A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY ON THE PERSPECTIVES OF PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS REGARDING ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF THEIR CHILDREN’S SCHOOLS

A Project

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by

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Abstract

of

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY ON THE PERSPECTIVES OF PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS REGARDING ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF THEIR CHILDREN’S SCHOOLS

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Lucia J. Hutchison

The purpose of this descriptive study is to examine the perspectives of parents and caregivers regarding their children’s experience with bullying in their schools and the anti-bullying policies and procedures followed by the schools. This study included 32 parents and caregivers who have a child in the 9th -12th grade within the Woodland Unified School District. Results indicate that parents and caregivers are aware that bullying affects their children’s education but unaware of the policies and procedures their children’s schools have in effect to combat the issue. While majority of the participants were aware of their children’s schools’ anti-bullying policy, 40.6% of the parents and caregivers were not aware of any anti-bullying policies of their children’s schools.
Results from this study indicate the importance of continued research into the growing issue of school bullying and how crucial it is to have parents and caregivers involved and aware of the school anti-bullying policies and procedures that directly affect themselves and their children.

___________________________, Committee Chair
Jude M. Antonyappan, Ph.D.

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Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Bullying in schools within the United States is affecting approximately one in three children (Smokowski and Kopasz, 2005). Victims of school bullying may suffer from anxiety and depression. They become less involved in school and are at risk for dropping out (Chaux et. al., 2009). Bullying has even left children feeling the only way out is to take their own life. Bullying leaves children feeling isolated from their peers and their own school. When a child comes to school they want to learn, have fun, and make friends. School is a place where children can express themselves. They can choose to play an instrument, take art classes, or play a sport. The varieties of activities a child can chose to be part of become not important to a child being bullied. School becomes that last place on earth that a child will want to go to if they have to face their perpetrator on a daily basis. Playing a sport, art class, or hanging with a friend at lunch time becomes terrifying. Bullying is a subject that everyone can speak to and most likely has had to endure throughout their school years. The topic of bullying is continuing to grow and it has reached a critical point in society. This study explains attitudes and perspectives towards school bullying.

Background of the Problem

The topic of bullying and the negative consequences bullying may entail has been researched by several authors. Studies focusing on the subject of bullying explored and
explained to their audiences that bullying is not an issue that exists only within the walls of the classroom. Bullying can and does follow children throughout life and can be detrimental to their mental health.

Children who are bullied at school commonly fear going to school because of the daily harassment but physiologically their bodies begin to be effected as well. Victims of school bullying may suffer from anxiety and depression. They become less involved in school and are at risk for dropping out (Chaux et. al., 2009). Bullying can leave children with short-term and long-term effects, but these effects can be detrimental. Bullying in schools bring daily suffering and a fearful life that millions of school-aged children encounter every day. Children who suffer from bullying at their schools have been reported to be generally lonely, unhappy, and displayed dislike of school (Handegard, Nabuzoka, and Ronning, 2009).

The authors that focus their studies on the topic of bullying want to convey to their audience that bullying is not a singular focus. Bullying is an issue that expands beyond the classroom into these children’s mental health. Authors have examined how school administrators and teachers deal with bullying. Research has shown that anti-bullying policies, which consist of qualified staff development combined with ongoing, effective training in and education about new policies will lead to effective implementation (Terry, 2010). In order for school to be able to implement effective anti-bullying policies, schools need to create long-term prevention strategies to affect change. In most schools there have been requirements made for teachers, administrators, and staff
to implement consequences for bullying and harassment, and to provide prevention programs to students (Terry, 2010). There is growing evidence that bullying has a profound and pervasive effect on the learning environment of a school (Whitted and Dupper, 2005).

Having anti-bullying policies and procedures are all important aspects that schools need to have covered, but in reality there are school personal that don’t know what to do when a bulling situation arises. Author Terry (2010) examined the South Carolina Safe School Climate Act that was enacted into a law in June 2006. The law was to address the concern over bullying in their public schools. The law was intended to limit and punish harassment, intimidation, or bullying among public school student in their state (Terry, 2010). There were about 120 South Carolina schools officials, including teachers, administrators, and district staff members were surveyed about the Safe Schools Climate Act. Although almost half of the individuals surveyed held a master’s degree in school leadership and felt that they were aware of the schools Safe Climate Act, answered “no” or “don’t know” when asked if the Safe Climate Act exerts the necessary pressure on schools and school districts when addressing school bullying and harassment (Terry, 2010).

Other researchers have performed studies that show the lack of school teacher and staff involvement when bullying situations arise on from t of them. When children have behavioral problems they tend to divert instructional time from other students and thus creating difficulties for the teachers and other people within the classroom (Bosacki,
Marini, & Dane, 2006). In one research study a respondent wrote “children will be children” and as long as there are children, there will always be teasing, and harassment. Teachers felt that even though it was inappropriate behaviors, it was understandable for children (Terry, 2010). Although bullying seems to be viewed by teachers and other school officials to be a casual encounter between children, it should be dealt with properly and effectively, so not to happen again.

Within the research conducted on the topic of bullying it was evident that cyber-bullying was a focus that many research wanted to expand. In today’s society there is internet access to almost every child. Bullying over the internet or through other electronic devices are just more ways and easier access to victimize other children. Juvonen and Gross (2008), expanded on prior research regarding cyber bullying. The researchers wanted to find out whether cyberspace operates at a high risk environment that is separate from the borders of schools. Their research allowed them to single out and recruit to obtain relatively high internet users, who are at the highest risk of cyber bullying. It was predicted that when controlling the time spent online, repeated school-based bullying encounters would increase the possibility of being a target of repeated online bullying.

With the high rate of one in three children being bullying at school and the increasing access to cyber-bully it is important to explore how parents and caregivers are dealing with the issues within the home environment. Author Anna Baldry focused her study on the role of parents and how a supportive family could decrease the harmful
effects of bullying. The negative impact, whether it being direct or indirectly bullying others and being victimized has on the mental and physical health of children can be decreased by a positive relationship with one or both parents (Baldry, 2004). When one or both parents are more involved with their children it is expected to protect against victimization, reducing the risk of developing poor mental and physical health. Social support is not only including parental support. Baldry (2004) also explored the idea that having a strong social support with the child’s school will reduce the negative consequences of bullying.

Previous researchers have been able to show readers that bullying in schools is a serious and very relevant topic in today’s society. Children who are bullied are not only going to struggle developmentally and possibly suffer long-term consequences, but they are also going to have a hard time managing educationally, socially, and psychologically during school. The topic of bullying is of course important and relevant to study but in particular the parents and caregivers perspectives should be researched to try to get a better understanding of what they know and what they might be missing.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to show the terrifying effects bullying can have on children and that service providers, parents and caregivers, and school administrators need to find better ways of dealing with this epidemic. School victimization not only affects the bully but it has negative effects on the perpetrator, and the children who have to witness it on a daily basis. The last thing parents and caregivers want their children
want their child to experience is daily torment. Bullying can be hard to detect and it becomes much harder when there is a child that has shut the world out and is living day to day in fear.

Surveying parents and caregivers on their perspectives of how they feel their child’s school effectively deals with bullying is an important focus within the field of social work. Most social workers goals are to help families who are lacking in skills necessary with raising well-adjusted children. With research showing evidence that families are a main foundation to the way a child coops with victimization at school, it is important for social workers to be aware and know how to effectively work with family struggling with understanding bullying. Bullying in school is a continuously growing issue within a large majority of families and it is important to find ways of helping both the family and school personnel combat the issue.

**Theoretical Framework**

Bullying in schools can make children, families, and schools feel they are in a constant battle. Possibly one of the best ways to combat bullying within the school system is to approach it from every angle using the theoretical model of systems approach. The best way to help students be better equipped to deal with bullying is to give them the skills they will need to change their overall climate of the campus. Focusing on the individual being targeted through bullying is the traditional way of confronting bullying, but developing more effective ways to handle the overall demand
of school violence that will set a standard throughout the school; essentially schools wants aim to bully-proof the school and decrease the fear.

Having a systems approach within schools would encompass have five key components; teachers and other staff, caring majority of students, bullies, victims, and parent community (Garrity, & Jens. (1997). The first element involving teachers and other staff members is pertaining to the degree that students should feel that they can approach any teacher when a bullying incident has occurred. Often students do not feel they have someone at school that they can go to, so they keep silent. Teachers would also be able to distinguish between a normal everyday conflict and a bully-victim situation.

The second component would be focused on the student population. Within the school setting it is the student bodies that creates and maintains the climate of the school, therefore in order to use a systems approach the student are at the core of the issue. When students have the skills to assist their peers who are victims of bully it shifts the power away from eth bully and on the students. Thirdly, the bullies should be a focus for attention within schools trying to use the systems approach. Bullies have a need for power and many of these children can be taught successful ways of using their positive strengths for leadership abilities. Punishment is unfortunately a common avenue used on bullies and it typically is unsuccessful.

The fourth components are the victims of bullying. The victims often feel a constant sense of blame, believing that they must have done something wrong to be victimized by their peers at school. These victims need guidance, support, and a place
where they can be able to increase their social and interpersonal skills. The fifth and last component of using the system approach with in school is creating a community with the parents. Parents have a great sense of relief when they know that their child is safe and that staff know how to intervene and take control. Parents should also know how to differentiate a normal conflict between peers or a bullying incident. When parents know how to recognize these situations within their children and appropriately intervene, anxiety and fear will decrease making the overall environment of the school more productive (Garrity, & Jens., (1997).

A second theoretical framework that can be used within schools is the idea of empowerment approach. The idea of giving bullying victims the power to take control of the situation is a very basic idea. Arnold (2007) discussed the study that focused on the concepts of empowerment and behavior within schools. The study wanted to test of three propositions that might lead to fewer bulling incidences with schools. The three components were; adapting prevention and management strategies that include parents and caregivers are more effective; having organizational tools and structures that will facilitate effective communication about approaches to bullying are more effective; and schools that are using and enforcing a whole school approach and management strategies are more effective.

Using the empowerment approach within schools is essential in creating a safe environment where students feel they can learn and have fun within the fear associated
with bullying. When children and their parents feel that they are involved and are being listened to, the climate of the schools becomes more positive.

Bullying can cause deep sadness and torment for some children who may endure bullying on a daily basis. There are even instances where a child has taken their own life. When a death takes place, it is important for a school to have crisis interventions set up within the walls of the school to help other students and school officials deal with their emotions. Crisis planning and preparedness can address the traumatic effects and provide short-term treatment for those affected (Knox, & Roberts. 2005).

Schools should have in place a School Crisis Response Model for the instances of a major event or tragedy that happens with a student. There are three levels of interventions that should be in place. The first is called a primary intervention. Within the school, the primary intervention level expects that there is an emergency and evacuation plan set in place, prevention programs, support services, and a crisis intervention plan.

The second level of intervention is the secondary intervention. The secondary intervention level includes; activate school crisis plan and teams, emergency and evacuation procedures, notification and communication, and debriefing and demobilizing short-term crisis counseling. The last level of intervention a school should have in place is the tertiary intervention. This level includes; referrals for long-term counseling or other support services, memorialization needs for the death of a student, follow-up with school crisis team members, and practice evaluation of interventions and programs (Knox, & Roberts. 2005).
Justification

It is well noted that bullying affects every child within the school system. Whether this child is directly affected through physical or emotional victimization or they witness their friend being bullied every day, and out of fear they remain silent. In some instances a child may even decide to end their own life due to the emotional torture they have to feel. Some of these children have families that are equipped with the necessary skills to help their child cope with the victimization but there are also some children that do not have the appropriate support system at home. There are also schools that have anti-bullying policies and procedures set up in place that are designed to combat bullying, but when this school does not encompass the whole system approach their policy can be useless.

This project aims to uncover the perspectives of parents and caregivers regarding their child’s schools anti-bullying policies and procedures. This project is aimed to discover whether these parents and caregivers know if their child’s school has an anti-bullying police in place and have they ever had to deal with their child being bullied. Uncovering what the parents and caregivers don’t know and what they want to know more of is a giant step towards the right direction of incorporating an effective battle against bullying in schools.

A fourth important theory and relevant within today’s mental health profession is focusing on providing a client-centered therapy to clients. Over sixty years ago client-centered therapy was introduced by the psychologist Carl Rogers and it was a contrast to
the behavioral and psychoanalytic theories that were domain at that time. Client-centered therapy also known as person-centered therapy can be explained very simply and its title gives a huge clue. Therapists providing client-centered therapy lets the client tell their own story at their own pace, using the therapeutic relationship in their own way (Client-centered therapy, 2006).

Therapists who are using client-centered therapy with their clients are allowing them to tell their story because they know more about themselves than anyone else. A main goal is to create an atmosphere where the client feels comfortable enough to express their thoughts and feelings with the idea they are being understood and not judged. With children who are being bullied they often begin to have a sense of not belonging and can become isolated within their world. Client-centered therapy would allow these children to have a safe environment that nurtures self-growth and self-actualization (Client-centered therapy, 2006).

When using client-centered therapy with a client the therapist hopes that the client will find their own answers to their issues. It gives the clients the power and independence to be themselves and have approval of self. Client-centered therapy is a permissive and indirect approach and could be very beneficial and freeing to a child that is being victimized at school.

Assumptions

It is safe to say that most people know just how significant a parents or caregiver role is with the development of their child. It is also safe to say that the school system is
the second most important role in a child’s life ages 5 to 18 years old. The school system a child is enrolled in should be dedicated to the safety and wellbeing of every child. Unfortunately, schools are increasing in size and it becomes hard to patrol campuses and enforce the policies that were put in place.

**Limitations**

In order for the researcher to gain knowledge on parents and caregivers perspective of anti-bullying policies and procedures at their child’s school, a non-random convenience sample was used. Due to the researchers chosen research design the findings cannot be generalized to any other population and holds a limited external validity because of the non-random small sampling. The researcher chose to survey participants at the same time every day of data collection because it was convenient; therefore, creating limited external validity. If the researcher happened to choose different days and at different times during the day to survey participants there would be more validity to the data collected and a better chance of getting varied attitudes and perspectives towards bullying.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents the themes that emerged through the review of literature about bullying over the span of two decades. The literature used in this chapter was accessed using the database and article searching site Academic Search Premier (EBSCO) from California State University of Sacramento online library database. The following themes that emerged from the literature reviewed are; bullying, a growing problem with the school system, emergence of cyber-bullying as a serious threat, teachers and other school administrator’s response and perspective of school bulling, bullying classifications and their consequences, and parents and caregiver response to the needs of their children.

School bullying is a topic of discussion that is gaining recognition more frequently throughout most societies in the United States. Bully causes children to living in fear and can leave them with more scares than one. Within this literature review it is important to give its readers an understanding of just how devastating constant victimization can be for children. An exploration of what teachers and other school administrator’s perspectives are on the topic of bullying is important to explore. It is also important to explain that there are more than one type of bullying and how each type has its own consequences. Also, examining the affects bullying can have on the physical, emotional, social, and educational aspects of a child’s life is crucial and those aspects are
discussed throughout. Cyber-bullying is also a point of focus due to the fact that increasing technology use among children; the easier it is for them to be victimized. One of the main themes within this literature review is the topic of parents and caregivers perspectives regarding bullying. Parents are caregivers are on the forefront of their child’s bullying experience. What are parents doing, not doing, or making it worse for their children when they are being bullied at school. Will children who come from supportive families have an easier time enduring bullying from their peers, or does that matter at all? Bullying in schools is going to happen no matter how well equipped parents are at dealing with it. Getting a better understand of how schools, children, parents and caregivers are dealing with this growing problem will only increase the awareness and bring about a discussion of what else can be done.

**Bullying, a growing problem with the school system**

School bullying is currently and has been a well-researched topic in our society. Bullying in our schools can and does have many negative consequences (Chaux, Molano, & Podlesky, 2009). There has extensive research on the importance of a whole-school approach to combating bullying in schools (Bauman, Rigby, & Hoppa, 2008). Bullying in school within the United States is affecting approximately one in three children (Smokowski and Kopasz, 2005). Victims of school bullying may suffer from anxiety and depression. They become less involved in school and are at risk for dropping out (Chaux et. al., 2009). According to Smokowski and Kopasz (2005), bullying is usually defined as a “form of aggression in which one or more children intend to harm or disturb another
child who is perceived as being unable to defend himself or herself” (pg.101). Bullying can leave children with short-term and long-term effects, but these effects can be detrimental. Bullying in schools bring daily suffering and a fearful life that millions of school-aged children encounter every day. According to Baldry (2004), “bullying in school is defined as a malicious repeated action inflicted by a more powerful person, or group of persons, over someone else perceived as weaker” (pg 343). It has also been defined as being a moral issue, meaning that it involves intending to do hard to another person (Bosacki, Marini, & Dane, 2006). As literature on the topic of bullying is research it becomes obvious that there is not one definition that fits perfectly, but they are all reinstating the devastating truth of the issue. Bullying has been described as being a phenomenon, it is not easily defined and measured (Hamarus, & Kaikkonen, 2008)

Bullying in schools is an issue that almost every child will have to experience at some point in their education. Children victimized by being bullied have been reported to be generally lonely, unhappy, and displayed dislike of school (Handegard, Nabuzoka, and Ronning, 2009). Bullying not only makes school miserable for its victims, but it can have physical, emotional, educational, and social impacts that can be devastating to the development of the child.

**Emergence of cyber-bullying as a serious threat**

A child being victimized in school is not the only realm that bullying can occur. Today’s fast paced social networkers within societies youth is and can cause just as much harm as being bullied on campus. Cyber bullying is just an easier way to single out and
target children’s peers Juvonen and Gross (2008) wanted to research the risk factors associated with repeated intimidating online experiences, and the possible overlapping and connection between bully encountered in school and online. Juvonen and Gross (2008), expanded on prior research regarding cyber bullying. The researchers wanted to find out whether cyberspace operates at a high risk environment that is separate from the borders of schools. Their research allowed them to single out and recruit to obtain relatively high internet users, who are at the highest risk of cyber bullying. It was predicted that when controlling the time spent online, repeated school-based bullying encounters would increase the possibility of being a target of repeated online bullying. It was also tested whether the use or lack of use with any specific electronic tools or communication methods might place youth at additional risk for cyber bullying. It was also important to discuss the validity of certain assumptions (1) the distress associated with cyber bullying, (2) the anonymity of online victimization, and (3) the low occurrence of reporting incidents to adults. Additionally, it was examined to what extent that internet users relayed on methods afforded by electronic communication systems to help prevent online bullying (Juvonen and Gross, 2008).

Juvonen and Gross (2008) also wanted to examine the strength of certain assumptions about (1) the distress accompanied with cyber bullying, (2) the anonymity of online harassment, and (3) the low occurrence or reporting bullying incident to adults. They also wanted to explore to what degree youth were taking to protect themselves from further harassment online. Juvonen and Gross (2008) discovered that the distress level of
online and off-line experiences of bullying overlapped. They were interested in whether cyber bullying incidents were related to social anxiety over and above bullying experienced at school. It was discovered that online bullying is associated with elevated levels of distress similar to encounters of bullying incidents in schools. The anonymity of online bullying was discovered that 73% of the studies respondents felt they were “pretty sure” or “totally sure” of the identity of their perpetrator of harassment. It was reported that 51% or respondents experienced online bullying from a schoolmate, 43% from someone they knew only online, and 20% by someone they knew of off-line but not at school. Lastly, it was not surprisingly discovered that most youth (90%) are not telling an adult of the cyber bullying they experience. When respondents were asked to give a reason for not telling an adult of the bullying a common belief (50%) felt they “need to learn to deal with it” by themselves. A second common reason for not informing an adult (31%) was they were concerned that their parents might find out and then restrict their internet use. Another important finding to add was that about one third of 12- to- 14-year-olds responded that they did not tell an adult about the online bullying because they were sacred they could get in trouble with their parents. Fear seemed to be an underlying concern for youth, especially girls, from sharing their harassment experiences with adults (Juvonen and Gross, 2008).

With technology becoming far more advanced it is important to study the links between school-based and online bullying because they are most certainly happening at the same time and are having equally destructive consequences. Juvonen and Gross,
(2008) discuss how there is no reason why cyberbullying should be beyond the school’s responsibility to address the issue. Whether bullying is happening online or on the school groups it is the schools responsibility to enforce tolerance of any intimidation among students.

Whether cyberbullying or campus bullying is the topic being discussed it is important to try and understand why 31 percent of children are not reporting to adults once harassment has occurred (Juvonen and Gross, 2008). It is also important to find out why some teachers believe bully-victims deserve the bullying they receive from peers and why teachers are less likely to intervene (Burrow-Conners, Johnson, Mansell-Whiteside, et al 2009).

Teachers and other school administrator’s response and perspective of school bullying

Are school teachers and other officials modeling appropriate behaviors and using effective interventions when working with children who bully? Research has shown that anti-bullying policies, which consist of qualified staff development combined with ongoing, effective training in and education about new policies will lead to effective implementation (Terry, 2010). In order for school to be able to implement effective anti-bullying policies, schools need to create long-term prevention strategies to affect change. In most schools there have been requirements made for teachers, administrators, and staff to implement consequences for bullying and harassment, and to provide prevention programs to students (Terry, 2010). There is growing evidence that bullying has a
profound and pervasive effect on the learning environment of a school (Whitted and Dupe\,r, 2005).

The South Carolina Safe School Climate Act was enacted into a law in June 2006. The law was to address the concern over bullying in their public schools. The law was intended to limit and punish harassment, intimidation, or bullying among public school student in their state. (Terry, 2010). Roughly 120 South Carolina schools officials, including teachers, administrators, and district staff members were surveyed about the Safe Schools Climate Act. Although almost half of the individuals surveyed held a master’s degree in school leadership and felt that they were aware of the schools Safe Climate Act, answered “no” or “don’t know” when asked if the Safe Climate Act exerts the necessary pressure on schools and school districts when addressing school bullying and harassment (Terry, 2010).

Research has shown that evaluating individual teacher responses to bullying is an important factor to take into consideration. It has been identified that there is a wide range of how teachers perceive and response to incidents of bullying. Maunder, Harrop, & Tattersall (2010), found that there are a significant variability of attitudes among teachers who feel that among secondary school children there is not always a disparity of power between bullies and their victims, or the intention of doing harm. Other studies have also shown the lack of school teacher and staff involvement in regards to bullying. When children have behavioral problems they tend to divert instructional time from other students and thus creating difficulties for the teachers and other people within the
classroom (Bosacki, Marini, & Dane, 2006). One respondent wrote “children will be children” and as long as there are children, there will always be teasing, harassment, etc. Teachers felt that even though it was inappropriate behaviors, it was understandable for children. (Terry, 2010). Classroom level interventions are including encouraging teachers to integrate bullying prevention materials into their curriculum (Whitted and Dupper, 2005).

Collectively, these different surveys have demonstrated the importance of school teachers and staff responses in preventing and intervening with bullying behaviors (Yoon, 2004). The lack of concern for bullying and harassing in schools from school teachers and other staff members can have a negative effect on their students. Yoon (2004) believes that extended research into the topic of the lack of administrator support should be studied in order to evaluate the roles in the prevention of and intervention in students’ bullying. In England, the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) has incorporated whether their schools have issues around bullying, and whether these schools have taken measures to combat the issue, which includes a policy (Samara, & Smith, 2008)

Helplessness is a feeling that many bully victims often experience. A reason why so many victims feel helpless following a bullying confrontation may be the result of the often widespread skepticism on the part of teachers and school administrations in regard to bullying and its seriousness, and their inability or unwillingness to support and protect bully victims (Borg, 1998). Borg (1998), reports a study of attitudes towards bullying among 172 secondary school teachers showed that there is a tendency for teachers to
underestimate bullying as a problem and to dismiss most bullying confrontations as ‘trivial’ and not worthy of ‘making a fuss’ about. Social support from teachers, peers, and parents can reduce the negative consequences of bullying (Baldry, 2004). The consequences of teachers’ attitudes regarding bullying on campus as an everyday occurrence that all children need to experience to grow up is gradually leading the victim into a state of helplessness (Borg, 1998).

Different approaches to help tackle bullying have been developing over the past decades. An idea starting in Scandinavia in the early 1980’s, focused on the idea that it is the responsibility of the school and not the responsibility of the child to handle it on their own. These programs were aimed at preventing bullying rather than dishing out consequences. They were focusing on the behaviors and the immediate effects those behavior were having. This approach was easier finding the less noticeable underlying causes and the possible long-term effects of the individuals (Bullies and Their Victims, 2001). When schools are aware that bullying has become a phenomenon, they can begin to focus on prevention programs and other interventions to deal with the issue (Hamarus, & Kaikkonen, 2008).

Schools within the United Stated are trying to adopt this strategy. The main idea around this approach is to change the schools climate and let students know that bullying will not be tolerated. The school starts with a declaration that you have a right as a student not to be bullied and a responsibility to not remain silent. Parents are also informed of this approach and that the school is on a mission to end bullying. Other
aspects of this approach will include training for school teachers and administrators. This may also include, monitoring the classroom by teachers, class discussions around the topic of bullying, support services for bullying victims, and reinforcement of the policy. Hopefully if this approach is successful it will lead bullying victims to come forward (Bullies and Their Victims, 2001).

**Bullying classifications and their consequences**

When discussing bullying the victims are not the only individuals who should be focused on. According to Conners-Burrow, Johnson, Whiteside-Mansell, et al (2009), there are four classifications of children that are and should be defined around the discussion of bullying at school. The four classifications are: victims, bullies, bully-victims (i.e., children who are both bullies and who are involved in bulling others), and children who are not involved. It has been researched that there are general differences within these children based on the classification that they fall into. One example is that the children’s age and gender are related to their classification. Boys tend to be more likely to be a perpetrator of bullying that are girls and the likelihood of a child falling into the classification of the bully-victim group will decrease as the child gets older (Conners-Burrow, Johnson, Whiteside-Mansell, et al 2009).

The first classification of being a victim of bullying has been discussed in this literature to some extent already. Children who are victims of bulling will show negative side effects of this occurrence. Victims are more commonly known to show evidence of internalized psychosocial behaviors. These children may show signs of being quiet or
withdrawn, depressed, or anxious (Conners-Burrow, Johnson, Whiteside-Mansell., et al 2009). Victims of bullying are known to be less socially accepted by their peers than children who fall into the other three classification groups. These children are seen to be the most rejected by their peers, and victims have reported that they have very few friends, and school is often felt to be a lonely and unhappy place.

The second classification is the group assigned for bullies. Bullies are the children feared at school. Children who fall into this group are aggressive, dominant, and impulsive. Students who classify as bullies are also at a higher risk of developing criminal behavior as compared to younger adults (Thornberg, 2010). Bullies know what they are doing and are very deliberate in their actions towards other students. These children tend to seek out their victims, and are goal oriented in their aggression. Bullies are opposite of their victims peers, studies show that bullies are commonly accepted by their peers, and seem to show positive relationships with peers that are not involved with bullying (Conners-Burrow, Johnson, Whiteside-Mansell., et al 2009). Bullies have been shown to be psychologically stronger than their classmates not involved with bullying, and that enables them to enjoy the high status within their class (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003).

Bully-victims are another group that is classified as being both a bully and a victim. Children that fit into this group are shown to have the least positive psychosocial outcome. Bully-victims have similar characteristics as bullies, but it has been studied that bully-victims are different in the way that they victimize other students. Bully-victims are
more aggressive and act more impulsively. They often tend to become more physically aggressive with their peers and are more reactive and less goal-oriented than bullies. Children that are classified as being bully-victims tend to have fewer friends than the group of bullies. Bully-victims are also different than victims because they are the group that tends to be more frequently physically victimized. It has been reported that teachers and students feel that bully-victims deserve to be bullied, and teachers are less likely to intervene when bully-victims are being victimized (Conners-Burrow, Johnson, Whiteside-Mansell., et al 2009).

It is important to explain that victims of bullying can experience direct or indirect bullying from their peers. Direct forms of bullying can be physical and verbal abuse. The bully will become physical by kicking, punching, hitting, and name calling toward their victim. Indirect forms of bullying can be psychological and relational, where the bully will spread rumors, and exclude someone on purpose (Baldry, 2004).

One of the most important factors that should be addressed when discussing bullying is that every part of the victim’s life can be affected. Being a perpetrator or victim of bullying has negative long- and short-term consequences on the general health and wellbeing of a child (Baldry, 2004). Having a poor mental and physical condition could be contributed to being victimized at school. Perpetrators of bullying can be an indicator of maladjustment and could be linked to poor health due to the stress that is attached (Baldry, 2004).
Parents and caregivers response to the needs of their children

In terms of bullies, parents tend to be less involved and supportive of their children than parents of children that don’t target and bully others. This lack of parental support leads to poorer parent-child relationships and a greater feeling of insecurity and anxiety (Baldry, 2004).

In reference to physical health, Baldry (2004) states that victims of persistence bullying develop a series of somatic complaints, including headaches and stomach aches, as a consequence of the physical pain and psychological stress brought on at school, and often require medical attention (pg. 344). Bullies and their victims also have worse physical health overall, compared to students that are not involved. Females also reporting more problems than males (Baldry, 2004)

The negative impact, whether it being direct or indirectly bullying others and being victimized has on the mental and physical health of children can be lessened by a positive relationship with one or both parents (Baldry, 2004). When one or both parents are more involved with their children it is expected to protect against victimization, reducing the risk of developing poor mental and physical health. Social support is not only including parental support. Social support by teachers and peers can reduce the negative consequences of bullying, especially in the children most at risk (Baldry, 2004).

Baldry (2004), found that social support has a mitigating positive effect on being victimized, decreasing its negative consequences. Studies have shown that the moderating role of the father’s involvement on life satisfaction in a sample of 1344
British adolescent boys and found that low father involvement and peer victimization contributed significantly and independently to low levels of life satisfaction in adolescent boys (Baldry, 2004). Having a supportive father and/or mother protects against the negative impact of being victimized (Baldry, 2004).

The emotional reactions and impacts of school bullies and their victims are important when discussing the behavioral reactions of victims. Borg (1998) primarily focused on the emotional reactions associated with the bullying incident as reported by self-declared bullies and their victim. One out of every third self-declared victim reports the feelings of vengefulness, anger and self-pity. One should feel a rise in concern when one-quarter of the bully victims felt indifferent to the whole experience; or, worse, an equal proportion felt completely helpless (Borg, 1998).

Borg (1998) expresses the common feeling that some children consider bullying as part of the everyday growing up process through grade schools; as a difficult phase they must endure if they want to be prepared for later in life. Does a young boy need to have a bloody nose to grow up and become a man; nor does a girl need be to ostracized and shunned from classmates in order for her to become a woman? Research conducted on the gender roles of bullying in schools has argued that many of our behavioral choices are largely influenced by society’s gender expectations (Gini, & Pozzoli, 2006).

When examining the emotional impacts of school bullying, an analysis of sex differences in the emotional reactions of both male and female students should be considered. Between boy and girl bully victims when analyzing the feelings of anger,
indifferences, and helplessness there were no differences, and no differences between boy and girl bullies feelings of satisfaction and indifference, showing that these feelings are a commonly shared across children irrespective of their sex (Bord, 1998). The only difference is sex-role stereotyping that was found was that more boy victims feeling vengeful and more girls expressing self-pity.

Borg (1998) found relatively few differences in boy-girl emotional reactions, although the school level effect was prevalent. This could be explained in terms of relative age and maturity of the pupils that are involved. It might be expected to find that more primary school than secondary school victims who would feel angry and vengeful, just as one would expect to find more primary school those secondary school victims who would express feeling self-pity and helplessness (Borg, 1998). The former emotions of feeling vengeful and angry were the strongest emotions, harboring the desire to act in some way or retaliate. The feelings of self-pity and helplessness were milder ones and directed towards inactivity.

When discussing the school level effect with regard to emotions reported by bullies, it is clear that primary school bullies, mostly younger and more impulsive than older bullies were more likely be regretful having bullied other children. The two emotions of satisfaction and indifference however were strong emotions; meaning, they were expected to be common, and they were (Borg, 1998). Both the emotions of satisfaction and indifferences imply a harder deposition which harbors very cruel, inhumane tendencies.
Borg (1998) focused his study of the emotions of bullies and their victims and found noteworthy evidence. It is also important to investigate the behavioral reactions of victims. The results were found to be concerning because almost one-third of bullying victims do nothing about their bullies, and relatively few of these victims seek out help from teachers, peers or school administration. Borg (1998) suggested that victims are not seeking out support because they are not feeling comfortable or safe bringing these situations and their experiences to school staff or administration. Not having and providing an atmosphere where bullying victims do not feel they can openly express their situation is only keeping this problem growing, and further intensifying the negative impacts on youth.

Bullying has become a major mental health concern facing youth. Emotional and physical intimidation is causing youth detrimental mental health problems. Seventy percent of youth report experiencing bullying at some point during their school careers, and at least 1 time, about 20-25% of youth report being directly involved in bullying at school (Juvonen and Gross, 2008).

The amount of social support is one important factor that differentiates bullies and victims from each other. It has already been noted that bully-victims are generally less accepted within their peers, but there has not been extensive research on the role of social supports within the lives of bullies (Conners-Burrow, Johnson, Whiteside-Mansell., et al 2009). On the other hand, research conducted on the social support for victims is more common. Furthermore, Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, (2011) reports much of the
research on bullying has focused on children, and the increased role of parents ability at preventing or intervening when bullying situation occur.

Parents may not be able to directly assist when their child is being victimized, but they are able to offer guidance and support on how to handle difficult situation. It has been well studied that parental support offers bullying victims a buffer from the negative impacts they might endure (Bowes, Maughan, & Caspi, et al, 2010). Parents can and do have a significant influence on their child’s development and maintenance of aggressive behaviors, as well as the response to victimizing situation (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011). There are several aspects that can foster a child’s resiliency to stressful situation. Parental warmth is the top aspect that has been identified to associate children’s social and emotional well-being (Bowes, Maughan, & Caspi. et al, 2010). Behavioral concerns were found to be less occurring with children who have a nurturing mother than other rejected children. Children who are identified to have been bullied and have a strong relationship with their mothers might have more encouraging adjustment outcomes than would otherwise be predicted given their experiences of being bullied (Bowes, Maughan, Caspi, et al, 2010).

It has been identified through empirical and theoretical research that parent’s attitudes about bullying and their response to their child’s victimization may also affect the child’s ability to cope with situation (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011). Parents may react differently to their child’s victimization according to their parenting style. Some parents may react to the situation simply by discussing it with their child, others
may go a step further and get in contact with their child’s teacher, school counselor, administrator, or contact the bullies parents directly. The more common response to hearing about your child’s victimization is likely going to be talking about it with your child. Literature has come to the consensus that parents should talk directly with their child about the victimization because it will provide an opportunity for assisting their child in coming up with adaptive ways to communicating ways for coping with peer with victimization occurs (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011).

Parents and caregivers are in the forefront of their children’s education and have the ability to reduce and lessen the negative effects of bullying. It has been research and stated that children who are victims of bullying who receive parental support are less likely to develop symptoms of depression (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011). Children who have a stable social support system have ongoing feelings of security, positive effect, self-efficacy, and security (Davidson, & Demaray, 2007). So, the question can be asked, why are there so many children that are continuing to suffer even if they have nurturing parents and caregiver by their side? The truth is that most of these victims of bullying do have parental support at home but many parents are simply lacking in the ability to help their children find ways to cope. In some instances, many parents do not know how to help their child cope from the victimization and they might even respond to their children in ways that can only make the situation worse (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011). For example, in some cases parents have contacted the bully’s parents and it has caused an adverse or unwanted consequences. It ended up making the victimization
worse, or it showed the children inappropriate response strategies. Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, (2011) state that parents reactions to bullying would be most appropriate if they were to simply contact their children’s school once they are aware of the bullying incident. Research shows that children are typically more likely to inform their parents over teachers when they are being victimized.

The way that parents respond to their children being victimized has been research and ethnicity does play a part. It has been found that minority groups were less likely than their White peers to self-report being “bullied.” On the other hand minority groups were more likely to self-report being victimized by their peers (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011). It should also be noted that school are full of children that come from different cultures and they are going to perceive their bullying experience different that a child from another culture. This also means that parents of different ethnic minority groups are going to perceive their child’s victimization differently and respond in their own way. Research has been conducted and supports findings that parent’s involvement in extracurricular activities will vary among race, ethnicity, or other culture factors (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011). Parents of non-White children were shown to participate less than parents of other ethnic races. Some issues that arise with that statement are, language barriers, or a difference in views of the culture in the home, which could differ from the dominant cultural values that are followed at their children’s school. These disconnects can lead to parents from ethnic minority groups feeling that they cannot approach their child’s school and withdraw from their education. Due to
these parents feeling isolated from their children’s education, parents feel they have less effect on their children experience at school and victimization situations (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011).

Gender is also an influential factor that should be taken into account with parental support. Americans society gives boys the impression that they should be “tough” and face any victimization situation head on. This gender stereotype is not only put onto young boys from society but may also come from parental pressure. Therefore, this stereotype that boys should be able to handle victimization can have harsh negative effects. It has been hypothesized that parents of young boys will be much less likely to contact their children’s school than parents who have girls, who are much more likely to advocate on their child’s behalf (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011).

The age of bullying victims is also a factor that plays a role in parental support. For children who are older, their parents tend to be less likely to supervise and mediate in their children’s peer relationships (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011). Children who are in elementary school have parents that are more likely to intervene in their children’s conflicts than parents who have children in middle school and high school. Davidson, & Demaray, (2007) found that within middle schools, younger children reported more bulling behaviors than older grades. What grade level a child is in also plays a role in parental school involvement. Research shows that parental involvement decreases by grade level, which further shows that parents of elementary school aged children are more involved than parents with children in middle school or high school. With that, it
can also be noted that with parents who have children in middle school will be more likely to contact the school when victimization occurs rather than parents with middle school or high school aged children (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011).

There may be several reasons why a parent may intervene when their child is being victimized, but the form of their child’s victimization is a cause of interest. Parents have reported that direct aggressive behaviors (e.g., physical, or verbal aggression) is more serious than indirect aggressive behaviors (e.g., rumor spreading, exclusion, and ignoring) and will be more likely to contact their child’s school. It may also be that parents of children who are not receiving direct victimization rather than indirect victimization are less likely to report to the school (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011).

The way that schools deal with campus bullying does have an impact on how parents and caregivers perceive their own disclosure of their child’s’ victimization. Children’s own perceptions of their school are also negatively affected when school administrations have dealt with it poorly. Research has shown that the social disorganization theory shows how high levels of aggressive behavior can signal to students that their school is distorted and adults do not have control over the school environment. Also, when students and staff feel this disconnection from the school, they are both less likely to intervene when bullying activity is happening. Parents own perception of how the school intervenes with bullying is directly related to the actual implementation and management of the prevention of bullying from schools staff and
administration. When parents have positive perceptions of the school it is most commonly associated with teacher’s effective implementation of bullying-prevention programs. Research has shown that parents who perceive the school to be safe and supportive towards their child will be more likely to be involved with the school (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011).

Although not a lot of research has been done on the involvement of parents and caregivers response to their children’s victimization, there is growing evidence that there is further need on this research topic. Whether it is; contacting the teacher, contact the administration, contact the school counselor, talk to the child, talk to the bully, talk to the bully’s parents, and ignore or do nothing, there is a need to further examine why some chose to react and some don’t. It has been hypothesized through research that the more parents feel positive about their child’s school atmosphere, the more likely they will be to spring into action when they become aware their child is being victimized. Direct victimization versus indirect victimization has also been an important subject of study due to the research showing that parents of children being directly victimized by their peers are more likely to respond and report to the school (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011).

The family dynamic of a child who is bullied can play a big role in the outcome. Children who are victims of bulling that have affectionate relationships with their siblings are shown to have less emotional problems. Siblings are known to provide a buffer for the negative outcomes of the sibling being bullied at school. These siblings are providing
an outlet other than their parents where they can enter a safe environment. Positive home environments that provide routine and organization are shown to be associated with children’s behavioral adjustment more so than the parental relationship. Children that come from a home with these qualities have less stress than a child that comes from a child that comes from a negative environment, and these children are an increased ability of achieving positive adaptation at school (Bowes, Maughan, Caspi, et al, 2010).

Through research it has been identified that there are two processes that examine the relationships between victimized children, their families and the child’s ability to build resilience towards bullying. One process explains that family can create a unique experience where children feel protected and a protected effect on bullied children’s resilience. These children who come from supportive families are building a buffer from developing adjustment difficulties because they are receiving support daily, alleviating stress and helping other children developing their own coping mechanism to deal with their own victimization. The second process is an association between the child’s adjustment following victimization and genetics. It may be possible that parents who provide loving and caring home environments for their children and who possess good parenting skills could be passing on genes associated with resilience (Bowes, Maughan, Caspi, et al, 2010).

Bullying is a social problem that is continuing to grow throughout schools, as well as through social media. Bullying, especially cyber bullying, is such as easy way for children to target each other. If there are no quick and easy solutions to this growing
problem then where most of the efforts to combat bullying should be focused? With the research there is on how positive family environments can play a crucial role on a victimized child, there continues to be a discrepancy between the actual bullying experience and the parent’s knowledge of the incident. It goes around in circles when the parents misunderstand or misjudge the true risk of their child’s victimization. (Matsunaga, 2009) No matter what type of direct or indirect victimization that a child is enduring, it has been researched that any and all types of bullying has severe consequences and should never go unaddressed (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011).

**Conclusion**

As you can see the majority of authors study the different aspects of bullying, but they are not speaking to the desperate need of effective interventions and the containment of the issue of bullying. Being bullied in school is said to be a natural part of growing up. How can it be a natural experience and part of growing up when it can leave a child feeling completely alone and isolated from the rest of their world. There is probably not one individual that has survived primary or secondary school without a story of being victimized. Maybe they were not directly bullied, maybe they were the bully, or maybe they were beat up every day. Bullying leaves scares that may not be visible to the eye but they are there and hard to forget.

Bullying in schools is the main topic of discussion in this literature, but it was important to show the significance bullying can have through today’s fast paced technological world. Children have extremely easy access to a wide range of different
social networks that school administrators, parents and caregivers should be aware of and taking action. It is evident that bullying, whether it be through an online source, direct bullying or indirect bullying at school, it will leave children with psychological issues that may follow them through their entire life.

Throughout the literature on the issue of bullying, parents and caregivers responses to the problem and their perspectives have been a topic of interest. There is obvious research on just how beneficial having a solid support system at home can have on the outcomes of a child’s mental health, but what happens when parents and caregivers do not feel connected to their child’s school and the problem continues? It is important to share such literature with other professionals and service providers in order to find out what is missing and how their work with parents and caregivers can be better supported.
Chapter 3

METHODS

Introduction

In order to address the perspectives of parents and caregivers regarding anti-bullying policies and procedures within their child’s schools, this study explored the understandings and attitude that parents and caregivers have toward school bullying. In addition, this chapter will identify: (a) the design of the study, (b) the study question, (c) the study sample, (d) the protection of human subjects, (e) the data collection, (f) and the data analysis.

Study Design

The researcher used a descriptive study design. Using a descriptive research design helped illustrate and describe the relationship between the parents, and caregiver’s perspectives of anti-bullying programs and policies, and their actual implementation, and effectiveness.

Using a descriptive study design is appropriate for this research because the data collected is quantitative data that describes the perspectives of parents and caregivers. Descriptive research has a goal of measurement and description of relevant variables and the distribution of their values (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2006). Descriptive research can be both quantitative and qualitative. Primarily within this research design quantitative questions were asked of the participants. Questions used in this research design that fall into the quantitative category were such questions that asked for gender, grade level, and
other questions that participants were asked to give a numerical rating. One question that was optional for the participants to answer was a qualitative question that asked for suggestions or comments regarding what they feel their child’s school could do to improve bullying on campus.

Descriptive research involves gathering the data tools (survey, questionnaires) that were administered to the participants and then organizing, tabulating, and analyzing that data received. Visual aids such as graphs, tables, and charts are used to assist in analyzing the data’s meaning that is easier for the readers to understand. Descriptive statistics also provide that researcher with measures of central tendency that include the mean, median, mode, deviance from the mean, variation, percentages, and correlation between the variables. The three main functions for using a descriptive research design is to describe, explain, and validate findings.

**Study Question**

The questions used in this study are aimed at examining the perspective of parents and caregivers to find out what they believe to be contributing to bullying on campus. The questions are asking parents and caregivers to examine how much they know about their child’s school and the policies and procedures that school has in place to deal with bullying when it occurs. The participants are asked whether they believe their child is bullied and to what extent. They are asked whether they explore the topic of bullying one on one with their child and if their child’s academia is negatively affected. Several of the main survey questions ask participants to explore whether their child has been a target of
bullying and did they school step up to intervened or offer assistance to the child. Participants are also asked to the degree of their understanding regarding whether or not the school has anti-bullying polices and prevention programs on campus and if their child is aware of them as well.

The questions in this research study aim at finding out parents and caregivers perspectives regarding the resources their child’s school offers. Many parents and caregivers do not look into what polices their child’s school enforces unless they are directly being affected. This study is not only geared to finding whether or not the school has polices in place for when bullying occurs on campus but to examine if the participants feel they are benefitting their child and if the school is stepping in when needed.

**Study Sample**

Parents and caregivers who can possibly be affected by their child being bullied at their school constituted the study sample used to conduct this research. All 32 participants were either parents or caregivers of a student at Woodland High School in the rural area of Woodland, California. Due to the sensitive nature of the survey the research used a convenience nonprobability sampling procedure. Within a nonprobability sample, it is not possible to determine the exact chance that any given person or element will be selected, but it is assumed that that some cases have a better chance of being selected than others (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2006).
One type of nonprobability sampling is convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is an unscientific approach to gathering data. Convenience sampling entails selecting participants for study primarily because they were the most accessible to the researcher. Within this research design the researcher chose to approach parents at a local high school when they were waiting inside their car for their child to get out of school. Although it was readily accessible to the researcher there are always limitations to this method. When a researcher chooses to use convenience sampling they have little or no claim to external validity. Their findings are generally shown to be applicable to those people that were accessible to study (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2006).

The researcher chose to use a nonprobability convenience sampling not because she wanted to come up with a solution to bullying on campus, but to find out the perspectives of parents and caregivers and their understanding on how their child’s school is dealing with the issue. The researcher cannot come up with a prescribed solution to bullying but can make recommendations on how to essentially help parents and their children effectively deal with bullying. The analyzed data that is collected from the participants may also be used to inform school administration of the possible lack in services or information being passed along to parents and caregivers regarding school anti-bullying policies and programs within their schools.

**Protection of Human Subjects**

The participants used in this study were strictly adults, but the subject of their own children and bullying can be cause for discomfort. Due to the sensitive nature of this
research topic the survey questions were created in a way that could cause the least amount of discomfort for the participants. Participants were also given a consent form informing them of what their participation included and what they can expect once they return the survey to the researcher.

Due to the fact that this research used a non-random convenience sampling procedure in one rural school, it should be noted that there are limitations to the data collected. It is important to note that because there were a small number of participants and the data was collected from one school the finding from the data analysis may not apply to other populations.

In order to conduct this research the researcher had to submit a human subjects protocol to the Human Subject Committee at Sacramento state University. When the proposal was granted it was proposed to be “minimal risk” to the participants with the approval number: 11-12-023. Within the appendix there will be a copy of the consent form, survey, and a letter from Woodland High School’s principal granting permission to enter campus and approach possible participants.

**Data Collection**

Within this research design the data collection was collected using a survey given to parents and caregivers. There were approximately 20 questions on the survey. Four of the questions were quantitative using a nominal level of measurement such as; gender, grade level, parental or caregiver role, and ethnicity. Sixteen of the items on the survey were asked using a likert scale. In a likert scale the participants are asked to indicate their
level of agreement with each item to indicate the intensity of their feelings (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2006). For the researchers likert scale the items asked related to how the participants feel their child is being affected by different types of bullying and whether they know of anti-bullying policies in affect within their child’s school and if and programs and other resources are offered to help their child cope with campus bullying.

**Data Analysis**

The data that was collected from participants was entered and analyzed using the computer program SPSS. In order to conduct an analysis of the data the researcher used frequencies and descriptive statistics in order to produce the mean, median, mode, and percentages pertaining to the survey questions asked to participants. The researcher also used cross-tabulation to see if there was any association between certain variables.
Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study that focus on the perspectives of parents and caregivers regarding various bullying issues, including policies and procedures to handle the bullying. This chapter begins with demographic information regarding the study subjects and presents the findings of the study and links it with the literature review.

The initial questions of the survey pertained to the caretaking role of the participant, the child’s grade level, gender, and ethnicity. The overwhelming majority of respondents identified as being the child’s mother (62.5%) (Figure 1). Thirty-five percent of the participants identified their child’s gender as male and (62%) identified their child’s gender as female (Figure 2). Of the sample group the majority of the participants identified their child’s ethnicity being Caucasian (46.9%), Hispanic (37.5%), African American (6.3%), Pacific Islander (6.3%), and Asian (3.1%) (Figure 3). The grade distribution of the participants children were in the 9th grade, 10th grade (31%), 11th grade (25%), and 12th grade (12.5%) (Figure 4).
Figure 1: Participant’s relationship to the child

Figure 2: Gender of child
Figure 3: Ethnicity of child

Literature review indicates that the gender and ethnicity of children play a role in the kind of bullying and the duration of bullying that child will encounter.
While gathering the demographic data is also important, it was the purpose of this study to determine what these parents and caregivers are feeling regarding their child’s school and the issue of bullying. Six of the questions on the survey administered to participants were using the Likert scale measuring system. These six questions gave participants the option to rate the extent to which they agreed with a certain statement. Participants could rate that they “strongly agree” a score of (4), “agree” a scores of (3), “disagree” a score of (2), or “strongly disagree” a score of (1) with the statement. Table 5 shows the six likert scale questions and the participants mean scores on the questions. The table shows the minimum score of (1) and maximum score of (4) a participant could choose and the mean of the scores after data analysis.

Figure 4: Grade level of child
Parents and caregivers perspectives regarding the frequency of bullying at their child’s school

The first statement asked participants to rate their understanding of how frequently bullying happens within their child’s school. It is interesting to note that the participants equally chose “agree (3)” (37.5%) and “disagree (2)” (37.5%) in their response. Three percent expressed that they “strongly disagree (1),” and (18.8%) chose “strongly agree (4)” that bullying frequently happens within their child’s school. Those statistics speak to the degree of parental understanding on the topic of bullying. When one or both parents are more involved with their children it is expected to protect against victimization, reducing the risk of developing poor mental and physical health (Baldry, 2004). It is also important to mention when participants felt that a certain questions did not pertain to their child, they were to leave the question blank. Three percent of the participants felt that the question on how frequently bullying happens at their child’s school did not apply to them. It is possible that some children do out tell their parent out of shame or fear. Fear seemed to be an underlying concern for youth, especially girls, from sharing their harassment experiences with adults (Juvonen and Gross, 2008).

Parents and caregivers perception of how their child’s school administration deals with bullying incidents

The second question on the survey using the likert scale asked participants to determine how they felt their child’s school administration dealt with a bullying incident when their child was involved. There were almost equal percentages of participants that
“agree (3)” and “disagree (2)” to this question. Twenty-five percent of participants chose “disagree (2)” and (21.9%) chose “agree (3).” Out of all the participants (9.4%) chose “strongly agree (4)” and a large majority of the participants chose not to answer this question (31.3%). When you have (31.3%) of participants that chose not to answer this question you have to wonder whether it was because their child has never experienced bullying, so they have never had to deal with school administration, or they are just unaware that their child has been a victim of bullying at school. Maunder, Harrop, & Tattersall (2010), found that there is a significant variability of attitudes among teachers who feel that among secondary school children there is not always a disparity of power between bullies and their victims, or the intention of doing harm. Other studies have also shown the lack of school teacher and staff involvement in regards to bullying. When children have behavioral problems they tend to divert instructional time from other students and thus creating difficulties for the teachers and other people within the classroom (Bosacki, Marini, & Dane, 2006). One respondent wrote “children will be children” and as long as there are children, there will always be teasing, harassment, etc. Teachers felt that even though it was inappropriate behaviors, it was understandable for children (Terry, 2010).

Parents and caregivers perception on their child’s school of preparing teachers and other staff to deal with bullying incidents

The third Likert scale type question is similar to the last but pertains to the level of preparedness on behalf of the teachers and other staff when bullying instances occur.
The majority of participants (46.9%) agreed that school teachers and other staff dealt with a bullying incident properly when their child was involved. The minority of the participants (6.3%) “strongly disagree (1)” that the teachers and other staff are unprepared to deal with bullying incidents, (18.8%) “disagree (2),” (21.9%) “strongly agree (4),” and (6.3%) of the participants chose not to answer this question. Borg (1998) focused his study of the emotions of bullies and their victims and found noteworthy evidence. It is also important to investigate the behavioral reactions of victims. The results were found to be concerning because almost one-third of bullying victims do nothing about their bullies, and relatively few of these victims seek out help from teachers, peers or school administration.
Table 1

Mean scores of survey questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying Happens – Frequently</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.7419</td>
<td>.81518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Properly Dealt with Incident</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.4091</td>
<td>.95912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared Teachers and Staff</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.9000</td>
<td>.84486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively Discuss Bullying with Child</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.1290</td>
<td>.80589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware Cyber-bullying is a Problem</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.9231</td>
<td>1.01678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoke to Child About Cyber-bullying</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.9677</td>
<td>.94812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parents and caregivers perspectives of how often they discuss bullying issues and concerns with their child

When asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement that they speak actively with their child about bullying issues and concern, the majority of participants (43.8%) agreed (3) that they speak frequently about bullying with their child. Three percent of participants chose “strongly disagree (1),” (15.6%) “disagree (2),” (34.4%) “strongly agree (4),” and (3.1%) chose not to answer this question. The negative impact,
whether it being direct or indirectly bullying others and being victimized has on the mental and physical health of children can be lessened by a positive relationship with one or both parents (Baldry, 2004). When one or both parents are more involved with their children it is expected to protect against victimization, reducing the risk of developing poor mental and physical health. Social support is not only including parental support. Social support by teachers and peers can reduce the negative consequences of bullying, especially in the children most at risk (Baldry, 2004).

**Parents and caregivers perspectives of their awareness of cyber-bullying affecting their child**

Participants rated their awareness of cyber-bullying being a problem that is affecting their child. An equal percentage (28.1%) of participants chose that they “agree (3)” and “strongly agree (4)” to their level of awareness that their child is being affected by cyber-bullying. A much smaller percentage (9.4%) chose that they “strongly disagree (1)” and (15.6%) chose “disagree (2)” that their child is being affected by cyber-bullying. Out of all the participants (18.8%) chose not to answer this question and that explains that a large percentage of parents and caregiver are unaware if cyber-bullying to be an issue that their child may be struggling with. Juvonen and Gross (2008) discovered that the distress level of online and off-line experiences of bullying overlapped. They were interested in whether cyber bullying incidents were related to social anxiety over and above bullying experienced at school. It was discovered that online bullying is associated with elevated levels of distress similar to encounters of bullying incidents in schools.
Another important finding to add was that about one third of 12- to- 14-year-olds responded that they did not tell an adult about the online bullying because they were scared they could get in trouble with their parents. (Juvonen and Gross, 2008).

Parents and caregivers perspectives regarding speaking to their child about cyber-bullying

When asked further about cyber-bullying, as to whether they have spoken to their child about cyber-bullying, the majority of participants (40.6%) chose that they “agree (3)” that they speak to their child about cyber-bullying, (31.3%) “strongly agree (4),” (15.6%) “disagree (2),” (9.4%) “strongly disagree (1),” and (3.1%) of participants chose not to answer this question.

Today’s fast paced social networks can cause just as much harm as being bullied on campus. Juvonen and Gross (2008), expanded on prior research regarding cyber bullying. The researchers wanted to find out whether cyberspace operates at a high risk environment that is separate from the borders of schools. Their research allowed them to single out and recruit to obtain relatively high internet users, who are at the highest risk of cyber bullying. It was predicted that when controlling the time spent online, repeated school-based bullying encounters would increase the possibility of being a target of repeated online bullying. Juvonen and Gross, (2008) discuss how there is no reason why cyberbullying should be beyond the school’s responsibility to address the issue. Whether bullying is happening online or on the school groups it is the schools responsibility to enforce tolerance of any intimidation among students.
Parents and caregivers perspectives of how bullying is affecting their child’s school performance

The first question (Figure 6) asked participants to determine if bullying has affected academic performance has affected their child. The majority of participants (84.4%) responded “yes” and (15.6%) responded “no.” Bullying in school within the United States is affecting approximately one in three children (Smokowski and Kopasz, 2005). Victims of school bullying may suffer from anxiety and depression. They become less involved in school and are at risk for dropping out (Chaux et. al., 2009). It is not surprising to determine that a little over eighty percent of participants feel that bullying is affecting their child’s school performance.

Parents and caregivers perspectives regarding their child’s school having adequate resources to deal with bullying

The second question (Figure 7) asked participants to determine if they feel that their child’s school has adequate resources to deal with bullying. The majority of the participants (46.9%) said “yes” and (28.1%) chose “no.” It is important to note that eight participants (25%) did not answer this question. That twenty-five percent of participants who did not answer this question speak to the percentage of parents and caregiver that are unaware of the resources their child’s school has to offer. In order for school to be able to implement effective anti-bullying policies, schools need to create long-term prevention strategies to affect change. In most schools there have been requirements made for
teachers, administrators, and staff to implement consequences for bullying and harassment, and to provide prevention programs to students (Terry, 2010).

**Parents and caregivers awareness of their children’s schools’ anti-bullying policy**

The third question (Figure 8) asked participants to determine if they know whether or not their child’s school has an anti-bullying policy. Out of all the participants (59.4%) did not know if their child's school has an anti-bullying policy and (40.6%) of participants were aware that there is an anti-bullying policy. When parents and caregiver know what is going on at their child’s school they feel a closer connection to the school and become more involved. On the other hand, some parents are not connected to the school and may feel isolated. Due to these parents feeling isolated from their children’s education, parents feels they have less effect on their children experience at school and victimization situations (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011). Research has shown that anti-bullying policies, which consist of qualified staff development combined with ongoing, effective training in and education about new policies will lead to effective implementation (Terry, 2010).

**Parents and caregivers awareness of their child’s schools’ anti-bullying prevention programs**

When asked to determine whether or not they know if their child’s school has bullying prevention programs on campus (Figure 9), the majority (78.1%) answered “no” and (21.9%) answered “yes” that they know of prevention programs on campus. It has been well studied that parental support offers bullying victims a buffer from the negative
impacts they might endure (Bowes, Maughan, & Caspi, et al, 2010). Parents can and do have a significant influence on their child’s development and maintenance of aggressive behaviors, as well as the response to victimizing situation (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011). If parents and caregivers were more aware of these prevention programs that their child’s school might offer then it may better equip the child and parents when faced with bullying.

**Parents and caregivers discussing bullying concerns and problems with their child**

Participants were asked if they discuss bullying incidences and problems including their own child (Figure 10) or other children at school, the majority of the participants (59.4%) said “yes” they do talk to their child about bullying, whether it directly affected the child or their friend. The remainder of the participants (40.6%) said “no” they do not discuss bullying problems with their child. Parents may not be able to directly assist when their child is being victimized, but they are able to offer guidance and support on how to handle difficult situation. It has been well studied that parental support offers bullying victims a buffer from the negative impacts they might endure (Bowes, Maughan, & Caspi, et al, 2010). Parents can and do have a significant influence on their child’s development and maintenance of aggressive behaviors, as well as the response to victimizing situation (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011). There are several aspects that can foster a child’s resiliency to stressful situation. Parental warmth is the top aspect that has been identified to associate children’s social and emotional well-being (Bowes, Maughan, & Caspi. et al, 2010).
Parents and caregivers awareness of their child reporting a bullying incident to school authorities

Participants were asked to indicate their knowledge of whether or not their child reported a bullying incident to school administration after it occurred (figure 11). Only (21.9%) of the participants answered “yes,” (46.9%) answered “no,” and ten participants (31.3%) chose not to answer this question. The low percentage of participants said they know that their child reported the bullying incident is alarming, but the (31.3%) of participants that are unaware speaks to the fact that many children may be scared to come forth to either school administration and their parents, or both. The way that schools deal with campus bullying does have an impact on how parents and caregivers perceive their own disclosure of their child’s’ victimization. (waasdorp, bradshaw, & dong, 2011). Borg (1998) focused his study of the emotions of bullies and their victims and found noteworthy evidence. It is also important to investigate the behavioral reactions of victims. The results were found to be concerning because almost one-third of bullying victims do nothing about their bullies, and relatively few of these victims seek out help from teachers, peers or school administration. Borg (1998) suggested that victims are not seeking out support because they are not feeling comfortable or safe bring these situations and their experiences to school staff or administration. Not having and providing an atmosphere where bullying victims do not feel they can openly express their situation is only keeping this problem growing, and further intensifying the negative impacts on youth.
Parents and caregivers perspectives regarding whether or not they feel their child is prepared to report a bullying incident to school authorities

Participants were asked to determine whether or not they know if their child is prepared to report a bullying incident to school a teacher or school administration (Figure 12). Majority of the reported “yes,” (75%) and (15.6%) reported “no,” and (9.4%) chose not to answer the question. If a child has reported a bullying incident, including themselves or possibly a peer, and they felt the school dealt with it improperly it may prevent them from reported again. Children’s own perceptions of their school can be negatively affected when school administrations dealt with an incident poorly (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011).

Parents and caregivers participation in programs to educate them on bullying issues within their child’s school

Participants were asked to indicate whether or not they have participated in any anti-bullying prevention program within their child’s school (Figure 13). This was a fairly straight forward question and the majority of participants (87.5%) answered “no” they have not participated in any bullying prevention program. The remained of participants (12.5%) answered “yes.” It should also be noted that school are full of children that come from different cultures and they are going to perceive their bullying experience different that a child from another culture. This also means that parents of different ethnic minority groups are going to perceive their child’s victimization differently and respond in their own way. Research has been conducted and supports
findings that parent’s involvement in extracurricular activities will vary among race, ethnicity, or other culture factors (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011). Parents of non-White children were shown to participate less than parents of other ethnic races. Some issues that arise with that statement are, language barriers, or a difference in views of the culture in the home, which could differ from the dominant cultural values that are followed at their children’s school. These disconnects can lead to parents from ethnic minority groups feeling that they cannot approach their child’s school and withdraw from their education. Due to these parents feeling isolated from their children’s education, parents feel they have less effect on their children experience at school and victimization situations (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011). When parents have positive perceptions of the school it is most commonly associated with teacher’s effective implementation of bullying-prevention programs. Research has shown that parents who perceive the school to be safe and supportive towards their child will be more likely to be involved with the school (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011).

**Parents and caregivers awareness of their child’s participating in programs that educate them about bullying issues**

Participants were asked to indicate whether they know of their child participating in any anti-bullying programs at school (Figure 14), the majority of the participants (65.6%) answered “no,” (25%) answered “yes,” and three participants (9.4%) chose not to answer the question. The idea of giving bullying victims the power to take control of the situation is a very basic idea. Arnold (2007) discussed the study that focused on the
concepts of empowerment and behavior within schools. The study wanted to test of three propositions that might lead to fewer bulling incidences with schools. The three components were; adapting prevention and management strategies that include parents and caregivers are more effective; having organizational tools and structures that will facilitate effective communication about approaches to bullying are more effective; and schools that are using and enforcing a whole school approach and management strategies are more effective.

Using the empowerment approach within schools is essential in creating a safe environment where students feel they can learn and have fun within the fear associated with bullying. When children and their parents feel that they are involved and are being listened to them climate of the schools becomes for positive (Arnold, 2007).

The victims of bullying often feel a constant sense of blame, believing that they must have done something wrong to be victimized by their peers at school. These victims need guidance, support, and a place where they can be able to increase their social and interpersonal skills (Garrity, & Jens, 1997).
Figure 5: Has bullying affected school performance?

Figure 6: Does your child’s school have adequate resources?
Figure 7: Do you know if your child’s school has an anti-bullying policy?

Figure 8: Do you know if your child’s school has anti-bullying prevention programs?
Figure 9: Does your child discuss bullying problems with you?

Figure 10: If your child experienced bullying, did they report to school authorities?
Figure 11: Is your child prepared to report bullying incident to school authorities?

Figure 12: Have you participated in programs to educate about bullying on campus?
Figure 13: Has your child participated in programs to educate them about bullying on campus?

Suggestions and recommendations that emerged from participants

The last question on the survey gave the participants the option to give a qualitative response. The question asked participants to give any suggestions that they felt could help their child’s school prevent bullying on campus. Seven out of the 32 participants wrote a suggestion and several themes emerged from their responses. One of the main themes that emerged was increased parental involvement to help teach the students about bullying and the actions that should be taken through team building exercises. The participants suggested more training exposure for the parents and making anti-bullying programs a priority within the school. Others talked about creating a better application of the current anti-bullying policy and making it more readily know to
students and parents. One of the participants spoke highly about tackling the fundamental issues, such as increasing the capacity to find similarities between students that accentuate their differences. Lastly, several participants suggested the need for increased security on their child’s campus.
Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the conclusion extracted from this study. The literature yielded important and relevant information regarding bullying in the school environment. The aim of this study was to bring out awareness of parent and caregivers perspectives around issues of bullying within their child’s school. This chapter will include a discussion on the importance of awareness in regards to bullying. In additions, this chapter will outline the implications of social work policy and practice, and discuss future recommendations.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to provide a source of information and data regarding parents and caregivers perspective regarding bullying within their child’s school. Several question helped guide this study. They were: Are parents and caregivers aware of bullying being an issue within their child’s school? Do they know if bullying is negatively affecting their child? Is cyber-bullying something parents and caregivers are aware of? Are parents and caregivers aware that their child’s school has an anti-bullying policy? Do parents and caregivers know if their child’s school offers any anti-bullying programs or preventions? This study included 32 parents and caregivers who have children in grades 9th-12th within the Woodland Unified School District. Results from this study showed that the majority of parents and caregivers are aware that bullying is an
issue within their child’s school but might not necessarily know what anti-bullying polices and prevention programs the school enforces and offers to their children. The sample was small (32) and may not represent the entire population of parents and caregivers who have children grades 9th-12th within the Woodland Unified School District; however, from this sample of participants, there is reason to believe that some parents and caregivers are unaware and disconnected from their child’s school where it comes to the issue of bullying and how it may be affecting their child.

The literature review shows there is not one definition with the term “bullying.” The term bullying can have many definitions, according to Smokowski and Kopasz (2005), bullying is usually defined as a “form of aggression in which one or more children intend to harm or disturb another child who is perceived as being unable to defend himself or herself” (pg.101). Another author stated, “bullying in school is defined as a malicious repeated action inflicted by a more powerful person, or group of persons, over someone else perceived as weaker” (Baldry, 2004, pg 343). One interesting and important aspect of the study that affirmed a portion of the literature review was the fact that parents and caregivers will be more aware and involved with their child and their child’s school if they feel they are a part of the school. When parents and caregivers were asked if they are aware if their child’s school has an anti-bullying policy (59.4%) responded that they did not know. Another questions asked participants if they know of anti-bullying prevention programs. The majority (78.1%) responded they were unaware of bullying prevention programs offered at their child’s school. When parents and
caregivers are more involved it not only provides their children with skills to deal with bullying, but it also provides them with a sense of involvement in their child’s school. Parents and caregivers are in the forefront of their children’s education and have the ability to reduce and lessen the negative effects of bullying. It has been research and stated that children who are victims of bullying who receive parental support are less likely to develop symptoms of depression (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011). Children who have a stable social support system have ongoing feelings of security, positive effect, self-efficacy, and security (Davidson, & Demaray, 2007).

Research has been conducted and supports findings that parent’s involvement in extracurricular activities will vary among race, ethnicity, or other culture factors (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011). Parents of non-White children were shown to participate less than parents of other ethnic races. Some issues that arise with that statement are, language barriers, or a difference in views of the culture in the home, which could differ from the dominant cultural values that are followed at their children’s school. These disconnects can lead to parents from ethnic minority groups feeling that they cannot approach their child’s school and withdraw from their education. Due to these parents feeling isolated from their children’s education, parents feels they have less effect on their children experience at school and victimization situations (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011).

The last question on the survey given to the participants asked them to write down any suggestion they feel could benefit the school with dealing with bullying. This
question gave insight that parents and caregivers asked for more parental involvement. When the participants expressed that they want to be more involved it shows that the literature is correct when talking about how parent involvement increases their feelings of being withdrawn and they become more aware of the issue of bullying and could help them become a better advocate for their child.

Although the sample was limited, findings based on the data discussed in chapter 4 indicate that the majority of parents and caregivers are aware that bullying is an issue but they are lacking in an understanding of what their child’s school has in place to combat the issue. It is interesting to note a small percentage of participants chose not to answer various questions on the survey. For example participants were asked to the degree of frequency of bullying happening at their child’s school, how they feel the school administration deals with bullying incidents, how they feel the school has prepared teachers and other staff to deal with bullying, and how often they speak to their child about bullying issues and concerns. This suggests that some of the participants are unaware of bullying being an issue and that may be due to several reasons or they have had very little contact with their child’s school and a disconnect has already taken place.

**Recommendations**

This section of the chapter will discuss recommendations that came about due to this study in regards to the different levels of social work practice. Within the realm of social work practice you have the macro level, mezzo level, and micro level. These three levels determine the degree of direct practice with the people you serve. This section of
the chapter will discuss how the topic of bullying and the study’s findings can relate to all three levels of social work policy and practice.

Before discussing the different levels of social work practice you have to understand what each level involves. The macro level of social work could be considered the big picture, including policy and governmental advocacy. Mezzo level of social work practice includes communities. Communities can be a very broad term due people’s definitions, which can include; schools, churches, and recreation. The micro level of social work is working with individuals and families directly.

The first level of social work practice that will be discussed in this chapter is the macro level. Marco level social work is an important aspect of this study when it comes studying the parents and caregivers perspectives of bullying within their child’s school get to the point of policy. The people at the heart of this discussion are American families and the policies that may or may not affect them. The Woodland Unified School District adopts anti-bullying policies within their schools and work hard at enforcing them on a daily basis. After data analysis was completed it was determined that (59.4%) of the participants said they are unaware if their child’s school has an anti-bullying policy. Why is it that such a high percentage of parents and caregivers are unaware if their child’s school adopts an anti-bullying policy? How every school operates and enforces their policies are a very important aspect of combating the devastating effects of bullying on children.
Over the past 10 years within the rural town of Woodland, CA where the participants were surveyed, there has been an increase in the Hispanic community. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 26,289 persons making up (47.4%) of woodlands population. It could be possible that with the increase of ethnic communities over the past 10 years there are families that are unaware of the policies their children’s school enforces. Literature has stated that parents of non-White children were shown to participate less than parents of other ethnic races. Some issues that arise with that statement are, language barriers, or a difference in views of the culture in the home, which could differ from the dominant cultural values that are followed at their children’s school. These disconnects can lead to parents from ethnic minority groups feeling that they cannot approach their child’s school and withdraw from their education. Due to these parents feeling isolated from their children’s education, parents feels they have less effect on their children experience at school and victimization situations (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Dong, 2011).

What can be done to assist these families assimilate with their child’s school, therefore creating a more enjoyable transition for their child. Macro level social work includes determining what resources are available to these families that feel disconnected from their child’s school. There could have been questions on the survey asking parents and caregivers to suggest what their child school could do to better equip them with understanding the policies enforced.
Within the mezzo level of social work practice comes the discussion around communities. Communities can be defined differently depending on who you are asking at the time. When discussing communities in relation to the topic of school bullying the community involved is the school. School is a very important community that every child should feel they are a part of. When children are bullied at their school they begin to lose their sense of community and that can have lasting consequences. Parents and caregivers are at the forefront of their child’s education and they are a vital part of the school community.

The last question on the survey administered to the participants asked them to give suggestions for combating bullying at their child’s school. One of the main themes that emerged was increased parental involvement to help teach the students about bullying and the actions that should be taken through team building exercises. The participants suggested more training exposure for the parents and making anti-bullying programs a priority within the school. Others talked about creating a better application of the current anti-bullying policy and making it more readily know to students and parents. One of the participants spoke highly about tackling the fundamental issues, such as increasing the capacity to find similarities between students that accentuate their differences. Lastly, several participants suggested the need for increased security on their child’s campus.

These suggestions are crucial and shouldn’t be taken lightly. These parents and caregivers have a voice and they should be heard by their child’s school on a daily basis.
It is important to listen to these parents and involve them in school activities whether school is in session or not. Determining to what level parents can be involved and should be involved is an important aspect to further explore within social work practice.

The third level of social work practice is the micro level and that includes individuals and families. The children and their families who are being affected by bullying are at the center of the issue. Children need to be taught the skills in order to help them handle the environment. Children need to be taught the skills to cope with bullying and that should not be something they have to do on their own. Bullying in school within the United States is affecting approximately one in three children (Smokowski and Kopasz, 2005). Victims of school bullying may suffer from anxiety and depression. They become less involved in school and are at risk for dropping out (Chaux et. al., 2009).

Children need to be individually taught the skills needed to combat the negative effects of bullying. Children and their families should come together as a forum to discuss these issues and brainstorm ways it could be improved. When families have the skills necessary to assist their child build the appropriate coping skills to deal with bullying then that sets a foundation for the child to build off. Ultimately children learn coping skills from members of their families and they are then able to use those skills when put into a situation in their school communities.
Implications for social workers

Bullying is an increasing problem in today’s school and there are implications for social work research, awareness, education and practice. Education in the field of social work is highly important and it can be said that most social work practitioners know that bullying affects a large majority of students but they should always continue to build of their educational foundation in order to understand clients and be able to assess their social problems. Although, the sample size was small, the data revealed that (84.4%) of participants stated that bullying is affecting their child’s school performance, (78.1%) of participants are unaware if their child’s school has anti-bullying preventions programs, and (59.4%) of participants are unaware if their child’s school has an anti-bullying policy. This study has illustrated that there is a need for further research into the parental perspectives of their children educational system. This study may also be useful to help illustrate school administrations and school officials the importance of keeping their parents and caregivers aware of the schools policies and programs offered to their children.

On a micro level of practice, social workers can utilize this study to support the way they interact and work with their client’s by providing social justice and advocacy for change within their schools. On a mezzo level of practice, social workers can use this study to help give power to the families and communities by utilizing their strengths to help create support systems within them. On the macro level of practice, social workers can use this study to empower themselves to becomes more involved in policy and
advocacy for their families and communities to help raise awareness of policies that affect children and families within the educational system.

As concluded by several authors, bullying cannot be defined by one singular definition and awareness of certain types of bullying, for example, cyber-bullying has not widely studied. Despite certain limitations, there are growing literatures regarding the topic of school bullying. Although this study does not provide a conclusive answer and solution to the prevalence of school bullying, it does show that parents and caregiver are aware of the effect of bullying issue and that there may be a disconnect to the organizational structure of their child’s school. Therefore, findings of this study not only support and depth to current knowledge of school bullying and past research findings, but it also provided parents and caregivers an opportunity to share their experiences and offered comments and suggestions of how their child’s school should tackle the issues of bullying. The findings in this study may assist future social work and other professionals in understanding and implementing research studies that may indeed gain the attention of school administrators, thus encouraging them to make changes within the educational system to better equip students to deal with campus bullying and allowing parents and caregivers to get more involved with their children’s school.
APPENDIX A

Consent To Participate As A Research Subject

Consent to Participate As a Research Subject

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to participate in a research project, conducted by Lucia Hollowell, a Master of Social Work student in the Division of Social Work, California State University Sacramento (CSUS). This study will examine the perspectives of parents and caregivers regarding current anti-bullying policies and programs in order to help understand their effectiveness.

Procedures:

After reviewing this form and agreeing to participate, you will be given a survey containing multiple choice and fill-in questions. As a participant, you have the option of completing the survey when it is handed to you or you may elect to complete on your own time and mail back to the researcher in a pre-paid envelope provided.

Risks:

This study is considered to have “minimal risk” of psychological discomfort because the nature of the questions asked about parents and caregivers perspectives towards anti-bullying policies and procedures. You may stop at any time if you experience any psychological discomfort during the research process. If you experience any distress at any time after completing this survey, please contact Yolo County Department of Mental
Health Services at (530) 666-8630. You can also contact Sacramento County Mental Health at (916) 875-1005.

**Benefits:**

The collected information will assist us in a better understanding of bullying issues within your child’s campus and the importance of having effective anti-bullying programs and policies. Although, the information gathered might not benefit you directly, what is learned from this study could benefit future social worker practitioners, and school administration with a better understanding of how parents and caregivers are perceiving policies and procedures for campus bullying.

**Confidentiality:**

I understand that my participation in this research is entirely voluntary. I may decline to participate now. The surveys are submitted anonymously without reference information to which survey belongs to. The surveys will be kept in a locked secure location in researchers home and destroyed once data is entered and analyzed.

**Compensation:**

I understand that I will not receive any compensation for participation in this study. If you have any questions, comments or concerns about completing the survey or about being in this study, you may contact the researcher at (530) 867-2229 or at Lucialady24@yahoo.com. This research project is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Jude Antonyappan; professor in the division of social work at California State University, Sacramento. She can be reached at (916) 278-4091 or at judea@csus.edu.
I agree to participate [ ]
I decline to participate [ ]
__________________________\__________  ________________________\__________
Participant’s Signature   Date     Researcher’s signature   Date
APPENDIX B

Parent/Caregiver Perspective Questionnaire

Parent/Caregiver Perspective Questionnaire: A descriptive study on the perspectives of parents and caregivers regarding anti-bullying policies and procedures of their children’s schools.

Please circle which answer you feel is most appropriate.

1. What gender does your child identify with?
   Male        Female     Transgender

2. How do you identify in your relationship with your child?
   Mother       Father     Grandparent   Caregiver

3. What grade level is your child currently enrolled in?
   9th grade   10th grade   11th grade   12th grade

4. What ethnicity does your child identify with?
   Hispanic    Caucasian    African American  Pacific Islander  Asian
   Other

Please use this rating scale for the next questions. Please circle the answer you feel is most appropriate.

Strongly Agree = SA   Agree = A   Disagree = D   Strongly Disagree = SD

5. I believe that bullying frequently happens at my child’s school.
   SA        A        D        SD
6. If your child has experienced bullying at school, do you feel that school administration properly dealt with the incident?

SA  A  D  S

7. If your child were to experience bullying at school, I would feel that school administration has prepared teachers and other staff to deal properly with the issue.

SA  A  D  SD

8. My child and I actively discuss bullying issues and concerns.

SA  A  D  SD

9. I am aware that cyber-bullying is also a problem that my child is being affected by.

SA  A  D  SD

10. I have spoken to my child about cyber-bullying.

SA  A  D  SD

**Please circle which answer you feel is most appropriate.**

11. If your child were to experience bullying, would it affect your child’s school performance?

   Yes  No

If you answered **Yes** please continue to question 12. If you answered **No** please skip to question 13.

12. Do you feel your child’s school has adequate resources to deal with bullying?

   Yes  No

13. Do you know if your child’s school has an anti-bullying policy?

   Yes  No
14. Do you know if your child’s school has anti-bullying prevention programs on campus?
   Yes   No

15. Does your child discuss bullying problems (involving themselves or others) with you?
   Yes   No

16. If your child has experienced bullying at school, did they report the incident to school administration?
   Yes   No

17. Is your child prepared to report a bullying incident to school authorities?
   Yes   No

18. Have you participated in any programs that educate you about bullying on campus?
   Yes   No

19. Has your child participated in any programs that educate them about bullying on campus?
   Yes   No

20. Do you have any suggestions that could help your child’s school prevent bullying on campus?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
REFERENCES


Terry, T. M. (2010). Blocking the Bullies: Has South Carolina's Safe School Climate Act Made Public Schools Safer?. Clearing House, 83(3), 96-100. doi:10.1080/00098651003655902


