bullying such as relational and cyberbullying particularly represent an area of uncertainty for social workers Phillippe & Stone (2011) suggest additional training for school social workers that enhances their ability to “understand key school organizational features” that would better prepare them to “contribute to positive outcomes throughout the school environment” (p. 78).

Empathy and Helping Theory

Spreng, McKinnon, Mar & Levine (2009) describe empathy as, “an important component of social cognition that contributes to our ability to understand and respond adaptively to others’ emotions, succeed in emotional communication, and promote prosocial behavior” (p.1). Limited research is available that examines empathy and helping behavior specifically. However, Carrera, Oceja, Caballero, Munoz, Lopez-Perez & Ambrona (2012), examined the joint influence of empathy and personal distress on helping behavior and found that in addition to the necessity of considering empathy and personal distress as distinct emotional experiences, it may be useful to measure them in a more holistic way that accounts for the entire emotional experience. Additionally,

Carrera et.al., (2012) concluded that when feelings of personal distress (egoistic motive) prevailed over empathy (altruistic motive) and escape from the situation seemed difficult, participants would help victims to alleviate their own distress but when escape seemed easy, they would remain passive. Finally, Carrera and colleagues found that when empathy prevailed over personal distress witnesses demonstrated high helping behaviors. Further, the authors (Carrera et al., (2012) argue for the need to look comprehensively at the entire emotional experience.

Similarly, De Paul & Guibert (2008) examine a combination of possible explanations for parents' neglectful behavior with their children. Explanations might include absence of empathic concern or presence of empathic concern but with high cost assigned. Additionally, predominance of personal distress over empathic concern and it is either possible to escape, helping is not associated with mood enhancement or failure to help is not associated with social punishment or helping is not associated with social reward, or utilization of the empathic avoidance mechanism. In other words, the authors (De Paul & Guibert, 2008) propose a theoretical model that explains parental neglect (the absence of helping behavior) which combines the constructs of empathic concern with other emotional or cognitive responses.

While literature that specifically evaluates the possible effects of adult empathy in bullying situations is limited, empathic concern and its influences in helping consistently appears in examinations of situations of exposure to another person's distress.

Current literature suggests that whole school bullying programs that incorporate teaching prosocial behavior are the most effective (Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2010).

Using this perspective is essential in bullying prevention and intervention planning (Espelage & Swearer, 2003) so that programs not only teach at-risk youth problem-solving, empathy and perspective-taking skills, but also are maximally responsive to the needs of the particular school, community, and cultural contexts (as cited in Leff, 2007, p. 409).

Further, research supports that “Teachers who are viewed as effective in taking a stand against violence are characterized by their promotion of empathy in encouraging victims to explain their feelings, while assisting aggressors to increase their awareness regarding how hurtful bullying behavior can be on the victim” (Craig, Bell & Leschied, 2011). Many of the best practice programs mentioned previously emphasize teaching empathy “With these actions, teachers model and teach empathy for victims, promote attitudes that bullying is unacceptable, and encourage students to take responsibility for classroom dynamics by changing how they respond to provocation” (Biggs, Vernberg, Twemlow, Fonagy & Dill, 2008, p. 535). Further, Biggs et al. (2008) found that teachers, who believe in the program they are using, use it more consistently and report changes in students’ levels of empathy. Because many programs emphasize adult modeling of empathy it was necessary to examine whether teachers and school social workers who demonstrate higher levels of empathy feel more prepared to deal with bullying in schools.

Additionally, a number of researchers have identified possible connections between teachers’ personal experiences with bullying and their attitudes toward and reactions to bullying (Mishna & Alaggia, 2005; Boulton, 1997; Craig, Henderson &

Murphy, 2000; Dake, Price, Telljohann & Funk, 2003; Mishna, Scarvello, Pepler & Weiner, 2005). Indeed, personal experiences of teachers may encourage higher empathic responses. Recently, Craig, Bell & Leschied (2011) found that, “Pre-service teachers who had personal experience involved in or witnessing bullying incidents were more sensitive to labeling an aggressive act as bullying. They were also more confident in identifying and managing the bullying behavior” (p. 28). Additionally, Craig et al. (2011) “found that pre-service teachers’ personal history of witnessing bullying was related to an increased concern for intervening in aggression at school. When the behavior includes acts of social exclusion, pre-service teachers who had experienced these types of victimization were more likely to label them as bullying and would actively intervene” (p. 28). It is not clear whether bullying experiences of teachers occurred as children or as adults. Research regarding the impact of previous experiences of school social workers does not exist and additional investigation about the potential influence of previous experience on teachers’ feelings of efficacy is necessary in order to inform practice.

Explanation for the Inclusion of School Climate/Administrative Support

Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt & Hymel (2010) emphasize the importance of school climate in addressing issues related to bullying in schools. However, little research has attended to teachers’ and school social workers’ feelings about school climate and administrative support and the possible impact on teachers’ and school social workers’ feelings of efficacy and related response to incidents of bullying. Early research efforts (Astor & Meyer, 1999) indicated a connection between school social workers’

feelings of safety in schools and their likeliness to intervene. Subsequent research implicates some connections between school climate and bullying. Bosworth, Ford & Hernandez (2011), found that “both adults and students felt safe in schools where they perceived that adults were caring and helpful, and rules were clear, consistent, well communicated and consistently applied. They also saw fewer unsafe behaviors such as bullying, fighting, weapons, alcohol and drug use, and vandalism” (p. 199). Washington & Avant (2001) also posited that schools that emphasize a whole school and community approach to addressing violence are more likely to be perceived as safe and that “School social workers play a primary role in creating social control and developing links and partnerships with other stakeholders in the community” (p. 205). Additionally, some research (Marachi, Astor & Benbenishty, 2007) indicates a possible connection between school climate and teacher avoidance. Marachi et al. (2007) found that “When teachers perceive that violence prevention in their schools is a priority; they are less likely to avoid dealing with violent events as they arise” (p. 509).

The above literature provides a basis for the idea that teachers’ and school social workers’ feelings about school climate, including safety and perceived administrative support may influence their feelings about preparedness and subsequently their willingness to intervene in bullying situations. Additionally, programs identified as best practice programs place strong emphasis on creating positive school climates and working at the whole school level to address bullying. An investigation into whether teachers’ and school social workers’ feelings about their school climate (including administrative support) influence their feelings of efficacy was important in order to inform practice.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed specific areas of the literature: a historical overview of the history of bullying and bullying research, definitions of bullying, including types of bullying and characteristics of bullies and victims, the extent of the problem of bullying, its effects on individuals, schools and society as well as current efforts to address problems of bullying. The next section focused on teachers' and school social workers' roles with regard to school bullying and the extant literature regarding their feelings of efficacy for dealing with bullying situations. The final section focused on the theoretical framework and its relationship to social work practice in school settings.

The Research

The extant literature regarding the perceptions of school social workers' feelings and teachers' about their feelings of preparedness to deal with issues of bullying (Dear, 1995; Astor, 1998; Slovak, Joseph & Broussard, 2006; Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan, 2007; Kelly et al., 2009; Slovak & Singer, 2011) respectively is sparse. While teachers are key personnel in the implementation of bully prevention efforts and the literature documents the need for additional training of teachers, little knowledge exists about the progress made by teacher education programs to prepare teachers to address these issues. Research suggests that coordinated efforts for dealing with bullying in schools, including teacher support occur at the school site level and are often the responsibility of the school social worker (Biggs, Simpson & Gaus, 2009). However, little knowledge exists about

whether school social workers are incorporating this into their practice at schools and whether they feel prepared to carry out this aspect of their jobs.

This research was unique in that it examined various explanations for school social workers' and teachers' perceived level of preparation for dealing with bullying in schools. Of particular interest was the degree to which school social workers identified providing bully prevention education and support to teachers at the school site level as something they feel prepared to do and whether teachers identified school social workers as a source of support in dealing with bullying problems. This research investigated the degree to which personal experiences, identify bullying as a problem in their school, and the level of violence and administrative support in their school had an effect on the professionals' level of self-efficacy. Additionally, an examination of years of experience and how the amount and type of educational experiences such as university preparation, professional development and self-education (e.g., reading journal articles and books on the subject) had an effect on their perceived level of preparation for dealing with bullying in schools (self-efficacy). Additionally, because teaching and modeling empathy and prosocial skills is a key component of best practice prevention and intervention programs, it was important to investigate teachers' and school social workers' levels of empathy and the potential impact that empathy may have on feelings of efficacy. Finally, whether teachers and school social workers recognize and address the role of bystanders in bullying situations has potential to affect the outcomes of prevention and intervention efforts.

Research investigating the perceived roles of school social workers' with regard to bully prevention and educating and supporting teachers as well as other school personnel does not exist. The paucity of research regarding school social workers' perceptions about their level of preparedness to deal with school bullying indicated the need for additional research in this area. Slovak, Joseph & Broussard (2006), compared perceptions of school social workers' who completed specific school social work graduate education programs to those who did not and found that school social workers who completed this type of program reported feeling significantly better trained in the area of student issues of violence, as well as other areas. However, Slovak et al., (2006) did not distinguish bullying as a separate phenomenon from school violence and other forms of peer aggression. While no consensus on a definition of bullying exists, researchers propose that it is necessary to identify bullying as a phenomenon with distinct characteristics (Furlong, Morrison & Greif, 2003) and generally agree that bullying involves intentionality, power imbalance, and repetition. The Slovak et al., (2006) study contributes to the growing body of literature surrounding school social workers and graduate education and provides additional support for graduate training that is specific to the school setting. However, it does not specifically address the area of bullying or account for other factors that may attribute to school social workers' perceptions about their level of preparation to deal with issues related to school bullying. Further, no information about school social workers' perceptions of their role as an educator in the host environment exists. While studies in the 1990s (Dear, 1995; Boulton, 1997) indicated that an overwhelming majority of teachers reported the need for additional violence education training recent research efforts have not been undertaken to determine

the current needs of teachers or their perceptions about their preparation with regard to violence education, specifically bullying education. This considerable gap in the literature presented an opportunity for investigation that may inform social work education programs, teacher education programs and K -12 schools. Determining which factors contribute to school social workers and teachers feeling better prepared to deal with bullying in schools may provide useful information for curriculum and program development and inform policy and best practice for bully prevention and intervention programs in schools. The need for research that helps to identify teachers' and school social workers' ability to recognize and intervene in bullying situations is essential in order to address this pervasive problem of bullying in our schools.

This research was exploratory and intended to gather information about school social workers' and teachers' perceptions about how well prepared they feel to recognize and deal with bullying in schools. Of particular interest was whether personal experiences with bullying, levels of empathy, understanding of bystander dynamics, or training, educational preparation and workplace experience alone or some combination of these have an effect on the level of preparedness each professional identifies with dealing with bullying in schools. In other words, which variables have the most effect on teachers' and school social workers' feelings of efficacy for dealing with bullying. Teachers, school social workers and other school professionals face challenges daily to respond to these incidents. However, many report feeling unprepared to do so. This research represents an initial investigation into teachers' and school social workers' self-efficacy for dealing with bullying in schools.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used for the study. It describes the process used for conducting the study. It includes information about the research design for the study, the study sample, data collection procedure, measurement and analysis of the data. In other words, it explains through which processes the researcher attempted to answer the questions generated in chapters one and two of this document.

Research Design and Rationale

As mentioned in the previous chapters, there has been a limited amount of research devoted to the study of why school social workers and teachers feel prepared or unprepared for dealing with bullying situations. Work by Elledge, Elledge, Newgent & Cavell, 2016; Slovak & Singer, 2011; Slovak, Joseph & Broussard, 2006; Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan, 2007; Kandakai & King, 2002; Astor, Behre, Wallace & Fravil, 1998; Boulton, 1997; Dear, 1995 has made a contribution to the body of knowledge. However, the literature consistently shows a need for additional training and research (Slovak & Singer, 2011; Slovak, Joseph & Broussard, 2006; Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan, 2007; Kennedy, 2010; Lenhardt, Farrell & Graham, 2010; O'Toole, 2010; Hyatt, 2010; Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Bye, Shephard, Partridge & Alvarez, 2009; Crepeau-Hobson, Filaccio & Gottfried, 2005; Astor, Behre, Wallace & Fravil, 1998;

Astor, Behre, Fravil & Wallace, 1997; Washington & Avant, 2001; Mishna, 2003; Koo, 2007; Kandakai & King, 2002; Hazler, Miller, Carney & Green, 2001; Ellis & Shute, 2007; Yoon, 2004; Lawrence & Green, 2005).

The purpose of this study was to examine school social workers' and teachers' perceptions about their feelings of efficacy to deal with bullying and what accounts for these feelings. This study design intended to assess school social workers and teachers' preparation for dealing with bullying. Knowledge about what factors or combination of factors help school social workers' and teachers' to feel more prepared has important implications for addressing the problem of bullying. As mentioned previously, Bradshaw, Sawyer and O'Brennan, (2007) found that staff who feel better prepared are more likely to intervene and more likely to intervene effectively. Furthermore, knowledge about school social workers' preparation for practice regarding bullying prevention has important implications for school social work education programs and practice.

This research explored several demographic characteristics to determine any differences between groups and possible contributions to an explanation for efficacy. Specifically, the demographic characteristics of age, years of experience, race, gender, geographic location of the school, whether the professional lives in the district they work in, the type of school, level of education and certification status of teachers and social workers were examined.

Research Questions

Research questions for this study were:

R1: How much and what kind of bullying education have teachers and school social workers had? Do teachers and school social workers who have had bullying education as a part of their respective university preparation or professional development feel comfortable and/or confident in intervening in bullying situations?

R2: What other factors contribute to the feeling of self-efficacy for teachers and school social workers in dealing with bullying in the school (e.g., perceived amount of bullying, administrative support)?

R3: Are teachers' and/or school social workers' with greater levels of empathy more comfortable and/or confident in intervening in bullying situations?

R4: Do teachers' and school social workers' personal experiences with bullying help these professionals to feel more comfortable and/or confident to address the problem of bullying?

R5: Are school social workers providing support for teachers in the educational environment? Do teachers identify school social workers as instrumental in helping them to prepare for dealing with bullying in schools? Do school social workers identify supporting and educating teachers about bullying as their role within the school environment and/or do they feel capable in this role?

R6: Is there a difference in self-efficacy between the two groups of professionals (teachers and social workers)?

This study was exploratory in nature and designed to provide information that may be useful to social work and teacher education programs as well as K-12 schools in addressing bullying problems.

This study surveyed school social workers and teachers in public schools in the state of Kentucky. The researcher used an electronic survey to generate the quantitative data. Schutt (2004), “Quantitative methods are most often used when the motives for research are explanation, description, or evaluation” (p. 15).

Participants answered a series of questions in order to describe the sample in terms of socio-demographic variables. Among the socio-demographic variables examined in the study were the level of professional preparation (bachelors or masters degree), and whether or not the teacher or school social worker is Kentucky certified, whether or not the teacher or school social worker live in the community in which they work. Additionally, participants supplied information about demographic factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, geographic location of the school in which they work, the type of school (elementary, middle school or high school), and the number of years of experience in working in schools. Finally, social workers identified if they completed specialized ‘school social work’ curriculum as a part of their graduate education programs.

The identified professionals (school social workers and teachers) also responded to a series of questions designed to provide information that might explain their feelings of efficacy for dealing with bullying. The researcher provides additional information about instrumentation and statistical analysis later in this chapter.

The survey for the study was an electronic survey. Electronic surveys have been in use since 1986 and have the advantages of quick distributions and turnaround times (Andrews, Nonnecke & Preece, 2003). Electronic web based surveys are increasingly being used to conduct social science investigations because of the relative ease with which they can be used and the low cost associated with conducting the research (Schutt, 2004). Qualtrics, a web based software application available to students through the University of Kentucky was utilized for this research.

Sample

The researcher used a purposive sample of teachers and school social workers in the state of Kentucky for this research. Purposive sampling intends to gather information for a certain purpose, one that is generally specific to a particular group of persons with particular expertise (Schutt, 2004). In this study the purpose was to ascertain what factor or combination of factors accounts for school social worker's and teacher's feelings of efficacy for dealing with bullying. The survey population for this research consisted of persons who are currently working in schools as teachers and school social workers. They have the required expertise about their respective professions and are currently working in schools where bullying situations may arise. The researcher initially contacted the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to inquire about the process of enlisting schools to participate. KDE officials advised the researcher to contact individual superintendent's of schools to request permission for their professionals to participate. The researcher sent emails to administrators of multiple school systems throughout the state of Kentucky. The researcher made contact with superintendents of

schools to request permission for their teachers and school social workers to participate in the survey. Three superintendents or district administrators agreed to allow their staff to participate in the study. One large district asked the researcher to contact school principals to request that they send the survey to their staff. The districts that agreed to participate represent the central, south-central and western parts of the state. By limiting the sample selection of teachers and school social workers to the state of Kentucky, generalization of findings to all teachers and school social workers is not possible. Additionally, because the sample does not represent every geographic area of the state, it is not possible to generalize the results to all Kentucky teachers and school social workers. Chapter 5 includes a more in-depth discussion of limitations of the study. However, this work adds to the limited body of research regarding feelings of efficacy for dealing with bullying.

Data Collection Procedure/Protection

The researcher used an electronic survey via the Qualtrics server to collect data from teachers and school social workers in the state of Kentucky and sent a cover letter and email invitation to possible participants to elicit participation in the study. An embedded web link allowed participants to access the survey via the internet. The researcher sent follow up reminder emails at one week and at three weeks through the appropriate school administrator. In some districts, the superintendent sent the reminders, in other districts, building principals sent the reminders. The researcher sent the survey to school administrators who forwarded the invitation letter along with the link

to potential participants. Participant's survey responses were anonymous and contained no identifying information. The researcher alone has access to the collected data.

Measurement

This section identifies and defines the conceptual and operational variables used in the study.

Conceptual Definitions

Bullying. The researcher employed the definition used in the Smith (2002) instrument to define bullying. Bullying is a behavior which:

1. Is an attack or intentionally causes harm.
2. Is done in a physical or psychological way.
3. Is done repeatedly (not once).
4. Is done by someone stronger to someone weaker- there is a power imbalance.

Bystander. Bystanders are those who are involved in bullying situations who are neither the bully nor the victim and may encourage the bully, discourage the bully through intervention or do nothing (Twemlow, Fonagy & Sacco, 2005).

Graduate School Education. The definition of Graduate School Education is completing a university educational program that leads to a Masters Degree. Participants answered questions to identify their level of education.

Undergraduate Education. The definition of Undergraduate Education is earning a Bachelor's degree from a university. Participants answered questions to identify their level of education.

Specific University Bullying Training. Specific university training describes courses or course content that had a particular focus on bullying. Participants identified whether they took specialized classes or had instruction with this focus.

Specialized Training or Certificate within a University. Specialized training or certificates from universities in this research includes curriculum that earns graduates additional distinctions, such as a school social work specialization or an additional certificate earned by a teacher, such as a guidance counselor credential. Participants answered questions to identify any specialized certificates or endorsements.

Kentucky Certification. The researcher defines Kentucky certification as a teaching certificate or school social work certificate issued by the Kentucky Department of Education.

Professional Development/Continuing Education in Bullying. Professional development and continuing education are activities in which degreed professionals (social workers and teachers for the purpose of this study) complete workshops or trainings related to bullying after they have completed their university training and are active within the profession. These trainings are usually offered within the school system where they are employed or as a part of an off campus workshop or convention.

Self-Study in Bullying. Self-study was conceptualized as any activity that the professional social worker or teacher engage in ‘on their own’ in order to learn more about bullying. For example, a teacher or social worker may read a book or a journal article, watch a film, or participate in a webinar about bullying.

Administrative Support regarding Bullying. The researcher defines administrative support as the support or encouragement teachers' or school social workers' receive from administrators in their schools regarding dealing with bullying situations. Teachers and social workers answered questions to identify whether they feel supported and encouraged in their respective roles regarding bullying situations and whether or not they felt they could talk with their administrator when a problem occurred.

Personal Experiences with Bullying. The definition used for personal experiences with bullying are those experiences that teachers' and social workers' have been involved in themselves. These experiences may include victimization by a bully or victimizing others as a child. Additional experiences might include being the parent, grandparent or sibling of a child who has been the victim of a bully or has bullied other children.

School Social Worker Role as Bullying Educator. The definition of a school social worker who is acting in an educator role is the school social worker who provides support and training to teachers and other school staff in the area of bullying. The school social worker may provide workshops or materials or work with teachers and staff individually to provide assistance in bullying intervention and prevention.

Self-Efficacy. The definition of the term self-efficacy is the teachers' or school social workers' feeling about their level of preparation to deal with bullying and ability to produce a desired result. Specifically, the surveyed professionals answered questions to identify their perceptions about their level of self-efficacy for dealing with bullying. Self-efficacy also encompasses the idea of how effectively prepared one is to carry out

their role with regard to bullying (i.e. how comfortable or confident they feel).

Participants answered specific questions about how comfortable or confident they feel with regard to specific aspects of bullying.

Empathy. The researcher used the Spreng, McKinnon, Mar & Levine (2009) concept of empathy as the “ability to understand and respond adaptively to others’ emotions, succeed in emotional communication, and promote prosocial behavior” (p. 1) for this study.

Operational Definitions

Socio-Demographic Variables. The socio-demographic section of the survey (questions 1-10) contained questions designed to describe the sample. Participants were asked their position within the school (social worker or teacher), gender, age, type of degree earned, certification, ethnicity, geographic location of school (urban, suburban, and rural), whether the professional lives in the school community, grade level of their school, and years of experience.. The researcher designed these questions based on knowledge and experience with bullying. For the purpose of this study, participants answered questions about the variables of age and years of experience in years and the researcher looked at the frequencies, mean and mode of this data. Participants answered the remainder of the demographic questions with either yes or no responses or categorical responses regarding their ethnicity, gender, position in the school, certification status, and location of their school, whether they live in or out of their school district, level of education, their role in the school and type of school they work in. The researcher examined these answers in terms of frequencies, percentages and comparisons of groups.

Bullying. For the bullying section of the survey, the researcher used two questions (questions 52 & 53 of this study) from the Teachers' Attitudes about Bullying Questionnaire (TAABQ) (Beran, 2005) and a selection of questions (questions 44-51 of this study) from the School Bullying Questionnaire (SBQ) (Nicolaidis, Toda & Smith 2002). The questionnaires contain questions that measure participant's perceptions about their comfort or confidence in specific bullying situations (questions 44--53). Additionally, the researcher designed questions 17 and 18 to gather information about teachers' perceptions and social workers' perceptions about the extent and level of bullying in their schools. Answers given to question 17 about teachers' and social workers' perceptions of whether or not bullying is a problem in their school are given on a five point Likert scale from Always (1) to Never (5). Answers given to question 18 in which teachers and social workers gave answers about their perception of bullying in their school compared to others are on a three point Likert scale with answers of lower (1), about the same (2) and higher (3). The researcher evaluated answers to both questions using frequencies, percentages and comparisons. Questions 44-53 of the survey measure levels of comfort or confidence participants feel regarding specific aspects of bullying. The researcher used a five point Likert scale with responses of 1-5 possible with strongly agree (1), through strongly disagree (5). The researcher evaluated answers to these questions using frequencies, percentages and comparisons. Questions 44-53 of the survey make up the Dependent Variable (efficacy) of the study.

Personal Experiences. Several questions (31-43) in the survey relate to personal experiences of the professionals and are a subscale of the School Bullying Questionnaire (SBQ) (Nicolaidis, Toda & Smith 2002). These questions specifically relate to research

question 4 regarding participant's current and previous experiences with bullying and feelings about bullying. Questions 31-43 of the survey asked participants to answer inquiries about past experiences using a five point Likert scale with responses of 1-5 possible with Never (1) through All of the time (5). The researcher evaluated answers to these questions using frequencies, percentages and comparisons.

Administrative Support. Questions 19-21 of the instrument contain three statements about the administration in the respondents' respective school. Participants responded on a five point Likert scale of 'always' (1), 'most of the time' (2), 'sometimes' (3), 'rarely' (4) and 'never' (5). These questions specifically relate to research question two regarding participants' feelings about administrative support in their schools. The researcher evaluated answers to these questions using frequencies, percentages and comparisons.

Training/Professional Development. Questions 11-16 of the instrument are questions about types of education and training teachers' and school social workers' have had and specifically relate to research question 1 regarding specific education or training or other factors that might contribute to feelings of efficacy as well as additional training that participants would like to receive. The questions, designed by the researcher, are included in the demographic section. Participants answered questions 11, 13 & 15 with yes or no answers. Participants answered questions 12 & 14 by selecting the type of university or professional development training they had. Participants answered question 16 by filling in the blank. Additionally, two of the items (questions 54 & 55) from the Beran (2005) subscale relate to educational preparation. It was necessary to modify these

items slightly for current professionals as the Beran (2005) instrument target were teacher education students. Participants answered questions 54 & 55 with a Likert scale of Strongly Agree (1), through Strongly Disagree (5). The researcher evaluated answers to these questions using frequencies, percentages and comparisons.

Empathy. To measure the variable of empathy, teachers and school social workers completed a self-administered questionnaire, the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (Spreng, McKinnon, Mar & Levine, 2009) via the online survey. Questions 56-71 encompass the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire. Participants answered the questions regarding empathy by selecting responses on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from Never (1) through All of the Time (5). The variable of empathy directly relates to research question 3. The researcher evaluated answers to these questions using frequencies, percentages and comparisons.

School Social Worker Role as Bullying Educator. The researcher designed four questions for social workers (questions 27-30) and four questions for teachers (questions 23-26) to measure the variable of the social worker role as bullying educator. The questions provide information about the degree to which social workers' feel comfortable in this role and teachers' perceptions about social workers within this role. The researcher designed the survey so that only social workers would answer questions 27-30 and only teachers would answer questions 23-26. Social workers could respond using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5). Teachers could respond to their questions using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from always (1) to never (5).

Efficacy. To measure the dependent variable of efficacy, teachers and school social workers completed a self-administered questionnaire via an online survey. The questionnaire consists of two instruments; the Teachers' Attitudes about Bullying Questionnaire (TAABQ) (Beran, 2005) and the School Bullying Questionnaire (SBQ) (Nicolaidis, Toda & Smith 2002) designed to capture information about knowledge, attitudes and feelings of efficacy. Specifically, questions 44-51 of the SBQ subscale (Nicolaidis et al., 2002) use the language 'comfortable' as an indicator of efficacy. Additionally, two items (questions 52 & 53) in the Beran (2005) subscale use the language 'confident' as an indicator of efficacy. Participants answered questions 52-53 by choosing the appropriate response on a Likert scale that ranged from Strongly Agree (1) through Strongly Disagree (5). Participants answered questions 44-51 by selecting responses from a Likert scale that ranged from definitely yes (1) through definitely not (5). The researcher evaluated answers to these questions using frequencies, percentages and comparisons.

Instrumentation

The instruments used for this study were a combined set of self-administered questionnaires; including questions designed by the researcher; a subscale of the Teachers' Attitudes about Bullying Questionnaire (TAABQ) (Beran, 2005) ; the School Bullying Questionnaire (SBQ) (Nicolaidis, Toda & Smith 2002) (Bullying subscale) and the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (Spreng, McKinnon, Mar & Levine, 2009). The researcher modified the teachers' questionnaires for use by school social workers as well as teachers. The researcher sent the instrument to peers to complete a pilot test survey.

The pilot test survey was well received and provided information about the length of time it would take participants to complete the study and whether test participants felt the survey questions were easy to understand and relevant to their work in schools.

Questions 31-51 of the survey instrument represent a subscale of the School Bullying Questionnaire (SBQ) (Nicolaidis, Toda & Smith, 2002). The *Knowledge and Attitudes about School Bullying in Trainee Teachers* (Nicolaidis, Toda & Smith, 2002) questionnaire used in the original study appears in a follow up study; *Knowledge and Beliefs about Bullying in Schools: Comparing Pre-Service Teachers in the United States and the United Kingdom* (Bauman & Del Rio, 2005) designed to replicate the original study. Reports about psychometric properties of the instrument are not available in either case. Because this researcher used a subscale of the SBQ, the researcher conducted a factor analysis to determine the reliability of the subscale in portraying the concept of efficacy. Factor analysis revealed all components loaded at .6, .7, .8 or higher (see Table 1).

Table 1

Component Matrix for the SBQ

The following questions apply to your role in the school. Do you feel comfortable.....	<u>Component</u> 1
Make bullies stop bullying?	.688
Talk with victims without attributing the cause to them?	.715
Support a bullied student?	.738
Talk with onlookers about their responsibility?	.790
Help onlookers to take a more active role to support the victim?	.809
Work with parents of victims?	.791
Work with parents of bullies?	.810

Additionally, the researcher used four questions (questions 52-55) from the Teachers Attitudes About Bullying Questionnaire (TAABQ) (Beran, 2005). The original entire instrument “was developed for the Beran study to measure pre-service teachers’ perspectives on bullying. Items were developed based on the author’s experience developing, implementing, and evaluating anti-bullying programs (e.g., Beran, Tutty, and Steinworth, in press; Beran and Shapiro, 2004)” (Beran, 2005, p. 45). The original scale consisted of 22 items using a 5-point Likert scale. The author reports, “The scores ranged from 30-108 and the grand mean was 86.8. A higher score indicated stronger attitudes against bullying” (Beran, 2005, p. 45). Further, the researcher evaluated the internal reliability for the factors of “system commitment”, “teacher commitment”, “concern”, and “confidence”. The Cronbach’s alpha for items measuring system commitment was .88, teacher commitment was .87, teacher concern was .78 and teacher confidence was .61, indicating that the internal reliability of the first three factors was high but the factor of ‘teacher confidence’ should be evaluated with caution (Beran, 2005). There have not been any psychometric properties reported on a subscale of this instrument.

Question 56-71 of the survey instrument came from the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ) (Spreng, McKinnon, Mar & Levine, 2009) and is related to research question 3 regarding levels of empathy of teachers and school social workers. The authors compared the original 16-item scale to existing empathy scales in three separate studies using a factor analysis. The authors (Spreng, McKinnon, Mar & Levine 2009)

found, “the TEQ demonstrated strong convergent validity; correlating positively with behavioral measures of social decoding, self-report measures of empathy, and negatively with a measure of Autism symptomology. Moreover, it exhibited good internal consistency and high test-retest reliability” (Spreng, McKinnon, Mar & Levine 2009, p. 62).

Data Cleaning, Grouping and Recoding

Data screening revealed the need to remove cases where respondents identified as neither a social worker nor a teacher and all cases with missing values on the dependent variable of efficacy. The removal of twenty-seven of the original respondents was necessary because they identified as neither a teacher nor a social worker. Removal of data from ten additional respondents was necessary because they did not respond to questions comprising the dependent variable. Following data screening 97 (n=97) cases remained for analysis for the current study (26 social workers and 71 teachers).

Age. For the demographic variable of age cases were grouped and coded in the following way, <25 (1), 26-35 (2), 36-45 (3), 46-55 (4) and >55 (5).

Years Experience. For the demographic variable of years experience cases were grouped and coded in the following way, 0-5 (1), 6-10 (2), 11-15 (3), 16-20 (4), 21-25 (5) and >26 (6).

Race. For the demographic variable of race because of the small number of minority cases in categories, combined cases went into 2 categories, white (4) and other (6).

Sex. For the demographic variable of sex, the data codes were male (1) and female (2).

Geographic Location. For the demographic variable of geographic location response codes were urban (1), suburban (2) and rural (3).

Residence in School Community. For the demographic variable of living in or out of the school district they work in responses codes were yes (1) and no (2).

Type of School. For the demographic variable of type of school response codes was elementary (1), middle or junior high (2), high school (3) and middle and high school (5).

Level of Education. For the independent variable of level of education response codes were Masters (1) and Undergraduate (2).

Teacher and Kentucky Teacher's Certification. For the independent variables of Teacher and Kentucky Teacher's Certification response codes were as yes (1) and no (2).

Social Worker and Kentucky School Social Work Certification. For the independent variables of Social Worker and School Social Work Certification response codes were yes (1) and no (2).

Specific Bullying Instruction. For the independent variable of specific university bullying instruction, response codes were yes (1) and no (2). Respondent answered a follow up question of "What type?", which received the following coding;

an entire course (1), infused curriculum in a course (2), a lecture (3), workshop (4), reading material (5) and assignment (6).

Professional Development. For the independent variable of professional development since you started working in schools, response coding was yes (1) and no (2). A follow up question of what types received the following codes; professional development workshops (1), a conference about bullying (2), read books or journal articles (3).

Additional Training. For the independent variable of additional training response, coding was yes (1) and no (2). A follow up question asked participants to write in the types of training they felt they needed.

School Bullying. For the variable of school bullying (Q 17), “School bullying is a big problem in my school.” Responses for “always” and “most of the time” were combined into “most of the time” and reverse coded (3), responses for “sometimes” remained in that group and were reverse coded (2), responses for “rarely” and “never” were combined into “rarely” and reverse coded (1). For this, variable higher scores would indicate a belief that bullying is more of a problem.

Level of Bullying. For the independent variable of level of bullying response, codes were lower (1), about the same (2) and higher (3).

Personal Experience. For the independent variable of personal experience, the researcher analyzed each question individually because reliability analysis revealed that Chronbach’s alpha was not acceptable for questions when grouped together.

Specifically, Q31, “Were you ever bullied when you were in school?” Q35, “Were your siblings ever bullied when they were in school?” Q36, “Were your children or grandchildren ever bullied when they were in school?” and Q37, “Did you ever bully others when you were a student in school?” and Q42, “Did you ever see someone being bullied when you were a student in school?” Questions 31, 37 and 42 were coded never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), often (4) and all of the time (5). Questions 35 and 36 were coded yes (1), no (2) and I do not have any (3).

University Preparation. The independent variable of university preparation consists of two questions from the original Beran (2005) scale. Responses to questions 54 and 55 regarding university education, Q54 “My university education prepared me to manage bullying” and Q 55 “I wanted to learn more about bullying in my university education” required regrouping and recoding. New coding is (3) if they agreed to some extent, coded (2) if they neither agreed or disagreed and coded (1) if they disagreed to some extent.

Scale Creation for the Current Study

Efficacy Scale. A combination of 10 questions from both subscales (the SBQ and the TAABQ) creates the Efficacy Scale (dependent variable of the study). Questions 44-53 of the instruments make up the Efficacy scale (NewComcon) and include questions in both instruments related to how comfortable or confident respondents feel about particular aspects of bullying (see table 2 below). The reliability for the combined subscales used (questions 44-53) was satisfactory with a Cronbach’s alpha of .82. All questions for the scale were recoded and reverse coded from the original 5 point likert

scale of “definitely yes (1), probably yes (2), maybe (3), probably not (4) and definitely (5)” to a 3 point likert scale of “no (1), maybe (2) and yes (3)” so that higher scores indicate a greater degree of efficacy. The range of scores possible is 10-30.

Table 2

Measurements of Comfort

Q 44. Do you feel comfortable with talking with bullies without blaming them?
Q 45. Do you feel comfortable with making bullies stop bullying?
Q 46. Do you feel comfortable with talking with victims without attributing the cause to them?
Q 47. Do you feel comfortable with supporting a bullied student?
Q 48. Do you feel comfortable with talking with onlookers about their responsibility?
Q 49. Do you feel comfortable with helping onlookers take a more active role to support the victim?
Q 50. Do you feel comfortable with working with the parents of victims?
Q 51. Do you feel comfortable with working with the parents of bullies?
Q 52. I feel confident in identifying bullying.
Q 53. I feel confident in managing bullying.

Administrative Support Scale. Three questions that respondents answered created the scale RAdminSupport. The included questions were “The administrators in my school are supportive and encouraging (Q 19)” and “It is easy to talk to my principal or other administrators if I have a problem with bullying (Q 20)” and “I feel that the administrative team at my school does the best that they can to address the problem of bullying (Q21).” The data were reverse coded in the following way; if participants answered ‘always’, they were coded (3). If they answered ‘most of the time’, they received a code (2). Participants who answered ‘sometimes’ or ‘rarely’, responses received the code (1). Thus, respondents who identified their administrators as supportive they would have a higher score. A reliability analysis on the RAdminSupport scale comprising three items produced a Chronbach’s alpha showing the questionnaire reached an acceptable level of reliability, $\alpha = .915$.

Teacher Social Work Support Scale. Four questions that teachers answered about social workers in their schools created the RevSWsupp scale. Included questions were; “The social worker at my school is supportive and assists me with addressing issues about bullying (Q23)” and “The social worker in my school is someone I can talk with if I have a problem with bullying (Q24)”. As well as, “The social worker at my school is a valuable resource to me (Q25)” and “The social worker at my school is accessible when I need help (Q26).” The data were reverse coded in the following way: If the teacher answered always, coding was (3), if the teacher answered sometimes (most of the time, sometimes or rarely) coding was (2), if the teacher answered never coding

was (1). Thus, teachers who felt social workers were supportive were having a higher sum score. A reliability analysis on the RevSWsupp scale comprising of four items produced a Chronbach's alpha showing the questionnaire reached an acceptable level of reliability, $\alpha=.968$.

School Social Work Tasks Scale. Two questions that the social workers answered created the scale RRSWtaskscomcon. The included questions were "I feel comfortable sharing my expertise about bullying with teachers and other staff (Q 30)" and "Bullying prevention and intervention programming is one of my responsibilities at school (Q 28)." The data were reverse coded in the following way; If participants agreed to some extent, (either Strongly Agree or Agree) they were coded (7). If they neither agreed nor disagreed, they received a code (6). If they strongly disagreed or disagreed, they received the code (5). Thus social workers who identified bullying programming at school was one of their responsibilities and felt comfortable doing it would have a higher score. A reliability analysis on the RRSWtaskscomcon scale comprising two items produced a Chronbach's alpha showing the questionnaire reached an acceptable level of reliability, $\alpha=.73$. Initial reliability analysis revealed the need to remove the other two questions from the scale, "I spend the majority of my time on crisis situations and have little time for the prevention of bullying" (Q 27) and "I assist teachers with bullying programs within their classrooms" (Q 29).

Empathy Scale. Sixteen question (56-71) of the survey instrument, the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ) (Spreng, McKinnon, Mar & Levine, 2009) make up the empathy scale (see table 3 below). Questions 57, 61, 62, 65, 66, 67, 69 and 70 were

reverse coded due to negative wording, never (5), rarely (4), sometimes (3), often (2) and all of the time (1). All other data codes were never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), often (4) and all of the time (5). Higher scores indicate a greater degree of empathy. A reliability analysis on the Empathy scale comprising sixteen items produced a Chronbach's alpha showing the questionnaire reached an acceptable level of reliability, $\alpha = .80$.

Table 3

Measures of Empathy

Q 56. When someone else is feeling excited, I tend to get excited too.
Q 57. Other people's misfortunes do not disturb me a great deal.
Q 58. It upsets me to see someone being treated disrespectfully.
Q 59. I enjoy making other people feel better.
Q 60. I have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.
Q 61. I remain unaffected when someone close to me is happy.
Q 62. When a friend starts to talk about his/her problems, I try to steer the conversation towards something else.
Q 63. I can tell when others are sad even when they do not say anything.
Q 64. I find I am "in tune" with other people's moods.
Q 65. I do not feel sympathy for people who cause their own serious illness.
Q 66. I become irritated when someone cries.
Q 67. I am not really interested in how other people feel.
Q 68. I get a strong urge to help when I see someone who is upset.
Q 69. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I do not feel much pity for them.
Q 70. I find it silly for someone to cry out of happiness.
Q 71. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards him/her.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used several analyses to analyze and describe the data. The researcher used frequency distributions, percentages, Chronbach's Alpha, Chi Square, *t* Tests, cross tabulations, factor analysis, One-Way ANOVA and Multiple Regression Analysis.

Frequency Distributions

A frequency distribution shows how many subjects responded similarly to other subjects so that they ended up in the same category when measured on the dependent variable (Huck, 2004). The letter *n* generally represents the number but other uses are the word *frequency* or the letter *f* (Huck, 2004). For example, a researcher may use a frequency table to report demographic data so that the reader can get a quick picture of who participated in the study (females ($n=25$), males ($n=28$)).

Percentage

Percentages calculated provide descriptive information about the study. Percentages are used to report relative frequencies and are calculated by dividing the number of times something occurs (participants who answered 'yes') by the total number of cases (all participants who were asked the question) and multiplying by 100 (Schutt, 2004). Percentages allow researchers to give a quick description of easily understandable statistics to readers. The researcher uses percentage reporting for all descriptive data. For example, the researcher reports the percentage of female respondents' levels of

efficacy and the percentage of male respondents' level of efficacy, thus allowing for quick comparisons based on gender alone.

Chronbach's Alpha

Chronbach's Alpha is not a statistical test but rather a coefficient of reliability ("Introduction to SAS UCLA: Statistical consulting group," n.d.). It is how researchers report internal reliability following a reliability analysis. It tells the researcher how reliable or consistent the items in a scale are.

***t* Test**

The *t* Test is a basic statistical test that measures the differences between two group means. Researchers use it when the Independent Variable (IV) has two groups or categories (males and females) and the Dependent Variable (DV) is quantitative (a grade on a test) (Mertler & Vannata, 2002).

Chi Square

Chi Square is a statistical measure of association that is used to estimate the probability that an association between variables is not due to chance. Chi Square proves that a relationship between any independent variable and the dependent variable was not just a random occurrence (Schutt, 2004). Chi square analysis determines the level of association between the identified independent variables and the dependent variable. For example, level of education and efficacy. It is important to determine that any association is not due to chance but rather the effect of one variable on another.

Cross-tabulation

Researchers often use a cross-tabulation analysis also known as a contingency table analysis to analyze categorical variables (Qualtrics, 2005). Cross-tabulation tables presented in a two (or more) dimensional table that displays the number of respondents that have the characteristics described in the cells of the table provide information about relationships between variables (Qualtrics, 2005).

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a procedure often used to assess construct validity of an instrument (Huck, 2004). Factor analysis can reveal the need for combining independent variables into ‘factors’ with a shared underlying structure, thereby reducing the number of independent variables (Mertler & Vannata, 2002).

One-Way ANOVA

The One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) compares the means of two or more independent groups to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the groups (“SPSS Tutorials: One-Way ANOVA,” n.d.).

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is a statistical technique used for predicting the unknown value of a variable (DV) from the known value of two or more variables (IV’s) (“Multiple regression analysis-Predicting unknown values,” n.d.).

Summary

This chapter provides the reader with an explanation of the conduction of the research. It provides the rationale for the project, information about the sample, data collection, measurements, and data analysis.

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

This chapter of the dissertation reports the results of the research findings from the statistical analysis. This study examined school social workers' perceptions and teachers' perceptions about their feelings of efficacy to deal with bullying and what may account for those feelings. Specifically, this study examined the amount and type of professional education and/or training, personal experiences with bullying, levels of administrative support, perceived amounts of bullying, and empathy levels of the school professionals. The researcher explored these variables along with demographic factors to learn what influenced the professionals' feelings of efficacy with regard to bullying. Knowledge about these factors separately or in combination may help school social workers, teachers, and administrators better prepare to deal with the problem of bullying and address the problem in their schools.

The first section of the quantitative analysis and presentation of the data reports the size and characteristics of the sample. Tables 4, 5 and 6 summarize the characteristics of the demographic variables for the sample. Results of the research questions representing univariate bivariate and multivariate analysis of the data are in tables 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13. The researcher conducted data analyses using the Windows version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 24.0, 2016).

Sample Respondents

As noted in chapter 3, this study surveyed a group of school social workers and teachers employed in the state of Kentucky in public schools. Respondents completed 134 of the approximately 250 distributed surveys. School administrators in Trigg County schools, Danville Independent School District and Fayette County Schools agreed to distribute the survey link to the Qualtrics survey to teachers and school social workers within their respective systems in early October, 2014. The numbers of surveys distributed are approximate because staff members received the survey link from administrative personnel to maintain anonymity. Administrators' responses to the researcher informed the estimate but there was no way to verify the exact number of distributed questionnaires. Based on the responses received from the administrators and the number of respondents, the survey obtained an overall response rate of 54% (n=134). Of the 134 completed surveys, the researcher removed 37 cases following data screening revealing respondents that neither identified as a teacher or a social worker (27 cases) and those who did not answer questions comprising the dependent variable scale (10 cases). The researcher used the remaining 97 cases for analysis.

Of the 97 respondents, 17% (n=16) were male and 83% (n=81) were female and 27% (n=26) were social workers and 73% (n=71) were teachers. See Table 4. The researcher launched this survey in early October 2014. At that time, information gleaned from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE, 2014), state statistics reveal that 41,725 teachers worked in Kentucky schools in 2013-2014 and approximately 2,320 social workers. The number of social workers is approximate because KDE does not

publish staff members' professional education but rather job titles within the school, many of which are Family Resource Center or Youth Service Center positions. Additionally, outside agencies employ some social workers working in Kentucky schools. Subsequently, social workers within the schools represent approximately 5.3% of the teacher population. In the state of Kentucky, 22% of the state's teachers are male and 78% female. This indicates that the sample contains a higher number of social workers than the state and approximates gender proportions of state statistics.

The majority of respondents in this study identified themselves as white 92%, (n=89) with all minorities reported as 8% (n=8). As compared with overall Kentucky Department of Education statistics (2014), this study has a slightly higher minority representation. Kentucky state DOE (2014) statistics revealed that the majority of its teachers were white (96%) and minority teachers consisted of only 4% of the total.

The respondents ranged in age from 22 years of age to 65 years old. Ninety-five respondents answered the question about age. Only four (n=4) respondents were 25 or younger and 11 were 56 years old or older. The largest group of the sample were between the ages of 36 and 45 (n=34) with the next largest group being between the ages of 26 and 35 (n= 30) and the group of 46-55 (n=16). The average age of respondents was 40 years old ($SD = 10.46$). State statistics regarding average age of teachers and school social workers were not available for comparison.

Table 4

Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants-Gender/Age/Ethnic/Racial Origin as Compared to Kentucky State Statistics

Variable		Test Statistic	State Statistic
	<i>n</i>	%	%
Role in the School			
Social Worker	<i>n</i> =26	27%	5%
Teacher	<i>n</i> =71	73%	95%
Gender			
Female	<i>n</i> =81	83%	78%
Male	<i>n</i> =16	17%	22%
Ethnic/Racial Origin			
White/Caucasian	<i>n</i> =89	92%	96%
All Minorities	<i>n</i> =8	8%	4%
Age			
25 and under	<i>n</i> =4	4%	Not available
26-35 years	<i>n</i> =30	31%	
36-45 years	<i>n</i> =34	35%	
46-55 years	<i>n</i> =16	16%	
56 and older	<i>n</i> =11	11%	
No response	<i>n</i> =2		

Teachers and school social workers who responded to the survey ranged in experience from 1- 43 years. The average number of years of experience of respondents was 11.97 years ($SD = 7.84$). The modal group ($n=10$) reported 7 years of experience. Professionals with 6-10 years of experience ($n=27$) comprised the largest group with 0-5 years of experience ($n=22$) making up the second largest group.

Respondents reported their educational level as follows: 90% ($n=87$) with a master's degree, 10% ($n=10$) with an undergraduate degree as shown in Table 5. The most respondents had a Master's Degree (90%). While specific information about the level of education of teachers and school social workers in Kentucky was not available, it would be reasonable to expect that the majority would have a Master's Degree of some type. This assumption is based on the state requirement that Kentucky teachers earn their Master's (or 5th year) degree within 5 years of beginning work as a teacher in the state (Educational Professional Standards Board-Powers and duties regarding the preparation and certification of professional school personnel-Membership, 2004). All seventy-one ($n=71$) respondents who identified as a teacher reported having a Kentucky Teacher's Certification indicating that 100% of the teachers in the study are certified. Twenty-six ($n=26$) respondents identified as social workers, twenty-four ($n=24$) of whom reported having earned a Kentucky School Social Worker's Certification (92%). Kentucky law requires teacher certification. Social workers with a master's degree and additional coursework in school social work can pursue certification by the Kentucky Department of Education as a school social worker, (Professional Certificate for a School Social Worker, 2002) and be included on the teacher's salary schedule. However, certification as a school social worker is not required for some job descriptions in schools. An

example of this might be a home-school liaison or a Family Resource and Youth Services Center Director.

Table 5

Years of Experience, Educational Level, and Certification Status

	Variable	Test Statistic
	<i>n</i>	%
Years of Exp.		
0-5 yrs	<i>n</i> =22	23%
6-10 yrs	<i>n</i> =27	28%
11-15 yrs	<i>n</i> =19	20%
16-20 yrs	<i>n</i> =16	17%
21-25 yrs	<i>n</i> =7	7%
Over 26 yrs	<i>n</i> =6	5%
Educational Level		
BA or BS	<i>n</i> =10	10%
MA or MS	<i>n</i> =87	90%
Certification Status		
Kentucky Teaching Cert	<i>n</i> =71	73%
School Social Work Cert	<i>n</i> =24	25%
No Certificate Reported	<i>n</i> =2	2%

Thirty-nine (n=39) respondents or 40% identified their school as urban, thirty or 31% identified their school as suburban and twenty-six or 27% identified their school as rural. However, Kentucky county classifications are micropolitan, metropolitan, or rural (See Table 6.) The OMB (Office of Management and Budget, 2017) defines Micropolitan as areas that have at least one urban cluster of a population of at least 10,000 people but less than 50,000 plus socially and economically integrated adjacent territory, measured by commuting patterns. Currently, the OMB uses Micropolitan to describe areas formerly referred to as suburban and 22% in Kentucky are micropolitan. Twenty-nine percent of Kentucky counties are metropolitan. The OMB (2017) describes metropolitan areas as areas that include at least one urbanized area of 50,000 people and adjacent areas with a high degree of economic and social integration as measured by commuting patterns. Forty-nine percent of Kentucky counties are rural.

In this study, urban and suburban schools are slightly overrepresented compared to the state of Kentucky. Conversely, slightly underrepresented in this study are rural schools when compared to the state of Kentucky. Less than half of the respondents indicated that they live in the community in which they work 41%, (n=40) and slightly more than half (56%, n=54) indicated that they live outside of the community in which they work. State statistics of this type were not available.

The majority of respondents reported working in elementary schools 49%, (n=48), with 32%, (n=31) reporting working in high schools, and 18%, (n=17) reporting working in a middle school. One respondent (n=1) reported working in a blended

middle/high school (1%) The overrepresentation of elementary respondents is comparable to state statistics in that the majority of schools in Kentucky (n=669 or 61% of the total number) are classified as elementary schools. The representation of middle and high school respondents closely relates to Kentucky state statistics in that middle schools represent 217 or 20% of Kentucky schools and there are 202 high schools or about 19% of the total. However, some schools are blended and classified as both.

Table 6

Demographic Characteristics of Geographic Location of School, Professionals' Status of Living Within the Community in Which they Work and Grade Level of Host School

	Variable	Sample	KY (OMB)
	<i>n</i>	%	%
Geographic Location			
Micropolitan	<i>n</i> =30	31%	22%
Metropolitan	<i>n</i> =39	40%	29%
Rural	<i>n</i> =26	27%	49%
Missing	<i>n</i> =2	2%	
Live Within or Community			
Yes	<i>n</i> =40	41%	
No	<i>n</i> =54	56%	
Missing	<i>n</i> =3	3%	
Grade Level of School			
Elementary	<i>n</i> =48	49%	61%
Middle	<i>n</i> =17	18%	20%
High	<i>n</i> =31	32%	19%
Middle/High	<i>n</i> =1	1%	

Demographic Factors

This section reports statistical findings regarding demographic factors (age, years of experience, educational level, certification status, sex, race/ethnicity, school location, type of school and status of living in or out of the community you work in). Reported is statistically significant information about differences between the two professional groups in addition to analysis results regarding how demographics may contribute to the feeling of efficacy (comfort/confidence) for teachers and school social workers dealing with bullying in the school.

D1. Does a respondent's age contribute to efficacy?

Social workers in the study were slightly older than teachers were but there was not a significant difference. Frequency distributions revealed the average age of the 70 teachers was 40 years old ($M=40.06$, $SD =10.83$) and for the 25 social workers it was 41 years old ($M =41.60$, $SD = 9.46$).

Additionally, a one-way ANOVA showed that there were no significant differences by age group when the dependent variable of efficacy was examined, ANOVA $F(4,90) = .819$, $p=.517$ $p >.05$. The 2 youngest groups, 25 and under and 26-35 had the lowest efficacy scores; with 25 and under ($M =27.00$, $SD = 2.16$) and 26-35 ($M =27.00$, $SD = 3.99$). The next group, 36 thru 45 years old had an efficacy score ($M =28.17$, $SD = 3.07$) with those 46-55 years old scoring very similarly ($M =28.12$, $SD = 2.33$). The oldest group, 56 and older had the highest efficacy score ($M =28.45$, $SD = 1.86$).

D2. Do respondents' years of experience contribute to efficacy?

Years of experience codes were; 0-5 years (1), 6-10 years (2), 11-15 years (3), 16-20 years (4), 21-25 years (5) and 26 years and over (6). Teachers ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 1.47$) and social workers ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.44$) reported similar years of experience. Additionally, respondents' years of experience did not reveal any significant difference in the respondents' efficacy, ANOVA, $F(5,91) = 1.37$, $p = .241$, $p > 0.05$. Those with 21-25 years of experience had the highest level of efficacy ($M = 29.00$, $SD = 1.00$). The next highest efficacy was reported by those with 0-5 years of experience ($M = 28.59$, $SD = 1.59$) followed by 11-15 years of experience ($M = 28.15$, $SD = 2.71$), 16-20 years of experience ($M = 28.00$, $SD = 3.26$), over 26 years of experience ($M = 27.16$, $SD = 3.06$) and 6-10 years of experience ($M = 26.62$, $SD = 4.28$). Additionally, when the years of experience groups of teachers were compared alone regarding efficacy, there was not a significant difference according to years of experience ANOVA $F(5, 65) = 1.27$, $p = .286$, $p > 0.05$. When social workers' experience groups were compared against efficacy, it also was not statistically significant ANOVA $F(5, 20) = .274$, $p = .922$, $p > 0.05$.

D3. Were there differences in reported levels of efficacy between professionals of different races?

There were not enough cases in each category of racial group to determine if there were statistically significant differences.

D4. Were there differences in the composition of the two professional groups by gender?

The percentage of the participants' that were in each of the professional categories did not differ by gender.

Further, there was not a significant difference in the efficacy scores for males ($M = 28.87, SD = 2.33$) and females ($M = 27.59, SD = 3.23$); $t(95) = 1.50, p = .136, p > 0.05$.

D5. Is the physical location of the respondent's school (urban, suburban or rural) associated with greater efficacy?

A Chi-Square analysis revealed a significant association between professional role and location of the school they work in $X^2(2, N = 95) = .000, p < 0.05$. Social workers reported a higher percentage level of working in urban schools (73.1%) compared to teachers (28.2%) and teachers reported a higher percentage (33.8%) compared to social workers (23.1%) of working in suburban schools. Teachers reported the highest percentage of working in rural schools (35.2%) while social workers reported (3.8%). However, One-way ANOVA analysis revealed there were no significant differences in efficacy among professionals that worked in the three different geographic locations ANOVA $F(2, 92) = .401, p = .671, p > 0.05$.

D6. Does efficacy vary depending on whether the professional lives in or out of the assigned school community?

An independent samples t-test revealed that whether the professional lives in or out of school community was not statistically significant with regard to the dependent variable of efficacy. There was not a significant difference in efficacy scores of those who lived in the district they worked in ($M = 28.27, SD = 2.13$) and those who did not (M

= 27.44, $SD = 3.72$); $t(92) = -1.26, p = .210, p > 0.05$. However, a Chi-Square analysis revealed a significant association between professional role and whether or not the professional lives in the district they work in $X^2(1, N = 94) = .008, p < 0.05$. Teachers reported a higher level of living in the community they work in (51%) compared to social workers (20%).

D7. Does the level of efficacy vary by type of school the professional works in?

One-way ANOVA analysis revealed there were no significant differences in efficacy among professionals that worked in the three types of schools (Elementary, Middle, and High Schools), ANOVA, $F(3,93) = .714, p = .546, p > 0.05$. Additionally, there was not a significant difference between the groups.

D8. Does a respondent's level of education contribute to efficacy?

As mentioned previously, nearly all of the respondents (90%) reported a master's degree. There was not a significant difference between the two groups.

Additionally, the researcher conducted an independent-samples t-test to compare efficacy scores in professionals with an undergraduate degree and those with a master's degree. There was not a significant difference in the efficacy scores for those with undergraduate degrees ($M = 28.50, SD = 3.06$) and those with masters degrees ($M = 27.72, SD = 3.15$); $t(95) = -.740, p = .461, p > 0.05$. These results suggest that educational level alone does not affect efficacy in dealing with bullying.

D9. Which of the two groups of school professionals have higher levels of certification status? Does certification status have an impact on efficacy?

As mentioned previously, frequency distributions revealed teachers in the study reported a higher level of certification than did social workers. Teachers reported the highest level of certification at 100%. This is not surprising given that the Kentucky Department of Education requires public school teachers to be certified. Social workers reported a lower level of certification at 92%. Because all teachers in the study reported being certified, it was not possible to examine whether certification status for teachers had an effect on the dependent variable of efficacy. Additionally, the number of social workers who reported not having certification (n=2) did not allow for analysis.

Research Questions and Analysis Results

Bullying Education

R1. How much and what kinds of bullying education/professional development have teachers and school social workers had?

Of the 97 respondents who answered the question, “As a part of your university education, did you receive any specific instruction on bullying?” the majority (79%) of respondents (n=77) answered in the negative while 21% (n=20) answered in the affirmative.

The type of university preparation about bullying received by the respondents was reported as overwhelmingly “infused curriculum within a course” at 17% (n=16). “Reading material” at 7% (n=7), “a lecture” 5% (n=5), “a workshop” 5% (n=5), “an assignment” 1% (n=1) and only 2% (n=2) of respondents reported having an entire course about bullying in their university preparation.

Education Continued

When respondents were asked whether their university education provided any specific instruction in bullying (Q11), 79% (n=77) reported no and 21% (n=20) reported yes. However, in a subsequent question (Q 13) respondents reported whether they have received specialized training in bullying since beginning their work in schools. The majority of respondents, 81%, (n=79) answered 'yes' revealing the need for data screening. A cross-tabulation analysis revealed only four cases of university preparation without subsequent professional development, too few for additional analysis against the dependent variable of efficacy (comfort/confidence). In addition, only four individuals reported receiving only university training, not enough cases to analyze the independent variable of university preparation against the dependent variable of efficacy. All of the other respondents who reported university training also reported subsequent professional development so that it is not possible to determine whether their feelings of efficacy might be due to university training.

Additionally, when respondents were asked whether their university education prepared them to manage bullying (Q54), 60% (n=58) of the respondents disagreed to some extent, 27% (n=26) neither agreed nor disagreed and only 13% (n=12) agreed to some extent. An Oneway ANOVA revealed no statistically significant difference between the groups that "agree to some extent", "neither agree nor disagree" and "disagree to some extent" ANOVA, $F(2,93) = .784, p = .460, p > 0.05$ regarding efficacy. Further, over one-third (n=36) of the respondents reported that they wanted to learn more about bullying in their university program (Q55). However, differences in efficacy between the groups, "agree to some extent", "neither agree nor disagree" and "disagree to

some extent” were not significant regarding efficacy ANOVA, $F(2,94) = .767, p = .467, p > 0.05$.

Further, 17 of 26 school social workers reported having earned a School Social Work Specialization through their university preparation. Those with the specialization were compared with social workers without the specialization against the dependent variable of efficacy. There was not a significant difference between the groups ANOVA $F(1, 24) = .168, p = .685, p > 0.05$.

Professional Development

In response to the question (Q 13), “Since you started working in school, have you received any specialized training in bullying?” eighty-one percent (n=79) of respondents answered with “yes” and nineteen percent (n=18) answered with “no.” In a subsequent question (Q 14) more than half of the respondents (n=60), 62% reported attending a professional development workshop, with 54% (n=52) reporting reading books or journal articles and 21% (n=20) reporting attending an entire conference. Table 7 provides a visual representation of education and training.

Ninety-six (n=96) respondents answered the question, “Do you feel you need or would like additional training about bullying/cyberbullying?” Thirty-five percent (n=34) of the teachers and school social workers who answered this question reported a need or desire for additional training. Survey questions did not address cyberbullying separately from other forms of bullying. However, a follow-up written response revealed that of the 30 respondents who provided feedback on desired trainings, three asked for training about cyberbullying. Additionally, five participants asked for help with empowering

bullied students and/or their parents. Twenty participants asked for additional research-based, general and specific information on managing and decreasing bullying and two participants asked for clearer definitions of bullying and the best way to explain those definitions to parents and students.

The researcher conducted a Chi Square analysis to test for association between the groups with regard to specialized training (Q 13). There was not a significant association between teachers and social workers, $X^2(1, N = 97) = .282, p > 0.05$.

Additionally, though respondents who reported yes to specialized training also reported higher levels of efficacy ($M = 28.04, SD = 3.22$), than those who reported no ($M = 26.77, SD = 2.53$), the difference was not statistically significant ANOVA $F(1, 95) = 2.40, p = .124, p > 0.05$.

The researcher conducted a Chi Square analysis to test for association between the two professional groups (teachers and social workers) on their desire for additional training. The results revealed a statistically significant association, $X^2(1, N = 96) = .005, p < 0.05$. Social workers reported a higher desire for additional training (58%) than did teachers (27%).

Finally, a one-way ANOVA compared the differences between the group that answered yes to the need for additional training and the group that answered no with regard to the DV of efficacy. There was not a significant difference between the groups ANOVA $F(1, 94) = 2.77, p = .099, p > 0.05$. However, the data trend toward significance. Those who answered yes to wanting or needing additional training scored

lower on efficacy ($M = 27.15$, $SD = 3.87$) than did those who answered no ($M = 28.24$, $SD = 2.55$).

Table 7

Participants Bullying Education & Training

	Variable	Test Statistic
	<i>n</i>	%
University Education		
Yes	<i>n</i> =20	21%
No	<i>n</i> =77	79%
Professional Development		
Yes	<i>n</i> =79	81%
No	<i>n</i> =18	19%
Types of Training/Education		
University Infused	<i>n</i> =16	17%
University Reading	<i>n</i> =7	7%
University Lecture	<i>n</i> =5	5%
University Workshop	<i>n</i> =5	5%
University Course	<i>n</i> =2	2%
University Assignment	<i>n</i> =1	1%
Prof. Devel. Workshop	<i>n</i> =60	62%
Read Books/Journals	<i>n</i> =52	54%
Entire Conference	<i>n</i> =20	21%

Other Factors

What other factors (e.g., perceived amount of bullying, level of bullying and administrative support) contribute to the feeling of efficacy (comfort/confidence) for teachers and school social workers in dealing with bullying in the school?

R2A. Does the perceived amount of bullying as a problem in the respondent's school have an impact on efficacy?

The researcher used two questions (Q 17 & Q 18), designed to gauge the impressions of participants about the extent of bullying in their schools. The researcher conducted a Chi-Square analysis to examine if there is an association between beliefs about bullying being a problem (Q 17) and the two professional categories of teacher and social worker. Participants could answer rarely (1), sometimes (2) and most of the time (3). The range of answers of these participants was from 1-3 ($M = 1.82$, $SD = .540$). The relationship between these variables was significant $X^2(2, N = 97) = .003$ $p < 0.05$. Teachers were more likely to believe bullying is a big problem in their school than were social workers.

With regard to the perception that bullying is a big problem in their school and their level of efficacy, there was not a significant difference between the groups of 'rarely', 'sometimes' and 'most of the time' ANOVA $F(2, 94) = 2.94$, $p = .057$, $p > 0.05$. However, the results were trending toward significance. The group that answered 'sometimes' to the question "Bullying is a big problem in my school." had the highest efficacy scores at ($M = 28.11$, $SD = 3.05$). The group that answered 'rarely' reported the next highest level of efficacy ($M = 27.75$, $SD = 2.54$) and the group that answered 'most

of the time' reported the lowest level of efficacy ($M = 25.14$, $SD = 3.13$). The possible range of efficacy scores is 10 -30. The range of efficacy scores for these participants is 12-30.

The researcher evaluated the possible association of these professionals' feelings about the level of bullying in their schools (Q 18) compared to other schools and their professional role as teacher or social worker. Possible responses to this question were lower (1), about the same (2) and higher (3). The range of responses for this group were 1-3 ($M = 1.54$, $SD = .579$). There was not a significant association, Chi-Square $X^2(2, N = 96) = .883$ $p > 0.05$. Additionally, there was not a significant difference between those that believed bullying was higher, about the same, or lower than at other schools with regard to efficacy ANOVA $F(2, 93) = 0.80$, $p = .923$, $p > 0.05$. The average for the group had a relatively high efficacy score ($M = 27.79$, $SD = 3.14$) with a possible range of 10-30 and this group range of 12-30.

R2B. Is the level of administrative support associated with efficacy for dealing with bullying?

The researcher analyzed the independent variable administrative support through use of the RAdminSupp scale. The scale consists of Q 19, "The administrators in my school are supportive and encouraging;" Q 20 "It is easy to talk with my principal or other administrator if I have a problem with bullying;" and Q 21 "I feel that the administrative team at my school does the best they can to address the problem of bullying." Analysis revealed that there is not a statistically significant difference between the two groups of social workers ($M = 6.69$, $SD = 2.22$) and teachers ($M = 7.32$, $SD =$

2.01), one-way ANOVA $F(1, 95) = 1.76, p = .187, p > 0.05$. The range of possible scores for the Administrative support scale is 3-9. Participants in this groups answers ranged from 3-9 with an overall average of ($M = 7.15, SD = 2.08$), indicating a relatively high level of administrative support. Individuals who scored higher on the scale felt a higher level of administrative support. There was not a significant difference in professionals who felt greater or lesser levels of Administrative Support with regards to their level of efficacy ANOVA $F(6, 90) = 1.74, p = .119, p > 0.05$.

Empathy

R3. Are teachers and/or school social workers with greater levels of empathy more comfortable and confident in intervening in bullying situations in school?

The overall group of participants with an average age ($M= 40.46$) scored higher on the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ) ($M= 65.64$) to previously studied adult groups. Spreng et al., (2009) studied a large sample of college students which revealed an average score ($M= 44.5$) on the TEQ. More recently, Gould and MacNeil Gautreau (2014) found younger adults with an average age of 19.5 had an average score of 46.0 on the TEQ and older adults in the study with an average age of nearly 69 years old ($M = 68.75$) had an average score of 47.7 on the TEQ. A comparison of adults in the general population similar in age ($M= 40.46$) to the participants of this study could not be found. The Empathy scale has a range of possibilities from 16-80. This group of school professionals scored in a range from 42-77, indicating a high degree of reported empathy amongst participants.

An independent-samples t-test compared empathy in social workers and teachers. There was not a significant difference in the scores for empathy in social workers ($M=67.69$, $SD=4.88$) and teachers ($M=64.88$, $SD=6.63$); $t(95)=1.96$, $p=.052$ at the .05 alpha level. However, the difference trends toward significance.

The three groups of empathy scores codes were scores of 16-37 (1) indicating low empathy, 38-58 (2), indicating medium empathy, and 59-80 (3), indicating high empathy for analysis of the dependent variable of efficacy. ANOVA revealed no statistical differences at the .05 significance level in the dependent variable of efficacy when comparing the three groupings of empathy ANOVA $F(1, 95) = 3.80$, $p = .054$, $p > 0.05$. However, the data trend toward a significant finding. Those who reported a high level of empathy also reported the highest level of efficacy ($M = 28.01$, $SD = 2.75$) and those who reported in the medium level of empathy, reported lower efficacy scores ($M = 26.00$, $SD = 5.29$). There were not any participants in the low empathy category. All social workers reported in the high empathy category (100%), and 86% of teachers reported in the high empathy category.

Personal Experience

R4. Do teachers and social workers who have had a personal experience with bullying feel greater efficacy in addressing the problem of bullying?

The researcher examined personal experience questions separately as scale creation was not possible. A Chi Square analysis of personal experience as a victim (Q31) revealed no statistically significant association between the two group's of professionals Chi-Square $X^2(1, N = 97)$ $p = .373$, $p > 0.05$. Being victimized as a child

(Q 31) was not statistically significant regarding the dependent variable of efficacy ANOVA $F(1, 95) = .097, p = .757, p > 0.05$. Having the personal experience of having a sibling that was victimized (Q 35) did not reveal a significant association either between the groups' of professionals $X^2(1, N = 96), p = .532, p > 0.05$ or with regard to the dependent variable of efficacy ANOVA $F(2, 92) = .376, p = .688, p > 0.05$. Having the personal experience of having a child or grandchild who was victimized (Q36) did reveal a significant association between teachers and social workers with social workers reporting a higher incidence ($M = 1.46, SD = .706$) than did teachers ($M = 2.00, SD = .748$) $X^2(1, N = 95) p = .001, p < 0.05$. For this question, a lower number indicates more experience. However, there was not a significant difference between participants reporting "yes", "no", or "I don't have any" with regard to efficacy ANOVA $F(2, 90) = .634, p = .533, p > 0.05$.

There was not a significant association between teachers and social workers who reported being a bully while in school (Q37) $X^2(3, N = 96) p = .211, p > 0.05$. Likewise, there was not a significant difference between the groups who reported "never", "rarely", "sometimes" and "often" about being a bully with regard to the dependent variable of efficacy ANOVA $F(3, 92) = 1.50, p = .220, p > 0.05$. Finally, there was not a significant association between the two professional groups with regard to being a bystander (Q42) $X^2(4, N = 97) p = .397, p > 0.05$. There was not a significant difference between the groups who reported "never", "rarely", "sometimes" and "often" and "all of the time" about being a bystander with regard to the dependent variable of efficacy ANOVA $F(4, 92) = 2.03, p = .096, p > 0.05$. The personal experience of being a bystander however, trends toward significant on the dependent variable of efficacy. Those who reported

having seen bullying “all of the time”, reported the highest level of efficacy ($M = 28.50$, $SD = .707$). Those reporting “sometimes” reported the next highest level ($M = 28.20$, $SD = 2.62$) and those answering “often” reported the next highest level ($M = 28.00$, $SD = 1.92$). Those reporting “rarely” ($M = 27.15$, $SD = 3.50$), and those reporting “never” reported the lowest level of efficacy ($M = 24.00$, $SD = 8.28$).

Social Workers’ Role/Support

R5A. Do teachers identify school social workers as instrumental in helping them to prepare for dealing with bullying in schools?

Sixty-six teachers answered four questions (Q23-Q26) comprising the Teacher Social Work Support measure (RevSWsupp scale). The possible range for the scale was 4-12 with 12 indicating that the teacher felt the most support from the social worker. Participants within this group response ranged from 4-12. Frequencies revealed that teachers reported an average score of 9.10 on the scale ($M=9.10$, $SD=2.77$). One-way ANOVA did not reveal statistical differences between the teachers that reported lower or higher levels of support (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12) from social workers with regard to efficacy ANOVA $F(8, 57) = .698$, $p = .691$, $p > 0.05$. In other words, teachers who felt more supported by their social worker did not have significantly higher efficacy scores.

R5B. Do school social workers identify supporting and educating teachers about bullying as their role within the school environment and/or do they feel capable in this role?

Two questions that the social workers answered regarding their roles in the school created the School Social Work Tasks Scale (RRSWtasks). The range of possible scores for the scale is 5-7. The social workers in this group answered in the range of 5-7. Data were coded as disagree (5), neutral (6) and agree (7). Frequency statistics reveal that the 26 social workers that answered the questions reported an average score of ($M=6.62$, $SD=.697$) indicating a relatively high level of reported support for teachers. One-way ANOVA did not reveal statistical differences between the social workers who reported lower or higher levels on the task scale (5, 6, or 7) with regard to efficacy ANOVA $F(2, 23) = .948$, $p = .403$, $p > 0.05$. Social workers who felt they were doing more in their schools to support teachers and other staff regarding bullying did not have significantly higher efficacy scores than social workers who felt they were not doing as much. Table 8 provides a visual representation of both social workers' and teachers' feelings about the social workers' support role within the school.

Table 8

School Social Workers' Roles/As Perceived by Teachers and Social Workers

Social Worker Assists with Bullying (SW)		
Agree	n=15	58%
Neither Agree or Disagree	n=5	19%
Disagree	n=6	23%
Social Worker Assists with Bullying (Teacher)		
Agree (Always/Most of the time/Sometimes)	n=47	72%
Disagree (Rarely/Never)	n=18	28%
Feel Comfortable Sharing Expertise About Bullying (SW)		
Agree	n=20	77%
Neither agree or disagree	n=2	8%
Disagree	n=4	15%
Social Worker someone I can talk with/bullying (Teacher)		
Agree (Always/Most of the tome/Sometimes)	n=51	77%
Disagree (Rarely/Never)	n=15	23%
Social Worker is a valuable resource (Teacher)		
Agree (Always/Most of the tome/Sometimes)	n=51	77%
Disagree (Rarely/Never)	n=15	23%
Bullying prevention/intervention my responsibility (SW)		
Agree	n=20	77%
Neither agree or disagree	n=2	8%
Disagree	n=4	15%
Social Worker accessible (Teacher)		
Agree (Always/Most of the time/Sometimes)	n=50	76%
Disagree (Rarely/Never)	n=16	24%
I spend majority of time in crisis/little time for prevention (SW)		
Agree	n=8	31%
Neither agree or disagree	n=8	31%
Disagree (Rarely/Never)	n=10	38%

Comparison of School Professionals on Efficacy (Comfort/Confidence)

R6. Which of the professionals in the study report feeling greater efficacy in dealing with bullying in schools?

An independent-samples t-test compared the dependent variable of efficacy for teachers and social workers. The possible range for the efficacy scale was 10-30 with a higher score indicating greater efficacy. Participants in this study answered in the range of 12-30 with an average score ($M = 27.80$, $SD = 3.13$) indicating a relatively high level of reported efficacy for the entire group. There was a significant difference in the efficacy scores for teachers ($M=27.39$, $SD=3.44$) and social workers ($M=28.92$, $SD=1.67$); $t(95)=-2.17$, $p=.033$ $p < .05$. Social workers reported a significantly higher level of efficacy (comfort and confidence) in feeling prepared to deal with bullying than did teachers.

Finally, a side by side comparison of frequency measures of comfort reveals social workers as a group felt more comfortable in all aspects than did teachers (table 9).

Table 9

Comparison of Comfort Variables—Teachers (T) and Social Workers (S)

Are you comfortable with...	Def/Prob Yes		Maybe		Prob/Def Not	
	T	SW	T	SW	T	SW
Talk with bullies without blaming them	55 (77%)	23(88%)	10 (14%)	1 (4%)	6 (9%)	2 (8%)
Make bullies stop bullying	54 (76%)	20 (77%)	12 (17%)	5 (19%)	5 (7%)	1 (4%)
Talk with victims without attributing cause to them	58 (83%)	25 (96%)	8 (11%)	1 (4%)	4 (6%)	-----
Support a bullied student	66 (93%)	26(100%)	2 (3%)	-----	3 (4%)	-----
Talk with onlookers about their responsibility	64 (91%)	26 (100%)	4 (6%)	-----	2 (3%)	-----
Help onlookers to take a more active role to support the victim	64 (90%)	25 (96%)	4 (6%)	1 (4%)	3 (4%)	-----
Work with parents of victims	53 (75%)	24 (92%)	12 (17%)	2 (8%)	6 (8%)	-----
Work with parents of bullies	42 (59%)	23 (88%)	18 (25%)	3 (12%)	11 (16%)	-----

Regression Analysis:

The variables of significance or trending toward significance entered into Multiple Linear Regression were; Empathy, Teacher/Social Worker, Bullying is a Big Problem, Bystander and Additional Training. The overall regression model was significant, $F(5, 90) = 4.9, p < .005, R^2 = .22$. The model accounted for 22% of the variance in efficacy. All coefficients were significant except bullying is a big problem (Tables 10 & 11).

Table 10

Coefficients

sig

not sig

Bystander (per exp)	<i>p=.010</i>	
Teacher/Social Worker	<i>p=.015</i>	
Additional Training	<i>p=.030</i>	
Empathy	<i>p=.035</i>	
Bullying Big Problem		<i>p=.064</i>

Table 11

Predictors of Self-Reported Efficacy

Variable	B	SE B	β
(Constant)	15.631	3.739	
Empathy	.101	.047	.207
Teacher/Social Worker	1.785	.716	.256
Bullying/Big Problem	-1.076	.574	-.185
Bystander	1.015	.387	.251
Additional Training	1.411	.640	.218

Brief Overview of Results

This research revealed that social workers had a significantly higher level of efficacy than did teachers. Additionally, social workers reported higher frequencies on all measures of comfort. None of the independent variables of the study was statistically significant for the dependent variable of efficacy (confidence/comfort) at the .05 significance level. However, the independent variables of empathy, the extent of bullying, bystander and additional training were trending toward significance (Table 12).

In addition, there were differences between the two professional groups on some demographic variables. Specifically, social workers reported higher levels of working in urban schools than did teachers. Teachers reported higher levels of working in their school districts and in suburban and rural schools than did social workers. With regard to other independent variables, social workers reported a higher desire for additional training, higher empathy and a higher incidence of personal experience while teachers reported a higher level of believing bullying is a big problem in their school (Table 13).

Finally, Regression Analysis revealed that significant or nearly significant variables (Bystander, Teacher/Social Worker, Additional Training, Empathy and Bullying is a Big Problem) produced a model that explained 22 % of the variance in Efficacy (Tables 10 & 11). Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the implications of these results.

Table 12

Significant Results for Efficacy

.05 sig

Trending

Teacher/Social Worker Efficacy	<i>p=.033</i>	
Empathy		<i>p=.054</i>
Bullying Big Problem		<i>p=.057</i>
Bystander (per exp)		<i>p=.096</i>
Additional Training		<i>p=.099</i>

Table 13

Comparison of Teachers and Social Workers on Selected Variables with Significance

.05 sig

Trending

Location of School	<i>p=.000</i>	
Personal Experience (Child or Grandchild Victimized)	<i>p=.001</i>	
Bullying a Big Problem	<i>p=.003</i>	
Additional Training	<i>p=.005</i>	
Live in School District	<i>p=.008</i>	
Empathy		<i>p=.052</i>

Chapter Five

Discussion

Introduction

This research has tried to capture social workers' and teachers' feelings about their level of preparedness for dealing with bullying. Chapter 1 presents the problem of bullying and the role that social workers and teachers play with regard to bullying. Additionally, Chapter 1 describes the significance to the field of social work and the guiding research. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature regarding bullying in schools and provides the reader with a history of the work completed as an attempt to address the problem. Additionally, it provides a review of the literature regarding the roles and preparation for dealing with bullying for social workers working in host schools and teachers, and situates it in the field of social work. Chapter 3 presents the methodology for the study, discussion of the selection of the sample for the research, data collection, and protection procedures and data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. This chapter, Chapter 5, presents the discussion of the results, limitations of the study and implications for future practice and research.

This study examined social workers' and teachers' feelings of self-efficacy (preparedness) to deal with bullying in schools and what might account for those feelings. Specifically, the study examined the impact of a number of socio-demographic variables (gender, ethnicity, age, years of experience, educational level, geographic location or grade level of a school, whether a participant lived in or out of the district in which they worked and whether a participant was a social worker or teacher). Additionally, the

study examined several non-demographic independent variables (preparation through either education or professional development, perception about the extent of the problem of bullying within the school, administrative support, empathy and personal experience). Of particular interest, the study examined social workers' feelings about their responsibility for and comfort as an educator and support person for teachers with regard to bullying and teachers feelings about their social worker in that role. Quantitative analysis informed the results of this study.

This study looked at participants' exposure to a variety of training and education as well as their exposure to personal experiences and their feelings about administrative support as well as other factors that might contribute to their feelings of efficacy. The study participants were currently working as educational professionals within a host school environment.

The literature review highlighted extant research, identified gaps related to teachers', and school social workers' feelings of efficacy for dealing with bullying (Dear, 1995; Astor, 1998; Slovak, Joseph & Broussard, 2006; Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan, 2007; Kelly et al., 2009; Slovak & Singer, 2011). Additionally, while research consistently identifies school social workers as educators regarding bullying within the host environment (Biggs, Simpson & Gaus, 2009), their validation of that role or comfort level in it had not been examined. This study adds to the existing literature with regard to how teachers and school social workers perceive their level of efficacy for dealing with bullying and for how school social workers identify themselves with regard to their role in bullying education and support and how teachers identify them. This research can

inform the education and professional development of social workers and teachers regarding bullying. Additionally, it can inform the education and professional development of school social workers as bullying educators within the school environment.

Because this study was exploratory in nature, the researcher examined significance at both the .05 and .10 levels. The most significant finding of the study revealed that social workers felt significantly more efficacious than did teachers. Four of the independent variables were significant at the .10 level. Specifically, the four independent variables that revealed a significant effect on the dependent variable of efficacy were empathy, extent of bullying, bystander and additional training. These results as well as other findings present implications for future research and practice.

Interpretation of Results and Implications for Research and Practice

Efficacy

There was a statistically significant difference between the two professional groups with regard to the dependent variable of efficacy. Social workers reported a higher level of efficacy for dealing with bullying.

Empathy and Efficacy

The level of empathy of teachers and social workers addressed in question three of this study had the most significant effect on the dependent variable of efficacy in dealing with bullying situations. This finding supports the emphasis of bullying education programs on teaching and modeling empathy (Brown et al, 2011; Karna et al., 2011). For

the purpose of this study, the researcher used the Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (Spreng, McKinnon, Mar and Levine, 2009) to evaluate respondents' level of empathy. In addition the research examined whether teachers and school social workers with higher empathy felt efficacious about bullying situations in schools. The Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (Spreng, McKinnon, Mar & Levine (2009) is a multidimensional measurement of the primarily emotional process of empathy. These findings may add to the growing body of knowledge regarding empathy and efficacy for bullying and support additional research to evaluate the contribution of teachers' and school social workers' empathy with regard to bullying.

Perceived Amount of Bullying and Efficacy

The perceived amount of bullying in the respondents' school addressed in question two in this study was a nearly significant predictor of self-efficacy for dealing with bullying. Respondents that believe that bullying is a big problem "most of the time" had significantly lower efficacy scores than those who believed it was a problem sometimes or rarely. Of note, teachers who reported significantly lower efficacy also reported a higher degree of believing bullying is a big problem in their school. These findings may be contradictory with recent research (Duong & Bradshaw, 2013) revealing that perceived threat was positively associated with teachers' likelihood of intervening in bullying situations. However, belief about the amount of bullying may differ from Duong and Bradshaw's construct of threat. Threat in the Duong & Bradshaw (2013) study was defined as "teachers perception of threat that bullying poses to students at their school" (p.424). The Duong & Bradshaw study examined a slightly different and

perhaps more in-depth construct than merely the amount of bullying that is present within a school. Additionally, the use of the word “threat” may illicit more serious consideration by respondents than the use of the word "amount". Additionally, previous research (Marachi et al., 2007) proposed that teachers are less likely to avoid dealing with violent events if they believe violence prevention is a priority in their school. This may indicate a connection to school climate, as may be the belief that bullying is a big problem.

Bystander and Efficacy

The independent variable of bystander had a trending effect on the dependent variable of efficacy. Those who reported having seen bullying “all of the time” reported higher levels of efficacy for dealing with bullying. This finding may support previous research indicating a connection between teacher’s personal experiences with bullying and their reaction to it. Previous research indicated a connection between teachers’ personal experiences with bullying and their reaction to it (Mishna & Alaggia, 2005; Boulton, 1997; Craig, Henderson & Murphy, 2000; Dake, Price, Telljohann & Funk, 2003; Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler & Weiner, 2005). In addition, previous research found a connection with being a bystander and pre-service teacher’s confidence in their ability to identify and manage bullying behavior (Craig, Bell & Leschied 2011). However, social workers were not included in the extent literature. This work may contribute to the knowledge about social workers’ experiences as bystanders and efficacy for dealing with bullying.

Additional Training and Efficacy

Another trending finding of this study addressed the study questions about bullying education. While university preparation or professional development was not statistically significant with regard to efficacy, this study revealed that teachers and school social workers who desire additional training feel less efficacious with regard to bullying. While this finding may be interpreted as lending additional support to previous research (Sawyer & O'Brennan, 2007; Duong & Bradshaw, 2013), it also provides distinct information. Though Sawyer & O'Brennan (2007) reported staff who feel better prepared and Duong & Bradshaw (2013) reported teachers' perceived efficacy as related to likelihood of intervening, neither study specifically examined school social workers' feelings of efficacy as related to bullying.

Previous research efforts found that teachers desired additional training for dealing with bullying (Boulton, 1997; Hazler, Miller, Carney & Green, 2001; Ellis & Shute, 2007; Yoon, 2004; Lawrence & Green, 2005; Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan, 2007) as did social workers (Astor, Behre, Wallace & Fravil, 1998). Additionally, Beran (2006) proposed the need for bullying education in teacher education programs to address knowledge, skills and confidence. The results of the current study revealed that nearly one-third (35%) of respondents reported a need or desire for additional training. Recent research about the inclusion of bullying education into teacher education and school social work programs does not exist. This study contributes to the research knowledge regarding the need for additional training for dealing with bullying.

Personal Experience

This study did find the personal experience of being a bystander as trending toward significant regarding the dependent variable of efficacy in dealing with bullying. Additionally, there was a significant association between teachers and social workers on the personal experience measure of having a child or grandchild who was a victim. Social workers reported a higher incidence of having a child or grandchild who was a victim. Additionally, social workers reported greater efficacy and a higher desire for additional training than did teachers. This may indicate that a higher level of personal experience motivates one to seek answers or perhaps education or training regarding bullying that will help them to feel better prepared. Additional research about whether teachers and school social workers who have had personal experience with bullying and motivation is needed in order to inform practice.

Demographic Variables

None of the demographic variables addressed in this study had a significant effect on the dependent variable of efficacy. Further, while there were significant differences between social workers and teachers in the geographic areas they worked in and whether or not they live in the district they teach in, there was not a significant effect on the dependent variable. These results further support that other factors such as beliefs about school climate (particularly beliefs about the amount of bullying), empathy, personal experience and training and education have a greater impact than demographic variables.

School Social Workers as Bullying Educators

The results of this study related to question five of the research regarding school social workers' identification and confidence as bullying educators and teachers' feelings about them revealed new information that begins to inform practice. While the majority (77%) of social workers felt that bullying intervention and prevention programming was one of their responsibilities at school and that they felt comfortable sharing expertise about bullying with teachers (77%), considerably fewer (58%) reported assisting teachers with bullying. However, this response may have been due to the wording of the question "I assist teachers with bullying programs within their classrooms." A statement less specific to the location of the assistance "within their classrooms" may have gotten a more favorable response. With regard to the other questions in the survey about the social worker as bullying educator, social workers reported their comfort level for educating teachers about bullying at a similar level (77%) as teachers reported social workers as helpful (72%) and supportive (77%). These findings suggest that most social workers are engaging with teachers as bullying educators and that they feel comfortable in doing so. Additional research of this nature, particularly with distinctions between identifying and managing bullying and types of bullying (including cyberbullying) needs to be done to inform practice as well as school social work education programs about what is needed in their curriculum to help prepare school social workers for this role in the school environment.

Regression Model

Finally, regression analysis produced a model of the combined significant or nearly significant variables (Bystander, Teacher/Social Worker, Additional Training, Empathy and Bullying is a Big Problem) which explains 22% of the variance of Efficacy. This model contributes to the knowledge of what factors may predict teachers' and school social workers' feelings of efficacy for dealing with bullying. Consideration of these predictors may inform education and professional development efforts for these professionals. An exploration of additional explanations such as school climate and previous trauma experiences of the professionals may contribute as well.

Limitations

This study has a number of limitations for consideration by the reader. The sample size is adequate for teachers and closely resembles teacher as well as school demographics in the state of Kentucky. However, it did not include schools from all geographic regions (i.e., Eastern Kentucky); therefore, the results are not representative of all Kentucky schools or schools in the United States. Additionally, the study uses a non-random sample of teachers and social workers in Kentucky who volunteered from school systems that agreed to distribute the surveys. In addition to geographic and overall sampling limitations, the sample for social workers was small and because exact numbers of social workers employed or working in schools in Kentucky were unavailable, it is unknown whether the ratio of social workers to teachers is representative of the state. Thus, generalization of results regarding social workers to the state of Kentucky or the U.S. is not possible. Additionally, because this study examined

efficacy of currently employed teachers and social workers, the majority of whom have attended professional development at the school level, it was not possible to examine the effect that university preparation alone had on feelings of efficacy. Furthermore, teacher and social worker self-report alone were used to gather information about school climate. Objective measures of school climate such as attendance, discipline referrals and referrals to school nurses were not gathered. Moreover, because previous research efforts indicate that teachers believe they intervene more often than students believe teachers intervene (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007), lack of student perceptions about teachers and school social workers are also limitations. Finally, study results indicated higher than expected levels of self-efficacy for both teachers and school social workers. Though the voluntary and anonymous nature of the survey may have reduced the potential for social desirability within the sample, there still exists the potential for selection bias. In other words, teachers and school social workers more interested in the topic of school bullying may have been more likely to participate in the survey. Additionally, the group overall scored significantly higher on the empathy scale than previously studied groups. This may indicate a similar phenomenon in that individuals who participate in voluntary surveys may be more likely to be empathetic.

Recommendations

Future research efforts in this area should focus on gathering additional information about the activities in which school social workers engage with teachers as bullying educators and the impact that has on teacher efficacy. Further, more information should be gathered about how social workers and teachers identify their roles with regard

to bullying. Additionally, research efforts which include student reports of teacher and school social worker efficacy and that focus on identifying reasons for discrepancies should be undertaken. Furthermore, additional research efforts should focus on examining the connection between empathy and efficacy in teachers and social workers and whether personal experiences with bullying, particularly being a bystander may be significant. Perhaps mandatory surveys (that require participation by all teachers and social workers) would provide additional information about the connection between empathy, personal experiences and efficacy. Additionally, participants' own traumatic experiences as well as vicarious trauma (Smith, 2012) may influence their feelings of self-efficacy. Future studies should investigate the potential connection between participants' adverse childhood experiences to help explain their comfort/confidence in dealing with bullying.

Given the results regarding beliefs about bullying prevalence and the discrepancy between teacher and student reports, future research should focus on the possible effects of the school culture regarding bullying.

Because of the differences between respondents in their reports of self-efficacy, an examination of the curriculum of university teacher education as compared to school social work programs as well as professional development offerings of each discipline should be undertaken. Finally, future research efforts need to have larger and more representative samples, which would allow more sophisticated analysis.

Appendix A

Sticks and Stones Survey

Q1 Please answer about yourself but do not include your name. Age (in years).

Q2 How many years have you worked in schools?

Q3 Please select your racial and ethnic categories.

- Hispanic or Latino (1)
- Asian (2)
- Black or African American (3)
- White (4)
- American Indian or Alaskan Native (5)
- Other (6)

Q4 Sex

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q5 In what geographic location is the school you work in?

- Urban (1)
- Suburban (2)
- Rural (3)

Q6 Do you live in the school community in which you work?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q7 What type of school do you work in? Select all that apply.

- Elementary (1)
- Middle or Junior High (2)
- High School (3)

Q8 What is your level of education?

- BA or BS (1)
- MA or MS (2)
- PhD (3)
- BSW (4)
- MSW (5)
- MSSW (School Social Work Specialization) (6)

Q9 Do you have a Kentucky Teacher's Certification?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q10 Do you have a Kentucky School Social Worker's Certification?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q11 As a part of your university education, did you receive any specific instruction on bullying?

- yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip to ...Since you started working in school, Q13, if Yes is selected go on to Q12

Q12 What type?

- An entire course (1)
- Infused curriculum in a course (2)
- A lecture (3)
- Workshop (4)
- Reading material (5)
- Assignment (6)

Q13 Since you started working in school, have you received any specialized training in bullying?

- yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip to Q15...Do you feel you need or would you like...if Yes is selected go on to Q14

Q14 What types of trainings have you participated in? Select all that apply.

- I have attended professional development workshops on the subject of bullying/cyberbullying. (1)
- I have gone to a conference about bullying/cyberbullying. (2)
- I have read books or journal articles about bullying/cyberbullying. (3)
- My school has paid for my trainings about bullying/cyberbullying. (4)
- I have paid for my own trainings about bullying/cyberbullying. (5)

Q15 Do you feel you need or would you like additional training about bullying/cyberbullying?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip to Q17...Regarding bullying in your school, please... If Yes is selected go on to Q16

Q16 What type(s) of training do you need? Please type in a response.

Q17 Regarding bullying in your school, please select one response that best describes how you feel about the statement. Bullying is a big problem in my school.

- Always (1)
- Most of the Time (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Rarely (4)
- Never (5)

Q18 Compared to other schools, the level of bullying is:

- Lower (1)
- About the same (2)
- Higher (3)

Q19 The administrators in my school are supportive and encouraging.

- Always (1)
- Most of the Time (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Rarely (4)
- Never (5)

Q20 It is easy to talk to my principal or other administrators if I have a problem with bullying.

- Always (1)
- Most of the Time (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Rarely (4)
- Never (10)

Q21 I feel that the administrative team at my school does the best that they can to address the problem of bullying.

- Always (1)
- Most of the Time (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Rarely (4)
- Never (5)

Q22 Are you a social worker?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip to Q28...Regarding your role in the school(s) ... If No is Selected go on to Q23

Q23 Regarding the Social Worker(s) in your school, please check one response that best describes how you feel about the statement. The social worker at my school is supportive and assists me with addressing issues about bullying.

- Always (1)
- Most of the Time (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Rarely (4)
- Never (5)

Q24 The social worker in my school is someone I can talk with if I have a problem with bullying.

- Always (1)
- Most of the Time (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Rarely (4)
- Never (5)

Q25 The social worker at my school is a valuable resource to me.

- Always (1)
- Most of the Time (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Rarely (4)
- Never (5)

Q26 The social worker at my school is accessible when I need help.

- Always (1)
- Most of the Time (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Rarely (4)
- Never (5)

Q27 Are you a teacher?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If No is selected and you are a social worker, go on to Q28

Q28 Regarding your role in the school(s) you work in, please select one response that best describes how you feel about the statement. I spend the majority of my time on crisis situations and have little time for the prevention of bullying.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly Disagree (5)

Q29 Bullying prevention and intervention programming is one of my responsibilities at school.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly Disagree (5)

Q30 I assist teachers with bullying programs within their classrooms.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly Disagree (5)

Q31 I feel comfortable sharing my expertise about bullying with teachers and other school staff.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly Disagree (5)

Q32 For the purpose of the remaining questions, the following definition applies: Bullying is a behavior which: (1) Is an attack or intentionally causes harm; (2) Is done in a physical or psychological way; (3) Is done repeatedly; (4) Is from the stronger towards the weaker, there is a power imbalance. Were you ever bullied when you were in school?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

If Never Is Selected, Then Skip to Q 36 -Have the following people ever been b...

Q33 Was the bullying spoken about with your teacher?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q34 Did your teacher help you about that bullying.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q35 Were you satisfied with the teacher's help?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q36 Have the following people ever been bullied when they were at school? Your siblings?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't have any (3)

Q37 Your children or grandchildren?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't have any (3)

Q38 Did you ever bully others when you were a student in school?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

If Never Is Selected, Then Skip to Q41- Have the following people ever bullied...

Q39 Was the bullying spoken about with your teacher?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q40 Did talking about it with your teacher make you reduce or stop the bullying?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q41 Have the following people ever bullied others when they were in school? Your siblings?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't have any (3)

Q42 Your children or grandchildren?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I don't have any (3)

Q43 Did you ever see someone being bullied when you were a student at school?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

If Never Is Selected, Then Skip to Q45- The following questions apply to your...

Q44 Did the teacher do something to stop the bullying?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q45 The following questions apply to your current role in the school. Do you feel comfortable with doing the following activities? Talk with bullies without blaming them?

- Definitely yes (1)
- Probably yes (2)
- Maybe (3)
- Probably not (4)
- Definitely not (5)

Q46 Make bullies stop bullying?

- Definitely yes (1)
- Probably yes (2)
- Maybe (3)
- Probably not (4)
- Definitely not (5)

Q47 Talk with victims without attributing the cause to them?

- Definitely yes (1)
- Probably yes (2)
- Maybe (3)
- Probably not (4)
- Definitely not (5)

Q48 Support a bullied student?

- Definitely yes (1)
- Probably yes (2)
- Maybe (3)
- Probably not (4)
- Definitely not (5)

Q49 Talk with onlookers about their responsibility?

- Definitely yes (1)
- Probably yes (2)
- Maybe (3)
- Probably not (4)
- Definitely not (5)

Q50 Help onlookers to take a more active role to support the victim?

- Definitely yes (1)
- Probably yes (2)
- Maybe (3)
- Probably not (4)
- Definitely not (5)

Q51 Work with parents of victims?

- Definitely yes (1)
- Probably yes (2)
- Maybe (3)
- Probably not (4)
- Definitely not (5)

Q52 Work with parents of bullies.

- Definitely yes (1)
- Probably yes (2)
- Maybe (3)
- Probably not (4)
- Definitely not (5)

Q53 For the following questions, please select how much you agree with the following statements. I feel confident in identifying bullying.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly Disagree (5)

Q54 I feel confident in managing bullying.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly Disagree (5)

Q55 My university education prepared me to manage bullying.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly Disagree (5)

Q56 I wanted to learn more about bullying in my university education.

- Strongly Agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly Disagree (5)

Q57 For the following questions please read each statement carefully and rate how frequently you feel or act in the manner described. When someone else is feeling excited, I tend to get excited too.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q58 Other people's misfortunes do not disturb me a great deal.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q59 It upsets me to see someone being treated disrespectfully.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q60 I remain unaffected when someone close to me is happy.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q61 I enjoy making other people feel better.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q62 I have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q63 When a friend starts to talk about his/her problems, I try to steer the conversation towards something else.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q64 I can tell when others are sad even when they do not say anything.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q65 I find I am "in tune" with other people's moods.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q66 I do not feel sympathy for people who cause their own serious illness.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q67 I become irritated when someone cries.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q68 I am not really interested in how other people feel.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q69 I get a strong urge to help when I see someone who is upset.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q70 When I see someone being treated unfairly, I do not feel much pity for them.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q71 I find it silly for someone to cry out of happiness.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

Q72 When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards him/her.

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Sometimes (3)
- Often (4)
- All of the Time (5)

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Curriculum Vitae

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Professional Experience

Clinical Manager, Residential Services, Lindner Center of Hope, Mason, OH, Spring 2018-Present

Program Director IOP & Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehab, Diamond Healthcare Corporation, Cadiz, KY, 2011-2018

Instructor, Brescia University, Owensboro, KY, 2011-Present

Therapist, Cornerstone Counseling, Hopkinsville, KY, 2010-2013

Assistant Professor/School Social Work Coordinator, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, IN, 2006-2011

Therapist, Pennyroyal Center, Princeton, KY, 2006-2010 & 1998-1999

Visiting Assistant Professor, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY, 2004-2006

Family Resource Center Coordinator, Trigg County Schools, Cadiz, KY, 1999-2004

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