Examining two types of bullying in high school: Relational aggression and cyber bullying

Sharon L. Lewis

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Examining Two Types of Bullying in High School: Relational Aggression and Cyber Bullying

BY
Sharon L. Lewis

THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF Master of Science IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

2011

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE
Examining Two Types of Bullying in High School:
Cyber Bullying and Relational Aggression
Thesis
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Abstract

Bullying has taken on a new realm as cyber bullying and relational aggression have escalated. Cyber bullying has increased due, in part, to technological advancements around the world. Cyber bullying has the ability to reach many individuals in a short time. Victims of cyber bullying may be unable to deter the magnitude of the harassment. Relational aggression is often hard to detect, as it is a subtle act such as glaring, staring, and rolling eyes at the victim. Relational aggression is more common among females than males. The current research study focuses on the prevalence and frequency of cyber bullying and relational aggression among high school students, the characteristics of cyber bullying and relational aggression, the physical, emotional, and academic consequences of cyber bullying and relational aggression, and the support given by family members, school staff, and friends. A self-report questionnaire was designed by the researcher. The respondents were enrolled in freshmen-level courses at a Midwestern University. Results of the study revealed that relational aggression was more common than cyber bullying. There were 106 respondents who participated in the research study. Seventy percent of the respondents revealed they had been victims of relational aggression, whereas 29% of the respondents reported they had been cyber bullied. The characteristics most commonly executed in relational aggression were those of staring, glaring, and rolling eyes. Posting comments to a blog or social website was revealed as the most common form of cyber bullying. The implications of the research study indicate that future research is still needed in order to educate U. S. society on the detrimental effects of bullying.
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this research to my daughter, Addison and my life partner, Mark for giving me the opportunity to pursue a dream of a lifetime. To Addison, you have given more than a mother could ever ask for in a daughter. Your unconditional love for me has shown through many times when the road was rough. Your smile brightened my day, whether in person or over the phone. You are a shining example of kindness, patience, and love. To my best friend, Mark, who has been there for me when I was overwhelmed and did not think I could move forward with my writing. "Keep your eye on the prize" are the words that you spoke when I failed to believe in myself. You are a wonderful man and have given me encouragement and love throughout my academic career. I love both of you with all of my heart!
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Chapter 1

Introduction

High school bullying has become an epidemic in modern U. S. society. Bullying has been a part of U. S. society for many years and has been seen as a part of the “growing up” process. However, bullying may cause emotional and physical scars for an individual’s lifetime. Bullying is a debated topic, largely due to the events of school violence. The tragedies range from the multiple school shootings influenced by bullying to everyday teasing.

Cyber bullying is one category of bullying. Social websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace have become portals for bullying and the center of lawsuits. For example, according to Jones (2009, ¶1), “A Long Island, N.Y. teen has sued Facebook, some of its users, and those users’ parents in a lawsuit that alleges the teen was traumatized through cyber bullying on the social networking site.” Lawsuits concerning social networks are making headline news. In another case, a teen sued Facebook and defendants who created a false Facebook account. According to the lawsuit “some of the sexual statements ‘describe the Plaintiff as enjoying and/or in engaging in sexual acts’ and ‘as being homosexual and engaging in sexual acts with other males’” (Heusser, 2009, ¶10). This form of harassment is becoming more commonplace. Bullying encompasses a multitude of negative behaviors and the effects of bullying can be extensive.

Relational aggression among females is another category of bullying. Relational aggression lurks in school classrooms, hallways, and libraries. The silence of such behavior means that it is often not recognized by those who are not the intended victims. Relational aggression is a sign of power exertion by peers. “Both relational aggression
and physical aggression appear motivated by an aggressor’s need for dominance and control” (Herrenkohl, Catalano, Hemphill, & Toumbourou, 2009, p. 3). The bully seeks to control others through hurtful acts and manipulation. The bully may also coerce others to join them in the bullying and, therefore, escalate the situation. Relational aggression can destroy self-esteem and self-worth.

The negative impacts of bullying may linger. The physical signs of bullying may disappear, but the emotional scars may never fade. The school environment should be a secure place in which children are able to have a comfort zone free from worry. However, in school, there are numerous opportunities for bullying. The opportunities often occur in areas of school include, but are not limited to, physical education classes, cafeterias, and playgrounds.

Who is targeted by school bullying? Researchers report that middle school children fall victim to bullying more often than young children or older adolescents. Adolescents may become prey to such victimization as they seek to conform to social norms and seek social status among peers. In one study concerning bullying, researchers found:

Ninety-four percent of seventh graders and 48% of eight graders had been bullied at school. These data results highlighted the students’ need to feel safe and prompted school counselors to modify existing bullying lessons and to ensure a safe learning environment and promote positive academic and social development (Young, Hardy, Hamilton, Biernesser, Sun, & Niebergall, 2009, p. 417).
The four common examples of bullying include physical bullying, verbal bullying, cyber bullying and relational aggression. Each form of bullying has exclusive traits. Through research, a better understanding of the consequences of bullying can be gained. Regardless of the type of bullying, there is a definite bullying problem in U. S. society which needs to be further addressed through research to support more awareness and educational initiatives. The two categories of bullying which are underrepresented in research are cyber bullying and relational aggression. These forms of bullying have increased in reported numbers over a short period of time and are creating havoc for innocent individuals, families, and communities. The current study will focus on cyber bullying and relational aggression.

The support and stability of family is yet another realm that is a positive asset for adolescents. Open communication between family members helps to strengthen the familial bond and, therefore, victimization can be discussed and a possible solution rendered. The victim "might venture to disclose information they otherwise would hide if their parents showed sincere concerns and made heartfelt inquiries" (Matsunaga, 2009, p. 225).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent, the characteristics, and the consequences of two types of bullying during the high school years. The individuals who comprised the sample were university students. The respondents were asked to recall their experiences of bullying while in high school.
Objectives

1. To examine the prevalence and frequency of cyber bullying and relational aggression among high school students;
2. To identify the characteristics of cyber bullying and relational aggression;
3. To examine the physical, emotional, and academic consequences of cyber bullying and relational aggression;
4. To examine the support given by family members, friends, and school staff.

Definition of Terms

**Bullying.** Bullying is defined as “an aggressive behavior that is intended to cause harm or distress, occurs repeatedly over time, and occurs in a relationship in which there is an imbalance of power or strength” (www.apa.org, 2009, ¶1).

**Cyber bullying.** Cyber bullying is defined as “the willful use of the Internet as a technological medium through which harm or discomfort is intentionally and repeatedly inflicted through indirect aggression that targets a specific person or group of persons” (Williams & Guerra, 2007, p. S15).

**Relational aggression.** Relational aggression is defined as “the systematic diminishment of an individual’s sense of self through ignoring, isolating, excluding, or shunning” (Hammel, 2008, p. 3).

Bullying in U. S. society has grown into an epidemic. This epidemic has caused much strife for U. S. society. The information concerning bullying needs to be disseminated not only to professionals and researchers, but to U. S. society as a whole. The review of literature will provide an overview of a few items which pertain to bullying and additional factors that may bridge the gap in previous literature.
Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This literature review focuses on adolescent vulnerability to cyber bullying, and relational aggression, bullying consequences, and family support for youth. Conflict is inevitable throughout a lifetime. However, conflict can lead to bullying among adolescents. Bullying may stem from many factors which may include, but are not limited to, control, power, threats, and promises. Conflict theory addresses each of these realms and how they relate to human nature. “Conflict theorists make certain assumptions about human nature. They assume that the individual is self-oriented or focused on self-interests” (Ingoldsby, Smith, & Miller, 2004, p. 104). The previous statement can indeed describe adolescents as they may be egocentric with a tendency to think only of themselves when taking risks and bullying their peers.

A tendency for risk taking behavior, low impulse control, a lack of established identity, and psychosocial under-development can characterize this stage in adolescent life. “Risk-taking behavior is typically conceptualized as a learned behavior, a personality characteristic, or a developmental phenomenon. When regarded as a developmental phenomenon, risk-taking is thought to be the result of cognitive immaturity” (Alberts, Elkind, & Ginsberg, 2007, p. 72). The risk taking that may be associated with youth may be that associated with the imaginary audience and the personal fable.

Theoretical perspectives encompass a variety of explanations to apply to adolescent growth and development. The cognitive abilities of youth are somewhat limited as the prefrontal cortex, which plays a role in the process of emotions, is not fully
developed. Erik Erikson’s theory focuses on psychosocial development over the lifespan. The adolescent stage is one of changes and identity may be achieved or diffused. Egocentrism may be a factor associated with bullying. Adolescents may believe the world revolves around them and, therefore, they believe that they are the center of the universe. The struggles with understanding and controlling their emotions may be influenced by a still somewhat limited ability to reason in a fully abstract manner and thoroughly grasp the realities and consequences of bullying. Emotional damage from bullying can lead to continued and further social rejection for victims, as well as prolonged psychological instability.

Moral development is often lacking in adolescents due to emotional immaturity. Lawrence Kohlberg focused his research on moral development. The stages which he developed were exclusive to the male population. “For males, advanced moral thought revolves around rules, rights, and abstract principles” (Crain, 2005, p. 168). However, his research was criticized by Carol Gilligan due the lack of female respondents in his studies. “For women, Gilligan says, morality centers not on rights and rules, but on interpersonal relationships and the ethics of compassion and care” (Crain, 2005, p. 168). The moral development of males and females plays an important role in U.S. society. However, it is often difficult for adolescents to follow rules and treat other compassionately until they have matured emotionally. Bullying others is one area in which rules are broken and compassion is lacking.

**Adolescent Vulnerability to Cyber Bullying**

The vulnerability associated with adolescent growth and development can impact emotional well-being into adulthood. “Early adolescents are especially vulnerable to the
emergence of social anxiety because of converging challenges in the peer context and social-cognitive developments that can amplify peer relationship stress” (Flanagan, Erath, & Bierman, 2008, p. 759). The silent nature of cyber bullying often goes undetected by adults. Therefore, those who incur such harassment often cope with the bullying alone. The social-cognitive maturity of an adolescent is not fully developed, and even the slightest hint of rejection can elevate stress and deter self-esteem. “With regards to short-term impacts, the high number of victims reporting negative effects on their self-confidence, esteem, relationships, school grades and attendance highlight the fact that cyber bullying should not be ignored” (Price & Dalgleish, 2010, p. 58). The realm of cyber bullying is an issue which raises great concern for U. S. society.

In today’s U. S. society, technology plays an important role in the daily lives of many individuals. However, technology intensifies cyber bullying. “The nature of new technology makes it possible for cyber bullying to occur more secretly, to spread more rapidly, and to preserve easily (such as cutting and pasting messages)” (Li, 2007, p. 1780). The lives that are touched by the devastating realm of cyber bullying can be seen through technological advancement of email, text messaging, and social networking. The overwhelming abilities of these technological domains are worldwide and reach millions of individuals. Adolescents have embraced technology and are now able to easily bully through cyberspace. Cyber bullying will continue to grow as technological advances are generated and adolescents become more skilled.

Although the negative aspects of technology contribute to bullying, there are positives. The internet can be “a haven for positive discourse where youth can seek a safe, nurturing environment for behaviors that reflect and promote social responsibility
and encourage caring and respectful interactions" (Cassidy, Jackson, & Brown, 2009, p. 384). Youth need social support to endure bullying situations. Peer interaction may alleviate some of the overwhelming sense of grief associated with bullying. The security of being able to discuss the emotional impact of bullying with friends may be positive. Youth look to their peers for advice, reassurance, and comfort. Technology allows them better access to a support system.

**Email, instant messaging, and website postings.** Computer usage allows for a more interactive form of bullying through email, instant messaging, and website postings. One study “found approximately 24% of adolescents e-mailed materials that said hateful things about another person, approximately 26% of adolescents reported visiting chat rooms daily, and approximately 25% of adolescents reported using instant messaging everyday” (Mason, 2008, p. 326).

“Internet bullying has emerged as a new and growing form of social cruelty. Such bullying is clearly not physical in nature and has more in common with verbal bullying” (Williams and Guerra, 2007, p. S15). The emotional consequences are similar for verbal bullying and cyber bullying, and detrimental to the individual who is victimized. “In terms of outcomes for the victims, bullying and cyber bullying has similar effects. Suicidal ideations, eating disorders, and chronic illness have beleaguered many of the victims of bullying” (Mason, 2008, p. 327). Emotions may be heightened by cyber bullying which may intensify depression, low self-esteem, helplessness, isolation, and to the extreme of suicidal ideation, attempts or completion. Defamation of character through bullying can lead to emotional struggles that are overridden with depression and suicidal ideation, attempts, or completion. The death of Ryan Halligan is
one such tragedy that led to an awareness campaign by his father. "His son was withdrawn and spent a lot of time on the Internet—behind the closed door of his bedroom. It was only when, searching for an explanation for his son’s suicide, Halligan discovered the cyberconnection" (Devlin, 2010, “Father of Suicide Victim Talks About Cyberbullies”, ¶11). Ryan was the victim of cyber bullying on a social network, Facebook. This revelation came after his father discovered the harassing remarks on his son’s computer. As evidenced, the extremes of cyber bullying can be deadly.

The tragic prediction is that cyber bullying will pervade as a source of cruelty in U. S. society. The lives of adolescents have the potential to be fragile, turbulent, and unpredictable.

**Text messaging.** Today, cell phones are owned by millions of individuals and approximately 82 percent of those individuals are adolescents. "Cell phone users in the United States have increased from 34 million a decade ago to more than 203 million, which comes close to fulfilling the Supreme Court’s one man-one cell phone mandate” (Leo, 2006, “Cell Phone Statistics That May Surprise You”, ¶1). Text messaging has become a common form of communication. Text messaging harassment is reportedly the least common form of bullying, but it does exist. One recent study found that “only 7 percent of respondents reported that cyber bullying occurs through text messages” (Cassid et al., 2009, p. 392). Although a smaller percentage of cyber bullying is perpetrated via text messaging, the amount of damage extends far beyond the grasp of the victim. As in all forms of cyber bullying, text messaging can travel far at a rapid pace with little to no chance for the victim to stop the damaging message. Sexting is another avenue of cyber bullying. “Sexting is where a person takes a sexually-explicit digital
photograph of him or herself or of someone else, and sends it as an MMS (multimedia messaging system and SMS (short message service) via a mobile phone” (http://www.schools.sa.gov.au, 2010, ¶ 7). In 2009, a young girl took her life due to the bullying that occurred after she sent a picture via text message to her boyfriend.

The image was blurred and the voice distorted, but the words spoken by a young Ohio woman are haunting. She had sent nude pictures of herself to her boyfriend. When they broke up, he sent them to other high school girls. The girls were harassing her, calling her a slut and a whore. She was miserable and depressed, afraid to even go to school (Celizic, 2009, ¶ 1).

This chilling story may only be the beginning for those unsuspecting adolescents who believe that their relationships are forever. The impulsive actions of adolescents may cause them to bring harm to the victim and to themselves when lashing out at the bully. Sexting can result in criminal charges of child pornography and identification as a child sex offender as prescribed by the law. Education on text messaging and proper etiquette is essential for the reduction of such acts or, at minimum, increasing awareness and understanding the potential consequences.

**Social networking sites.** Social websites are a breeding ground for cyber bullying. These websites include the popular Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter. The websites are intended to provide harmless and fun social connectedness for individuals who subscribe to them, but they are portals for cyber bullying when misused. The misuse of social networks may create an environment of harmful and offensive behaviors aimed at innocent or unaware individuals.

In these sites, teenagers provide personal information (personal picture,
city of residence) and built in is the ability for users to communicate through e-mail. Participation in chat rooms and playing online games increase the exposure of adolescents' to unknown others and therefore increase the risk of being bullied or harassed online (Mesch, 2009, p. 388).

By educating youth and adults, cyber bullying may be prevented or reduced in frequency. The advancement of technology will continue to influence U. S. society and opportunities for cyber bullying have much growth potential via social websites. However, with media coverage and an emerging body of research literature, U. S. society is becoming more aware of cyber bullying. Awareness is a necessary precursor to action. "Victims can attempt to avoid receiving messages from suspected bullies by blocking their screen names from their computer, restricting buddy lists or changing their own avatar" (Price & Dalgleish, 2010, p. 52). Such actions are proactive in securing a safe and more positive environment. The pent up feelings associated with cyber bullying may become more pronounced as youth take matters into their own hands in the form of relational aggression.

**Relational Aggression**

Relational aggression is the most common form of bullying perpetrated by females. "Relational aggression includes behaviors that inflict harm on others by manipulating their peer relationships (e.g., giving a peer the silent treatment, maliciously spreading lies and rumors about a peer to damage the peer’s group status)" (Grotpeter & Crick, 1996, p. 2329). It is difficult to detect because of the subtle gestures that are used in this type of bullying. These gestures can be as harmful as physical bullying. "The
term relational aggression refers to behaviors that harm others through damaging their relationships, feelings of acceptance, inclusion in social groups, and friendships” (Merrell, Buchanan, & Tran, 2006, p. 345). The realm of female relational aggression was not always defined as bullying, but “girls acting like girls” when engaging peers. Public examples of the pain and harm inflicted by girls led U.S. society to realize that these hurtful acts do not epitomize the traditional notion that all girls have sweet personalities.

The interaction of adolescents is often complicated with inappropriate gestures (e.g., rolling of the eyes, extending the middle finger of the hand) that have been a part of U.S. society for many years. These gestures may represent silent derogatory remarks and can fuel the fire for bullying. Social norms are a part of everyday life. Integrating these social norms is a learning process as the life stage progresses. However, in U.S. society today many traditional norms are no longer the norm. The growth of adolescent intelligence is far more advanced that in the past. The downside to this growth in intelligence is that innocence is quickly lost and bullying begins at an early age and continues into adolescence.

The traditional-minded affirmation asserts that girls are sugar and spice and everything nice. In the case of relational aggression, nothing could be farther from the truth. “Female aggression is often expressive rather than instrumental and girls are more likely to fight with those whom they have close relationships” (Letendre, 2007, p. 355). Harmful, subtle gestures of female aggressors may cause as much damage emotionally as any type of physical infliction caused by punching or kicking. The rolling of eyes, unbecoming facial expressions, and inappropriate hand gestures can trigger negative
emotions. Relational aggression also encompasses exclusion from an activity or game and the spreading of harmful gossip.

The inequality, or perceived inequality, of individuals may influence aggressive behavior. The adolescent stage of life can be one of personal struggle often complicated by the need to conform or "fit in" with a certain social circle or clique. Competition begins for many individuals in the pre-adolescent years when sports teams are formed and school academics become a pressure-filled focus of attention. The competition excels as the adolescent stage progresses. Degree and type of parental involvement can influence how adolescents perceive and react to negative situations. Positive role modeling and guidance of parents are essential to the reduction or elimination of relational aggression. Adolescents need to be able to witness positive behaviors in response to situations of conflict and find productive outlets for frustration, anger, and other complex emotions.

The covert behavior of relational aggression can be a preferred way to bully peers while remaining obscure. "As a result, girls need to hide their aggressive intentions and initiate peaceful outcomes in conflicts so they do not violate the social etiquette of the non-aggressive female" (James & Owens, 2005, p. 72). The silence of relational aggression makes this type of bullying difficult to pinpoint. The behaviors may also be misinterpreted by the victims. However, a better understanding of such acts must be addressed to effectively eliminate the silent aggressive behavior. The aggression is not only common among females, but also occurs in males. Females, however, participate more in relational aggression than males. The male population resorts to physical bullying more often than relational aggression.
Coping with relational aggression is often a silent, isolating, and difficult process. Researchers have shown “that girls use a greater number of coping styles that aim at increasing their interpersonal involvement than boys do” (Remillard & Lamb, 2005, p. 223). The victims of such behaviors are also affected by the extent of bullying. Coping skills may include, but are not limited to, passiveness, avoidance of the bullying, and wishful thinking that the bullying will end.

The unfortunate reality of relational aggression is that this is one of the most difficult forms of bullying to address in an educational environment. Although there is a state of semi-control, a teacher cannot possibly detect every relational dispute that occurs. Through education, youth may be made aware of the problem, the consequences, and the potentially effective coping and response skills. Two factors that strengthen coping skills include a stable home environment and continuity in friendships. Supportive family, peer, and educational systems and prevention programs can deter relational aggression among youth, especially the female population.

**Family Support and Stability**

The social support provided to youth during their formative years can impact negative or positive outcomes related to bullying. “Social support is generally measured by assessing individuals’ perceptions about the degree of support they feel available to them from others” (Konishi & Hymel, 2009, p. 336). There are various domains that influence youth and their ability to cope with bullying. The two main domains which influence youth are the home environment and the school environment, as these environments play a significant role in the lives of youth.
The degree of stability or instability in family relationships may have an impact on bullying. Stability in the family unit is influential on relationships outside of the home environment. The role modeling of a parent contributes to the overall demeanor of youth and their outlook on negative situations. “According to social learning and social control theories, parents influence their children’s social-emotional outcomes both directly (e.g., modeling and social reinforcement) and indirectly (e.g. shaping of perceptions and attitudes)” (Totura et al., 2009, p. 575). Another positive correlation between environmental stability and emotional stability is that “children reported fewer symptoms of depression when support from parents was high compared to when it was low” (Connors-Borrow, Johnson, Whiteside-Mansell, McKelvey, & Gargus, 2009, p. 601).

Instability in a family relationship can have negative effects on youth. “Ambivalent and less cohesive family relationships, harsh discipline practices, and inconsistent and authoritarian parenting are more likely to be associated with bullies” (Totura et al., 2009, p. 575). Youth who bully others are often victims of bullying in their home environment. Therefore, in turn, youth convey what they have learned from those who guide their development. The social support youth receive may be accessible through mentoring and education from prevention and intervention programs. The social support system which includes not only family, but other mentors as well, may contribute to the guidance of influential youth through the trials and tribulations of life. The educational values that are instilled in youth through intervention and prevention programs may address the issue of bullying before the problem becomes overwhelming.
Prevention and Intervention Programs

Prevention or intervention programs focusing on bullying are just as critical as having stability in the home environment. Youth are in an educational environment approximately one-third of the day for the majority of the year. The school environment should be a safe haven for youth. Programming that is incorporated into a school curriculum should be unique and fit the districts needs relative to the school’s community.

Whatever the effectiveness of specific bully prevention programs, the national effort to minimize the negative effects of bullying will need to address fundamental matters related to the definition of school bullying and the translation of best research practices into public policy and educational practice at the school site (Furlong, Morrison, & Grief, 2003, p. 456).

Quality effectiveness of a program is essential to the reduction of bullying. Research data on this topic exists, but the literature is still relatively new. The processes of evaluating such programs “have not reached a level of rigor that permits us to accept their outcomes as conclusive” (Ryan & Smith, 2009, p. 256). However, the strides that are being made in the area of prevention and intervention programming are positive.

In today’s U. S. society, the issue of bullying has been brought to the surface through tragic and even deadly events. Such cases have been damaging for the victims and their families, but positive outcomes have emerged in some situations. Through the violence that has occurred over the past several years, awareness of bullying has been amplified. Such awareness has increased the implementation of prevention and
intervention programs. Still, there is an urgent need for heightened communication and understanding in our U. S. society related to bullying. To an extent, U. S. society has been shifting away from a dismissive “kids will be kids” mentality and responding to the severity of bullying. Bullying is an issue that may never cease, but it may decrease over a period of time through insightful research applied to practice.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Design of the Study

The study was a quantitative non-experimental survey design.

Sample

The respondents were included in a convenience sampling of freshmen and sophomore students from a Midwestern university. The sample size included 106 respondents. A questionnaire was administered to students who were enrolled in University Foundations courses and introductory-level Family and Consumer Sciences courses.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted prior to the research study. The respondents were selected from two undergraduate level classes. There were 43 females and 3 males who participated in the survey. The ages of the respondents ranged from 18 years to over 45 years. The outcome of the pilot provided insights for the researcher to revise the questionnaire for the present study.

Data Collection Instrumentation/Measurement

The 26-item Addison Lewis Bullying Questionnaire (See Appendix A) designed by the researcher was administered. The questionnaire asked respondents to recall events related to bullying during their high school years. Specifically, the questionnaire focused on the prevalence and the frequency of bullying by high school grade level, unique characteristics of cyber bullying and relational aggression among girls, consequences of bullying, and demographic information. The instrument was tested for two main types of
validity: content validity and social/ecological validity. Content validity of the instrument was achieved through expert review by three professors who specialize in child and family studies. Social/ecological validity of the instrument was achieved in light of the current state of our societal culture – a culture where conflict is the norm and episodes of bullying/harassment are frequently reported. The reliability of the questionnaire has not been established due to the fact that the instrument has not previously been administered and tested. A pilot test was conducted in a prior graduate course.

**Procedure for Data Collection**

Data were collected from students whose university class standing ranged from freshmen to sophomores. The researcher explained the questionnaire and the informed consent (See Appendix B). Participation was completely voluntary, data were treated as anonymous, and respondents were able to choose to not participate or to withdraw at any anytime. The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete after class sessions.

**Data Analysis**

The quantitative data collected from the questionnaires was analyzed with Microsoft Office Excel 2007. The descriptive statistics of frequency counts and mean scores were used. Scoring mechanisms were incorporated for the Likert scale items. The labels were converted to numerical values (Frequently = 4, Sometimes = 3, Rarely = 2, and Never = 1). Statistical data are presented through tables and charts for path analysis.
Chapter 4
Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent, the characteristics, and the consequences of two types of bullying during the high school years. The individuals who comprised the sample were university students. Respondents were asked to recall their experiences of bullying while in high school. Quantitative data were collected and analyzed to reveal means, percentages, and frequencies. Four objectives guided the study:

1. To examine the prevalence and frequency of cyber bullying and relational aggression among high school students;
2. To identify the characteristics of cyber bullying and relational aggression;
3. To examine the physical, emotional, and academic consequences of cyber bullying and relational aggression; and
4. To examine the support given by family members, school staff, and friends.

Sample Analysis

The sample consisted of students from a Midwestern university. The respondents were enrolled in two sections of a Family and Consumer Sciences freshmen-level course and six sections of a freshmen-level University Foundations course. The respondents ($N = 106$) in the research included males ($n=25$) and females ($n=81$) (See Figure 1).
Objective One: The first objective of the study was to examine the prevalence and frequency of cyber bullying and relational aggression among high school students.

Twenty-nine percent ($n = 31$) of the 106 respondents were electronically bullied (e.g., computer, phone, other electronic device) by a peer in high school (See Figure 3). The female respondents ($n = 81$) revealed that thirty-five percent ($n = 28$) had been electronically bullied. The remaining respondents had not been bullied by electronic methods. The male respondents ($n = 25$) overwhelmingly stated that they had not been
electronically bullied with eighty-eight percent \((n = 22)\) responding “no” and the remaining three respondents stated they had been bullied by way of electronics.

In today’s U. S. society, technology plays an important role in the daily lives of many individuals. “The nature of new technology makes it possible for cyber bullying to occur more secretly, to spread more rapidly, and to preserve easily (such as cutting and pasting messages)” (Li, 2007, p. 1780). Information gained from the data analysis of the items concerning cyber bullying does not indicate that this type of bullying is as prevalent as past research studies.

![Figure 3](image)

Figure 3. Percentage of Respondents Who Were Electronically Bullied

The data revealed that females were bullied electronically more than males (See Figure 4). Further analysis revealed that males in this sample were virtually untouched by electronic bullying; however, the data may be skewed due to the lower number of responses by males.
The types of electronic bullying (e.g., text message, email, blog or social website comment, inappropriate pictures posted to a blog or social website, instant message) were examined to determine the frequency and prevalence of this type of bullying. A four-point Likert scale (Frequently = 4, Sometimes = 3, Rarely = 2, and Never = 1) was used to determine the frequency and mean of each type of electronic bullying.

The mean score for frequency of text messaging as a form of bullying was 2.16 for all respondents (females = 2.07, $SD = 0.86$; males = 3.00, $SD = 1.00$). As in all forms of cyber bullying, text messaging can travel far at a rapid pace with little to no chance for the victim to stop the damaging message. The mean score for frequency of emailing as a form of bullying was 1.42 for all respondents (females = 1.46, $SD = 0.74$; males = 1.00, $SD = 0.00$). Data revealed that emailing is preferred by females more so than males, but this type of bullying is not as frequently imposed as other types of bullying.

In 2009, a young girl took her life due to the bullying that occurred after she sent a picture via text message to her boyfriend.
The image was blurred and the voice distorted, but the words spoken by a young Ohio woman are haunting. She had sent nude pictures of herself to her boyfriend. When they broke up, he sent them to other high school girls. The girls were harassing her, calling her a slut and a whore. She was miserable and depressed, afraid to even go to school (Celizic, 2009, ¶ 1).

Instant messaging has become a popular form of communication for adolescents. Instant messaging can be executed by computer or cell phone. The incidence of bullying may include teasing or threatening an individual at school. Instant messaging has the ability to follow an individual from school to home. Therefore, there may be little to no reprieve from such negative behavior.

The mean score for frequency of posting comments on a blog or website (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, or MySpace) as a form of bullying for all respondents was 2.58 (females = 2.57, SD = 1.03; males = 2.67, SD = 0.58). Data revealed that posting comments on a blog or website was preferred by males more so than females. This form of bullying is most frequently used by the respondents in this study. The research study revealed that bullying through social media was infrequent. However, one can expect that if the questionnaire had been administered 5 years ago that this type of bullying may have been almost nonexistant. Social media has grown exponentially.

“It was 5 years ago …that Mark Zuckerberg founded Thefacebook.com along with fellow Harvard classmates Chris Hughes, Dustin Moskovitz, and Eduardo Saverin. 1,800 days and 150,000,000 users later, Facebook
has become one of the most heavily used and trusted websites in the world" (http://www.insidefacebook.com, 2009, ¶ 1).

Although these social websites often boast about security, the unfortunate truth is that cyber bullying does occur within their realm.

Social websites have given the bully a stronger and more vicious avenue for harassing a victim. Social websites are not anonymous by any means. An individual may become 'friends' with another individual by submitting a request through the social website. The bullying in the social website may be accomplished by posting comments, chatting with the victim, or sending a message. The victim, however, does have the ability to stop the bullying by deleting the bully from their friend list and blocking them to insure there is no further direct harassment.

The mean score for frequency of posting inappropriate pictures to a blog or website was 1.61 for all respondents (females = 1.61, SD = 0.92; males = 1.67, SD = 1.15). Data revealed that posting inappropriate pictures to a blog or website was most frequently utilized by males. This type of bullying was not used as frequently as other forms of bullying.

Instant messaging has become a popular form of communication for adolescents. This type of bullying has become more popular with the advancement of technology. If the research study had been conducted 5 years ago, this form of bullying would have been minimal if not nonexistent. Instant messaging can be executed by computer or cell phone. The incidence of bullying may include teasing or threatening an individual at school. Instant messaging has the ability to follow an individual from school to home. Therefore, there may be no reprieve from such negative behavior.
A 6-point Likert scale was used to analyze the data for the frequency and mean of those who were electronically bullied in high school (Figure 9). The scores were coded as follows: Very Frequently (every day or almost every day) = 6; Frequently (about 1 to 3 times a week) = 5; Occassionally (about once a month) = 4; Rarely (1 to 2 times every few months) = 3; Very Rarely (1 to 2 times a year) = 2; and Never = 1.

Of the 106 respondents it was reported that none of the individuals were very frequently electronically bullied (Figure 5). The mean score for frequency of being electronically bullied for all respondents was 1.81, (SD = 1.12). The remainder of the responses are as follows: 3% (n = 3) were frequently electronically bullied; 11% (n = 12) were occasionally electronically bullied; 4% (n = 4) were rarely electronically bullied; 28% (n = 30) were very rarely electronically bullied; and 54% (n = 57) reported they were never electronically bullied.

The information gained from the data analysis provides another perspective on cyber bullying. The results indicate the majority of the respondents never experienced cyber bullying while in high school. However, this may not be true of adolescents at the present time or in the future. It is with more knowledge and advancement of younger individuals that electronic bullying may be more easily executed.
Figure 5. Percentage of Responses for Electronic Bullying

The analysis of female respondents \((n = 81)\) revealed a mean score of 1.90 \((SD = 1.15)\) for frequency of electronic bullying (Figure 6). The sample also reported that no respondent was very frequently bullied using electronic methods. Four percent \((n = 3)\) had been frequently bullied by electronic methods and the remaining responses are as follows: 11% \((n = 9)\) were occasionally bullied by electronic methods; 5% \((n = 4)\) were rarely bullied by electronic methods; 32% \((n = 26)\) were very rarely electronically bullied; and 48% \((n = 39)\) had never been electronically bullied.

Figure 6. Percentage of Female Responses for Electronic Bullying

The data were analyzed to reveal the male responses for question 11 of the

*Addison Lewis Bullying Questionnaire* (See Figure 7). The mean score for the frequency
of electronic bullying for males was 1.52 ($SD = 1.00$). No respondents were very frequently or frequently electronically bullied. Twelve percent ($n = 3$) of respondents disclosed they had been occasionally electronically bullied, no respondents had rarely been electronically bullied, 16% ($n = 4$) had very rarely been bullied by electronic methods, and the remaining 72% ($n = 18$) had never been electronically bullied.

![Figure 7. Percentage of Male Responses for Electronic Bullying](image)

Question 12 of the *Addison Lewis Bullying Questionnaire* asked which sex tended to be electronically bullied more frequently (See Figure 8). The analysis of the total responses ($N = 106$) revealed that 86% ($n = 91$) of females believed that females were bullied more by electronic methods and 14% ($n = 15$) believed that males were victimized more by electronic bullying. The male respondents disclosed the following information: 68% ($n = 17$) believed that females were bullied more by electronic methods and 32% ($n = 8$) believed that males were bullied more by electronic methods.
Another area of bullying which was examined was non-verbal bullying (e.g., rolling eyes, obscene gestures, other silent or subtle acts). Respondents were asked whether or not they had been bullied non-verbally. A high percentage of respondents were bullied by non-verbal actions (See Figure 9). Seventy percent \((n = 74)\) of respondents had been non-verbally bullied and 30% \((n = 32)\) reporting they had not been a victim of such bullying.

Forty-four percent of males \((n = 11)\) revealed they had been non-verbally bullied (See Figure 10). The female respondents, in contrast, had a higher response for being
non-verbally bullied. Seventy-eight percent \( n = 63 \) of females had been non-verbally bullied (See Figure 11).

Data analysis revealed that relational aggression occurred more often for females than males. This subtle, but harmful aggression is often inflicted in a silent manner. Aggressive gestures can be as harmful as physical bullying. "The term relational aggression refers to behaviors that harm others through damaging their relationships, feelings of acceptance, inclusion in social groups, and friendships" (Merrell, et al., 2006, p. 345). It is essential that U. S. society understand the impact of such behavior. The gestures (e.g., rolling eyes, obscene gestures, other silent or subtle acts) may be interpreted as a form of bullying. Adolescents whose emotions are underdeveloped at the adolescent stage of their lives may not completely understand the impact of these gestures. Another popular and widespread obscene gesture is 'giving the finger'.

Also known as the 'flip-off', the 'bird', the 'highway salute', 'digitus impudicus' and the 'One-Fingered Victory Salute' (thanks to President Bush's famous TV blooper), the middle finger is probably the most universally-understood hand gesture in the world. This is owed mostly to its age, the sheer simplicity of the gesture, as well as the human preoccupation with somehow relating everything back to sexual organs (Wong, 2007, ¶ 28).

Relational Aggression. The knowledge of relational aggression is central to lowering the amount of bullying caused by silent and subtle gestures. The efforts put forth by U. S. society to educate adolescents on the outcome of this type of behavior may leave a lasting impression of the consequences associated with relational aggression.
Figure 10. Percentage of Males Who Were Non-Verbally Bullied

Figure 11. Percentage of Females Who Were Non-Verbally Bullied

The data were examined to determine the frequency and mean scores of non-verbal bullying (e.g., rolling eyes, obscence gestures, other silent or subtle acts) while in high school. A 6-point Likert scale was used for question 13 of the Addison Lewis Bullying Questionnaire. The scores were coded as follows: Very Frequently (every day or almost every day) = 6; Frequently (about 1 to 3 times a week) = 5; Occasionally (about once a month) = 4; Rarely (1 to 2 times every few months) = 3; Very Rarely (1 to 2 times a year or less) = 2; and Never = 1. A mean score of 2.74 (SD = 1.37) revealed the frequency of non-verbally bullying. The total respondents (N = 106) revealed that 4%
(n = 4) had been bullied very frequently by non-verbal methods (See Figure 12). The data also revealed the following statistics: 8% (n = 8) had been frequently non-verbally bullied; 19% (n = 20) had been occasionally non-verbally bullied; 17% (n = 18) had been rarely non-verbally bullied; 34% (n = 36) had been rarely non-verbally bullied; and the remaining 19% (n = 20) had never been non-verbally bullied.

Figure 12. Frequency of Non-Verbal Bullying

A mean score of 2.85 (SD = 1.35) revealed the frequency of non-verbally bullying for females (See Figure 13). Respondents disclosed that 4% (n = 3) had been very frequently bullied by non-verbal actions. The remaining data revealed the following: 7% (n = 6) had been frequently non-verbally bullied, 16% (n = 13) had occasionally been non-verbally bullied, 19% (n = 15) had rarely been non-verbally bullied, 31% (n = 25) have very rarely been non-verbally bullied, and the remaining 23% (n = 19) of the respondents had never been non-verbally bullied.

The results did not show that non-verbal bullying was the most frequent type of bullying. However, past studies have revealed that non-verbal bullying is popular. “Meanness provides a way for girls to covertly express and experience the feelings of personal power and invulnerability that make popularity so prize” (Currie, Kelly, &
The realm of female relational aggression was not always defined as bullying, but ‘girls acting like girls’ when interacting with peers. Public examples of the pain and harm, such as being left out of an activity, can inflict irreversible emotional distress. Such hurtful acts do not epitomize the traditional notion that all girls have sweet personalities, rather they reflect pain and even humiliation when inflicted on an individual.

A mean score of 2.36 ($SD = 1.38$) revealed the frequency of non-verbal bullying for males (See Figure 14). Eight percent ($n = 2$) of respondents reported they were very frequently bullied by non-verbal actions. The remaining respondents revealed the following: 4% ($n = 1$) had frequently been bullied by non-verbal actions; 28% ($n = 7$) had occasionally been non-verbally bullied; 12% ($n = 3$) had rarely been non-verbally bullied; 44% ($n = 11$) had very rarely been non-verbally bullied; and the remaining 4% ($n = 1$) had never been bullied by non-verbal methods.

Non-verbal bullying is the least common method of bullying. The subtle gestures of non-verbal bullying may be as detrimental to the victim as physical bullying. The silence of rolling eyes, crossing arms, staring/glaring, being left out of an activity, and obscene gestures are harder to detect, but can be as painful as being punched or kicked by

**Figure 13. Frequency of Female Responses for Non-Verbal Bullying**

A mean score of 2.36 ($SD = 1.38$) revealed the frequency of non-verbal bullying for males (See Figure 14). Eight percent ($n = 2$) of respondents reported they were very frequently bullied by non-verbal actions. The remaining respondents revealed the following: 4% ($n = 1$) had frequently been bullied by non-verbal actions; 28% ($n = 7$) had occasionally been non-verbally bullied; 12% ($n = 3$) had rarely been non-verbally bullied; 44% ($n = 11$) had very rarely been non-verbally bullied; and the remaining 4% ($n = 1$) had never been bullied by non-verbal methods.

Non-verbal bullying is the least common method of bullying. The subtle gestures of non-verbal bullying may be as detrimental to the victim as physical bullying. The silence of rolling eyes, crossing arms, staring/glaring, being left out of an activity, and obscene gestures are harder to detect, but can be as painful as being punched or kicked by
the aggressor. "In addition to physical aggression, words are often used to directly hurt others in the form of verbal aggression, including yelling at and threatening others" (Verona, Sadeh, Case, Reed, & Bhattacharjee, 2008, p. 494). Relational aggression is an area of bullying that should be addressed to prevent and avoid before dire consequences.

![Pie chart](image1.png)

**Figure 14.** Frequency of Male Responses for Non-Verbal Bullying

Question 14 of the *Addison Lewis Bullying Questionnaire* asked both male and female respondents which sex tended to be more often non-verbally bullied in high school (See Figure 15). Seventy-six percent \((n = 81)\) of males and females combined responded that females are more often victims of non-verbal bullying. The remaining 24% of respondents \((n = 25)\) disclosed that males are more often victims of such acts.

![Pie chart](image2.png)

**Figure 15.** Percentage of the Sex Most Frequently Non-Verbally Bullied
Objective Two: *Identify the characteristics of cyber bullying and relational aggression.*

Further analysis of question eight of the *Addison Lewis Bullying Questionnaire* revealed the characteristics of cyber bullying while in high school (See Table 1). The categories which were examined include the following types of cyber bullying: text message, email, comments on a blog or social website (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, MySpace), inappropriate pictures to a blog or social website (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, MySpace), and instant messages. A 4-point Likert scale was used to analyze the data for the frequency and mean of those who were electronically bullied in high school (See Table 1). The scores were coded as follows: Frequently = 4; Sometimes = 3; Rarely = 2; Never = 1; and Non-applicable = 0.

The analysis of the data from respondents (N = 106) revealed a mean score of 2.16 (SD = 0.90) for frequency of bullying by text messaging. The information that was gained from the questionnaire concerning text messaging revealed that 2% (n = 2) of the respondents were frequently bullied by text messaging. The remaining data revealed the following information: 8% (n = 9) were sometimes bullied by text messaging; 11% (n = 12) were rarely bullied by text messaging; and 8% (n = 8) were never bullied by text messaging. Seventy-one percent (n = 75) of the respondents did not respond to being bullied via text message.

The analysis of the data from respondents (N = 106) revealed a mean score of 1.42 (SD = 0.72) for frequency of bullying by email. Twenty-one percent (n = 22) of respondents disclosed being bullied frequently by email. The following data were disclosed for the remaining respondents: 4% (n = 4) were sometimes bullied by email;
5% (n = 5) were rarely bullied by email; 21% (n = 22) were never bullied by email; and 71% (n = 75) did not respond to being bullied by email.

The social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, MySpace) have become popular over time and bullying has increased via technology. However, the respondents in the research study did not reveal that bullying via social networks was an issue.

The analysis of the data from respondents (N = 106) revealed a mean score of 2.58 (SD = 0.99) for frequency of bullying by posting comments of a blog or social network. Five percent (n = 5) of the respondents reported being frequently bullied by an individual or group of individuals posting comments on a blog or social network. The remaining respondents disclosed the following: 13% (n = 14) were sometimes bullied by an individual or group of individuals posting comments on a blog or social website; 6% (n = 6) were rarely bullied by an individual or group of individuals posting comments on a blog or social website; 6% (n = 6) were never bullied by an individual or group of individuals posting comments on a blog or social website. Seventy-one percent (n = 75) of the respondents did not respond to being bullied by an individual or group of individuals posting comments on a blog or social website.

The posting of suggestive pictures (e.g., pictures containing nudity) on a blog or social network is another avenue for bullying. The analysis of the data from respondents (N = 106) revealed a mean score of 1.61 (SD = 0.92) for frequency of bullying by posting inappropriate pictures on a blog or social website. One percent (n = 1) of the respondents reported being bullied frequently by an individual posting an inappropriate picture on a blog or social website. The remaining data revealed the following: 6% (n = 6) were sometimes bullied by an individual or group of individuals posting inappropriate pictures
on a blog or social website; 4%, \((n = 4)\) were rarely bullied by an individual or group or individuals posting inappropriate pictures on a blog or social website; and 19% \((n = 20)\) were never bullied by an individual or group of individuals posting inappropriate pictures on a blog or social website. Seventy-one percent \((n = 75)\) of the respondents did not respond to being bullied by an individual or group of individuals posting comments on a blog or social website.

Instant messaging is another form of electronic bullying that was analyzed. The analysis of the respondents \((N = 106)\) revealed a mean score of 2.13 \((SD = 0.99)\) for frequency of bullying by instant messaging. The analysis of the data revealed that zero respondents were frequently bullied by instant message. The remainder of data revealed: 2% \((n = 2)\) were sometimes bullied by instant message; 3% \((n = 3)\) were rarely bullied by instant message; 21% \((n = 22)\) were never bullied by instant message; and 75% \((n = 79)\) did not respond to being bullied by instant message.

### Table 1

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<th></th>
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<th>Never</th>
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\(N = 106\)
The two forms of electronic bullying which had the highest frequencies were comments on a blog or social network and instant messaging. These two forms of bullying can reach many individuals within a short time frame, which may cause additional repercussions from the bully. These repercussions may include, but are not limited to, additional bullying by verbally harassing or physically injuring the victim.

The data analysis revealed the characteristics of non-verbal bullying. Those characteristics include the following: a peer rolling his/her eyes at you, a peer crossing his/her arms to send you a message (e.g., anger, hatred), staring/glaring, being intentionally left out of a game, activity, or social event, obscene or threatening gestures or other forms of non-verbal bullying (See Table 2).

The analysis of the respondents \((N = 106)\) revealed a mean score of 2.75 \((SD = 0.81)\) for frequency of bullying by a peer rolling his/her eyes. The analysis of the data revealed that 13\% \((n = 14)\) of respondents were frequently bullied by a peer rolling his/her eyes. The remainder of the results revealed: 28\% \((n = 30)\) were sometimes bullied by a peer rolling his/her eyes; 25\% \((n = 26)\) were rarely bullied by a peer rolling his/her eyes; and 3\% \((n = 3)\) were never bullied by a peer rolling his/her eyes. Thirty-one percent \((n = 33)\) did not respond.

The second category of a peer crossing his/her arms to send a message (e.g., anger, hatred) was analyzed to determine the frequency of responses. The analysis of the respondents \((N = 106)\) revealed a mean score of 2.20 \((SD = 0.88)\) for frequency of bullying by a peer crossing his/her arms. The data analysis revealed that 5\% \((n = 5)\) of the respondents had been frequently bullied by a peer crossing his/her arms to send a message. The remaining results revealed: 21\% \((n = 22)\) had sometimes been bullied by a
peer crossing his/her arms to send a message; 28% \( (n = 30) \) had rarely been bullied by a peer crossing his/her arms to send a message; and 16% \( (n = 17) \) had never been bullied by a peer crossing his/her arms to send a message. Thirty percent \( (n = 32) \) of the respondents did not respond.

The bullying action of staring/glaring was the next category analyzed. The analysis of the data from respondents \( (N = 106) \) revealed a mean score of 2.89 \( (SD = 0.79) \) for frequency of bullying by staring/glaring by a peer. The analysis of the data revealed that 13% \( (n = 14) \) of respondents were frequently bullied by staring/glaring by a peer. The remainder of the responses revealed: 41% \( (n = 43) \) had sometimes been bullied by staring/glaring by a peer; 11% \( (n = 12) \) had rarely been bullied by staring/glaring by a peer; and 5% \( (n = 5) \) had never been bullied by staring/glaring by a peer. Thirty percent \( (n = 32) \) did not respond.

The respondents were next asked to disclose information of being intentionally left out of a game, activity, or social event. The analysis of the data from respondents \( (N = 106) \) revealed a mean score of 1.95 \( (SD = 0.95) \) for frequency of bullying by being intentionally left out of a game, activity, or social event. The data analysis revealed that 5% \( (n = 5) \) of the respondents had been frequently bullied by being intentionally left out of a game, activity, or social event. The remainder of the responses revealed: 15% \( (n = 16) \) were sometimes intentionally left out of a game, activity, or social event; 22% \( (n = 23) \) were rarely intentionally left out of a game, activity, or social event; and 28% \( (n = 30) \) were never intentionally left out of a game, activity, or social event. There were 30% \( (n = 32) \) of respondents did not respond.
The analysis of the data from respondents ($N = 106$) revealed a mean score of 1.92 ($SD = 0.99$) for frequency of bullying by obscene gestures such as ‘flipping off’ the victim. The analysis of the data revealed that 6% ($n = 6$) of respondents were frequently bullied by obscene gestures. The remainder of the results revealed: 14% ($n = 15$) were sometimes bullied by obscene gestures; 19% ($n = 20$) were rarely bullied by obscene gestures; and 31% ($n = 33$) were never bullied by obscene gestures. Thirty percent of the respondents ($n = 32$) did not respond.

The category of staring/glaring had the highest frequency of all categories. This subtle gesture is often difficult to detect in a classroom or other location of school. The respondents revealed that a peer rolling his/her eyes at them was considered the second most common form of bullying in high school. The remaining categories were similar across the scale.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rolling Eyes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossing Arms</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staring/Glaring</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionally Left Out</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obscene Gestures</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$N = 106$
Objective Three: The third objective was to examine the physical, emotional, and academic consequences of cyber bullying and relational aggression.

Physical Consequences. The analysis of data collected from the Addison Lewis Bullying Questionnaire examined the physical symptoms (e.g., headaches, upset stomach) associated with bullying in high school. A four-point Likert scale (Frequently = 4; Sometimes = 3; Rarely = 2; and Never = 1) was used to determine the frequency and mean of the physical symptoms of bullying (See Figure 16). The analysis of the data from respondents \( N = 106 \) revealed a mean score of 1.24 \( (SD = 0.64) \) for frequency of physical symptoms (e.g., headaches, upset stomach) associated with bullying in high school. Two percent \( (n = 2) \) of the respondents reported frequent bouts of physical symptoms associated with bullying. The remaining data from respondents revealed: 6% \( (n = 6) \) reported they sometimes had physical symptoms associated with bullying; 7% \( (n = 7) \) rarely had physical symptoms associated with bullying; and 86% \( (n = 91) \) never had physical symptoms associated with bullying.

![Figure 16. Frequency Respondents Suffered Physical Symptoms Due to Bullying](image)

Academic Consequences. The next area of data analyzed was the realm of academics and the effects associated with bullying. A four-point Likert scale (Frequently
= 4; Sometimes = 3; Rarely = 2; and Never = 1) was used to determine the frequency and mean of the impact of bullying on academics. A mean score of 1.25 ($SD = 0.67$) revealed how often respondents ($N = 106$) suffered academic consequences due to bullying (See Figure 17). One percent ($n = 1$) disclosed that their academics were frequently affected by bullying. Ten percent ($n = 11$) of the respondents’ academics were sometimes affected by bullying; 1% ($n = 1$) of the respondents’ academics were rarely affected by bullying; and 88% ($n = 93$) of the respondents’ academics were never affected by bullying.

Although 88% of the respondents reported their academics were never affected by bullying, 12% reported having academic issues due to bullying. The ability to concentrate in an environment, where bullying has or may occur, creates disruption for not only the victim, but also for the remainder of the class. The students “found it difficult to concentrate on their class work when they thought about what had already happened to them. Another them was concern over what future victimization experiences lay ahead for them” (Boulton, Trueman, & Murray, 2008, p. 474). The ability to prevent and bullying situations in a school environment is one area that would help to improve academics among students.

![Figure 17. Frequency Respondents Suffered Academically Due to Bullying](image)

$N=106$
Objective Four: The fourth objective of the study was to examine the support given by family members, school staff and friends.

There are two important domains that influence youth and their ability to cope with bullying. One domain is the home environment. The ability to provide a safe and supportive environment for adolescents is a responsibility that should be embraced by family members. The stability or instability of family relationships may have an impact on bullying situations. Stability in the family unit influences relationships outside of the home environment. The role modeling of a parent contributes to the overall demeanor of youth and their outlook on negative situations. A 10-point Likert scale was used to analyze the data for the stability of family relationships. Of the respondents (N = 106), the mean score was 9.05 (SD = 1.30) for the total respondents. Male respondents had a mean score of 9.16 (SD = 1.03) for stability and support of family members and home environment. Female respondents reported having a mean score of 9.01 (SD = 1.38) for support of family members and home environment.

The Addison Lewis Bullying Questionnaire revealed that the majority of respondents responded favorably concerning stability and support given by their family members (See Figure 18). A 4-point Likert scale was used to analyze the data for the mean score, frequency, and ranking of adolescents’ confidants while in high school. The scores were coded as follows: Frequently = 4; Sometimes = 3; Rarely = 2; Never = 1; and Non-applicable = 0.

Respondents (N = 106) revealed a mean score of 2.10 (SD = 1.19) for frequency of confiding in a family member. Nineteen percent (n = 20) of the respondents would frequently confide in a family member if they were being bullied. The remaining data
from the respondents revealed: 20% \((n = 21)\) reported they would sometimes confide in a family member if they were being bullied; 14% \((n = 15)\) reported that they would rarely confide in a family member if they were being bullied; and 47% \((n = 50)\) reported they would never confide in a family member if they were being bullied. The degree of stability or instability in family relationships may have an impact on bullying. Stability in the family unit is influential on relationships outside of the home environment.

Another positive correlation between environmental stability and emotional stability is that “children reported fewer symptoms of depression when support from parents was high compared to when it was low” (Connors-Borrow, et al., 2009, p. 601). The ability to help adolescents cope with bullying is one issue that should be a joint effort among all members of the family unit.

![Figure 18. Frequency Respondents Would Confide in a Family Member](image)

A mean score of 1.60 \((SD = 1.00)\) revealed how frequently male respondents who would confide in a family member if they were being bullied (See Figure 19). Eight percent \((n = 2)\) of the respondents reported they would frequently confide in a family member if bullying was an issue. Data from the remaining males revealed: 12%
(n = 3) reported they would sometimes confide in a family member if bullying was occurring; 12% (n = 3) disclosed they would rarely confide in a family member if they were being bullied; and the 68% (n = 17) reported they would never confide in a family member if they were being bullied.

A mean score of 2.26 (SD = 1.21) revealed how frequently female respondents would confide in a family member if they were being bullied. Twenty-two percent (n = 18) of the female respondents reported they would frequently confide in a family member if bullying was an issue. The data from the remaining respondents revealed: 22% (n = 18) reported they would sometimes confide in a family member if bullying was occurring; 15% (n = 12) disclosed they would rarely confide in a family member if they were being bullied; and 41% (n = 33) reported they would never confide in a family member if they were being bullied.

![Graph](attachment:image.png)

*Figure 19. Male and Female Responses Regarding Confiding in a Family Member*
The school environment is ripe for bullying and unfortunately not every instance can be detected. Youth are in an educational environment approximately one-third of the day for the majority of the year. Teachers, counselors, and principals were chosen as possible answer, because these individuals have the most interaction with students. Although it is virtually impossible for all types of bullying to be stopped, preventing and minimizing such behavior are needed to enhance secure learning environments. However, the data analysis does not provide positive results where confidentiality in teachers, principals, and counselors is concerned. Through the guidance and support of teachers, administrators, and counselors, an adolescent may be able to overcome bullying problems.

A mean score of $1.34$ ($SD = 0.69$) revealed how frequently respondents would confide in a teacher about a bullying issue. Three percent ($n = 3$) of the respondents would frequently confide in a teacher if bullying was an issue; $4\%$ ($n = 4$) of the respondents would sometimes confide in a teacher if bullying was an issue; $18\%$ ($n = 19$) of the respondents would rarely confide in a teacher if bullying was an issue; and $75\%$ ($n = 80$) of the respondents would never confide in a teacher if bullying was an issue.

Respondents were least likely to confide in the principal about a bullying issue. A mean score of $1.11$ ($SD = 0.40$) revealed how frequently respondents would confide in a principal about a bullying issue. None of the respondents would frequently confide in a principal if bullying was an issue; $3\%$ ($n = 3$) of the respondents would sometimes confide in a principal if bullying was an issue; $6\%$ ($n = 6$) of the respondents would rarely confide in a principal if bullying was an issue; and $92\%$ ($n = 97$) of the respondents would never confide in a principal if bullying was an issue.
Confiding in a counselor also had a low mean score. A mean score of 1.29 ($SD = 0.66$) revealed how frequently respondents would confide in a counselor when about a bullying issue. One percent ($n = 1$) of the respondents would frequently confide in a counselor if bullying was an issue; 8% ($n = 9$) of the respondents would sometimes confide in a counselor if bullying was an issue; 9% ($n = 10$) of the respondents would rarely confide in a counselor if bullying was an issue; and 81% ($n = 86$) of the respondents would never confide in a counselor if bullying was an issue.

The comparison of data for male and female respondents revealed that male respondents had a higher response rate of never confiding in a teacher, principal, or counselor (See Figure 20). A mean score of 1.12 ($SD = 0.33$) for males revealed how frequently they would confide in a teacher about a bullying issue. None of the male respondents would frequently or sometimes confide in a teacher if bullying was an issue. Twelve percent ($n = 3$) of the respondents would rarely confide in a teacher if bullying was an issue, and 88% ($n = 22$) of the respondents would never confide in a teacher if bullying was an issue.

A mean score of 1.00 ($SD = 0.00$) for male respondents revealed how frequently they would confide in a principal about a bullying issue. The respondents were 100% ($n = 25$) in complete agreement when they stated that they would never confide in a principal about a bullying issue.

A mean score of 1.16 ($SD = 0.55$) for males revealed how frequently they would confide in a counselor about a bullying issue. None of the male respondents would frequently confide in a counselor if bullying was an issue. Eight percent ($n = 2$) of the respondents would sometimes confide in a counselor if bullying was an issue, zero
respondents would rarely confide in a counselor if bullying was an issue, and 92% \((n = 23)\) of the respondents would never confide in a counselor if bullying was an issue.

![Bar chart showing frequency of confiding in school staff](image)

**Figure 20. Frequency of Male Responses Concerning Confiding in School Staff**

Female respondents did confide in a teacher, principal, or counselor when an act of bullying occurred (Figure 21). A mean score of 1.41 \((SD = 0.75)\) for female respondents revealed how frequently they would confide in a teacher about a bullying issue. Data revealed that 4% \((n = 3)\) of female respondents would frequently confide in a teacher if bullying was an issue. Data also revealed: 5% \((n = 4)\) the female respondents would sometimes confide in a teacher if bullying was an issue; 20% \((n = 16)\) would rarely confide in a teacher if bullying was an issue; and 72% \((n = 58)\) would never confide in a teacher if bullying was an issue.

Females were least likely to confide in the principal about bullying issues. A mean score of 1.15 \((SD = 0.45)\) for female respondents revealed how frequently they would confide in a principal about a bullying issue. There were zero females who would frequently disclose a bullying instance with a principal. Data analysis revealed the
following: 4% \((n = 3)\) would sometimes confide in a principal if bullying was an issue; 7% \((n = 6)\) would rarely confide in a principal if bullying was an issue; and 89% \((n = 72)\) would never confide in a principal if bullying was an issue.

Confiding in a counselor again had a low mean score. A mean score of 1.33 \((SD = 0.69)\) for females revealed how frequently they would confide in a counselor about a bullying issue. One percent \((n = 1)\) of the female respondents would frequently confide in a counselor if bullying was an issue. Nine percent \((n = 7)\) of the respondents would sometimes confide in a counselor if bullying was an issue, 12% \((n = 10)\) would rarely confide in a counselor if bullying was an issue, and 78% \((n = 63)\) of the respondents would never confide in a counselor if bullying was an issue.

Figure 21. Frequency of Female Responses Concerning Confiding in School Staff

Friends were the most likely confidants if bullying happened to male and female respondents (See Figure 22). A mean score of 2.35 \((SD = 1.19)\) for male and female respondents combined revealed how frequently they would confide in friends about a bullying issue. Twenty-three percent \((n = 24)\) would frequently confide in a friend about
bullying, 25% \( (n = 27) \) would sometimes confide in a friend about bullying, 16% \( (n = 17) \) would rarely tell a friend about bullying, and 36% \( (n = 38) \) would never confide in a friend about bullying.

![Confiding in Others](image)

*Figure 22. Frequency of Total Responses Concerning Confiding in Others*

Percentage of male \( (n = 25) \) and percentage of female \( (n = 81) \) respondents stated that they would never confide in their friends when they were being bullied (See Figure 23). The analysis of the male respondents \( (n = 25) \) revealed a mean score of 1.80 \( (SD = 1.19) \) of how frequently they would confide in a friend when bullying occurred. Sixteen percent \( (n = 4) \) of the males stated that they would frequently confide in a friend about bullying, 12% \( (n = 3) \) stated they would sometimes confide in a friend about a bullying incident, 8% \( (n = 2) \) said they would rarely confide in a friend, and 64% \( (n = 16) \) stated that they would never confide in a friend about bullying.

The analysis of the females respondents \( (n = 81) \) revealed a mean score of 2.52 \( (SD = 1.14) \) for how frequently they would confide in a friend about bullying. Twenty-five percent \( (n = 20) \) disclosed they would frequently confide in a friend about bullying, 30% \( (n = 24) \) stated they would sometimes confide in a friend about bullying,
19% (n = 15) said they would rarely confide in a friend, and 27% (n = 22) stated they would never confide in a friend about bullying.

The adolescent stage of life is challenging. Friendships are an important part of life and often help adolescents through difficult situations. "Peer relationships provide a socialization contest of great importance during adolescence, in part because adolescents who are similar to one another's behavior in those groups" (Lansford, Killeya-Jones, Miller, & Costanzo, 2009, p. 1084). Although data from the research study did not indicate a high frequency of confiding in friends about bullying, previous research studies cite the importance of friends.

![Bar Chart](image)

**Figure 23.** Male and Female Responses Concerning Confiding in Friends

The ranking by total respondents (N = 106) in their confidence in others is as follows: In rank order from most frequent to least frequent, female respondents (n=81) confided in: friend, family member, teacher, counselor and principal. In rank order from most frequent to least frequent, male respondents (n=25) confided in: friend, family member, counselor, teacher, and principal. The difference between females and males
was interchanging of teacher and counselor. The research study revealed information concerning bullying and the implications of such treatment. The further research of bullying is needed in order to understand the impact of such negative behavior and the detrimental affects of such behavior.
Chapter 5

Summary, Limitations, Implications, and Recommendations

Cyber bullying and relational aggression are types of bullying which have had limited studies in the past. This current study was conducted to further investigate and understand cyber bullying and relational aggression among high school students. Although the results of this research study do not parallel previous research, there are indications that these two forms of bullying are gaining popularity among the adolescent population. Physical and verbal bullying remain the most common among youth. For instance, “Boys still commit the majority of violent crimes, but there is growing concern that the rates of aggression and delinquency with adolescent girls, particularly those living in urban environments, are increasing more than with males” (Letendre, 2007, p. 354).

As with relational aggression, the popularity of cyber bullying has been on the rise over the past several years, especially as reported by females. Thirty-five percent of females reported being electronically bullied compared to three percent of males.

Relational aggression allows individuals to bully in a way that is subtle and often hard to detect. This form of bullying is most popular in females as they intimidate their victims. The research revealed that relational aggression is somewhat more common than cyber bullying.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent, the characteristics, and the consequences of two types of bullying during the high school years. Students from a
Midwestern university, 18 to 20 years old, recalled their experiences of bullying while in high school.

The findings revealed that bullying played a role in victimization, but it was minimal. However, past research studies report a physical, an emotional, and an academic impact when bullying is a factor.

Fifteen percent of the respondents \( N = 106 \) reported physical symptoms associated with bullying to some degree. Previous research on the physical impact of bullying is limited. "There are few investigations examining the association between victimization and physical symptoms than psychosocial adjustment" (Nishina, Juvonen, & Witkow, 2005, p. 37). However, it should be noted that the current research study only asked respondents if they encountered headaches and upset stomachs. There are many other physical symptoms associated with bullying. Those physical symptoms include, but may not be limited to, "skin problems such as eczema, psoriasis, athletes foot, ulcers, sweating, trembling, shaking, palpitations and panic attacks, irritable bowel syndrome, aches and pains in the joints and muscles; and frequent illness such as viral infections" (Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike, & Afen-Akpaida, 2008, p. 157). If the instrument for the current research study had a more detailed list such as the one listed above, the outcome of the results may have given a more in-depth picture of the physical symptoms associated with bullying.

The emotional stability of an adolescent can also be affected negatively by bullying. A strong family environment can assist adolescents when a negative situation, such as bullying, impedes itself the life of an adolescent. "Parents influence their children’s social-emotional outcomes both directly (e.g., modeling and social
reinforcement) and indirectly (e.g., shaping of perceptions and attitudes)” (Totura et al., 2009, p. 575). The unfortunate disadvantage for some adolescents is that they lack a stable and supportive home environment. The communication level in such an environment is also lacking, so victims may feel as though there is no one to turn to in a time of need. It is imperative for parents and guardians to provide an environment where an adolescent can have emotional support to work through a bullying situation. This current research study did reveal that the majority of respondents had highly stable and supportive environments in which to live.

The academics of students can be affected by the unruliness of bullies in the classroom. The teacher is a main force behind trying to control bullying in the classroom. But, often times, an individual is harassed in the hallways, cafeteria, or other locations in the school before or after class. As a result, bullying may be an issue without the teacher being aware. The victim’s level of academic concentration is affected from the maltreatment of the bully, as well.

It is proposed that experiences of peer victimization at school contribute to maladjustment, which in turn challenges adolescents’ ability or motivation to enjoy school and commit to learning. In turn, behavioral, emotional, and cognitive disengagement from school and learning are expected to interfere with adolescents’ ability to do well academically (Hoglund, 2007, p. 685).

The current findings of the research study did not concur with previous research studies. The current research study revealed that 12% of the respondents experienced their academics being affected to some degree by bullying.
Limitations

There were three limitations for this research study. The first limitation was the small convenience sample. Therefore, the limited size may have influenced the information, or lack thereof, and the subsequent analytical conclusions. A second limitation was only distributing the questionnaire to Family and Consumer Sciences courses and University Foundation courses. Different results may have been yielded if the questionnaire had been administered to students enrolled in other discipline courses.

Third, the reliance on recall of the respondents is a limitation. The age range for the respondents was 18 to 20 years old. The respondents were asked to recall bullying experiences from the freshmen to senior level of high school. Respondents had graduated from high school approximately 1 to 3 years prior to the research study. Therefore, the respondents experienced any reported episodes of bullying 1 to 7 years prior to participating in this study. The recall of the incidents may have regressed over time.

Another factor that may affect recall is the violence associated with the incidences of bullying. “Students who are being bullied or who witness chronic bullying may use avoidance as an attempt at coping by repressing the intrusive thoughts and feelings about the abuse” (Carney, 2008, p. 179). The ability to cope with such negative behavior may be easier if the victims repress the bullying incidents and are able to move forward with their lives.

Implications

Bullying continues to be a chronic problem in U. S. society. Bullying may begin as early as preschool and continue through adulthood. Bullying is not selective as it can affect both males and females, all ethnicities, and other demographic lines. Bullying is
reported in the United States and all over the world. The seriousness of bullying continues to be an issue that is being exposed by victims, parents, and especially the media. Such exposure has opened doors, to the realities of bullying, that have been closed for many generations. In the past, bullying may have been seen as a rite of passage or part of growing up. Today, bullying is more commonly emerging as a concerning and tragic issue and is targeted with growing intolerance.

The implementation of anti-bullying prevention and intervention programs have been recently introduced into schools. However, these programs are only the beginning to educating children and adults about the dangers and lifelong consequences associated with bullying. These dangers may include, but are not limited to, physical injuries such as a broken bones or even head/brain trauma. The lifelong consequences associated with bullying may include emotional scars such as humiliation and depression. These emotional scars may lead to a more permanent tragedy, such as suicide. “On average, the more frequent the victimization, the higher the risk for depression and suicidality. Among males, it was primarily frequent peer victimization that was more consistently associated with depression and suicidality. Among females, any level of peer victimization was associated with depression and suicidality” (Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2008, pp. 173-174). Through additional support from parents, school staff, and friends, adolescents may find the ability to cope with bullying.

The current research study indicated that parental support is of the utmost importance when a bullying situation arises. On a 10-point Likert scale, respondents had a mean score of 9.05 which indicates the support system at home was extremely high. However, 61% of the sample reported they would rarely confide in family about a
bullying incident. The level of confiding in a family member is not inline with that of a supportive and stable home environment. The results of the research study clearly revealed that, even though the home environment is stable and supportive, the level of turning to a parent as a confidant is less than favorable. In order to help an adolescent cope with bullying, the lines of communication must be positive and open. A loving and stable home environment is essential for fostering coping skills. Matsunaga (2009) noted that “bullied children who sought help from their parents not only has lesser stress but were also more likely to escape victimhood than those who did not disclose the crisis” (p. 223). It is essential for parents and adolescents to have an open line of communication to combat bullying.

Prior research concludes that support received in the school environment is also essential when a bullying situation presents itself. Alarmingly, the results of the research study disclosed that up to 92% of respondents would never confide in teachers, principals, or counselors if they were being bullied by a peer. Teachers spend the majority of the day with students and, while they may not directly observe all bullying, they are likely aware of the schools’ bullies, victims, and dynamics. “Social support is important in maintaining optimal day-to-day functioning and also as a buffer to decrease the likelihood of negative outcomes when individuals experience stressful life events” (Flaspohler, Elfstrom, Vanderzee, Sink, & Birchmeier, 2009, p. 639).

The buffer that teachers, counselors, and principals create can assist in the reduction of bullying in school. However, this buffer may be limited. The research study revealed that adolescents are extremely unwilling to confide in a counselor or a principal. The results of the study revealed that 81% (n = 86) of the respondents would never
confide in a counselor. Additionally, according to the results of the research, ninety-two percent (n=97) of the respondents revealed that they would never confide in a principal. The counselor and principal are often seen as intimidating to students and therefore, students hesitate to confide in an authoritative figure. The question becomes as to how and what can be done to help students overcome this resistance to confiding in individuals who make be able to help them through this difficult time. The research concerning the principal and counselor roles should be further investigated in the future to reveal their actual impact on victims of bullying.

Friendships are an important part of life and extremely important for adolescents. However, this is also a difficult period of time for individuals who are victimized by bullying. The current research study did not provide findings that concur with previous studies. Previous studies report that having a friend to confide in is important to an individual who is the victim of bullying. The current research did not uncover that respondents frequently confide in a friend when bullying was an issue. The data revealed that 64% of male respondents (n=16) and 27% of female respondents (n=22) stated that they would never confide in their friends when they were being bullied. The question of “Why?” must be addressed in future research. The current research study did not reveal why confiding in a friend is not a choice. However, during this delicate time in the life of an adolescent, there are a number of reasons why a friend may not be a confidant. The reasons may include, but are not limited to, embarrassment, lack of understanding, and the admission of bullying making the situation a reality. Another avenue is the peer support system. This system is a program that has been developed to help peers work through the issue of bullying.
Usually, victims of school bullying are advised to tell teachers when they are bullied, but they are also encouraged to speak to their parents or guardians. Furthermore, in recognition that not all pupils wish to speak to teachers or parents or guardians about such an issue, peer support systems have been developed in which students are used to tutor, to reinforce positive behaviour, and to counsel or advise other pupils (Hunter, Boyle, & Warden, 2004, p. 376).

Together, individuals and families, teachers and principals, and community members can address the negative behavior to work for the betterment of adolescents and children.

**Recommendations**

Based on the results of the research study, it is recommended that additional research be conducted in the areas of cyber bullying and relational aggression. A stratified proportional study would assist in furthering knowledge on cyber bullying and relational aggression. By conducting a stratified proportional study, researchers would have a better understanding of when the bullying begins and how it affects different ages. It would be beneficial for future researchers to include a population of either middle or high school students and compare how each grade differs from one to the other. Comparing one grade level to another may identify different types or frequencies of bullying. Through continued exploration of cyber bullying and relational aggression, many opportunities may present themselves to enlighten and encourage both victims and support persons.

The education of adolescents, parents, and school personnel is imperative for the safety and well-being of individuals who may be plagued by this negative behavior.
Education could be implemented in the form of school assemblies in which guest speakers discuss the implications of bullying. The education should not only be achieved through these means, but also by teaching the consequences of bullying in the home environment. Although the bullying cycle may be hard to alter, greater awareness is needed to convey an intolerance of bullying. Another avenue for anti-bullying programs in the school is a peer court in which children and teachers collaborate to address bullying and how to overcome obstacles associated with bullying. Such collaboration could result in a presentation to the school board and superintendent to create or further anti-bullying protocol, such as prevention or disciplinary measures. Further recommendations could be made by the students and teachers to reevaluate programs and protocol as time progresses.

A further recommendation is for future researchers to continue to examine the issue of confiding in family, friends, teachers, counselors, and principals. The ability to confide in another individual may help the victim to find some peace when being bullied. Continued examination of the barriers that impede the confiding in others has the potential to help with the development of programs to reduce the instances of bullying. The reduction of bullying will take many years, but the awareness that has already been created through the media and educational efforts is a great beginning. The educational role of anti-bullying should begin in the early stages of life and continue throughout the life span. Learning how to confide and cope with bullying is essential for the betterment of U. S. society and finding ways to increase the levels of confiding will be essential to achieving this better U. S. society.
In this study, both males and females concur that females encounter more non-verbal bullying than males. The silent act of relational aggression was revealed as a predominant type of bullying among both males and females. All individuals are or have the potential to be somehow affected, either directly or indirectly, by bullying. The previous and current research studies and the media show bullying as a serious societal problem. The future of the youth of this country, as well as the rest of the world, is everyone's issue. Together, our global U. S. society must work together to prevent and reduce bullying.
References


Appendix A

Consent Form

The *Addison Lewis Bullying Questionnaire*

Thank you for participating in this research project. The purpose of this research is to examine two types of bullying in high school. The results will provide a better understanding of cyber bullying and relational aggression for professionals and future researchers.

You are invited to complete a questionnaire for a research study conducted by Sharon L. Lewis, Graduate Student in the school of Family and Consumer Sciences at Eastern Illinois University. The questionnaire will take about 10 minutes of your time. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Please ask any questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate. You may choose to withdraw at anytime and not complete the questionnaire without penalty or prejudice. Your identity will remain anonymous, your name is not required on any documentation, and you will not be connected with the information provided on the questionnaire. By completing and submitting the questionnaire, you are consenting to participate in the study by completing the questionnaire and agreeing that you have been given the opportunity to ask questions and withdraw from participation.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please feel free to contact Sharon Lewis at sllewis2@eiu.edu or Dr. Kathleen O’Rourke (Thesis Advisor) at kaorourke@eiu.edu

Thank you!!
Appendix B

Questionnaire

Addison Lewis Bullying Questionnaire

The purpose of this study is to examine the prevalence of cyber bullying and relational aggression during high school. You are invited to participate in this research study conducted by Sharon L. Lewis, Graduate Student, from the School of Family and Consumer Sciences at Eastern Illinois University. Your participation is completely voluntary. You may choose to withdraw at anytime without penalty or prejudice. Any information contained in connection with this study is completely confidential. Please ask any questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate. If you have any questions regarding this project, please feel free to contact me at sllewis2@eiu.edu.

Thank you for participating in this research project.

BULLYING is defined as “an aggressive behavior that is intended to cause harm or distress, occurs repeatedly over time, and occurs in a relationship in which there is an imbalance of power or strength” (www.apa.org, 2009, ¶1).

1) What is your age? (Please specify) ________________

2) What is your gender?

   a) Male  b) Female

3) In general, how stable and supportive would you rate your family members/home environment in high school?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

   (Not Stable)                (Very Stable)
4) How stable and supportive would you rate your school environment/teachers/other school staff during your high school years?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not Stable) (Very Stable)

5) Overall, how commonly did bullying occur at your high school?

Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never

6) How often did you witness bullying among students at each level of high school?

a) Freshmen
   Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never

b) Sophomore
   Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never

c) Junior
   Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never

d) Senior
   Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never

7) Were you ever bullied electronically by (e.g., computer, phone, other electronic device) by a peer in high school?

a) Yes (Please go to question #8)

b) No (Please go to question #9)

8) If you were bullied electronically in high school by a peer, how often did each form of bullying occur?

a) Text message: Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never
b) Email: Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never

c) Posting comments on a blog or social website (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, MySpace):
Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never

d) Posting inappropriate pictures to a blog or social website (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, MySpace):
Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never

e) Instant messaging: Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never

f) Other: Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never

(Please specify) ____________________________________________________________

9) Were you ever non-verbally bullied (e.g., eyes rolling, obscene gestures, other silent or subtle acts) in high school by a peer?

a) Yes (Please go to question #10)

b) No (Please go to question #11)

10) If you were non-verbally bullied in high school by a peer, how often did each form of bullying occur?

a) A peer rolling his/her eyes at you
Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never

b) A peer crossing his/her arms to send you a message (e.g., anger, hatred)
Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never
c) Staring/glaring

Frequently  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

d) Being intentionally left out of a game, activity, or social event

Frequently  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

e) Obscene or threatening gestures

Frequently  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

f) Other

Frequently  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

(Please specify) ____________________________________________________________

11) On average, how often were you electronically bullied? (e.g., text message, email, instant messaging)

(Please circle the answer that is most applicable to your situation)

a) Very Frequently (Every day or almost every day)

b) Frequently (About 1 to 3 times a week)

c) Occasionally (About once a month)

d) Rarely (1 to 2 times every few months)
e) Very Rarely (1 to 2 times a year or less)

f) Never

12) Who tended to be bullied more frequently electronically?

a) Males         b) Females

13) On the average, how often were you non-verbally bullied? (e.g., staring, glaring, obscene or threatening gestures)

(Please circle the answer that is most applicable to your situation)

a) Very Frequently (Every day or almost every day)

b) Frequently (About 1 to 3 times a week)

b) Occasionally (About once a month)

d) Rarely (1 to 2 times every few months)

e) Very Rarely (1 to 2 times a year or less)

f) Never

14) Who tended to be bullied more frequently non-verbally?

a) Males         b) Females
15) It is said that bullying and being bullied is "part of growing up" or "kids being kids." Do you believe these statements are true?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(Not at all True) (Very True)

16) Were you ever afraid to go to high school because of bullying?

Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never

17) If you were bullied in high school, did you ever have any physical symptoms as a result? (e.g., headaches, upset stomach)

Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never

18) Were your academics ever affected because of bullying? (e.g., skipping school or classes, lower grades in classes)

Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never

19) If you were bullied in high school, how often did you confide in:

a) Family member

Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never

b) Friend

Frequently Sometimes Rarely Never
20) How often did bullying occur in the following places?

a) Hallways 
Frequently 
Sometimes 
Rarely 
Never

b) Classrooms 
Frequently 
Sometimes 
Rarely 
Never

c) Gym Class 
Frequently 
Sometimes 
Rarely 
Never

d) Cafeteria 
Frequently 
Sometimes 
Rarely 
Never

e) Restrooms 
Frequently 
Sometimes 
Rarely 
Never
f) Waiting for the bus or a ride before or after school
   
   Frequently  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

g) On the bus
   
   Frequently  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

h) At school functions (e.g., sporting events, assemblies)
   
   Frequently  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

21) How often did bullying occur at these times?

a) Before school
   
   Frequently  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

b) After school
   
   Frequently  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

c) During school
   
   Frequently  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

22) How often did teachers/administrators/counselors/other school staff discuss bullying with students (e.g., in class, at an assembly, at a student organization committee)?

   Frequently  Sometimes  Rarely  Never
23) Did your school have a bullying prevention or intervention program? (if Yes, go to #24; if No, go to #25)
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) Don’t know

24) How effective was the bully prevention or intervention program?
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
   (Not Effective) (Very Effective)

25) Was there a zero tolerance policy regarding bullying at your school?
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) Don’t know

26) How often did the administrators, teachers, or school staff enforce the zero tolerance policy?
   Frequently    Sometimes    Rarely    Never