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THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF BULLYING BYSTANDERS
IN AN URBAN SCHOOL SETTING

by
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A Thesis

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Thesis Chair:　　　Terri Allen, Ph.D.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this manuscript to anyone who has been affected by bullying.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

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THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF BULLYING BYSTANDERS
IN AN URBAN SCHOOL SETTING
2011/12
Terri Allen, Ph.D.
Master of Arts in School Psychology

The current study focused on bystander interventions in hypothetical real world and cyber world bullying scenarios. Participants included 87 5th-8th grade students living in an urban community in southern New Jersey. The intervention of bystanders, taking into account their cultural awareness of snitching was explored. The bystanders' relationship with the bully and victim, and the bystanders' method of intervention were examined. An original survey of bullying scenarios was administered to collect data. Results showed the majority of bystander intervention levels as moderate (50.57%) or high (35.63%). The cultural relevance of snitching yielded no significant impact on bystander intervention. Future research should examine a high school population in addition to field settings compared to a survey.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Need for Study

The current study focused on innocent bystander reactions in hypothetical real world and cyber world bullying scenarios. Current research is primarily conducted on members of the middle class, hindering a focus on the urban population. The phenomenon of snitching is culturally relative to urban communities, holding the belief that telling on someone else will get them in trouble, which is frowned upon. The present study explored the relationship between bystanders and their choice of intervention, taking into account their cultural awareness of snitching. The act of bullying impacts all involved parties, especially the bully, the victim, and the bystanders. These experiences can negatively impact children physically, mentally, and emotionally. With society moving forward technologically, it is important to examine how experiences in the real world and cyber world translate to one another.

Purpose

The current study aimed to examine the role and impact of bystanders in an urban middle school setting. The two main focuses of the present study were the bystanders' relationship with the bully and victim, and the bystanders' method of intervention, if any.

Hypothesis 1

There will be a difference in method of intervention if the bystander is friends with the bully or victim.

Hypothesis 2

There will be a difference in the method of intervention with respect to type of bullying.

Operational Definitions

Bullying includes any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, as defined in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents that:

1. Is reasonably perceived as being motivated by either any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability; or

2. By any other distinguishing characteristic; and that

3. Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds as provided for in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15.3, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that

4. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a pupil or damaging the pupil's property, or placing a pupil in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or

5. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any pupil or group of pupils; or

6. Creates a hostile educational environment for the pupil by interfering with a pupil's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

Electronic communication as defined by N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14 is "a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager". A bystander is a student who has witnessed or has knowledge of an act of bullying. The cyber world refers to the realm in which electronic means are used to interact (including internet, chat rooms, social media/social networking websites, and mobile devices). Snitching is defined as telling or tattling on someone, which gets them in trouble.

Assumptions

Participants taking the survey are capable of reading at an appropriate grade level.

Limitations

A small sample size was encountered due to a total school population of less than 300. Participants were from a low socioeconomic status (SES) community; some students may not have as much access to social media (can't afford smart phones, don't own computers etc) to relate to the cyber bullying scenarios. An additional limitation could occur with the data because it is being self-reported (students may think that they will get in trouble). The survey presents students with hypothetical situations. As a result, they may intervene differently in a true situation. While previous research has lacked diversity due to primarily Caucasian participants, the current research lacks diversity due to having a majority of African American participants.

Summary

The current literature review focused on general bullying and bullying interventions. Cultural factors pertaining to an urban setting were also examined, as well as the intervention of peers (bystanders). The present study looks to see if peer (bystander) intervention translates to an urban setting due to cultural norms.

Students were asked to complete a survey composed of hypothetical bullying scenarios, providing their method of intervention (I would tell a teacher, I would tell the group to stop, I would confront the bully, or I wouldn't do anything). Scenarios suggested having a relationship (being friend's) with the bully and/or the victim as well as the bully and/or victim being a random student (not a friend). The bullying scenarios also accounted for real world (bus stop, hallway, and playground) and cyber world (Facebook post) settings.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Bullying occurs on and off school properties across the world. This epidemic has escalated in recent years to the extent that victims are retaliating or taking their own lives (Swearer, 2007a, 2007b, 2010, 2012a, 2012b). The state of New Jersey recently passed the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act, one of the strictest in the country. Bullying affects everyone, whether they are directly or indirectly involved (Polanin, Espelage, & Pigott, 2012). The following literature review will focus on components of bullying as well as methods of intervention.

General Bullying

In Barbara Coloroso's (2003) book *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*, she identified three essential components to bullying. Imbalances of power, the intent to harm, and the threat of further aggression, are established parts of a bullying relationship. An imbalance of power can be created by differences in age, size, strength, verbal skills, social skills, race, sex, and group size (Coloroso, 2003). Intent to harm is characterized by the bully meaning "to inflict emotional and/or physical pain, expects the action to hurt, and takes pleasure in witnessing the hurt" (Coloroso, 2003, p.13). The third component of bullying, the threat of further aggression, is characterized by the intention to happen again, not being a onetime event (Coloroso, 2003).

There are three main types of bullying, verbal, physical, and relational (Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999; Coloroso,2003; Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Olweus, 1993; Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt, & Hymel 2010; Swearer 2012a, 2012b). Coloroso (2003) noted that "verbal abuse is the most common form of bullying used by both boys and girls" and that "it accounts for 70 percent of reported bullying" (p.15). Forms of

verbal bullying include "name-calling, taunting, belittling, cruel criticism, personal

defamation, racist slurs, and sexually suggestive or sexually abusive remarks" (Coloroso,

2003, p.16). The most identifiable form of bullying is physical. Less than one-third of

children reported bullying is physical; this can include "slapping, hitting, choking,

poking, punching, kicking, biting, pinching, scratching, twisting limbs into painful

positions, spitting, and damaging or destroying clothes and property belonging to the

bullied child" (Coloroso, 2003, p.16). Relational bullying is the hardest to detect of the

three (Coloroso, 2003). While boys tend to use more physical bullying, girls are more

likely to use relational. Relational bullying can be carried out by "ignoring, isolating,

excluding, or shunning", typically to keep the target out of a social circle (Coloroso,

2003, p.17).

A study by Bosworth, Espelage, and Simon (1999), focused on bullying behaviors

among middle school students. The studies' sample was composed of participants from

the Midwestern United States. Unlike the present study however, approximately 84% of

participants were Caucasian, creating a lack of diversity (Bosworth et al., 1999). While

the present study focused on the concept of snitching, Bosworth et al. (1999) examined

beliefs supportive of violence; Questions on their scale included:

> "(a) 'If I walked away from a fight , I'd be a coward', (b) 'It's okay to hit
> someone who hits you first', (c) 'If a kid teases me, I usually cannot get him/her
> to stop unless I hit him/her', (d) 'If I refuse to fight, my friends will think I'm
> afraid', (e) 'I don't need to fight because there are other ways to deal with being
> mad', and (f) 'If I really wanted to, I can usually talk someone out of wanting to
> fight with me'" (Bosworth et al., 1999, p.350).

Scores on this scale ranged from 0-24, with a higher score indicating more supported

beliefs of violence. Results showed that the average score for this scale was 11.47;

students "who held beliefs supportive of violence were significantly more likely than were other students to bully their peers" (Bosworth et al., 1999, p.354).

Dan Olweus is considered to be a "founding father" in the field of bullying and victimization. Olweus has conducted countless studies in the Scandinavian countries of Norway and Sweden for over 20 years. In his 1993 book *Bullying at School What we know and what we can do*, Olweus provided typical characteristics of both victims and bullies. He suggested that there are two types of victims, passive or submissive, and provocative. The passive or submissive (referred to as 'typical') victim is characterized by being anxious, insecure, cautious, quiet, and without friends (Olweus, 1993, p.32). Olweus (1993) summarized passive victims by stating that their "behavior and attitude…*signal to others that they are insecure and worthless individuals who will not retaliate if they are attacked or insulted*" (1993, p.32). The second type of victim, provocative, is less common than passive or submissive victims. Provocative victims are characterized as both anxious and aggressive; they may be viewed as annoying by classmates, and their behavior can provoke other students (Olweus, 1993).

Coloroso (2003) suggested several reasons why kids may not tell adults about being bullied. One reason is that "they have learned that 'ratting' on a peer is bad, not cool, 'juvenile'—even if that peer is bullying them…letting it go is supposed to be a more 'mature' response" (Coloroso, 2003, p.50).

Olweus (1993) also provided characteristics for typical bullies as well as other forms of bullies. Typical bullies are aggressive in general, not just towards peers, impulsive, have a need to dominate others, and have a positive self-view (Olweus, 1993). While typical bullies initiate the act, there are also individuals considered to be bullies

that do not initiate the act. Those guilty by association are considered bullies through their on-looking or distant support. Olweus (1993) described these individuals as passive bullies, followers, and henchmen. Coloroso (2003) defined passive bullies as those "who support the bullying but do not take an active part" and followers/henchmen as those "who take an active part but do not start the bullying" (p.65).

Coloroso (2003) suggested that there are seven types of bullies: confident, social, fully armored, hyperactive, bullied, bunch, and gang. The confident bully has a sense of entitlement and feels superior over others, while the social bully hides their own insecurities by isolating and excluding others (Coloroso, 2003). A fully armored bully is highly opportunistic in deciding when to strike; the hyperactive bully usually acts as a result of a social miscommunication. The bullied bully "bullies others to get some relief from her own feelings of powerlessness and self-loathing" (Coloroso, 2003, p.19). The bunch of bullies and gang of bullies while both operating in groups, differ in their intentions. The bunch of bullies is usually a group of friends who act out collectively towards someone they would not target individually. The gang of bullies is a group that strategically works together and has no remorse for victims (Coloroso, 2003).

Bullying Intervention

Olweus (1993) suggested 3 levels of intervention, at school, in the classroom, and with the individual. School level intervention included having assemblies on bully/victim problems, increased supervision during lunch and recess, and having meetings between parents and school staff (Olweus, 1993). Classroom level interventions included establishing and enforcing class rules concerning bullying, and role playing (Olweus, 1993). Olweus' (1993) individual level intervention included "serious talks" with

involved students and their parents, support groups for the involved individuals (both

parents and students), and changing schools (p.64).

Olweus (1993) performed pre- and post-tests to 2,500 elementary and middle

school children to test the effectiveness of his bullying intervention. The intervention

program was composed of a "teacher booklet, a parent folder, a videocassette, and the

Bully/Victim Questionnaire" (Olweus, 1993, p.112). Main findings of this study

included "marked reductions – by 50 percent of more – in bully/victim problems during

the two years following the introduction of the intervention program" (Olweus, 1993,

p.113). Olweus (1993) found that his "results applied to both boys and girls and to

students across all grades studied (from grade 4 through 9)" (p.113). Additionally, the

intervention program "reduced considerably the number (and percentage) of *new* victims"

(Olweus, 1993, p.114). Olweus (1993) suggested basic principles that are the foundation

of his intervention program. It is important to create a school and home environment that

are "characterized by warmth, positive interest, and involvement from adults on one hand

and firm limits to unacceptable behavior on the other" (Olweus, 1993, p.115).

Additionally, Olweus (1993) stated that reprimands that are "nonhostile, nonphysical

sanctions…be consistently applied" and that "adults (should) act as authorities at least in

some respects" (Olweus, 1993, p.115).

Merrell and Isava (2008), composed a meta-analytic review of school bullying

intervention programs from 1980-2004. Studies included in their review took place in

both North America and Europe. The results of their review showed multiple significant

positive effects for the following variables: (a) student self-reports of positive attitude

toward bullying, being bullied, having witnessed bullying, intervene to stop bullying, (b)

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teacher self-reports of efficacy of intervention skills, and (c) peer reports of participation in bullying roles and peer acceptance (Merrell & Isava, 2008). Multiple significant negative effects were found in (a) student self-reports of bullying others, being bullied and (b) teacher report of child behavior concerning student behavior/emotional problems (Merrell & Isava, 2008).

Espelage and Swearer (2004) edited *Bullying in American Schools A Social-Ecological Perspective on Prevention and Intervention*, which partially focused on current effective prevention and intervention programs. One intervention, the Bully Busters Program focuses on changing the environment in which bullying occurs. There are eight goals presented in this program; increasing awareness of bullying, preventing bullying in the classroom, building personal power, recognizing the bully and victim, recommendations and interventions for bullying behavior and for helping victims, and relaxation and coping skills (Espelage & Swearer, 2004).

Intervention of peers (bystanders)

The bystander is the third party of a bullying episode (Coloroso, 2003). Often caught in the middle between the bully and the victim, the bystander often does not intervene (Coloroso, 2003). Coloroso (2003) suggested the four most provided reasons for not intervening; these include fear of getting hurt, fear of becoming a new target, fear of making matters worse, and not knowing what to do. Some of the most common excuses provided for lack of intervention include the bystander relationship/friendship with the bully and/or victim (Coloroso, 2003; O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999; Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999). Coloroso (2003) noted that "kids are less willing to intervene when the bully is seen as a friend (and)…more willing to intervene when the

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targeted kid is a friend" (p.68). Another common excuse for lack of intervention lies within a child's code of silence (Coloroso, 2003).

Darley and Latane (1968) and Latane and Darley (1970) conducted studies on bystander intervention since the 1964 murder of Kitty Genovese. Darley and Latane (1968) focused on the diffusion of responsibility in emergency situations. Participants were primarily female, 59, compared to male, 13. The participants were instructed to take turns discussing "personal problems associated with college life" (Darley & Latane, 1968, p.378). While subjects were not face to face, they were all able to speak to one another over an intercom (to maintain anonymity) one at a time, in intervals. One member of the discussion revealed that he is prone to seizures. After a few intervals of speaking, the other group members overheard the individual having a seizure. Due to the intercom intervals, everyone could hear the seizure, not speak to see if the individual was ok, and not speak to one another to figure out collectively what to do (Darley & Latane, 1968). Darley and Latane (1968) measured the amount of time it took for the subject to report an emergency (subject having a seizure) and also the subject's reaction based on how many individuals were perceived to be in the discussion group. Based on speaking intervals, the participant believed he or she was in one of three possible discussion group sizes for this experiment:

> "a two-person group (consisting of a person who would later have a fit (seizure) and the real subject), a three-person group (consisting of the victim, the real subject, and one confederate voice), or a six-person group (consisting of the victim, the real subject, and four confederate voices)" (Darley & Latane, 1968, p.379).

Darley and Latane (1968) found that "eighty-five percent of the subjects who thought they alone knew of the victim's plight reported the seizure (before the intercom interval

switched to the next group member), only 31% of those who thought four other

bystanders were present did so" (Darley & Latane, 1968, p.379).

Thornberg (2007) published a study that focused on the bystander effect in

children. While in the field (5th grade Swedish classroom), Thornberg observed a student

clearly in distress (holding his arm while lying on the floor, and crying). The class

teacher had not yet discovered the child, and Thornberg observed the student reactions.

After the child received aid, Thornberg later interviewed students who saw their

classmate in distress, regarding their intervention or lack thereof. The interview process

provided "seven concepts of definitions associated with passive or non-intervention

bystander behavior… trivialisation (sic), dissociation, embarrassment association, busy

working priority, compliance to a competitive norm, audience modeling and

responsibility transfer" (Thornberg, 2007, p.13).

Thornberg (2007) defined trivialization as the bystanders not finding the situation

to be an emergency. This was done by claiming that the event was not serious, or

dismissing the event as something routine (Thornberg, 2007). Dissociation involved

removing oneself from the situation ("I didn't see what happened") or defining oneself as

a non-friend of the victim. According to Thornberg (2007), the concept of

embarrassment association involved both the victim and the bystander. Not only did the

bystander not want to "overcrowd" the victim, believing that he or she is already

embarrassed as it is, the bystander also did not wish to intervene for fear of personal

embarrassment. Interestingly, students' definitions of responsibility transfer were three-

fold. The first and most common form was a transfer of responsibility to the teacher.

Second, students' felt that it was the victim's friend's responsibility to intervene. Third,

bystander responsibility transfer involved the bully, with students suggesting that whoever caused the problem should fix it (Thornberg, 2007).

Fischer et al (2011) completed a meta-analytic review on bystander intervention in dangerous and non-dangerous emergencies. Bystander attributes included "(a) number of present bystanders, (b) relation between bystanders (familiar vs. stranger), (c) sex of bystanders, and (d) real (i.e., actually present naïve other participant) versus confederate versus implied bystanders (i.e., bystanders who are not actually present in the critical situation but implied, e.g., to be next door or available via intercom)" (Fischer et al., 2011, p.522). Results of the meta-analysis were consistent with the hypotheses. Fischer et al. (2011) found that "the bystander effect is reduced when the situation is perceived as dangerous, when a perpetrator is present, or when the focal bystander faces a physical cost of intervention" (p.527).

Pozzoli and Gini (2010) conducted a study in Italy focusing on active defenders of a victim and passive bystanding in bullying. Participants included 462 7th and 8th grade students that were diversely sampled from families of low-, working-, and upper middle social classes. Self-report measures were used for bullying, active defending, and passive bystanding behaviors for physical, verbal, and relational bullying. Pozzoli and Gini (2010) used the following items for passive bystanding:

> "When a classmate is hit or pushed, I stand by and I mind my own business" (physical), "If a classmate is teased or threatened I do nothing and I don't meddle" (verbal), and "If I know that someone is excluded or isolated from the group I act as if nothing had happened"(relational) (p.818).

Students rated all items based on how often during the current school year "they had enacted the behavior described in each item on a 4-pont scale from 1 (never) to 4 (almost always)" (Pozzoli & Gini, 2010, p.818).

Pozzoli and Gini (2010) also used a "Perceived Peer Normative Pressure" scale, which examined how students rated "what extent peers expected them to behave in each of the following ways: (a) direct intervention, (b) ask for adults' intervention, (c) disregard, and (d) withdrawal for self protection" when asked "If in my classroom someone repeatedly bullies another classmate, according to my classmates I should…" (p.819). Results of this study showed that the interaction of perceived peer pressure and personal responsibility "significantly predicted defending (the victim) behavior" (Pozzoli & Gini, 2010, p.821). Additionally of significance were results of gender and bullying behavior concerning passive bystanding; finding that "passive bystanding behavior was higher among boys and associated with higher bullying" (Pozzoli & Gini, 2010, p.823). Further, O'Connell, Pepler, and Craig (1999) found that "The amount of time peers spent in passively reinforcing the bully by watching without joining in was, on average, 53.9% of the time" (p.446). Additionally, "Peers actively supported the victim by intervening, distracting the bully, or otherwise discouraging the aggression, for 25.4% of the time" (O'Connell et al., 1999, p.446).

Bystander effect

Originally, Darley and Latane (1968) examined what bystanders would do as a means of intervention. Later, Latane and Darley (1970) focused on why bystanders do not intervene in certain situations and they developed a five-step model that bystanders use when determining to intervene. The bystander has to notice the event, interpret the event as an emergency, decide if it is their responsibility to act, if they are going to intervene, they must decide how, and finally the bystander must actually respond (Latane & Darley, 1970). If there are several bystanders around during a confrontation, they are

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less likely to help the victim (Darley & Latane, 1968; Fischer et al, 2011; Gansberg, 1964; Latane & Darley, 1970; O'Connell, Polanin, Espelage, & Pigott, 2012; Pozzoli & Gini, 2010; Pepler, & Craig, 1999; Thornberg, 2007).

Additionally, Latane and Darley (1970) provided four potential reasons as to why bystanders don't intervene

"(1) Others serve as an audience to one's actions, inhibiting him from doing foolish things. (2) Others serve as guides to behavior, and if they are inactive, they will lead the observer to be inactive also. (3) The interactive effect of these two processes will be much greater than either alone; if each bystander sees other bystanders momentarily frozen by audience inhibition, each may be misled into thinking the situation must not be serious. (4) The presence of other people dilutes the responsibility felt by any single bystander, making him feel that it is less necessary for himself to act" (p.125).

A famous example of the bystander effect is the Kitty Genovese murder in 1964. Thirty-eight bystanders heard Genovese's cries for help as she was brutally attacked; however no one intervened until it was too late (Gansberg, 1964). Together, the findings of Darley and Latane (1968), Latane and Darley (1970), and Thornberg (2007) and suggested that the bystander effect can be generalized to both child and adult populations.

Cultural Factors

Craig and Pepler (1995) examined bullying interactions on school playgrounds in an urban part of Canada. Demographically, participants of this study were diverse; there were "43% Caucasian, 25% African descent, and 32% mixed or other ethnicity" (Craig & Pepler, 1995, p.85). Data was obtained through hidden microphones and cameras from a distance. The data showed that "Peers were observed to be involved in some capacity in 85% of the bullying episodes" and that involvement included "being actively involved, observing the aggressive interaction, being involved in the same activity as the bully prior to the episode, or intervening to terminate the interaction" (Craig & Pepler, 1995, p.87).

These findings also suggest that peers reinforced bullying in 81% of bullying episodes, and that peers were "significantly more respectful to bullies (74% of the episodes) than victims (23% of the episodes)" (Craig & Pepler, 1995, p.87). Interestingly, results of this study also showed that of the episodes in which peers were present, 85% of the time, they only intervened 13% (Craig & Pepler, 1995).

Whitman and Davis (2007) studied youth, gangs, and witness intimidation in several Massachusetts cities. Key findings of the study showed that "community norms against 'snitching' are strong, but youth were still willing to report crimes under certain circumstances" (Whitman & Davis, 2007, p.4). Participants most commonly cited lack of crime reporting because they "did not want to be seen as a snitch, while they most often attributed their peers' non-reporting to fear of being beaten up or killed" (Whitman & Davis, 2007, p.4). However, participants also provided being able to break "the 'no-snitching' code, most notably when an injured victim needed help or when the crime was directed against themselves or their family members" (Whitman & Davis, 2007, p.5). They state that "Intimidation happens on two levels: (1) direct and indirect threats and assaults directed against witnesses in particular cases, and (2) 'anti-snitching' campaigns directed at the community as a whole" (Whitman & Davis, 2007, p.10).

A diverse sample of youth participated in the Whitman and Davis (2007) study. Subjects' ethnic demographics included 57% Hispanic, 27% black, 7% white, 2% Asian, and 2% Native American. The participants' of this study tended to be "more minority, more poor, and more likely to live in single-parent households than the general population of their cities" (Whitman & Davis, 2007, p.17). The authors note that the previously mentioned discrepancy "indicates that the findings may not be generalizable

to the population at large of these cities, (but) may, in fact, be representative of the particular Massachusetts communities with entrenched gang problems" (Whitman & Davis, 2007, p.17). The current research raises the question "Will the bystander effect translate to urban settings?" The present study looks to examine the perception of being a "snitch" due to violating the social norm of silence.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The current study aimed to examine the role and impact of innocent bystanders in an urban middle school setting. The two main focuses of the present study were the bystanders' relationship with the bully and victim, and the bystanders' method of intervention, if any.

Participants

Participants included 87 5th-8th grade students at a charter middle school in Camden, NJ. There were a total of 36 male and 51 female participants. The number of participants in each grade level was the following: 5th grade n=21, 6th grade n=26, 7th grade n=16 and 8th grade n=24. Demographically, 50 participants were African American (57.5%), 16 Hispanic (18.4%), 1 Asian (1.1%), 1 Caucasian (1.1%), 17 had multiple ethnicities (selected more than one option) (19.54%), and 2 participants (2.3%) did not provide their ethnicity.

Materials

Subjects participated in a self constructed survey (see Appendix A) by the researcher questioning how they would respond if they witnessed or had knowledge of four bullying events. The survey contained four bullying scenarios; each scenario focused on either the bystander-victim or bystander-bully relationship. The scenarios depicted if the participant (bystander) is a friend or non-friend with either the victim or bully of each scenario, respectively. For each scenario, the participants were asked "What would your reaction be?". Possible reactions or methods of intervention included telling an adult, telling the bullies to stop, telling a friend, approaching the bully directly, or not doing anything. Participants who selected "I would not do anything" were then

asked to select the best reason for why they would not intervene. Four possible reasons were provided; (a) It was none of my business, (b) I don't know (the victim), he or she is not my friend, (c) I don't want to get in trouble, and (d) I don't want to be called a snitch. The second choice (b) was omitted from the first scenario because the victim is stated to be the bystander's friend. The second portion of the survey, which examined the lack of bystander intervention, if any, builds on Coloroso's (2003) suggestions by applying them to specific (urban) populations.

Design

Data was analyzed by performing a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The 4x2 design included the bystander relationship to the bully and/or victim (friend with victim, non friend with victim, friend with bully, and non friend with bully), and the type of bullying (face-to-face scenario and non face-to-face scenario). The total survey score was used to indicate the participant's level of bystander intervention.

Procedure

Consent forms were sent home to parents of prospective participants. Upon receiving informed consent permission for their child's participation, participants were administered a brief bullying scenario survey in their respective classrooms. All participants were informed of the purpose of the study, that their participation was voluntary, that their participation would not affect their grades, and that they could end their participation at any time. Participants were instructed to work quietly and independently. Upon completion, all surveys were collected and scored.

Each response for the four scenarios was weighed 1 through 4 for scoring purposes. The response of "I would not do anything" was given a 1 in that there was no

bystander intervention. The option of telling an adult was scored as a 2 because it was the most indirect method of intervention. A 3 was assigned to telling (indirectly) the bully or bullies to stop, or telling a different friend about the incident. A 4 was assigned to directly approaching the bully/bullies and telling them to stop. Possible scores ranged from 4-16; each score fell in one of the following categories low, moderate, or high level of bystander intervention (4-8 low, 9-13 moderate, 14-16 high).

Chapter 4

Results

The present study contained two hypotheses; (1) There would be a difference in the selected method of intervention if the bystander was friends with the bully or victim, and (2) There would be a difference in the method of intervention with respect to the type of bullying (face-to-face vs. non face-to-face).

Descriptive Data

The majority of participants were either African-American, Hispanic, or of multiple ethnicities. Figure 1 shows the total number of participants by their provided ethnicity.
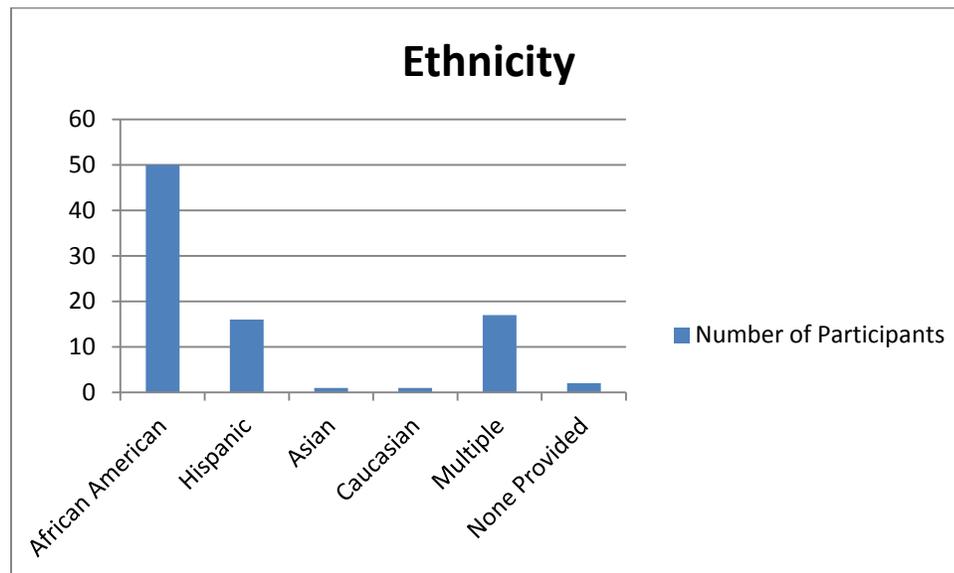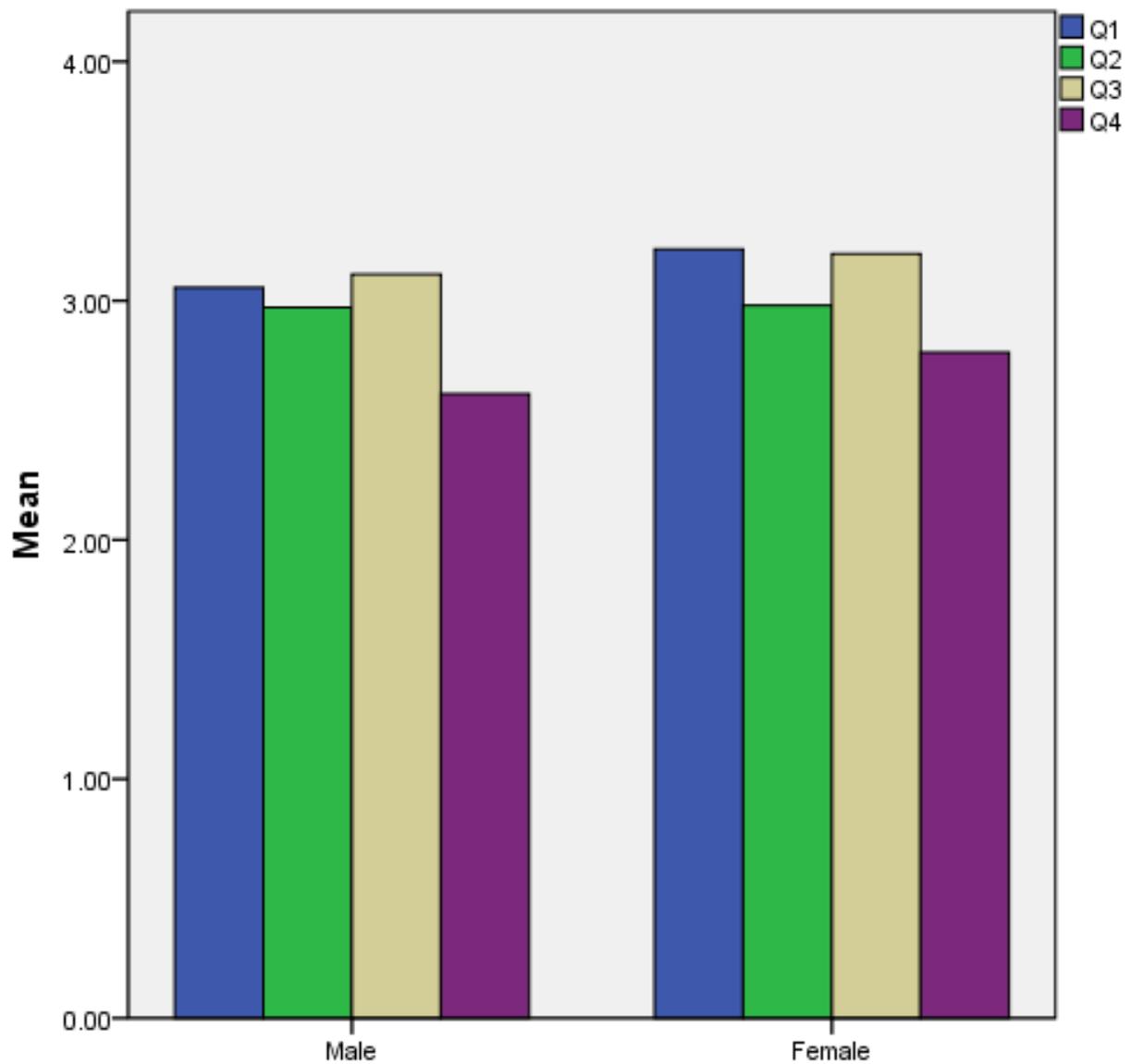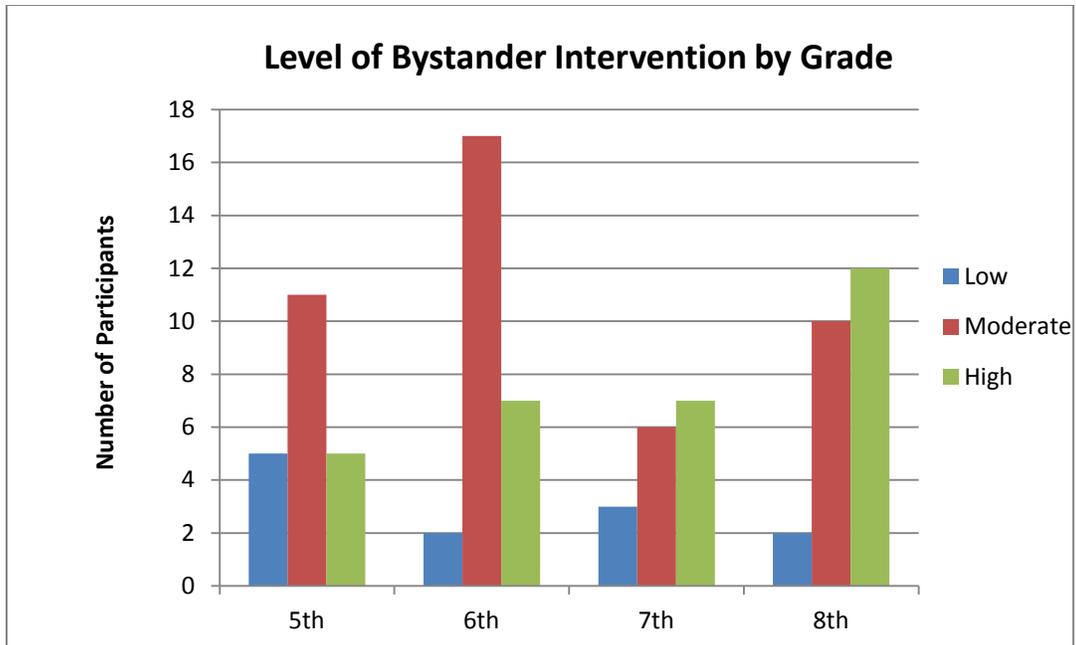

Figure 1

There were no significant differences between male and female responses. Figure 2 provides the mean method of intervention per scenario across gender.

Figure 2

Total survey scores reflected a low, moderate, or high level of bystander intervention.

Figure 3 shows the total number of participants per grade and their overall level of

intervention.

Figure 3

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that there would be a difference in the selected method of intervention if the bystander was friends with the bully or victim. For nonparametric analyses, the Friedman's Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the distribution of responses for Q1 (friend of victim) and Q3 (friend of bully). Initial results showed no significance for the first hypothesis. After further analysis, distributions of each of the four survey questions across participants were examined, which yielded a significance level of .002 across scenarios.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 was that there would be a difference in the method of bystander intervention with respect to the type of bullying (face-to-face vs. non face-to-face). Directly intervening and telling an adult were the most frequently selected methods of

bystander intervention across scenarios. Total participant responses for the third scenario

(non face-to-face) were compared to face-to-face scenario responses. The highest ranked

method of intervention, directly intervening, was selected by participants most often in

the cyber scenario (Q3). Additionally, the second highest method of intervention, telling

an adult, was selected the less compared to the face-to-face scenarios. Figure 4 shows the

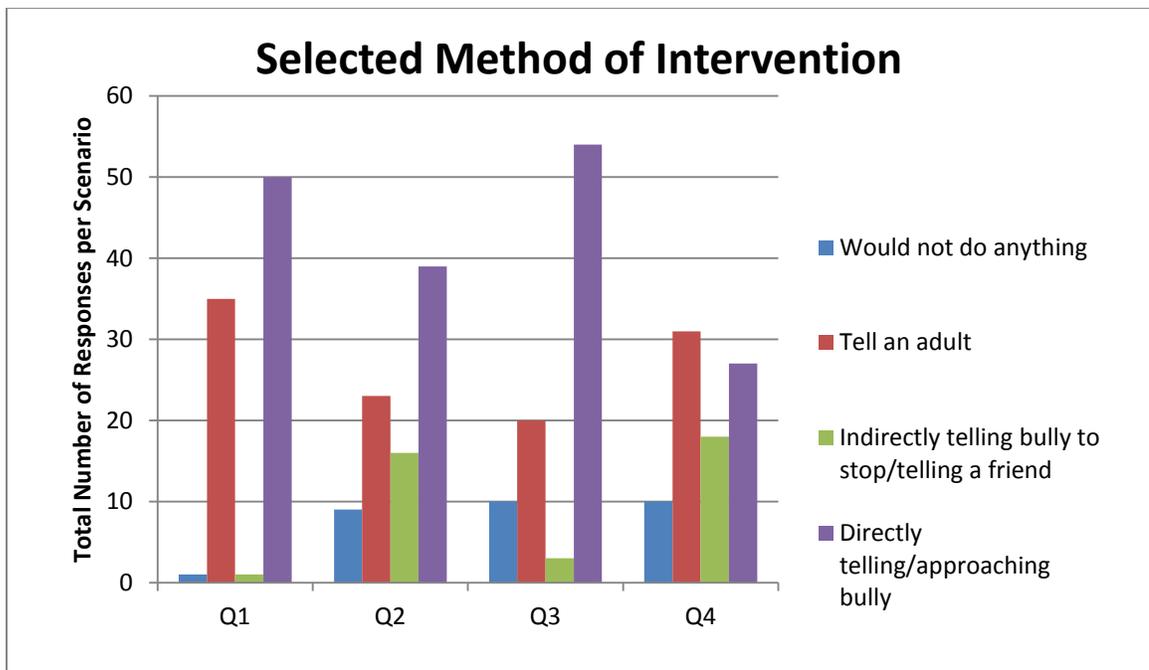total number of responses of each intervention method across the four scenarios.

Figure 4

Chapter 5

Discussion

Summary

The current study examined the bystander relationship to both victims and bullies and if these relationships impacted the bystander intervention in a given scenario. Hypothesis 1 stated that there will be a difference in the method of intervention if the bystander is friends with the bully or victim. There was no significance when examining responses of Q1 (friend of victim) and Q3 (friend of bully); 62% of participants provided the same method of intervention regardless of relationship status. Additionally, 52.8% provided the same response regardless of relationship to the victim (Q1 and Q2) and 37.9% provided the same response regardless of relationship to the bully (Q3 and Q4). However, significance was achieved when looking at the distribution of each participant's method of intervention per scenario. Therefore, participants did not provide the same method of intervention each time, despite each scenario containing bullying.

Hypothesis 2 stated that there will be a difference in the method of intervention with respect to type of bullying. Across scenarios, the two most cited methods of intervention were directly intervening and telling an adult. In the third scenario specifically (non face-to-face bullying), directly intervening was selected more than in the other scenarios. Additionally, telling an adult was selected less in the third scenario compared to face-to-face scenarios.

Integration and Implications of Findings

Divergent from reports of Coloroso (2003), current results showed that bystander friendship with the bully did not lead to lower rates of intervention or indirect or no method of intervention. The current participants provided the same method of

intervention regardless of friendship status with the bully and/or victim. Mockus,

Fladhammer, Meyers, & Landau, found that when defending the victim, bystanders

primarily acted in one of two ways, escaping to involve others, or direct involvement

(2012, p.2). The most common method of escape was telling a teacher; together, these

findings are congruent with the current most common methods of intervention.

Being a friend of the victim or bully did not affect the method of bystander

intervention. Individuals in an urban community may exhibit a heightened sense of

awareness and sensitivity to bullying. This could translate to intervening as a bystander.

Results of the current study showed that students selected "Tell an adult" as the

second highest method of intervention. Therefore, kids will directly intervene without

the potential secondary gain of friendship. Results of the current study showed that

students selected "Tell an adult" as the second highest method of intervention. Therefore,

teacher availability is important in a school climate. An adult presence is necessary to

receive the information students are trying to pass along (i.e. reports of bullying).

Limitations and Future Directions

The current study presented several limitations. While 87 participants provided

insight into bystander interventions, the results cannot be generalized to a larger

population. Examining multiple schools across grade levels may provide data that can be

representative of a school district, city, or state. A secondary limitation of the sample

size was the lack of diversity. The present study included a more concentrated sample of

African American and Hispanic participants compared to previous studies; however

ethnic differences could be better assessed with proportionate group sizes.

The survey used was created specifically for the current research. As a result, the survey was not previously assessed to measure reliability or validity. Reliability and validity must be considered when assessing individuals, in addition to examining self-report. A survey or method of measurement is valid if it actually measures what it is supposed to (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). A measure is reliable if the same results are achieved if an individual is assessed more than once (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). The measurement of reliability can include test-retest reliability (stability over assessments), internal consistency, and inter-rater reliability (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). As an original assessment the current survey used for measuring the method and level of bystander intervention may have lacked stability and internal consistency.

The survey used presented students with hypothetical situations. Therefore, it is unclear if participants would intervene differently in a true situation. Current scenarios either implied or explicitly stated the bystander relationship to the victim or bully. Future research should explicitly state these relationships in all scenarios for both the victim and bully, regardless of which relationship is being examined.

Another limitation of the present study was the use of self-report data (Haeffel & Howard, 2010). Several questions encountered when examining participant responses were (1) are responses dependent on the environment; (2) were the responses "Tell an adult" or "I would not do anything" selected because students believed that they might get in trouble in a school setting; (3) did responses on Q1 vary because valuable property (iPod) was involved; and (4) could the level of threat be perceived differently depending on the grade level of the participant?

Further research must be conducted, preferably with an updated version of the current survey, to assess the reliability and validity in order to lower self-report errors. While the cultural awareness of snitching had no significant effect on participant responses, future research should consider a high school population in comparison to the present study. Additionally, urban communities should continue to be the focus on bullying episodes and bystander interventions. The urban population should be examined to compare heightened sensitivity and awareness levels which may lead to higher intervention rates. Additionally, inter-rater reliability should be taken into consideration for future research if participants are asked to operationally define "snitch". Future interventions should attempt to empower bystanders to intervene regardless of environment (face-to-face vs. non face-to-face). Future research should specifically focus on cyber scenario interventions, as society progressively makes technological advancements.

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Appendix A

Survey

Thank you for completing this survey about bullying situations. I am interested in seeing <u>how you would respond if you witnessed or had knowledge of</u> the following events. This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary; you do not have to answer questions that make you feel uncomfortable and may stop at any time. Your grades will not be affected by your decision to answer the following questions. By answering the questions, you agree to be a participant in this study. All responses will be anonymous; <u>no one will know what you mark for your answers</u>. Survey data will be included in a master's thesis completed by Courtney Casey at Rowan University. Results can be made available upon request. This survey has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Rowan University. If you have any questions about this survey, please ask Miss Courtney once you have finished, or you can talk to Dr. Doughty.

Section 1: Background Information

Please fill in the appropriate circle.   What grade are you in?

Are you…

    ○ 5th ○ 7th
    ○ 6th ○ 8th

○ Male

○ Female

What is your ethnicity?

    ○ African-American (Black)   ○ Asian-American

    ○ Caucasian (White)   ○ Hispanic/Latino

    ○ Native-American   ○ Pacific Islander

Section 2: Bullying Scenarios

For the following situations, imagine that you <u>witnessed or had knowledge of (someone told you about) what happened</u>. Please fill in one response for each question.

Scenario 1:   You and your friend are waiting at the bus stop one morning before school. Your friend is listening to an iPod when two older boys arrive at the bus stop. Both of the boys push your friend to the ground and one of them takes the iPod. What would your reaction be?

    ○ I would tell an adult/bus driver/teacher
    ○ I would tell the boys to stop

○ I would approach the boy who took the iPod and tell him to give it back

○ I would not do anything

If you chose the last option "I would not do anything", please fill in the circle for the best reason for why you would not do anything.

○ It was none of my business

○ I don't want to get in trouble

○ I don't want to be called a snitch

Scenario 2:   One day after school, you take your younger sister to the playground. As you are walking to the swings, you see two other kids from school take a boy in the first grades basketball. The boy asks for his ball back and the kids who took it say "No, it's our ball now". What would your reaction be?

○ I would tell an adult

○ I would tell the kids to leave the boy alone

○ I would approach the boys and tell them to give the ball back

○ I would not do anything

If you chose the last option "I would not do anything", please fill in the circle for the best reason for why you would not do anything.

○ It was none of my business

○ I don't know who the boy is; he is not my friend

○ I don't want to get in trouble

○ I don't want to be called a snitch

Scenario 3:   After school one day, you go over your friend's house. Your friend's parents are not home, so you both decide to go on the computer. Your friend is posting a message on one of your classmates, Jessica's, Facebook wall. Your friend writes: "Jess, you are so fat and ugly. No one likes you, that's why you never get picked in gym class. Tomorrow in gym I'm going to throw a ball at your face." Your friend tells you that this is not the first time that they have posted this type of message. What would your reaction be?

○ I would tell an adult or teacher the next day

○ I would tell a different friend about what happened

○ I would tell my friend to stop typing those messages on Facebook

○ I would not do anything

If you chose the last option "I would not do anything", please fill in the circle for the best reason for why you would not do anything.

○ It was none of my business

○ Jessica is not my friend

○ I don't want to get in trouble

○ I don't want to be called a snitch

Scenario 4:   After math class one day, you and your classmates line up in the hallway to go to lunch. On your way to the lunch room, you see a few 8th graders trip a 5th grader when there are no teachers around. What would your reaction be?

    ○ I would tell an adult/teacher
    ○ I would tell the group to stop
    ○ I would approach the leader of the group and tell him or her to stop
    ○ I would not do anything

If you chose the last option "I would not do anything", please fill in the circle for the best reason for why you would not do anything.

    ○ It was none of my business
    ○ I don't know who the 5th grader is; he or she is not my friend
    ○ I don't want to get in trouble
    ○ I don't want to be called a snitch

Thank you for completing this survey!