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Bullying amongst eighth grade students: a comparison of the perceptions of bullying between students and teachers

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BULLYING AMONGST EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS: A COMPARISON OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF BULLYING BETWEEN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

by
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my Dad, Walter Litwinczuk. Thank you for always encouraging me to pursue my dreams.

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Abstract

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Bullying is a serious problem in today's world. It is not limited by age, gender or education level. The purpose of this study is to examine the differences of teachers' and students' perceptions of bullying, including the comparison of gender throughout the research. The Swearer Bullying Survey was used in this study to assess the students' and teachers' perceptions of bullying. Due to the new Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying Law that was recently passed in New Jersey, results are expected to show similar perceptions of bullying among students and teachers. Both results and implications of this study will be further discussed.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Bullying among children and adolescents is not only a nation wide problem, but is now a worldwide growing concern among parents and educators. Bullying is defined as a class of intentional and repeated acts that occur through physical, verbal and relational forms in situations where a power difference is present (Olweus, 1993). Bullying and related forms of aggression are considered to be of increasing concern for students, as nearly 30% of youth are estimated to experience frequent involvement in bullying (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2006; Nansel et al., 2001).

The key features of bullying include the intent to harm, the repeated aspect of the harmful acts, and the power imbalance between bully and victims. Bullying behavior may be shown in a variety of ways. In addition to acts of physical aggression, bullying may also be displayed through acts of relational aggression, such as social exclusion or injuring the reputation of another person, as well as verbal harassment or intimidation such as threats and psychological intimidation (Merrell, Gueldner, Ross & Isava, 2008).

A major difficulty surrounding school bullying prevention efforts appears to stem from the perceptual differences between school staff and students (Houndoumadi & Paterakim 2001; Newman & Murray, 2005; Stephens, Kyriacou, & Tonnessen, 2005). Past research has shown that many teachers are unaware of the seriousness of peer victimization at their school and its significant effects on students (Nicolaides, Yuichi, & Smith, 2002). Teachers and other school staff tend to underestimate the prevalence of bullying occurring in their school (Houndoumadi & Pateraki, 2001) and expect that

children will resolve these conflicts on their own (Newman, 2003; Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Larson, & Sarvela, 2002).

Previous research and theory on bullying has found demographic factors to be associated with bullying. Boys are more likely to be both bullies and victims, although girls tend to have fairly high prevalence of relational bullying, which is defined as using social exclusion or rumor spreading (Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Duys, Larson & Sarvela, 2002).

Need for Study

There has been little research examining in the differences in students' and teachers' perceptions of bullying. Bullying is now a world wide known phenomenon that we cannot ignore. Having an improved understanding of the discrepancy between student and teacher perceptions of bullying will increase our knowledge, which will improve interventions that are implemented in our school systems to increase the adult-youth collaboration to prevent bullying.

Purpose

Bullying is a serious problem in today's world. It is not limited by age, gender or education level. The purpose of this study is to examine the differences of teachers' and students' perceptions of bullying, including the comparison of gender throughout the research.

Hypothesis

There are three research questions in this study. 1) Are there perceptual differences of bullying between teachers and students? 2) Will teachers report less incidents of bullying than students? 3) Do females tend to associate bullying as relational

bullying? Do males associate as aggressive bullying? The hypothesis being analyzed is that a discrepancy will occur between students' and teachers' perceptions of bullying. Students will report more incidents of bullying than teachers. Females will associate bullying as relational aggression, compared to males associating bullying as a physical aggression.

Operational Definition

Bullying is defined as a class of intentional and repeated acts that occur through physical, verbal and relational forms in situations where a power difference is present (Olweus, 1993). Relational bullying is defined as using social exclusion or rumor spreading (Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Duys, Larson & Sarvela, 2002).

Assumptions

I believe that I will find a discrepancy between teachers' and students' perceptions on bullying. Students will report more bullying than teachers but I think it will be extremely close due to the new NJ HIB Law. Teachers will want to make sure they are reporting everything. Teachers will want to look good on paper. I believe that males will report more physical bullying, compared to females reporting relational bullying.

Limitations

It is important to note the limitations of this study. The data will be collected using self-report measures, thus social appropriateness may influence their responses. This is known more to teachers because of the recently passed New Jersey Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Law this year. Teachers may feel that they need to answer questions in a specific way so they don't get penalized. Another limitation is regarding

the most appropriate way to define bullying so students can clearly understand the definition to answer the questions accurately.

Summary

Pepler, Craig, Zeigler, and Charach (1994) found that 84% of teachers believed they intervened "always" or "often" in bullying instances, whereas just 35% of students reported that teachers intervened. Many students believe teachers make the situation worse when they intervene (Rigby & Bagshaw, 2003; Rigby & Barnes 2002) and therefore hardly report bullying incidents to school staff.

The nonphysical forms of bullying are more covert and consequently harder to teachers to identify (Craig, Henderson, & Murphy, 2000). Additionally, school staff are more likely to categorize physical aggression as a form of bullying and to view nonphysical aggression, such as verbal attacks and social exclusion, as less serious and easier for children to cope with (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006).

Over 49% of children reported bullying by other students at school at least once during the past month, whereas 30.8% reported bullying others during that time (Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan, 2007). Defining "frequent" involvement in bullying as occurring two or more times within the past month (Solberg & Olweus, 2003), 40.6% of students reported types frequent involvement in bullying, with 23.2% as a frequent victim, 8.0% as a frequent bullying, and 9.4% as a frequent bully or victim. (Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan, 2007).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Bullying

Bullying is defined as a class of intentional and repeated acts that occur through physical, verbal and relational forms in situations where a power difference is present (Olweus, 1993). According to Olweus' (1991, 1999a, 1999b) widely cited definition,

> "A person is being bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. It is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another …" (1999b, p.10)

The key features of bullying include the intent to harm, the repeated aspect of the harmful acts, and the power imbalance between bully and victims. Bullying behavior may be shown in a variety of ways. In addition to acts of physical aggression, bullying may also be displayed through acts of relational aggression, such as social exclusion or injuring the reputation of another person, as well as verbal harassment or intimidation such as threats and psychological intimidation (Merrell, Gueldner, Ross & Isava, 2008).

Bullying among children has been commonly believed to be a normal part of growing up, but has emerged in the past two decades as a potentially serious threat to school safety and to the psychological and physical well being of children. Evidence suggests that bullying has acute consequences that range from suicide, murder and absenteeism at school to medical conditions such as fits, faints, vomiting, headaches and

long-term psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, loneliness and hysteria (Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Duys, Larson & Sarvela, 2002).

Types of Bullying

Olweus (1991) defined bullying as negative actions continually directed toward a child by one or more other children "by physical contact, by words, or in other ways, such as by making faces or dirty gestures" (p. 413). Olweus also distinguished between direct bullying, such as open attacks on victim, and indirect bullying, such as social isolation and exclusion and indicated that girls experience more indirect forms of bullying than direct forms.

Bullying may be physically direct such as, hitting, kicking or punching, or verbally direct such as, saying "nasty" things to a person and it may be intentionally hostile (O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999; Olweus, 1991). It includes being "sent nasty notes" (Smith & Sharp, 1994, p.13) including via cellular phone and the Internet (Jerome & Segal, 2003). It also includes indirection aggression (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz & Kaukiainen, 1992) characterized by its typically covert nature and use of third parties, for example, gossiping, spreading malicious rumors and social exclusion such as, deliberately not allowing a person into a group (Lagerspetz, Bjorkvist & Peltonen, 1988).

.Olweus (1993), took bullying into direct and indirect bullying categorizations. Direct bullying includes physical aggression (hitting, kicking, shoving), name-calling and teasing, threats, and having money or items taken or damaged (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Espelage & Swearer, 2003). This form of bullying has also been called overt aggression (Crick, 1995). In contrast, indirect or covert (Crick, 1995) bullying includes spreading false rumors and using a third party to harm others (Espelage & Swearer,

2003). This is closely linked to a similar new type of aggression called relational aggression. Relational aggression is the use of relationships to harm another student (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996).

Most empirical studies on bullying have focused on direct, overt behavior patterns, like physical aggression, hitting, shoving, verbal threats, swearing and/or mocking. For a few years now, according to studies on indirect, social or relational aggression (e.g., Crick and Grotpeter, 1995) indirect or relational forms of bullying have also been explicitly taken into account. These forms of aggression have in common that a person tries to harm another by damaging his/her social relationships such as, by excluding, gossiping or telling lies to isolate this person (Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann & Jugert, 2006).

Prevalence of Bullying

Prevalence is a concept used to characterize groups or populations, but it can also collect information at the individual level to generate a comprehensive estimate. To translate the word prevalence into the area of bully/victim problems in a school environment, a prevalence estimate of victimization, "having been bullied" or "being a victim," refers to the percentage of students in a school who have been exposed to bullying/victimizing behavior by other students with a defined frequency within a specified time period in the group of interest. A period prevalence estimate of bullying, "having bullied other students" or "being a bully," can be defined in a comparable way as the percentage of students who, within the specified time period, have exposed one or more other students to bullying/victimizing behavior with a defined frequency (Solberg & Olweus, 2003).

Bullying and related forms of aggression are of increasing concern for students, as nearly 30% of youth are estimated to experience frequent bullying (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007). In a study conducted in 2007 by Bradshaw, Sawyer and O'Brennan, frequent bullying was defined as occurring two or more times within the past month (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). 40.6% of students reported some type of frequent involvement in bullying, 23.2% as a frequent victim, 8.0% as a frequent bully, and 9.4% as a frequent bully or victim. Over 49% of children reported being bullied by other students at school at least once during the past month, whereas, 30.8% reported bullying others during that time (Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan, 2007).

Bullying victimization is estimated to affect 15 percent to 20 percent of the United States student population, with verbal teasing and intimidation being the most common forms (Nansel et al., 2001; Nansel e al., 2003). A study of secondary school students found that 88 percent of students reported having observed bullying and 90 percent of fourth through eighth graders reported being victims of bullying at school (Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008). Studies have reported that approximately 30% of adolescents report being involved in bullying at least two to three times per month (Craig et al., 2009; Nansel, et al., 2001). Nansel et al. found that students held various roles in regards to bullying, with 13% reporting being a bully, 10.6% reporting being a victim, and 6.3% reporting being a victim and bully in the past two months.

In a study conducted in 2003 by Seals and Young researching the prevalence of bullying they found that the students in their study perceived a high frequency of bullying. Of the 454 students surveyed, 48% of the seventh graders and 42% of the eighth graders reported that bullying occurred "often" in the delta schools participating in this

project. In addition, 24% reported having direct involvement in bullying. 10% of the students bullied others one or more times per week, 13% were victimized at the same rate and 1% both were bullied and bullied others on a weekly basis (Seals & Young, 2003).

Gender Differences

Research has shown a trend through gender differences in forms of aggression, with boys being more aggressive than girls and girls being predominately more indirectly aggressive than boys, especially during adolescence (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz & Kaukiainen, 1992). Researchers also found that boys were more commonly designated, through self and peer evaluations, as bullies than were girls and that boys more often participated in bullying as reinforcers and assistants, whereas girls were outsiders and defenders (Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, Osterman & Kaukiainen, 1996). This means that even if boys do not actively originate bullying, they may either follow a leading bully or reinforce his behavior by laughing or watching the act. In contrast, girls usually take either the role of the outsider, who does not get involved, or the role of the defender, who is supportive to the victim and tries to stop bullying (Athanasiades & Deliyanni-Kouimtzis, 2010).

In a study conducted by Athanasiades & Deliyanni-Kouimtzis in 2010, students agreed on the different ways that bullying is expressed among them. They agreed that boys engage in more physical and violent ways of bullying, whereas girls use verbal, such as mocking, and indirect such as, betraying secrets and spreading rumors or bullying that has to do with social relationships. Students also agreed that girls are aggressive with words meaning verbal or indirect bullying and that boys are aggressive with certain acts meaning physical bullying (Athanasiades & Deliyanni-Kouimtzis, 2010).

The gender difference in bullying is specifically marked for direct bullying, such as physical violence or threats, but less noticed for indirect bullying such as, spreading rumors or social isolation (Rigby, 2005). Girls are consistently more likely than boys to bully indirectly (Osterman et al, 1998).

There have been numerous studies linked to the question and gender differences in bullying. In 2003, Scheithauer conducted a meta-analysis of gender and age differences in relational, indirect and social aggression. He also included studies on indirect and/or relational forms of bullying. He summarized that although studies on bullying in general have found that boys report more often than girls; studies that differentiate between different forms of bullying, such as indirect or relational vs. verbal and physical forms of bullying, will report different results with regard to gender differences (Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann & Jugert, 2006).

Whitney and Smith (1993) reported that boys were more often involved as victims or bullies within their peer group, while girls bullied others to a stronger extent indirectly, such as exclusion or social isolation. Wolke et al. (2000) found that although there were more boys bullying others relationally, girls, however, reported more often than boys that they were relationally victimized (Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann & Jugert, 2006).

Overt-aggressive, also known as direct, behavior is associated with importance for boys within their peer group, such as concern for their dominance and position within the hierarchy of their peer group, whereas relational-aggressive, also known as indirect, behavior patterns have a special value for girls in the context of their psychosocial development within their smaller same-sex peer group. With the help of relational forms of bullying, girls may influence social relationships within their peer group successfully,

whereas boys may improve their social status within their peer group with the help of visible, overt-physical and domineering forms of aggression and/or bullying (Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann & Jugert, 2006).

Due to the importance of the same-sex peer group in early adolescence and to gender-role development, girls more often behave in a socially manipulative manner and therefore exhibit indirect or relational-aggressive behavior. Shown in the context of the intention to cause harm, indirect or relational-aggressive behavior is specifically negative for female peers (Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann & Jugert, 2006).

Research shows that females tend to express their aggression socially, using indirect, subtle methods such as slander, spreading rumors, social exclusion and manipulation of friendship relations, whereas boys express their aggression more physical means (Ahmed & Smith, 1994; Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Berthold & Hoover, 2000; Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukainen, 1992; Carney & Merrell, 2001; Craig & Pepler, 1997; Olweus, 1997). In fact, male bullies are three to four times more likely to inflict physical assaults than girls (National School Safety Center, 1995). Ahmed, Whitney, and Smith (1991) found this trend to expand to the male and female victims of bullying, with females more likely than boys to experience verbal and indirect forms of bullying and boys more likely to experience physical forms of bullying.

Gender differences in bullying are particularly marked at secondary school; by then, girls have greatly decreased direct physical bullying, but it is still common in boys. On the other hand, girls have increased their involvement in indirect forms of bullying, especially spreading rumors about someone behind their back' (Ahmed & Smith, 1994, p. 82).

Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Bullying

The difficulty surrounding school bullying prevention efforts originates from the perceptual differences between school staff and students (Houndoumadi & Pateraki, 2001; Newman & Murray, 2005; Stephens, Kyriacou, & Tonnessen, 2005). Past research has shown that many teachers are unaware of the seriousness of peer victimization at their school and its substantial effects on students (Nicolaides, Yui- chi, & Smith, 2002). Furthermore, teachers and other school staff tend to underestimate the number of students being bullied at their school (Houndoumadi & Pateraki, 2001) and expect that children will resolve these conflicts on their own (Newman. 2003; Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Larson. & Sarvela, 2002).

Teachers' inability to effectively identify bullying behavior, especially verbal and social forms, may be part of the problem. Leff, Kupersmidt, Patterson, and Power (1999) found that teachers more effectively identified bullying behaviors amongst elementary school children than adolescents. This disparity may be a result of the standard developmental trend whereby physical forms of aggressive behavior decline but social forms of aggression increase during the transition from childhood to adolescence (Craig & Pepler, 2003). The non-physical forms of bullying, also known as indirect, are more camouflaged and consequently harder for teachers to distinguish (Craig, Henderson, & Murphy. 2000). Additionally, school staff are more likely to label physical aggression as a form of bullying and to view nonphysical aggression, such as verbal attacks and social exclusion, as less serious and easier for children to cope with (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006).

There is also a difference between student and teacher perceptions in the likelihood that adults will intervene. Teachers typically believe that they intervene in

bullying situations more than they actually do (Newman & Murray, 2005). Pepler, Craig, Ziegler, and Charach (1994) found that 84% of teachers believed they intervened "always" or "often" in bullying incidents, whereas 35% of students reported that teachers intervened. In fact, many students believe teachers make the situation worse when they intervene (Rigby & Bagshaw, 2003; Rigby & Barnes, 2002) and thus rarely report bullying incidents to school staff. Consequently, students are more likely to report bullying events to their friends rather than school psychologists, counselors, or other school staff (Genta, Menesini, Fonzi, Costa- bile, & Smith, 1996; Houndoumadi & Pateraki. 2001; Rigby & Barnes, 2002).

Research exploring how people define bullying has concentrated on two strands. The first focus is on theoretical elements to the definition of bullying and the second considers whether specific instances are observed as bullying (Siann et al. 1993). Within the first strand, research studying pupils' and teachers' theoretical definitions suggests that their descriptions may differ from the collective elements of academic definitions. Not all teachers feel that repetition of incidents is required for a definition of bullying (Siann et al. 1993), and research with secondary school pupils and teachers suggests that they do not always include differential power between bully and victim or the intention to cause harm (Naylor et al. 2006).

The second strand of research has focused on the specific behaviors that individuals identify as bullying. Within the academic literature, there is agreement that bullying can involve direct behaviors or indirect behaviors (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, and Kaukiainen 1992). Direct behaviors include face-to-face actions such as hitting, threatening and calling names. Indirect behaviors include behaviors that occur through a

third party such as social exclusion, rumor spreading and unpleasant emails or text messaging (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, and Kaukiainen 1992). Research with pupils and teachers, however, shows a tendency for bullying to be associated to purely physical, direct behaviors (Arora 1996; Naylor et al. 2006), with the indirect behaviors often being neglected. Social exclusion has been viewed as bullying by the smallest number of pupils compared to other behaviors (Boulton, Trueman, and Flemington 2002).

In a study on teachers' views on bullying, Boulton (2002) found that most of the teachers in his sample (N=138) defined bullying in terms of physical and verbal abuse and forcing people to do things they do not want to do. However, about 25% of these teachers did not include in their definitions: name-calling, spreading rumors, intimidating by staring and taking other people's belongings. In addition, over 50% did not include social exclusion. This finding is consistent with Ramasut and Papatheodorou's (1994) that many teachers do not rate social exclusion by peers as a serious problem for those students who experience it (Naylor, Cowie, Cossin, Bettencourt & Lemme, 2006).

Teachers are less likely to observe incidents of social exclusion, since the behaviors are often brief and covert, and do not often provoke observable reactions from the victim (Craig & Pepler, 1997). Craig et al. (2000) found that teachers characterized physical aggression as bullying more often, viewing it as more serious and considering it more worthy of intervention than verbal aggression (Reid, Monsen & Rivers, 2004).

Chapter 3

Methodology

Participants

Data was collected in March 2012 from 97 students, both male and female, in the eighth grade and 10 teachers in a large New Jersey public school district. There was a total amount of 47 males and 50 females that participated in the study. To ensure anonymity among participants, students and teachers were only asked questions regarding their race and sex.

Materials

Two instruments were used to evaluate student and teacher perceptions of bullying.

The Bully Survey – Student Version (BYS-S). The Bully Survey (Swearer, 2007) **is** a 45-item questionnaire that provides a comprehensive examination of the nature and magnitude of bullying and victimization in individual schools and/or school districts. The survey includes four parts: (1) When you were bullied by others, (2) When you saw other students getting bullied, (3) When you bullied others, (4) Your thoughts about bullying.

The Bully Survey – Teacher Version (BYS-T). The Bully Survey (Swearer, 2007) is a 28-item questionnaire that provides a comprehensive examination of the nature and magnitude of bullying and victimization in individual schools and/or school districts. The survey includes three parts: (1) Your observation/knowledge of students being bullied, (2) Your observations/knowledge of students bullying others. (3) Your thoughts about bullying.

Design

The study was a between-subject design. The independent variables were the students and teachers that participated in the study. The dependent variable were the Swearer Bully Survey, both Student and Teacher versions.

Procedure

An examiner administered the Student Version of the Swearer Bully Survey to students and the Teacher Version of the Swearer Bully Survey to the teachers. The examiner read aloud the definition and examples of bullying to the students provided on the survey to ensure comprehension the word bullying. Bullying was defined as: Bullying (Swearer, 2007) happens when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself. Usually, happens over and over. Five examples of bullying were read aloud: (1) Punching, shoving and other acts that hurt people physically, (2) Spreading bad rumors about people, (3) Keeping certain people out of a group, (4) Teasing people in a mean way, (5) Getting certain people to “gang up” on others. After all students completed the survey, the examiner went around the classroom and collected the survey.

Chapter 4

Results

Students were asked 3 different types of questions. 1) Have you been bullied this school year? 2) Did you ever see a student other than yourself who was bullied this school year? 3) Did you bully anyone this school year? The way students were categorized is due to the way the student answered the three questions. Categories ranged from 1 to 8. Below are what each number represents: 1: Victim; 2: Bystander; 3: Bully; 4: Bully-Victim; 5: Victim-Bystander; 6: Bully-Bystander; 7: No Response; 8: Victim-Bystander-Bully.

Findings show a close relationship between males and females in the Bystander group. The majority of students perceived themselves as bystanders to bullying. A total of 20 out 47 males (42.5%) and 18 out of 50 (36%) females found themselves to be bystanders. The majority (35.2%) of students perceived themselves as bystanders to bullying.

Wide ranges of scores were shown throughout this study. 3.7% of students perceived themselves as a victim to bullying. 0.9% of students perceived themselves as bullies to bullying. 1.9% of students perceived themselves as bully-victims to bullying. 18.5% of students perceived themselves as a victim-bystander to bullying. 8.3% of students perceived themselves as a bully-bystander to bullying. 7.4% of students perceived themselves as no relation to bullying. 13.9% of students perceived themselves to be a bully-victim-bystander to bullying.

There was no significant difference between student and teacher attitudes regarding bullying. There was also no significant difference between males and females

attitudes regarding bullying. Thus, our findings didn't provide strong support for the hypothesis. However, there was a significant finding representing students who thought bullying was a problem in their school; also thought that schools should worry about bullying.

In the survey, students were asked to answer two different questions. 1) Is bullying a problem in your school? 2) Do you think that schools should worry about bullying? The results of those two questions resulted in a significance level of .05. These results show a correlation between students and their perceptions of the seriousness of bullying in their school. Results conclude that if a student believes bullying is a problem in their school, they also believe that the schools should worry about bullying.

There was no significant gender differences among students in their perceptions of how often bullying happened in school. The students were asked how often bullying occurred depending on what category they perceived themselves as. They were either asked, "How often have you been bullied? "How often did you see this student being bullied?" or "How often did you bully this person?" Table 1 provides the analysis of the question. The table is broken down between gender (1= Male; 2 =Female) and frequency (1= One or more times a month; 2= One or more times a week; 3= One or more times a day). The table shows that the majority (47.5%) believed bullying occurred one or more times a week. 30.3% of students believed bullying occurred one or more times a month. 22.2% of students believed bullying occurred one or more times a day.

Table 1

		frequency			
		1.00	2.00	3.00	Total
gender	1.00	10	23	9	42
	2.00	20	24	13	57
Total		30	47	22	99

Table 2 (Group 1= teachers; Group 2= students; Problem 1= Answered yes to the question; Problem 2= Answered no to the question) shows that the majority (90%) of teachers believed bullying was a problem in their school. The majority (70.1%) of students also believed bullying was a problem in their school. 10% of teachers and 29.9% of students believe bullying wasn't a problem in their school.

Table 2

		group		
		1.00	2.00	Total
problem	1.00	9	68	77
	2.00	1	29	30
Total		10	97	107

Table 3 (Group 1= teachers; Group 2= students; Problem 1= Answered yes to the question; Problem 2= Answered no to the question) shows that all the teachers (100%) believe that their school should worry about bullying. The majority of students (87.6%) also believe that their school should worry about bullying. 12.4% of students believe that their school should not worry about bullying.

Table 3

		group		
		1.00	2.00	Total
worry	1.00	10	85	95
	2.00	0	12	12
Total		10	97	107

Table 2 and Table 3 both show a relationship between students and teachers and their perception about whether bullying is a problem in their school and whether schools should worry about bullying.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Overall, this study will provide schools with more insight for further implications and/or interventions concerning bullying. Even though the hypotheses in this study were proven wrong, the results from this survey show no perceptual differences between students and teachers, which overall, is better for the school district because both students and teachers are beginning to come to an understanding about bullying. I believe the new Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Law in New Jersey could have played a role in that finding. Both students and teachers are well aware of the new law that came into effect this school year. Teachers and students may have had that in the back of their head while taking the survey, which could have swayed their answers. They may have found the need to answer a question a specific way so they do not get penalized for their answer.

Limitations of this study would include the low amount of participants in the study, especially teachers. Only 10 teachers and 97 students completed the Swearer Bully Survey. For future research, it is suggested to use the entire grade of school, if not the whole entire school, rather than a specific core in a grade. The higher the amount of the participants, the better chance the study will have results of significant findings. The data collection through self-report measures is considered to be another limitation, due to the possibility of social appropriateness influencing their responses.

This study also extends research on bullying with important implications that can be brought into schools. The study showed the concern both students and teachers had

concerning bullying in their school. The findings showed a relationship that the perceptions of students and teachers were similar in a way that bullying is a problem in their school and also that schools should worry about bullying. This can provide schools with a possible question to ask students and staff in their school that would analyze their perceptions on how serious of a problem bullying might be in their school.

This finding could be a possibility that contradicts previous research. The majority of past research implies that students and teachers perceptions of bullying differ. However, this finding showed that students and teachers had similar perceptions regarding bullying. This finding is a positive outlook for the future to have both students and teachers on the same page. When students and teachers are on the same page for bullying, it allows the school to achieve success and growth to control bullying in their school.

Implications for schools in the future would be to create and implement an intervention to decrease the problem of bullying in schools. A questionnaire asking questions of what both students and teachers suggest that could be done concerning bullying. Since both students and teachers agree that bullying is a problem in their school, it is important to take suggestions from both groups of people. This will provide knowledge to the school district of what could possibly work for them.

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