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A CYBERBULLYING NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN A MIDDLE SCHOOL
POPULATION: IDENTIFYING A DIRECTION FOR NURSES

Ashley Morgan Eggleston BSN, RN, CCRN

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF NURSING PRACTICE

Kirkhof College of Nursing

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Dedication

This scholarly project is dedicated to every adolescent who has ever been a victim or perpetrator of cyberbullying. I hope cyberbullying continues to be the focus of further inquiries because of the impact it has on adolescents, their families and peers.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge those who have assisted me in completing this scholarly project. First, I would like to recognize each of my committee members. Each one of you had a special role in helping me to complete this project. To Dr. Andrea Bostrom: thank you for your constant guidance, expertise, patience, time, and tissues. I have learned so much from you and I could not have completed this project without you. To Dr. Patricia Schafer: thank you for your encouragement, knowledge, feedback, enthusiasm, and all of the research articles over the past four years. To Dr. Shawn Bultsma: thank you for your feedback, kindness, and for helping me to consider this topic from a new perspective. To Sarah O'Brien: thank you for your willingness to try something new and work with a graduate nursing student. Thank you for all of your time in helping me to complete this project, your guidance, understanding, and friendship.

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Abstract

Cyberbullying is a fairly new phenomenon that most adolescents will experience or be exposed to during their lifetime. It produces devastating outcomes on those who are victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying. There is a limited amount of research regarding the prevention of cyberbullying. The evidence that is available is mostly exploratory in nature. Currently, the literature recommends conducting a needs assessment to validate the problem, raise awareness, and identify potential solutions that are specific to a population and/or setting. Therefore, the purpose of this scholarly project was to administer a cyberbullying needs assessment at a local west Michigan middle school. Two conceptual frameworks were used to guide this project: the model for evidence-based practice change and the social cognitive theory.

The sample included 296 seventh and eighth grade students from a local west Michigan middle school. The Cyberbullying and Online Aggression Instrument created by Hinduja and Patchin (2014) was used. Three qualitative questions were asked. These pertained to how teachers, peers and parents could prevent cyberbullying. Descriptive statistics were used to report the data and categories were identified from the qualitative data.

Findings included that most students at this middle school have been exposed to cyberbullying. Differences were observed in cyberbullying methods between the seventh and eighth grade students. Differences were also observed in cyberbullying frequency between male and female students. Based on the findings, recommendations related to future prevention efforts are made for this west Michigan middle school.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Bullying among adolescents is a common and potentially devastating behavior. In 2009 it was reported that roughly one-third of adolescents had been bullied (Family First Aid, 2013b). In 2010 it was reported that over half of students had witnessed a bullying event. Approximately, 15% of adolescents will not attend school out of fear of being bullied. One in 10 students will drop out or transfer schools because of bullying (Family First Aid, 2013c). Willard (2007) described bullying as a form of aggression used with the intent to harm or hurt another individual. This behavior is usually repeated and often results from an imbalance of power. Olweus (2013) defined bullying as a “subset of aggressive behavior” and a “behavior intended to inflict injury or discomfort upon another individual” (p. 756). He further discussed three important criteria that make up traditional bullying: intentionality, repetitiveness, and imbalance of power. Unfortunately, bullying is a well-known and widespread concern among adolescents in the United States (U.S.).

The problem of bullying is further compounded by the fact that there are many different types of bullying. For example, bullying can be verbal, social, physical, or can even occur through technology, known as cyberbullying (Family First Aid, 2013e). In particular, cyberbullying is a form of bullying that is becoming increasingly more prevalent and is the focus of this scholarly project. Regardless of the type, all bullying produces devastating outcomes.

The Problem: Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be defined as “sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social aggression by using the Internet or other digital technologies” (Willard, 2007, p. 1). When applying Olweus’s (2013) traditional bullying definition to cyberbullying, sometimes a concern is raised over whether repetitiveness is required. For example, if someone exposes an embarrassing picture of someone else online, it is a single act, but is normally still considered to be cyberbullying. Therefore, Olweus (2013) emphasized that cyberbullying events are usually repeated, but can also occur as a single isolated event. This is important to consider since many definitions of cyberbullying emphasize repetitiveness.

Family First Aid (2013d) reported that over half of adolescents have been cyberbullied and have also participated in this type of behavior themselves. Over 25% have been bullied through cellphones. Half of all adolescents who are cyberbullied will not tell their parents or a trusted adult when this type of bullying occurs allowing the bullying to continue.

Although, the motives for all types of bullying remain the same, this form of bullying is unique because unlike others, it can occur 24 hours a day, seven days a week, allowing the perpetrator to continuously hurt the victim (Ackers, 2012; Stopbullying.gov, n.d.b). In other words, cyberbullying is more harmful than other kinds of bullying since it can occur anywhere and at any time. Cyberbullying is also considered to be more harmful than other forms of bullying, as the perpetrators are able to target more victims at once and have a larger spectator audience. In other words, rather than bullying solely occurring in the hallway and having a few student bystanders to witness the event, cyberbullying

can occur via the Internet with the entire school potentially witnessing the event.

Perpetrators are able to perform such behaviors more frequently and repetitively. Finally, this form of bullying can be visualized for an extended period of time, because once something is posted in cyberspace, it is usually retrievable (Willard, 2007).

Another reason cyberbullying is considered to be more harmful is the fact that this type of bullying can occur secretly. Oftentimes, parents, coaches, and/or teachers are not aware that such behaviors are even occurring. In fact, perpetrators know that adults are not as knowledgeable regarding technology and use this to their advantage (Dehue, 2013). All of these factors make cyberbullying more harmful than other forms of bullying.

Outcomes of Victims

Victims of cyberbullying can suffer from a variety of ailments. Some studies report that victims of cyberbullying are more likely to use drugs and alcohol (Baek & Bullock, 2014; Juvonen & Graham, 2014; Stopbullying.gov, n.d.b). Others suggest that substance use is higher in adolescents who perpetrate cyberbullying, but victims are not more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol (Gamez-Guadix, Orue, Smith, & Calvete, 2013).

Cyberbullying can also disrupt a victim's learning environment. Victims tend to miss more school days as well as receive lower grades (Family First Aid, 2013c; Juvonen & Graham, 2014; Stopbullying.gov, n.d.b). Adolescents who are cyberbullied perceive their school environment to be unsafe (Kvarme, Monsen, & Eboh, 2014). Victims develop an aversion to school, have difficulty concentrating, have poor relationships with school peers, develop poor social skills, and are more likely to bring a weapon to school, get suspended or receive detention (Suzuki, Asaga, Sourander, Hoven, & Mandell, 2012).

Perhaps the biggest impact cyberbullying can have is on a victim's mental health. Victims usually suffer from low self-esteem as well as other mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety. These psychosocial difficulties often continue into adulthood. Subsequently, these adolescents are then more likely to consider suicide (Bucchianeri, Eisenberg, Wall, Piran, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2014; Family First Aid, 2013a; Juvonen & Graham, 2014; Stopbullying.gov, n.d.b). Jones (2014) reported "cyberbullying was more strongly related to suicidal ideation than traditional bullying" (p. 220). Increased risk for suicide is significant since suicide is already a major public health concern and is the third leading cause of death among adolescents (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention [CDC], 2012).

Other emotional and social difficulties include that victims tend to have higher feelings of stress, embarrassment, loneliness, and anxiousness; have low life satisfaction; and are more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (Wachs, 2012). Patchin and Hinduja (2006) surveyed adolescents about how cyberbullying made them feel. Forty-two percent felt frustrated, 40% felt angry, and 27% felt sad. Raskauskas and Stoltz (2007) found that 93% of cyberbullying victims stated cyberbullying affected them negatively. Most stated it made them feel sad, hopeless, afraid to go to school, and depressed. Gamez-Guadix et al. (2013) found both victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying to display symptoms of depression. In some cases, this is a reciprocal cycle where the depressed victim becomes an actual perpetrator.

Outcomes of Perpetrators

Perpetrators of cyberbullying also experience poor outcomes. Kiriakidis and Kavoura (2010) discussed how perpetrators are more likely to have behavioral problems

such as physical and sexual aggression. They are more likely to be rule-breakers, have poor relationships with their peers and parents, as well as abuse substances. Finally, they are more likely to be targets of traditional bullying. This predisposes them to the poor outcomes associated with this form of bullying thus, leading to more problems.

Cyberbullying and Adolescents

Traditional bullying as well as cyberbullying occur more frequently among the middle school population than older adolescents (Suzuki et al., 2012). The age for middle school children ranges from 12-15. This particular population is known as mid-adolescence.

Adolescents are considered to be vulnerable as well as highly influential to their peers. They can be influenced by society including their peers, family, school, and community. These influencers ultimately contribute to an adolescent's thinking, decisions, health and beliefs (CDC, 2011). During this developmental period, adolescents are learning morality as well as social norms and behaviors of society. The adolescent begins to make his or her own decisions regarding how to behave. Feedback is then generated for the adolescent that either promotes or discourages specific behaviors (Willard, 2007). There are many factors that can contribute to cyberbullying among this vulnerable population.

Influential Factors Related to Cyberbullying

Adolescents who participate in traditional or real world bullying will also be more likely to participate in cyberbullying. However, some perpetrators of cyberbullying have been victims of real world bullying and partake in online bullying in order to address an imbalance of power (Family First Aid, 2013f). Feinberg and Robey (2009) discussed how

culprits of this behavior usually have poorer relationships with their caregivers, engage in delinquent behavior, and are more likely to abuse substances such as drugs and alcohol. They also discussed how use of the Internet is a daily occurrence for these individuals.

Research has demonstrated that female adolescents are only slightly more likely to engage in this type of behavior, while other reports have concluded that girls are equally as likely as boys to be perpetrators or victims of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying affects all races (Family First Aid, 2013d; Feinberg & Robey, 2009). About half of the adolescents who have been victims of traditional bullying will also be the victims of cyberbullying. They are usually not popular, fear their peers, and are suffering from various mental health problems. The more prominent influential factors for this population are discussed below.

Media and technology use. Adolescents have always been a population that heavily uses media and technology. Various research studies have found that young people spend a significant portion of their day using technology and social media sites (Ahn, 2011). The Pew Research Center has conducted research studies with nationally representative large samples of adolescents ages 12-17 and found that about 77% owned a cell phone (half of them being smart phones) and receive roughly 50-90 text messages per day (Lenhart, 2012; Madden, Lenhart, Duggan, Cortesi, & Gasser, 2013). One in four has his or her own tablet or personal computer and 93% have computer access in their own home (Madden et al., 2013). White adolescents were the racial group with the highest technology use, followed by African Americans and then Hispanics. The higher income households were associated with a higher frequency of adolescent technology use. Another interesting finding is that only 62% of adolescents utilize the private settings

on social media sites. Up to 29% reported that they sometimes witnessed online cruelty and 15% stated that someone had bullied them online (Lenhart, 2012). In general, America's adolescents have increased access to technology through the various devices that are being supplied to them. Even young children are using technology more than they did in recent years (Rideout, 2013). Overall, this shift in culture and the increasing global widespread use of technology allow for multiple venues in which cyberbullying may occur.

Anonymity. Anonymity is another factor directly related to media and technology use among this population. In fact, some researchers argue that cyberbullying is more detrimental than other forms of bullying due to the anonymity inherent in bullying through technology (Dehue, 2013). Moreover, adolescents are more likely to participate in this kind of bullying versus traditional bullying because it is not face-to-face. In other words, cyberbullying may be easier for adolescents to carry out since they are communicating through technology and not directly to the individual. Unfortunately, this permits more and more adolescents to participate in cyberbullying. Anonymity emboldens adolescents to say or post harsher things than they normally would were they talking to the victim face-to-face. Generally, this results in a more severe form of bullying with more severe effects for its victims (Yilmaz, 2010). Additionally, anonymity allows for multiple perpetrators to attack one victim at a time (MediaSmarts, n.d.). Perpetrators can also pretend to be someone else in order to persuade the victim to reveal personal information (Hilt, 2013). Thus, anonymity is another powerful influential factor related to cyberbullying and this population.

Culture, institution, and family. Around the world, the U.S. is known for its culture and obsession with power, violence, and winning. This culture is depicted in U.S. schools, families, and social life. Ultimately, this culture can have an impact on the lives of U.S. children and adolescents. Specifically, children grow up surrounded by these behaviors, which are ultimately learned and considered acceptable. This results in children and adolescents trying to make attempts to achieve a similar power and dominance within their own lives (Family First Aid, 2013f).

Family First Aid (2013f) discussed how some organizations, such as schools, households, or workplaces are being more tolerant of bullying. Eventually, allowing this sort of behavior permits children to view it as acceptable. Overall, an individual's future behaviors and actions become influenced by this inappropriate conduct. For example, children see that their peers who act out receive more attention, even if it is negative. This ultimately influences them to behave in a similar fashion in order to receive more attention. The media displays this as well, which further contributes to this problem. Similarly, children who are unsupported by their family or who experience rejection are more likely to bully others (Family First Aid, 2013f). Thus, culture and family are important influential factors related to cyberbullying.

Teachers and parents. An influential factor is the commanding role teachers and parents play in adolescents' lives. Among adolescents, parents and teachers are often regarded as role models and are the individuals adolescents look to for help. However, research has revealed that not all teachers believe cyberbullying to be a major problem nor that it has the potential to cause long-lasting effects on adolescents (Stauffer, Health, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2012). This type of perception will prohibit an active approach in

identifying and preventing this phenomenon. These perceptions have the ability to create resistance for potential preventative cyberbullying programs to be implemented within schools. Unfortunately, this factor then has the potential to further aid in the development of cyberbullying.

Similarly, another research study found that parents have a serious lack of knowledge and awareness regarding cyberbullying as well as safe Internet usage (Floros, Siomos, Dafouli, Fisoun, & Geroukalis, 2012). Therefore, if parents are not knowledgeable regarding this health care concern and its negative consequences, they will be more likely to allow their adolescents to continue to use the Internet and other technologies without setting any safety limits. Again, this factor also has the potential to further contribute to cyberbullying among adolescents.

Research demonstrates that most adolescents do not tell a trusted adult when they are victims of cyberbullying (Yilmaz, 2010). Perhaps if the perceptions of parents and teachers were different regarding this problem and they were more knowledgeable regarding this behavior, adolescents would be more willing to talk to them about it. Generally, parents and teachers play a crucial role within an adolescent's life and are able to directly impact this phenomenon.

The Role of Advanced Practice Nurses

Cyberbullying is a prevailing issue within society that causes devastating health and mental health outcomes for America's youth. As a nurse who is currently working in a pediatric intensive care unit, the number of adolescents who are admitted for suicide attempts is significant. Causes for the suicide attempts vary, but a substantial number are related to cyberbullying. Seeing one of the worst outcomes that can happen due to

cyberbullying is what inspired this scholarly project. Nurses, specifically advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) can play a pivotal role in helping to address this health care concern.

It is crucial that APRNs, serving as pediatric nurse practitioners in primary care, are knowledgeable and up to date regarding this health care problem. First, APRNs can help prevent cyberbullying by educating children and their parents about this topic and discussing prevention techniques at routine health care visits. Second, APRNs can implement appropriate screening tools to help identify adolescents who are victims or perpetrators of cyberbullying. Once identified, the APRN can educate on the specific needs related to that child and family's situation. In particular, APRNs are able to assist parents best when educated regarding specific strategies for managing the problem as well as educating about cyberbullying overall (O'Keeffe, Clarke-Pearson, & Council on Communications and Media, 2011). Education could include incidence statistics and influential factors related to cyberbullying as previously mentioned. Overall, APRNs have the ability to prevent, intervene, and make appropriate referrals as necessary if a child is dealing with cyberbullying.

APRNs often have developed a good rapport with their adolescent patients. Therefore, the adolescent may be more likely to confide in the APRN if cyberbullying is occurring. APRNs are not usually considered to be in a disciplinary or academic role like teachers and parents, further aiding the relationship where trust and confidence may be established (Cooper, Clements, & Holt, 2012). Hence, APRNs should routinely incorporate this health care topic into their screening and anticipatory guidance.

Purpose of This Project

Although traditional bullying has historically been a recurring problem among youth, the concept of cyberbullying is a newer phenomenon facing America's young people. Similarly, the research describing this problem and possible solutions is limited. Specifically to date, very few intervention studies and randomized controlled trials have been conducted. However, the research that has been done is mainly concerned with recommendations for prevention strategies. In general, the best approach that has been found to prevent cyberbullying utilizes a multidisciplinary team incorporating key members of the community including parents, teachers, and health care providers (Feinberg & Robey, 2009).

To facilitate a specific community's engagement in preventing a destructive behavior such as cyberbullying, another recommendation found in the literature is to first conduct a needs assessment for the community. A needs assessment is a survey of a community and a particular problem. The results identify the needs, behaviors, and perceptions of a community, which can then be used to target and prioritize problems as well as to help develop and implement interventions for the future (Bilton, 2011; Community Tool Box, 2013). Other potential benefits of a needs assessment include (a) it obtains honest and objective data, (b) one may discover needs that were not initially hypothesized or previously investigated, (c) the survey serves as valid documentation and evidence of a community's needs, and (d) it can be used in the future when advocating for funding and intervention projects. More importantly, the results allow for the implementation of interventions that are based on evidence obtained directly from the community to which the efforts will be focused (Community Tool Box, 2013). Therefore,

future inquiry is more likely to be well received among the community and participants may be easily recruited.

The purpose of this scholarly project was to conduct a needs assessment specifically related to cyberbullying in a west Michigan middle school. As mentioned, cyberbullying is a prevalent problem among adolescents across the U.S. and an emerging concern for middle school adolescents as their social roles evolve. This project has the potential to increase cyberbullying awareness among students, parents, teachers, and the community as well as to help identify recommendations for future efforts in prevention and management of cyberbullying.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the literature that supports the scholarly project. Specifically, literature related to the question that inspired this project will be reviewed: to what degree is cyberbullying occurring in a local west Michigan middle school? The chapter will begin by briefly reviewing the problem of cyberbullying and the age group cyberbullying commonly affects. Research studies related to interventions for cyberbullying will then be reviewed.

A Review of the Problem

Cyberbullying Defined

Cyberbullying is defined as “any communication activity using cyber technology that could be considered harmful to individual or collective well-being” (Kvarme, Monsen, & Eboh, 2014, p. 35). Patchin and Hinduja (2006) defined it as “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text” (p. 152). Willard (2007) defined cyberbullying as “being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social aggression using the Internet or other digital technologies” (p. 265). Willard (2007) identified six different types of cyberbullying. First, flaming is online fighting using angry or threatening messages. Second, harassment and stalking is sending cruel messages to someone repeatedly. Third is denigration, which is sending or posting rumors with intent to hurt another’s reputation. Fourth, impersonation is using someone else’s account to send hurtful or embarrassing materials to others. Fifth is outing and trickery, which is luring someone through online communication to reveal something private and then sharing that information with others

online. Sixth is exclusion, which is purposefully excluding someone from an online group. These methods are specific to cyberbullying, which is a newer and unique form of bullying.

Cyberbullying Versus Traditional Bullying

There are other ways cyberbullying is different from traditional bullying. Perpetrators are not always physically stronger than their victims, but feel more powerful through the use of technology and the anonymity that is associated with it (Strom & Strom, 2005). Kowalski and Limber (2007) thoroughly discussed how cyberbullying is different from traditional bullying. They stated that since the perpetrators bully through a device they are unable to experience the emotional responses that are produced in the victim. The result is that empathy is unlikely to occur within the perpetrator. The authors discussed how the anonymity associated with cyberbullying could make it more difficult to identify the perpetrator and the perpetrator may then go unpunished. In addition, they also mentioned how cyberbullies are not likely to admit to their behaviors out of fear of technology devices being taken away from them, which would then cause them to feel socially isolated. All of these contribute in the continuation of cyberbullying behaviors.

Also, when cyberbullying occurs there is usually no or extremely limited adult supervision. Many adults are unaware that their child is cyberbullying or that technologic safety applications can be implemented on electronic devices (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Cyberbullying can occur at anytime of the day, whereas traditional bullying usually only occurs at school. This allows the perpetrator to cyberbully 24 hours a day making the adolescent's home no longer safe (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007). Finally, technology allows cyberbullying to reach numerous people rapidly without the chance for the victim

to stand up for him or herself (Li, 2007). Overall, cyberspace is unique and differs from the real world. This uniqueness has formulated cyberbullying into a highly complex phenomenon that can be considered more detrimental than traditional bullying.

Population Cyberbullying Commonly Affects

Any form of bullying usually involves power. Many times, perpetrators are considered popular and bully others to remain in a dominant position. This is most likely why bullying increases when youth transition from elementary school into middle school. This is a time of social reorganization, status enhancement, as well as uncertainty (Juvonen & Graham, 2014). Also during this time, a social hierarchy is usually formed. Juvonen and Graham (2014) discussed how this hierarchy allows young people to socially explore one another and eventually establish their position within this hierarchy. Given these influential factors, middle adolescence is the time when adolescents are most likely to experience cyberbullying.

There are many studies that support the focus on mid-adolescence. Suzuki et al. (2012) reported age differences with cyberbullying. They presented the findings from multiple exploratory studies conducted in Europe and the United States and they discovered that the most common age for an adolescent to be cyberbullied was between 12-15 years. Similarly, Baek and Bullock (2014) reviewed multiple international and United States research studies and found that the most prevalent age for cyberbullying was 10-15 years. Media Smarts conducted a national survey of Canadian students in 2013. The total sample surveyed was 5,436 Canadian students in grades four through eleven. Based on this survey, Steeves (2014) concluded that participation in cyberbullying or being victimized by cyberbullying peaked in eighth grade.

Hinduja and Patchin (2008) completed an exploratory study surveying a convenience sample of adolescents and their experiences with cyberbullying. Adolescents completed an online survey that was available from December 22, 2004 through January 22, 2005. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The final sample consisted of 1,378 adolescents who were all under the age of 18. The average age was 14.8 years. The sample was equal in gender, but was not diverse related to ethnicity. Most of the adolescents were Caucasian (82%) and were from the United States (74.6%). Based on the findings, the authors concluded that mid-adolescence is the most common age for cyberbullying to occur.

Finally, Slonje and Smith (2008) conducted an exploratory study on cyberbullying. This study had multiple aims, but one was to examine the age differences among adolescents who cyberbully. The authors used a questionnaire that had been adapted from one of the author's previous research studies. Eight Swedish schools were randomly selected to participate. The age of the students attending ranged from 12-20 years. The questionnaire was administered during class time and assessed if the students had ever been cyberbullied as well as how often. The final sample consisted of 360 students. Average age was 15.3 years. The authors concluded that the incidence of cyberbullying was highest among ages 12-14. There was also no significant difference in incidence between ages in cyberbullying through email (means: 12-13 years = 2.28, 14 years = 2.12, 15 years = 2.19, $p = 0.496$). All of these findings support that cyberbullying is more prevalent during middle adolescence and support sampling seventh and eighth grade students.

A Review of the Literature for Cyberbullying Interventions

Research articles were obtained from ERIC, JSTOR, PsycINFO, PubMed, ProQuest, and the Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health databases. The nursing librarian was also utilized as a resource during this literature search. Key words used in order to identify potential interventions for cyberbullying were “cyberbullying,” “cyberbullying intervention,” and “cyberbullying prevention.” Studies that were conducted before the year 1990 were eliminated in order to have the most current literature available. This resulted in the most relevant data representing the current state of this phenomenon.

There has been little research done regarding cyberbullying. Most of the literature that was retrieved contained studies that summarized cyberbullying demographics and frequency statistics. The most prevalent studies found, which were still extremely sparse, were intervention studies. Only six articles were retrieved that conducted an intervention and collected data. One article was retrieved that conducted a systematic review related to cyberbullying. All are reviewed below.

Exploring Cyberbullying with Quality Circles

Paul, Smith, and Blumberg (2010) implemented a study that utilized the quality circle (QC) approach to determine if this method aided in explorative analysis related to cyberbullying. The authors did not state specific hypotheses or research questions. A sample of 32 academy students in the United Kingdom (UK) in grades seven through nine participated. Teachers selected students whom they thought would benefit from the QC. The authors did not state whether this was because the students were victims or perpetrators of cyberbullying. The QC groups consisted of teachers and a total of 32

students. Five students were in grade seven, 20 students were in grade eight, and seven students were in grade nine.

The QC groups met weekly for one hour for a total of 12 weeks. The authors used a set of topics and projects for the students to complete each week. Some of the projects included problem identification and analysis, solution formation, as well as project planning and delivering. Each session heavily relied on the students' ability to lead and the teachers were only allowed to guide the students.

No specific tools were used to collect data. The authors provided an overview of the qualitative data. Findings included that each QC identified various interventions that they thought would help to reduce the incidence of cyberbullying such as watching movies, listening to a speaker, creating a bullying club, conducting a student survey, and having an anonymous mailbox available to report problems. Student perspectives related to bullying included that verbal bullying was extremely common and often started as a joke, but then quickly escalated. Teachers were often unaware of this form of bullying due to the increased use of slang words, especially in relation to ethnicity. Students' attitudes toward cyberbullying were often light-hearted and taken with good humor. Sending and receiving photos was considered a form of entertainment and few considered themselves victims. However, hacking into another person's phone or computer was the biggest concern among participants.

Paul et al. (2010) concluded that this approach yielded positive feedback from both the student and teacher participants. During the intervention the school personnel reported a decrease in negative behavior reports. Limitations identified by the authors were that the findings might not be replicable in school settings utilizing a more

traditional approach compared to the UK's residential school structure. They further stated that results from individual schools would most likely vary dramatically. Therefore, this should be considered in future analyses and studies. Further limitations were that the sample size was small. The selection method was not random, which would allow for bias. Also, more research is needed in this area to determine if these findings are similar in different school settings or among different age groups. The authors did not mention a standardized approach or training that the teachers completed before starting the QCs. A standardized method would be necessary in order for consistency in methods to occur and would help to reduce bias. It would help ensure that the students are leading the groups as much as they are able to. The authors recommended that more research is still needed concerning cyberbullying, but other approaches could include promoting an understanding of the phenomenon through activities similar to QCs. They suggested that cyberbullying needs to be easy to report and promotion of positive use of technology among students needs to occur.

In regards to the proposed scholarly project this study supports that cyberbullying occurs among the selected population. It also supports the notion that students this age as well as school staff support exploratory projects regarding bullying. Finally, it supports that more exploratory research is still needed about cyberbullying and no definitive intervention has yet to be found.

Paul, Smith, and Blumberg (2012) conducted an additional study utilizing QCs. There were two intentions of this exploratory study. The first was to compare and discuss the authors' previous work from 2010 using QCs to address cyberbullying in a UK residential school. Specifically, the authors wanted to know if there had been any

significant changes regarding bullying/cyberbullying activities and problems, as well as solutions suggested by the participants. The second was to gain feedback from the participants regarding the QC approach. The sample included 30 students who were in grades seven through eight from the same residential school in the UK. All of these students had been involved with a bullying incident during the school year.

The QC approach involved discussions between the researcher and students using a semi-structured interview script. The discussions were recorded, transcribed, and examined for themes. The students had seven weekly QC meetings that lasted for one hour. Findings included that cyberbullying had drastically changed in regards to an increase in hacking cellphones and computers. The use of slang words that adolescents use for bullying/cyberbullying had increased. Some participants discussed a “no snitching code” where silence is promoted among students when bullying occurs. Younger participants expressed resentment about attending a school where bullying was an issue. These students also had a better understanding of the outcomes bullying produced, especially outside of the school environment. The eighth grade students were more involved with technology and aware of cyberbullying. Overall, all participants felt that cyberbullying had increased from previous years. The perpetrators and bystanders often perceived those who posted hurtful comments on the Internet as amusing rather than hurtful. Finally, evaluations of this program were mostly positive. Participants felt it was enjoyable and a good use of their time. Based on participant satisfaction, the authors concluded that the QC approach is effective, but must adapt to the changing nature of bullying itself in order to remain effective over time.

Limitations identified by Paul et al. (2012) included that it still remains unclear what the best intervention to prevent cyberbullying is. Feedback from students was helpful, but the authors were unsure how to translate this information into other research or school settings. They recommended further research utilizing QCs in other matched schools in order to gain more information. Another limitation of this study was that the authors were not able to determine if the QC method was effective at reducing cyberbullying/bullying. This was due to the authors not collecting any quantitative data related to the incidence of cyberbullying. The QC approach has been cited in other literature as an effective method to reduce bullying. However, this study did not collect any quantitative data. The authors did not utilize any formal instruments to evaluate the program or to measure cyberbullying (Smith & Sharp, 1994). Therefore, it is difficult to determine the acceptability of the QC method. Overall, this intervention provided researchers with new information related to cyberbullying.

Like the previous study conducted by these authors, this study supports the proposed scholarly project in that it demonstrates that cyberbullying commonly occurs among the selected population. It also supports that students and teachers support cyberbullying interventions. Finally, due to the lack of standardized tools for assessing cyberbullying, it demonstrates that more research is needed regarding this phenomenon.

Decreasing the Incidence of Cyberbullying Through a Computer Program

Lee, Zi-Pei, Svanstrom, and Dalal (2013) conducted a pilot study to determine if a computer program titled WebQuest would be effective in cyberbullying prevention in a school in Taiwan. WebQuest is a student-focused computer learning activity that is presented in webpage format. The program is based on social constructivism, scaffolding

theory, and collaborative learning theory. The authors did not state specific hypotheses or research questions.

In this quasi-experimental study, the sample consisted of 61 students from two different classes who were all in the seventh grade. All of the students attended the same school. One class (n=30) was the experimental group and the other class (n=31) was the control group. Both groups completed a questionnaire before the intervention (pre-test), immediately after (post-test), and two weeks after the intervention (follow-up test). The experimental group received eight sessions of WebQuest over a four-week time period. The control group did not receive any sessions of WebQuest or any teaching related to cyberbullying. Measurement tools utilized by the authors included a self-compiled questionnaire. The questionnaire assessed the students' family and socioeconomic status, Internet usage, knowledge, attitudes, and intentions related to cyberbullying. The questionnaire had well-established internal consistency as well as content and expert validity (Lee et al., 2013).

Lee et al. (2013) reported that the two groups were essentially the same in demographics, except there were significant differences for socioeconomic status. The authors categorized the groups into low, medium, and high socioeconomic status, but did not give details of how the categories were determined. Thirty-five (58%) were from low socioeconomic status, 16 (26%) from middle socioeconomic status, and 10 (16%) were from high socioeconomic status. Thirty percent of the students used the Internet less than one hour a day, 51% used the Internet one to three hours a day, 10% used the Internet four to six hours a day, 3% used the Internet seven to nine hours a day, and 7% used the Internet more than nine hours a day.

For knowledge, attitude, and intention Lee et al. (2013) conducted statistical analyses using the generalized estimating equation (GEE) method. This was done in order to analyze the differences among the pre-test, post-test, and follow-up test scores between study groups and considering the interaction of time. The authors measured effects of the intervention on knowledge, attitudes, and intention of cyberbullying.

When Lee et al. tested the effect of the intervention on knowledge, they found that the experimental group score was higher than the control group and this difference was significant (mean=8.58 points, $p=.028$). The experimental group mean score increase to post-test was 24.26 points and to follow-up was 20.39, indicating an increase in knowledge as a result of the intervention. The effect of the intervention on attitude between the groups was not significant (mean difference = 2.87, $p=.334$). While the mean scores on attitude increased by 13.20 at post-test and 10.07 at follow-up, neither of these changes were significant. The effect of the intervention on mean score for intention to cyberbully between groups was not significant (mean difference = -2.49, $p=.201$). However, the mean scores increased significantly at post-test (mean=5.39, $p=.005$) and at follow-up (mean=5.81, $p=.002$). The investigators concluded that the web-based intervention was successful at improving knowledge of cyberbullying and reducing intention to cyberbully. The intervention did not change attitudes.

The authors determined that WebQuest is an effective cyberbullying prevention program. It was effective in enhancing students' knowledge and reducing the intention of cyberbullying. The authors also stated how this program helps students to retain knowledge learned from the program. However, the authors do acknowledge that the

program was not successful in changing the students attitudes toward cyberbullying (Lee et al., 2013).

Limitations identified by the authors included that the sample size was small. Lee et al. (2013) stated that the short duration of the intervention is another limitation and is most likely the reason why a significant difference was not found among groups related to attitude. One limitation not identified by the authors was that the sample was purposively selected. According to Suresh (2011), without randomization the results are not as valid since selection bias could have been introduced. Lee et al. (2013) recommended further research studies utilizing WebQuest, but with larger samples, a longer duration, and across different settings in order to establish generalizability.

This study supports the scholarly project by demonstrating that cyberbullying occurs among the selected population. It supports the scholarly project by demonstrating that this population can be influenced by cyberbullying interventions. It also supports that interventions conducted while the students are at school are appropriate. Finally, the study supports that more research regarding cyberbullying is still needed and there are few prevention programs in existence that have been found to be effective.

An Educational Program to Reduce Cyberbullying

In 2012 Toshack and Colmar conducted a pre and post design research study that involved a cyberbullying intervention. The authors discussed three aims of their study. The first was to develop a cyberbullying program that would help adolescents better understand cyberbullying. They predicted that after participating in the program, the participants would have an in-depth understanding of this phenomenon. The second aim was to teach safety strategies. Upon completion of the program, they predicted that the

participants would be able to identify appropriate safety strategies in a survey. The third aim was to encourage students to participate in the management of cyberbullying within their own school. For the last aim, the authors did not state a prediction. The sample size included five female students who were in sixth grade. A teacher selected all of the participants who the teacher felt would benefit from this intervention or who had been involved with a cyberbullying incident (Toshack & Colmar, 2012).

The Cyber-Bullying Survey created by Qi Ling was used to assess understanding and knowledge of cyberbullying as well as safety strategies related to technology use. This survey had been previously used in investigating cyberbullying (Li, 2006; Li, 2007). The survey obtains qualitative and quantitative data. The authors of this study modified the survey for their research needs as well as to make it age appropriate. Associated statistics related to the modified version of the survey were not provided by the authors. The students completed the survey before the cyberbullying program was implemented. The students participated in the cyberbullying program for one hour each week for a total of five weeks. Upon completion, the students completed only two of the questions from the same survey and were given an opportunity to make suggestions on how to manage the school's issue with cyberbullying. Toshack and Colmar (2012) did not specifically state what was included in the cyberbullying program.

Toshack and Colmar (2012) described the characteristics of the sample before the intervention. Four of the five students had been victims of cyberbullying. Three of four stated it occurred less than four times and one student stated it had occurred over ten times. Email was the most common method reported. Three of four students knew who the perpetrator was. Four of five knew of other students who were currently being

cyberbullied. Three of five admitted to participating in cyberbullying themselves. Only two of five stated that they reported the cyberbullying to an adult. Three of five were able to identify safety strategies.

Toshack and Colmar (2012) concluded that all participants showed a better understanding of cyberbullying as well as safety strategies. They also concluded that cyberbullying occurs within this age group and that teaching students about cyberbullying helps to enhance their understanding and knowledge, which could ultimately help reduce the incidence of cyberbullying. No statistical analyses were provided in the article. For future research, Toshack and Colmar (2012) recommended conducting longitudinal and larger scale studies with a more diversified sample. They suggested including additional measurements related to cyberbullying or even obtaining information from parents or teachers.

Toshack and Colmar (2012) did not discuss any limitations of the study. However, identified limitations include the extremely small sample size as well as the method for participant selection. Allowing teachers to choose the participants without any criteria could have introduced bias. The authors did not mention any reliability or validity measurements related to the survey used.

Despite these limitations, this study supports the scholarly project by demonstrating that interventions conducted while the students are at school are appropriate. It supports that cyberbullying occurs among sixth graders and that these students are willing to participate in cyberbullying programs. It also supports that cyberbullying interventions can be effective. Finally, this study further supports the need for more research related to cyberbullying.

A Systematic Review of Cyberbullying Interventions

Mishna, Cook, Saini, Wu, and MacFadden (2011) performed a systematic review involving cyberbullying interventions. This document reviewed the effectiveness of cyberbullying interventions related to increasing Internet safety and decreasing risky online behavior. Studies were included if: (a) the study evaluated a prevention or intervention program involving youth that were between the ages of five and nineteen; (b) the intervention program had outcomes related to youth that were exposed to the Internet or cell phone; (c) the design was experimental or two-group quasi-experimental that included a control group; (d) randomization of participants was used or quasi-experimental designs used parallel group design or naturally created groups; (e) a post-program measure of knowledge or behavior was obtained; and (f) the study was conducted within the last 10 years. A variety of search methods were used: keyword search, a hand search of significant journals, experts in the field were contacted, and gray search. The authors calculated effect sizes and z-tests to statistically analyze the data findings.

According to Mishna et al. (2011), only three studies met the inclusion criteria of this review. The first involved the I-SAFE cyber safety program. The second was the Missing Cyber Safety Program (MCSP). The third was the “Help, Assert Yourself, Humor, Avoid, Self-talk, Own it” (HAHASO) program. All studies utilized a pre and post-test design with a control group. Randomization was not used; rather groups were decided based on classrooms. The teacher gave the intervention for I-SAFE and MCSP. In the HAHASO program, the researcher delivered the intervention. The I-SAFE program contained classroom lessons about cyberbullying and the study focused on

measuring Internet safety knowledge. MCSP involved an interactive computer game and focused on measuring change in Internet safety behaviors and attitudes. The HAHASO program utilized classroom lessons, which mainly included traditional bullying. HAHASO focused on measuring the prevalence of bullying incidents, reactions, and knowledge of social skills (Mishna et al., 2011).

Mishna et al. (2011) reported effect sizes for the three programs. The treatment group in the I-SAFE program demonstrated an increase in knowledge regarding Internet safety (0.88). Participants from the MCSP program were less likely to disclose information to others in chat rooms (-0.35 to 0.00) and less likely to report information on a personal webpage (-0.15 to 0.18) after the intervention. This program also made a difference on Internet safety attitudes. The authors reported positive effect sizes. Participants in the HAHASO program had a change in behavior and perception from pre-test to post-test (0.62 to 0.00). A decrease in cyberbullying was found in the treatment group (0.37).

In terms of z-tests, the difference in the effect sizes for I-SAFE was significant (0.05) on all outcomes, except for “inappropriate online behavior.” This result suggested that the treatment group did retain knowledge. The results were not statistically significant related to “inappropriate online behavior” (0.50) indicating the intervention did not change behavior. For the most part, the MCSP program only produced non-significant results between the treatment and control groups at the .05 level. In other words, the program did not significantly change the participants’ online behavior and attitudes. It did have an impact on the probability of disclosing personal information over the Internet. The program was able to reduce the likelihood of disclosing one’s gender

(effect size-0.05 for the treatment group; -0.03 for the control), age (0.14; 0.07), school, name (0.07; -0.20), and photo online (0.18; -0.02). Finally, for the HAHASO program, there was no significant difference found between treatment and control group related to “social skills” (1.49).

Given the results mentioned above, Mishna et al. (2011) concluded that there was sufficient evidence supporting that involving children in programs that teach Internet safety helps to increase knowledge, but does little to change their behavior. They also concluded that there are very few research studies related to cyberbullying and that more research is needed. The authors do not list any limitations of the study.

This study supports the scholarly project by demonstrating that cyberbullying interventions can be implemented with the selected population. It supports that interventions conducted while the students are at school are appropriate and effective. Finally, the study supports that more research regarding cyberbullying is needed. There are few prevention programs in existence and the evidence of their effectiveness is limited.

A Cyberbullying Prevention Program

In 2013 Wolfer et al. evaluated the effectiveness of the cyberbullying prevention program named Media Heroes. This program is a school-based approach and is influenced by the theory of planned behavior. The following hypotheses were tested: (a) the class that participated in the Media Heroes program would have a decrease in cyberbullying and (b) the long version of the program would be more effective than the short version. Participants were from five different schools in Germany and were randomly assigned by school to one of three groups: intervention (short version),

intervention (long version), or control. The sample size was 593 students who were in grades seven through ten. The average age was 13 and there was a similar distribution related to gender. The study design was pre-test and post-test.

Teachers integrated the Media Heroes program into the classroom curriculum. Participants in the short version group received a 90-minute session for four weeks. Participants in the long version group received a 90-minute session for 10 weeks. The control group did not receive any sessions related to cyberbullying. Nine months after the program was implemented the post-test questionnaire was completed. This was done in order to evaluate the long-term effects. Variables measured were cyberbullying behavior, perspective-taking skills, and aggressive behavior. One of the measurement tools was a self-constructed questionnaire for cyberbullying behavior. This was a tool made specifically for this study and no validity statistics are mentioned. Wolfer et al. (2013) stated that for cyberbullying behavior, the scale produced reliabilities of Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$ and 0.92 at the pre-test and post-test. For perspective-taking skills, the authors used a subscale from the Interpersonal Reactivity Index. The authors did not mention anything regarding its validity, but stated that the scale had reliabilities for pre-test and post-test of Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.84$ and 0.89 . For aggressive behavior, the authors used one subscale from another instrument that is part of a 36-item tool related to different forms of aggression (Fite, Stauffacher, Ostrov, & Colder, 2008). Again, the authors do not mention any statistics related to its validity. However, Fite et al. (2008) reported that this tool demonstrated adequate internal consistencies within the six subscales that make up the instrument. For Wolfer et al. (2013), the aggression subscale had reliabilities of Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.91$ and 0.93 at the pre-test and post-test.

Statistical analyses for this study included prevalence rates of cyberbullying and comparing age and sex differences. Wolfer et al. (2013) applied multilevel modeling to test the program's effectiveness. All continuous variables were then z-standardized. This was done in order to help with interpretation of regression coefficients from variables with different scale formats and across the varying levels. Results from the control group ($n = 295$) are presented first.

The control group did not differ significantly from the other two treatment groups in initial cyberbullying behavior at pre-test [$F(2,590) = 0.63, p > 0.05$]. The mean score of cyberbullying behavior was low both at pre-test and post-test. However, the overall mean score of cyberbullying behavior increased significantly from pre-test (0.08) to post-test (0.15, [$t(294) = -2.08, p < 0.05$]). The authors then compared the mean score of cyberbullying behavior considering both gender and age. Multivariate analysis of variance was used. Gender produced a significant effect. Boys were more likely to engage in cyberbullying behavior [$F(1, 291) = 4.59, p < 0.05$ and $F(1,291) = 9.30, p < 0.01$]. Older students (ages 14-17) were more likely to report participating in cyberbullying at pre-test [$F(1,291) = 3.35, p < 0.10$]. The age effect was not present at post-test [$F(1,291) = 0.09, p > 0.05$]. This finding led the authors to conclude that “cyberbullying reaches its peak in middle adolescence” (Wolfer et al., 2013, p. 236).

When comparing the control group with the two intervention groups, cyberbullying behavior was found to increase in the control group, remain the same for the short-intervention group, and decrease in the long-intervention group. Post hoc analyses demonstrated that the control group differed on cyberbullying behavior, perspective-taking skills, and aggressive behavior compared to the long-intervention

group. The control group differed from the short-intervention group on perspective-taking skills (-0.12, 0.00) and aggressive behavior (0.14, 0.13). Both intervention groups did not differ significantly from one another (perspective taking skills 0.13, 0.11; aggression -0.19, -0.12). Wolfer et al. (2013) stated that two psychosocial variables improved with both intervention groups and not the control group. However, the authors did not state which variables these were. No psychosocial variables were listed in the description of the Media Heroes program. The authors just stated that the program is built “on several developmental and psychological concepts” (Wolfer et al., p. 232).

Finally, Wolfer et al. (2013) compared the two intervention groups as well as the effectiveness of the Media Heroes program. This was done by analyzing the change in cyberbullying behavior within a multilevel framework (a two-level random intercept model). The null model contained no predictors. The full model contained demographic factors, psychosocial factors, and treatment condition. The null model supported that 4% of the variance in changed cyberbullying behavior is on a contextual level, while 96% is on an individual level. This variance between classes differs significantly from zero [$\chi^2(34) = 57, p < 0.01$]. The full model supported the Media Heroes program. Both dummy variables representing the two treatment interventions demonstrated a significant negative effect. Wolfer et al. concluded that participation in Media Heroes program could produce a decrease in cyberbullying behavior.

Wolfer et al. (2013) concluded that if adolescents do not receive any intervention related to cyberbullying then the incidence of these behaviors would increase. They concluded that middle adolescence could represent a crucial time period where cyberbullying is likely to increase and interventions for this age group are desperately

needed. Hypothesis one was supported: Media Heroes (short and long version) was able to help decrease cyberbullying behavior. Hypothesis two was partly supported in that the behaviors decreased, but the change was not statistically significant.

A limitation identified by Wolfer et al. (2013) was that all of the findings were from self-reported measures. However, cyberbullying is difficult to assess using external raters or through objective measures. The authors recommended an improved psychometric assessment of cyberbullying behavior. Another limitation is the multilevel evaluation that was conducted which lacked statistical power. They recommended future studies to include different statistical approaches. Finally, they recommended trialing Media Heroes on elementary students.

One limitation not identified by the authors is that they do not mention how the classes were assigned to a treatment group. If random assignment based on classroom was not used, bias could have been introduced. This study helps support the scholarly project by demonstrating that cyberbullying most commonly occurs or is worse during middle adolescence. Therefore, proposed interventions are necessary for this target population. It also shows that despite cyberbullying interventions, this age group might not respond. However, this is only one study and the findings are not necessarily generalizable to other populations and cultures. More research regarding effective prevention programs is still needed.

Exploring Cyberbullying with a Philosophic Approach

Tangen and Campbell (2010) did an exploratory study on cyberbullying prevention. The purpose of this study was to compare students' self reports on bullying between a school with a philosophy for children (P4C) approach and one with a whole

school approach. Traditionally, whole school approaches have been used in bullying research. A whole school approach utilizes key stakeholders such as school staff, parents, and community members. The P4C approach encourages children to think creatively about problems and provides students with opportunities to solve real-life problems. It is based on Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories. Tangen and Campbell (2010) hypothesized that the school with P4C would have less bullying in all forms.

There were 35 students in the P4C group. Purposive sampling was used and 35 students were matched from a non-P4C school based on certain criteria set forth by the authors. All of the students were in grades six and seven. There were an equal number of boys and girls for each group and the average age was 11.49 years. The student bullying survey was used which contains 87 questions. Tangen and Campbell (2010) did not provide information regarding its reliability and validity. Participants completed the questionnaire during one of their scheduled class times.

Results included that more students from the P4C school admitted to being bullied and participating in bullying others (62.9%) than the non-P4C school (42.9%). This included all forms of bullying. The incidence of cyberbullying was the same for both schools (17.1%). There were no differences between the two groups of students related to their perceptions about how adults tend to manage cyberbullying compared to face-to-face bullying. Of all the participants, 94.2% thought adults made attempts to prevent face-to-face bullying within their school. Only 84.3% thought adults made attempts to prevent cyberbullying. Likewise, 84.3% of the students said that while in school they were given lessons on bullying whereas only 54.3% had received lessons on cyberbullying (Tangen & Campbell, 2010).

The authors concluded that many of the results were similar between the two cohorts, especially related to cyberbullying. They had expected that the P4C approach and the philosophy, which helps the students critically think, would have made a difference. This was not the case. Tangen and Campbell (2010) concluded that students might need to have actual lessons related to bullying rather than just on critical thinking and relationship skills. Finally, the staff at the P4C school need to have more training and education regarding how to teach students to handle cyberbullying. The authors concluded that this could change the student's perceptions in how the staff manages this issue.

Limitations identified by the authors were the small sample size and that the data were obtained through self-report measures. One limitation not identified by the authors was that they did not mention anything regarding validity or reliability of the instrument they used to survey the students. Since many students had already experienced bullying they recommend beginning prevention programs earlier. They recommended that teachers and staff be more direct in their approach related to cyberbullying prevention.

This study supports the scholarly project by showing that cyberbullying is prevalent among young adolescents. It demonstrates a need for cyberbullying awareness among teachers. Finally, it supports that more research is needed to discover effective interventions to help reduce cyberbullying.

Summary

This literature review demonstrates that cyberbullying occurs commonly during middle adolescence. It demonstrates that currently there are few intervention research studies that have been conducted. It is important to note that research regarding

cyberbullying is new, which is most likely why there have not been many intervention studies related to this phenomenon. Olweus (2013) stated that the United States' concern for bullying is a recent phenomenon and that their research on bullying began ten years after European countries and Australia. Most of the research thus far has been exploratory in nature. However, many of the exploratory studies as well as organizations recommended conducting a needs assessment.

Feinberg and Robey published articles on cyberbullying in 2008 and 2009. Both years they recommended doing a needs assessment in order to identify the incidence, guide prevention efforts, and pinpoint areas of concern. The Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use (2005) stated that conducting a needs assessment is necessary in order to identify specific concerns, to provide understanding of underlying issues, to enhance awareness, and to provide insight into any modifications that might be needed related to current bullying prevention efforts. The National Association of School Psychologists (n.d.) as well as the United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS, n.d) also recommended needs assessments stating that they can help determine how often bullying occurs, where it usually happens, how students and adults can intervene, and whether current prevention efforts are working or not.

The USDHHS (n.d.) helped support the stop bullying now campaign. During that time, they published an article discussing the ten best practices in bullying prevention and intervention. One of those is conducting a needs assessment. Reasons include that adults do not always perceive bullying issues to be as prevalent as they truly are. Therefore, a needs assessment helps to validate the magnitude of the issue. The results can help motivate adults within the organization to take action; help shape an intervention tailored

to meet the specific needs of that organization; and serve as baseline data for administrators to use later to measure progress. Willard (2011) is highly involved with cyberbullying research and has published many articles. She recommended conducting a needs assessment to find norms and practices within an organization, to discover any incidents that have occurred, as well as identify risks and protective factors. All of the aforementioned findings help to support the scholarly project of a needs assessment.

Conclusion

Literature has been reviewed that supports the scholarly project. Specifically, literature related to the most common age that cyberbullying occurs and the few intervention studies that have been implemented. This literature review supports the project proposal of a needs assessment given to middle school students.

CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the conceptual frameworks that were used as a rationale for the selected intervention for this scholarly project. Two conceptual frameworks were used. They are the models for evidence-based practice change as well as the social cognitive theory. Both helped to address the research question: to what degree is cyberbullying occurring in a local west Michigan middle school?

The Model for Evidence-Based Practice Change

The model for evidence-based practice change is comprised of six steps. They include assessing the need for change in practice, locating the best evidence, critically analyzing evidence, designing a practice change, implementing and evaluating the change, and integrating and maintaining the change (Melnik & Fineout-Overholt, 2011). Each step is described below.

Step One: Assess the Need for Change in Practice

This step begins with identifying a problem within an organization or an area that can be improved. It encourages forming a team and involving key stakeholders to address the problem. It also recommends collecting internal and external data from the organization in order to confirm there is a problem or area for improvement. Finally, refining the problem statement by linking the problem with possible interventions or outcomes, or by developing a PICOT (population-intervention-comparison-outcome-time frame) question is recommended. The PICOT question serves to clarify what the focus of the project is and guides the work that will be completed during step two (Melnik & Fineout-Overholt, 2011).

Step Two: Locate the Best Evidence

This step involves gathering evidence related to the problem. This model emphasizes how the search for evidence needs to be carefully planned. The PICOT question serves as a guide for the literature search and helps decide what literature will be included and excluded. The model recommends including evidence of different types as well as from different sources (Melnyk & Fineout-Overholt, 2011).

Step Three: Critically Analyze the Evidence

In this step, the evidence is analyzed. The quantity and strength of the literature is evaluated to determine if there is support for the practice change. Based on the findings found in the literature, the feasibility, benefits, and risks of the practice change are assessed. Key stakeholders should be involved with the last part of this step (Melnyk & Fineout-Overholt, 2011).

Step Four: Design Practice Change

This step begins with describing the practice change or procedure and should be supported by the evidence that was gathered in step three. Appropriate resources needed for the practice change should be identified. The implementation and evaluation plans are designed. During this step, translation strategies should be considered in order to promote the practice change (Melnyk & Fineout-Overholt, 2011).

Step Five: Implement and Evaluate Change in Practice

Using the implementation plan that was created in step four, the practice change is now initiated. Obtaining verbal feedback from those involved with the change is recommended. If necessary, this feedback can be utilized to make slight modifications to the implementation plan. Data are then collected and analyzed. Based on the data and

verbal feedback, the team decides if a practice change should be adopted, adapted, or rejected. It is important to note that this model discusses how, by using this model, few teams will reject the practice change. Most decide to adopt the practice change or adapt a change that better fits the organization. After this decision is made, conclusions and recommendations are prepared that will be shared with administrators of the organization (Melnyk & Fineout-Overholt, 2011).

Step Six: Integrate and Maintain Change in Practice

The last step involves sharing information about the project and recommendations to all stakeholders. The stakeholders, especially those in administration, will decide what the next best course of action should be. If a change is to be adopted, education will need to be given to those within the organization prior to the change. Plans should be made as to how the organization is going to continue monitoring the project and/or any outcome indicators. The data collected from continuous monitoring can be used to refine the new change or could generate a need for a new project. Finally, the model suggests disseminating the results to various organizations (Melnyk & Fineout-Overholt, 2011).

The Social Learning and Social Cognitive Theory

Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory (SCT) is based on his social learning theory (SLT). Bandura first created the SLT in the 1960s. This theory transformed into the SCT in the 1980s (Boston University School of Public Health, 2013). The SLT will first be described and then the SCT.

Social Learning Theory

The premise of the SLT is that people learn by observing others and then subsequently behave by mimicking others around them. Bandura called this process

observational learning. Within this concept, there are four steps learners proceed through. They include attentional processes, retention processes, motor reproduction processes, and motivational processes (McAdams, 2009).

Attentional processes. Attentional processes involve two concepts: modeling stimuli and observers' characteristics. Bandura suggested that observers would be more likely to notice models of behavior that contained unique features. Examples include models that are attractive, famous, familiar, or strange. These features are more likely to draw attention. Therefore, adolescents are more likely to bully if they observe their friends (familiar) or those who are considered popular (attractive/famous) demonstrating this behavior.

Likewise, characteristics of observers play a role with observational learning. Observers must be able to watch the models through appropriate senses such as seeing and hearing. The observers must also be motivated. For example, if observers lack motivation or are extremely fatigued, observational learning will not occur (McAdams, 2009). All play a role in the first step of observational learning.

Retention processes. The second step is retention processes. Observers must be able to understand what they are observing. For example, the individuals must have the cognitive capacity to determine what they are observing, remember the observation, and interpret its meaning. Observers must already have developed a certain level of cognition in order for observational learning to occur (McAdams, 2009).

Motor reproduction processes. Motor reproduction processes concern the ability of observers to perform behaviors. Just like observers must have the appropriate senses to observe, observers must now be physically capable of performing the actual behavior.

Another component of this concept is the observer's observational memories. Memory is important because the observer creates an inventory that he/she comes back to. The memory of observations influences behavior throughout the observer's lifetime. However, the observers must have a memory or response in order to carry out a behavior. Related to bullying, those who attend a school with a high incidence of bullying would be more likely to bully others because they are constantly observing this behavior and having it become a part of their memories (McAdams, 2009).

Motivational processes. If the observers progress through all of the previously mentioned steps, the observers must now want to imitate the behavior. This motivation must be present in order for the behavior to be initiated. Here, reinforcement plays a strong role. The individual is likely to perform the behavior if he/she will be reinforced for doing so. Reinforcements can be from the environment (external), from himself/herself (internal), or from seeing or imagining someone else (vicarious). Therefore, an adolescent could be motivated to bully someone if reinforcements have been present (McAdams, 2009).

Social Cognitive Theory

The SLT and SCT are very similar. In the SCT, an individual utilizes observational learning and still proceeds through the four different types of processes. However, the SCT emphasizes that it is one's own cognition that mainly influences behavior (Swearer, Wang, Berry, & Myers, 2014).

The SCT states that there is a continuous and reciprocal interaction between social environment, internal stimuli, and behaviors. Social environment is observing others' behaviors. Internal stimuli are an individual's cognitions and feelings (Swearer et al.,

2014). In other words, individuals will observe others' behaviors and actions throughout their environment. These observations will then influence their behaviors, cognitions, and feelings. Likewise, behavior, cognitions, and feelings will also influence the environment.

Integrating the Frameworks

The model for evidence-based practice change and the SCT both contain unique properties that were integrated throughout this scholarly project. A description of how these frameworks were incorporated is described below.

The Model for Evidence-Based Practice Change

Step one. The model for evidence-based practice was integrated throughout the entire scholarly project. For example, the project began by identifying a problem. Cyberbullying has become more prevalent among America's youth and therefore, an intervention needs to be identified and implemented in order to help reduce this phenomenon (Family First Aid, 2013d). An opportunity for improvement was analyzed within a middle school in west Michigan. Key stakeholders from this organization were involved with the initial assessment and provided information supporting the notion that cyberbullying was occurring at the school. Internal and external data were collected to support that cyberbullying was a problem. The middle school previously had participated in the Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth survey (MiPHY), which demonstrated that cyberbullying might be a problem within this organization. However, it is difficult to determine the degree of the problem since the results were reported by county rather than by individual school district. In addition, this survey only asked three questions related to

cyberbullying. Therefore, more information is needed about this topic. This also supports that this is another opportunity for improvement within this organization.

A team was formed to help address this issue consisting of stakeholders within the middle school and pertinent faculty. All of the information discussed above helped to form a PICOT question, which clarified the focus of this project. The PICOT question for this scholarly project is: to what degree are current cyberbullying prevention efforts (issue of interest) having an impact (outcome) on adolescents (population)? There is no comparison group or time frame.

Step two. The PICOT question served as a guide for step two. A plan was created that included a search strategy as well as inclusion and exclusion criteria. This is discussed in more detail in chapter two. The literature search was then conducted. Searching different sources of evidence as well as different types of evidence retrieved the best evidence. For example, nursing as well as educational databases were searched. Information was also obtained from books, websites, expert opinions, randomized controlled trials, systematic reviews, and the MiPHY survey. All of this evidence was then reviewed.

Steps three and four. The evidence was appraised by quantity and strength. A sufficient amount of evidence was retrieved. Much of this supported that cyberbullying is prevalent and causes harmful outcomes for adolescents. Unfortunately, concerning cyberbullying prevention there were very few studies that were at the highest level of evidence, namely, randomized controlled trials (RCTs, Suresh, 2011). Despite this, it was not feasible to translate the findings from the RCTs into the middle school due to cost and an inability to determine the degree to which the interventions matched the actual needs

of the identified sample. For example, one of the prevention studies involved a computer software program for a sample in Taiwan (Lee et al., 2013).

To better understand the type and magnitude of the problem of cyberbullying in the designated school district, it was feasible to implement a needs assessment. This activity is supported in the evidence retrieved and was supported by the key stakeholders after assessing the feasibility, benefits, and risks. Finally, based on the evidence retrieved the sample for this scholarly project was selected. As discussed in chapter two, numerous studies demonstrate that cyberbullying most commonly occurs during young middle adolescence.

At this time, the practice change is implementing a needs assessment survey in order to gather more information related to this phenomenon within the selected middle school. In order to conduct this intervention, a step-by-step plan was created and is described in chapter four. Appropriate resources that will be needed for this intervention were identified. They include personnel from the middle school, support from key stakeholders, a cyberbully survey, writing utensils to complete the survey, parental permission slips, and time during the middle school student's health class.

Steps five and six. The needs assessment was implemented in February 2015. The team consisted of stakeholders at the middle school and select faculty. Feedback was obtained from key stakeholders of the organization and those who were involved during the implementation phase. The data were evaluated and analyzed. The findings were disseminated to the organization. Based on the project's findings and available literature, recommendations were made.

The Social Learning and Social Cognitive Theories

These theories can be incorporated into this scholarly project by providing a framework that helps to clarify the phenomenon of cyberbullying. Having a better understanding of the phenomenon allowed for a focused literature search and helped clarify questions and concerns held by key stakeholders.

Swearer et al. (2014) discussed how the SCT applies to bullying. First, observational learning and reinforcement help to explain how adolescents learn to participate in bullying behaviors. Adolescents who are in an environment where they are exposed or observe bullying are more likely to participate in bullying. Adolescents will avoid behaviors they know will lead to punishment and participate in behaviors they know will lead to a reward. For example, an adolescent could bully someone due to the positive reinforcement associated with an increase in social status or popularity. Likewise, an adolescent might not bully someone out of fear of punishment. Second, an adolescent's beliefs concerning bullying as well as positive and negative reinforcements will determine if he/she will participate in bullying. If an adolescent thinks bullying behaviors are unacceptable, then he/she will be less likely to participate. Further, adolescents who have thoughts and beliefs that bullying is wrong will still not participate in bullying, despite seeing it through observational learning. Third, Swearer et al. mentioned studies that found youth who observe aggressive behaviors are more likely to participate in bullying. Fourth, they discussed how youth who live in violent neighborhoods or socialize with aggressive peers are more likely to participate in bullying. Fifth, they reviewed studies that established a relationship between the status of a youth's social environment and bullying. Finally, the authors conclude that the SCT and

research findings support that adolescents learn how to bully through observational learning and reinforcement. Both are key concepts of the SCT.

Due to the findings above, Swearer et al. (2014) suggested that interventions to address bullying based upon the SCT could be an effective approach. The authors stated how the intervention should focus on cognitive and social functioning. Since there is limited evidence regarding cyberbullying prevention or intervention efforts, a needs assessment will serve as a starting point by assessing the environment for and prevalence of cyberbullying. The needs assessment survey will also provide the organization with baseline data. The survey will assess for those who participate in cyberbullying as well as those who have been victims of cyberbullying. The findings will help the organization to know where to target future prevention efforts.

Conclusion

Conceptual frameworks used throughout this scholarly project have been described. The frameworks provided support and understanding for the scholarly project.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methods that were used to effect this scholarly project. The methods outlined helped to address the question that inspired the project: to what degree is cyberbullying occurring in a local west Michigan middle school? The methods are divided into how the scholarly project was designed and implemented.

Design

This scholarly project began with a thorough review of literature from nursing, education, and counseling. The findings demonstrated that there are few studies related to cyberbullying interventions and prevention. It confirmed that needs assessments are recommended. Finally, the literature review determined the target population for cyberbullying is youth who are in the middle adolescence stage of life, or middle school students.

Setting

Through university involvement with surrounding communities, an opportunity presented itself for the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) student to meet with a local middle school in a small metropolitan community. In February 2014, the DNP student met with the elementary, middle school, and high school counselors to discuss if bullying, in particular cyberbullying, was an issue within the school. The conclusion of this meeting was that the counselors believed cyberbullying was a significant concern and an issue they frequently encountered. The counselors were looking for more information in managing cyberbullying.

In order to gain involvement and share project implementation ideas from other key stakeholders within this school community, the DNP student became involved within this organization. The DNP student attended parent teacher organization (PTO) meetings and school board meetings. This began in September 2014 and continued until February 2015. The DNP student attended bullying lessons that were taught during the middle school students' health classes. The DNP student assisted the middle school with its anti-bullying initiatives. These efforts and involvement allowed for the DNP student to identify facilitators for the project as well as identify potential barriers related to the scholarly project. Key stakeholders identified were the middle school counselor, the health teacher, the middle school principal, the middle school assistant principal, the superintendent, and the parents.

During the DNP student's involvement with this organization it was discovered that this school system participated in the Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth (MiPHY) survey during the 2013-2014 school year. Students in grades seven, nine, and eleven were eligible to participate. The survey assessed for high-risk behaviors such as substance abuse, sexual activity, and violence. The results from the survey were listed by county. Only three questions were related to cyberbullying. Results for these three questions included that (a) 295 (17.4%) students who were in seventh grade had been electronically bullied in the past 12 months, (b) 555 (32.1%) had read an email or website message that spread rumors about other students one or more times during the past 12 months, and (c) 380 (22%) had read an email or website message that contained threats to other students one or more times during the past 12 months (Michigan Department of Education, 2014). These findings were another reason this community was interested in obtaining more

information about cyberbullying. Therefore, the available sample for this scholarly project was a convenience sample of middle school students at the identified middle school in a Midwest community.

Sample

The selected middle school is comprised of 7th and 8th grade students. For the 2014-2015 school year, there were 167 students enrolled in the 7th grade (50.3% male, 49.7% female) and 165 students enrolled in the 8th grade (60% male, 40% female). The ethnicity make-up for each grade was: (a) American Indian (1.2% for each grade), (b) Asian American (0.6% for each grade), (c) African American (5.4%--7th grade, 2.4%--8th grade), (d) White (83.2%--7th grade, 89%--8th grade), (e) Hispanic/Latino (7.8%--7th grade, 6%--8th grade), (f) Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (0.6%--7th grade, 0%--8th grade), and (g) unclassified (1.2%--7th grade, 0.6%--8th grade). The age of all these students ranged from 12-15 years.

Related to academics, both the 7th and 8th grade students tested below the 2013-2014 proficiency target in mathematics. The 7th grade students also tested below this target for reading, but the 8th graders were above this target. Eighth grade students also tested below in science. The 7th grade students were slightly above the target in writing. No other testing information was available. The graduation rate for the 2012-2013 class was 77.86% (Michigan.gov, 2014).

As far as the district this school serves, 64.4% of all students from 2013-2014 were from an economically disadvantaged home (Michigan.gov). As of October 2014, the Michigan Department of Human Services reported that 1.4% of the residents in this school's county were enrolled in the Family Independence Program, 22.7% received food

assistance, 0.07% were on disability, and 23.3% were eligible to receive Medicaid (Michigan.gov, 2014). For the 2014-2015 school year, 62% of the students attending this middle school received free or reduced lunch. Many of the residents of this county and many of the students at this school receive government support of some type.

Participants

There were 169 seventh grade students enrolled on the day the survey was conducted. A total of 156 (92.3%) students in 7th grade completed the survey. No opt-out consent forms were returned and zero students refused to take the survey. There were 12 (7.7%) students who were absent on the day of the survey. There were 167 eighth grade students enrolled on the day the survey was conducted. A total of 140 (83.8%) students in 8th grade completed the survey. There were three (1.8%) opt-out consent forms that were returned and three (1.8%) students who refused to take the survey. There were 18 (10.8%) students who were absent on the day of the survey. There are four students unaccounted for: one in grade seven and three in grade eight. The total sample size for this scholarly project was 296 middle school students.

A tool was designed to obtain demographic information (Appendix A). Each question was followed with a list of options regarding age, gender, ethnicity, grade, and socioeconomic status. The sample characteristics that were obtained from the survey are presented in Table 1. All of the participants answered the question on what grade they were in. However, not every student answered all of the questions related to the other demographic questions. Ten (3.4%) students did not answer the question related to age. Seven (2.4%) students did not answer the question related to gender. There were 8 (2.7%)

students who did not complete the question about free or reduced lunch services and a total of 13 (4.4%) students did not answer the question related to ethnicity.

Table 1

<i>Sample Characteristics</i>		
Item	%	<i>n</i>
Age (yrs)		
12	16.78%	48
13	49.30%	141
14	29.37%	84
15	4.20%	12
16	0.35%	1
Gender		
Male	56.40%	163
Female	43.60%	126
Ethnicity		
Non-Hispanic White	59.00%	167
Black-African American	3.90%	11
Latino or Hispanic	6.70%	19
American Indian	5.30%	15
Multi-Ethnic	8.10%	23
Prefer not to answer	17.00%	48
Socioeconomic Status		
Receives free/reduced school meals	36.80%	106
Does not receive free/reduced school meals	42.70%	123
Unsure	20.50%	59
Grade		
7 th	52.70%	156
8 th	47.30%	140

**Note: percentages based on answered questions*

Instrument

The survey used was the Cyberbullying and Online Aggression Instrument (see Appendix B). It was created by Hinduja and Patchin (2014). The DNP student received permission from one of the authors to use the instrument as well as for the results to be

published within this dissertation (see Appendix C). This survey has been used in six different research studies from 2007-2014. It was pilot-tested and refined in four different studies from 2003-2007. It has been administered in over 90 schools and approximately 15,000 adolescents, ages 11-18, have taken the survey. The survey has two parts: a cyberbullying victimization scale and a cyberbullying offending scale. There are 25 cyberbullying victimization questions and 24 cyberbullying offending questions. The response scale is a 5-point scale with word designations: never, once, a few times, several times, and many times. The reading grade level of the instrument is 12.0. The findings from the many times this survey has been administered have been consistent across various samples and settings, which support the instrument's validity. Internal reliability for the cyberbullying victimization scale is reported as Cronbach's alpha 0.892-0.935. Internal reliability for the cyberbullying offending scale is reported as Cronbach's alpha 0.935-0.969 (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014). In this scholarly project, the internal reliability for the cyberbullying victimization scale was Cronbach's alpha 0.917, and 0.839 for the cyberbullying offender scale.

The USDHHS (n.d.) recommended needs assessments because they can determine how often bullying occurs, where it usually happens, how students and adults can intervene, and whether current prevention efforts are working or not. By using the Cyberbullying and Online Aggression Instrument, data were obtained related to how often bullying occurred and where it usually happened. However, the instrument did not address prevention. In order to obtain information related to how students, parents, and adults can intervene, three open-ended questions were asked. These questions were listed

after the demographic questions on the Sample Characteristics Questions tool (see Appendix A).

Implementation

Procedures

As previously mentioned, in order to gain acceptance for this scholarly project, the DNP student attended PTO meetings beginning in September 2014. During this time, the DNP student spoke with the PTO president as well as other PTO board members about the project. The DNP student discussed this project with PTO members who were also in attendance. The PTO from this west Michigan middle school supported this scholarly project (see Appendix D). The DNP student also attended the school's board meetings and coordinated with the school's principal. The principal supported this scholarly project (see Appendix E). A white paper (Appendix F) was also created and presented to the school counselors as an effort to plan for a needs assessment and address potential barriers associated with this scholarly project.

Key facilitators for this project were the middle school counselor and the teachers who allowed the DNP student time and access during their class for the middle school students to complete the survey. The middle school counselor ensured that the DNP student was following appropriate school policies and procedures.

Barriers for this scholarly project included resistance from students and parents. Attempts to minimize these included educating the parents on cyberbullying and by establishing a trusting relationship with the parents and staff prior to the survey. This was done through attendance at the PTO meetings and at the student's bullying lessons as

well as by being present within the organization from September 2014-February 2015. The DNP student assisted the PTO and middle school with their anti-bullying initiatives.

Prior to the students completing the survey, a parental notification letter and opt-out form were sent home to the parents of the 7th and 8th grade students (see Appendix G). The letter outlined the intention of the survey, described any apparent risk to the student, and provided appropriate contact information. Parents had the option of excusing their child from completing the survey, if preferred. Parents had one week to return the form. These documents were created using the middle school's policies and procedures. They are comparable to another parental notification letter the school sent out for a similar survey. The reading grade level of the parental notification letter was 9.3.

The cyberbullying needs assessment was conducted at a west Michigan middle school on February 23, 2015 and February 25, 2015. The students completed the survey during one of their classes. A script was read to the students before they completed the survey (see Appendix H). The middle school counselor approved the script and the reading grade level was 6.4. The survey was anonymous and no identifying information was collected. Before the surveys were collected, the students placed their survey in an envelope and sealed it. The completed surveys are stored at the college of nursing research room in a locked drawer. The data were entered electronically by the DNP student and stored on an encrypted flash drive. The middle school has no specific policies related to data storage.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version 20 (SPSS 20) in February 2015. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data in

order to best present the baseline frequency of the various types of cyberbullying. Categories were identified from the qualitative data. The results were presented to the middle school in May 2015. During this presentation, the DNP student made recommendations for prevention based on the findings from this scholarly project and findings found in the literature.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to report the results from the cyberbullying needs assessment that was conducted at a local west Michigan middle school. The needs assessment sought to address the guiding question for this scholarly project: to what degree is cyberbullying occurring in a local west Michigan middle school? Data analysis was completed using SPSS 20. The results are presented and discussed according to the school as a whole, by individual grade, and by gender. The qualitative results are then presented.

Quantitative Data

The Cyberbullying and Online Aggression Instrument that was used for this scholarly project measured both the incidence of students who are victims of cyberbullying as well as students who are cyberbullying offenders (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014). The results are presented according to two subscales: the cyberbullying victimization scale (CVS) and the cyberbullying offender scale (COS). The response scale for the entire instrument is a 5-point scale with word designations: never (coded as 1), once (coded as 2), a few times (coded as 3), several times (coded as 4), and many times (coded as 5). The responses “once” and “a few times” as well as “several times” and “many times” were collapsed in order to succinctly present the findings. The combined categories are newly labeled as “rare (once and a few times)” and “often (several times and many times).” The means presented are based on the 1-5 coded responses, not the collapsed scale. The collapsed scale was used for reporting purposes

only. Despite the ordinal scale, the mean was calculated to help determine the comparative frequency of cyberbullying behaviors.

Results for the Entire Middle School

The results for the entire middle school are presented. These results include both grades and gender. The victimization scale is presented first, followed by the offender scale.

Cyberbullying victimization scale. The CVS consists of 25 questions. The first three questions are related to whether or not the student has ever been cyberbullied (Table 2). The data are presented as percentages, the total number of students that the percentage represents, and the mean (based on the 1-5 scale).

Table 2

Cyberbullying Victimization Scale for a West Michigan Middle School

Item	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
I have seen other people being cyberbullied	14.2% (42)	51.3% (152)	34.2% (101)	3.1051
In my lifetime, I have been cyberbullied	44.3% (131)	43.2% (128)	12.2% (36)	2.0915
In the last 30 days, I have been cyberbullied	78.4% (232)	17.6% (52)	3.4% (10)	1.3571

**Note: n = 296*

The remaining questions of the CVS are specific to where or how the student has been cyberbullied. Examples of this include whether or not the student has ever been cyberbullied in a chat room or on Facebook. Other examples include whether or not the student has ever had someone spread rumors about him or her online or if the student has

ever had someone post online a mean or hurtful picture of him or her. For questions 4-25, the data were analyzed and the most common and least common reported items are presented (Table 3 and Table 4). The most common and least common reported survey items were selected by analyzing and evaluating the percentages that correspond to the “never,” “rare,” and “often” categories based on the combined scale. The mean was also considered for each of these (based on the 1-5 scale) and was used to help rank the highest to lowest cyberbullying activities.

Most students at this middle school have seen other people being cyberbullied and most have also been victims of cyberbullying. There are fewer students who have recently (in the last 30 days) been cyberbullied. Victims are most commonly cyberbullied through Facebook, cell phones, computer instant messages, and gaming systems. Victims most commonly experience cyberbullying by someone spreading rumors about them online and someone posting mean or hurtful comments about them online. Victims are least commonly cyberbullied through Twitter, YouTube, email, online virtual worlds, and PictureMail or VideoMail. Cyberbullying actions that victims experience the least include someone posting a mean or hurtful video online or someone creating a mean or hurtful webpage about them.

Cyberbullying offender scale. The COS consists of 24 questions. The first two questions are related to if the student has ever cyberbullied another person (Table 5). The data are presented as percentages and the total number of students the percentage represents. At this west Michigan middle school about half of the students have participated in cyberbullying before. However, only a few of the students have recently (in the last 30 days) participated in cyberbullying.

Table 3

Most Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Victims at a West Michigan Middle School (Highest to Lowest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have been cyberbullied on Facebook	72.6% (215)	21.6% (64)	5.5% (16)	1.5017
... someone spread rumors about me online	74.3% (220)	20.6% (61)	4.4% (13)	1.4456
... I have been cyberbullied while playing online with Xbox, Playstation, Wii, PSP or similar device	78.7% (233)	15.5% (46)	5.8% (17)	1.4257
... I have been cyberbullied through cell phone text messages	79.7% (236)	16.2% (48)	4.1% (12)	1.3784
... I have been cyberbullied through computer instant messages	81.8% (242)	14.8% (44)	3.4% (10)	1.3311
... I have been cyberbullied through a cell phone	81.8% (242)	14.9% (44)	3.4% (10)	1.3243
... someone posted mean or hurtful comments about me online	80.4% (238)	17.2% (51)	2.1% (6)	1.3119

*Note: (n = 296)

Table 4

Least Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Victims at a West Michigan Middle School (Lowest to Highest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... someone posted a mean or hurtful video online of me	98.0% (290)	1.0% (3)	0.3% (1)	1.0204
... someone created a mean or hurtful web page about me	97.0% (287)	2.0% (6)	0% (0)	1.0205
... I have been cyberbullied on Twitter	97.3% (288)	2.4% (7)	0% (0)	1.0339
... I have been cyberbullied through PictureMail or VideoMail	95.3% (282)	4.4% (13)	0% (0)	1.0576
... I have been cyberbullied in virtual worlds such as Second Life, Gaia, or Habbo Hotel	96.6% (286)	1.3% (4)	1.3% (4)	1.0680
... I have been cyberbullied on YouTube	94.6% (280)	4.4% (13)	0.7% (2)	1.0780
... I have been cyberbullied through email	94.9% (281)	5.1% (12)	1.0% (3)	1.0912

*Note: n = 296

Table 5

Cyberbullying Offender Scale for a West Michigan Middle School

Item	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
In my lifetime, I have cyberbullied others	53.7% (159)	41.2% (122)	5.1% (15)	1.7872
In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied others	83.8% (248)	15.5% (46)	0.6% (2)	1.2230

*Note: n = 296

The remaining questions of the COS are specific to where or how the student has cyberbullied another person. Examples of this include whether or not the student has ever cyberbullied someone while playing video games or on Twitter. Other examples include whether or not the student has ever cyberbullied by threatening someone or by pretending to be someone else and acting in a way that was hurtful to another individual. For these questions, the data were analyzed and the most common and least common reported items are presented (Tables 6 and 7). The most common and least common reported survey items were selected using the same methods mentioned in the previous section about the victimization scale.

For this middle school, there were fewer students who reported being offenders compared to victims. The offenders are most likely to post mean or hurtful comments about someone online and spread rumors online. Offenders most commonly cyberbully others through gaming systems, Facebook, instant messages, multiplayer online games, and in chat rooms. The offenders are least likely to post a mean or hurtful video or picture online of someone or create a mean or hurtful webpage about someone. They are also not

Table 6

Most Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Offenders at a West Michigan Middle School (Highest to Lowest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have cyberbullied someone while playing online with Xbox, Playstation, Wii, PSP or similar device	83.8% (248)	12.2% (36)	3.7% (11)	1.3051
... I have cyberbullied someone on Facebook	83.1% (246)	15.5% (46)	1.0% (3)	1.2542
... I have posted mean or hurtful comments about someone	88.5% (262)	10.8% (32)	0.7% (2)	1.1588
... I have cyberbullied someone through instant messages	88.2% (261)	10.8% (32)	0.6% (2)	1.1559
... I have spread rumors about someone online	90.5% (268)	8.8% (26)	0.7% (2)	1.1284
... I have cyberbullied someone while playing a massive multiplayer game	92.2% (273)	6.4% (19)	1.0% (3)	1.1153
... I have cyberbullied someone in a chat room	91.6% (271)	7.7% (23)	0.3% (1)	1.1085

*Note: n = 296

Table 7

Least Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Offenders at a West Michigan Middle School (Lowest to Highest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have posted a mean or hurtful video online of someone	99.7% (295)	0.3% (1)	0% (0)	1.0034
... I have cyberbullied someone through PictureMail or VideoMail	99.3% (294)	0.3% (1)	0% (0)	1.0034
... I have created a mean or hurtful web page about someone	99.3% (294)	0.6% (2)	0% (0)	1.0101
... I have cyberbullied someone on Twitter	98.6% (292)	1.0% (3)	0% (0)	1.0102
... I have cyberbullied someone through email	98.0% (290)	1.7% (5)	0% (0)	1.0169
... I have posted a mean or hurtful picture online of someone	97.3% (288)	2.3% (7)	0% (0)	1.0271
... I have cyberbullied someone in virtual worlds such as Second Life, Gaia, or Habbo Hotel	97.3% (288)	2.4% (7)	0% (0)	1.0305

*Note: n = 296

likely to cyberbully someone through PictureMail, VideoMail, Twitter, email, or in virtual worlds.

Results by Grade

In order to discover if any potential differences existed between the prevalence of cyberbullying and any of the demographic information collected, the data were analyzed according to grade.

Cyberbullying victimization scale. Questions 1-3 of the CVS for the 7th and 8th grade students are presented in Table 8. The most common and least common reported items for cyberbullying victims in the 7th grade are presented in Table 9 and Table 10. The most common and least common reported victimization scale survey items for the 8th grade students are presented in Table 11 and Table 12.

Table 8

Cyberbullying Victimization Scale for the Seventh and Eighth Grade Students

Item	7 th Grade				8 th Grade			
	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
I have seen other people being cyberbullied	14.7% (23)	55.8% (87)	29.5% (46)	3.0064	13.6% (19)	46.4% (65)	39.3% (55)	3.2158
In my lifetime, I have been cyberbullied	42.3% (66)	45.5% (71)	12.2% (19)	2.1603	46.4% (65)	40.7% (57)	12.2% (17)	2.0144
In the last 30 days, I have been cyberbullied	78.2% (122)	18.6% (29)	2.5% (4)	1.3226	78.6% (110)	16.5% (23)	4.3% (6)	1.3957

**Note: n = 156 for the 7th grade and n =140 for the 8th grade*

Table 9

Most Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Victims in Seventh Grade at a West Michigan Middle School (Highest to Lowest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have been cyberbullied on Facebook	73.7% (115)	20.5% (32)	5.1% (8)	1.4839
... someone spread rumors about me online	74.4% (116)	19.2% (30)	5.8% (9)	1.4645
... I have been cyberbullied while playing online with Xbox, Wii, PSP, Playstation, or similar device	76.9% (120)	17.9% (28)	5.1% (8)	1.4167
... I have been cyberbullied through cell phone text messages	80.1% (125)	14.2% (22)	5.8% (9)	1.4167
... I have been cyberbullied through a cell phone	78.8% (123)	16.7% (26)	4.5% (7)	1.3846
... I have been cyberbullied on a different social networking web site (other than Facebook)	82.1% (128)	15.4% (24)	1.9% (3)	1.2968
... someone posted mean or hurtful comments about me online	82.1% (128)	15.4% (24)	2.6% (4)	1.2949

*Note: n = 156

Table 10

Least Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Victims in Seventh Grade at a West Michigan Middle School (Lowest to Highest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... someone created a mean or hurtful web page about me	97.4% (152)	1.9% (3)	0% (0)	1.0194
... someone posted a mean or hurtful video online of me	98.1% (153)	0.6% (1)	0.6% (1)	1.0258
... I have been cyberbullied on Twitter	95.5% (149)	3.9% (6)	0% (0)	1.0516
... I have been cyberbullied in virtual worlds such as Second Life, Gaia, or Habbo Hotel	95.5% (149)	1.2% (2)	1.9% (3)	1.0779
... I have been cyberbullied on YouTube	93.6% (146)	4.4% (7)	1.3% (2)	1.0903
... I have been cyberbullied through PictureMail or VideoMail	92.3% (144)	7.0% (11)	0% (0)	1.0903
... someone posted a mean or hurtful picture online of me	93.6% (146)	6.4% (10)	0% (0)	1.1026

**Note: n = 156*

Table 11

Most Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Victims in Eighth Grade at a West Michigan Middle School (Highest to Lowest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have been cyberbullied on Facebook	71.4% (100)	22.9% (32)	5.7% (8)	1.5214
... I have been cyberbullied while playing online with Xbox, Playstation, Wii, PSP or similar device	80.7% (113)	12.8% (18)	6.4% (9)	1.4357
... someone spread rumors about me online	74.3% (104)	22.1% (31)	2.8% (4)	1.4245
... I have been cyberbullied through computer instant messages	77.9% (109)	18.6% (26)	3.5% (5)	1.4000
... I have been cyberbullied through cell phone text messages	79.3% (111)	18.5% (26)	2.1% (3)	1.3357
... someone posted mean or hurtful comments about me online	78.6% (110)	19.3% (27)	1.4% (2)	1.3309
... someone threatened to hurt me online	80.7% (113)	17.1% (24)	2.1% (3)	1.3000

**Note: n = 140*

Table 12

Least Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Victims in Eighth Grade at a West Michigan Middle School (Lowest to Highest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have been cyberbullied on Twitter	99.3% (139)	0.7% (1)	0% (0)	1.0143
... someone posted a mean or hurtful video online of me	97.9% (137)	1.4% (2)	0% (0)	1.0144
... I have been cyberbullied through PictureMail or VideoMail	98.6% (138)	1.4% (2)	0% (0)	1.0214
... someone created a mean or hurtful web page about me	96.4% (135)	2.1% (3)	0% (0)	1.0217
... I have been cyberbullied through email	96.4% (135)	3.5% (5)	0% (0)	1.0500
... I have been cyberbullied in virtual worlds such as Second Life, Gaia, or Habbo Hotel	97.9% (137)	1.4% (2)	0.7% (1)	1.0571
... I have been cyberbullied on YouTube	95.7% (134)	4.2% (6)	0% (0)	1.0643

*Note: n = 140

Most of the students in 7th grade at this west Michigan middle school have seen other people being cyberbullied. The majority of the 7th grade students have been cyberbullied before. However, only a few have been cyberbullied within the last 30 days. These students are usually cyberbullied through Facebook, gaming systems, cell phones, and on different social networking sites other than Facebook. The victims are more likely to experience someone spreading rumors about them online and someone posting mean or hurtful comments about them online. They are not usually cyberbullied through Twitter, virtual worlds, YouTube, and PictureMail or VideoMail. Cyberbullying actions that these victims experience the least include someone creating a mean or hurtful web page about them, or someone posting either a video or picture online of them.

Most of the 8th grade students at this west Michigan middle school have seen other people being cyberbullied. Additionally, most of these students have been cyberbullied themselves. However, a smaller proportion of these students have recently (in the last 30 days) been cyberbullied.

The victims usually experience someone spreading rumors about them online, someone posting mean or hurtful comments about them online, or someone threatening to hurt them online. They are usually cyberbullied through Facebook, gaming systems, computer instant messages, and cell phone text messages. The victims do not usually experience someone posting a mean or hurtful video online of them or someone creating a mean or hurtful web page about them. It is uncommon for them to be cyberbullied through Twitter, PictureMail or VideoMail, email, virtual worlds, and YouTube.

Cyberbullying offender scale. The results for offenders by grade are presented in Table 13. The most and least common reported items are presented in Tables 14-17.

Table 13

Cyberbullying Offender Scale for the Seventh and Eighth Grade Students

Item	7 th Grade			Mean	8 th Grade			Mean
	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)		Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	
In my lifetime, I have cyberbullied others	48.7% (76)	47.4% (74)	3.8% (6)	1.8269	59.3% (83)	34.3% (48)	6.4% (9)	1.7429
In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied others	82.7% (129)	17.3% (27)	0% (0)	1.2244	85.0% (119)	13.6% (19)	1.4% (2)	1.2214

**Note: n = 156 for the 7th grade and n = 140 for the 8th grade*

Roughly half of the 7th grade students at this west Michigan middle school have never participated in cyberbullying in their lifetime. The other half of these students has participated in cyberbullying in their lifetime, but all fell in the “rare” category. Most of the 7th grade students have not recently (in the last 30 days) cyberbullied someone.

The 7th grade cyberbullying offenders at this school are more likely to spread rumors about someone online as well as post mean or hurtful comments about someone online. They usually cyberbully through gaming systems, Facebook, computer instant messages, chat rooms, and cell phone text messages. They less commonly post a mean or hurtful picture online of someone or create a mean or hurtful web page about someone. They are least likely to cyberbully someone through online virtual worlds, Twitter, email, and PictureMail or VideoMail. None of these offenders have ever posted a mean or hurtful video online of someone. There are many similarities and some differences when these results are compared to the eighth grade.

Table 14

Most Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Offenders in Seventh Grade at a West Michigan Middle School (Highest to Lowest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have cyberbullied someone while playing online with Xbox, Wii, Playstation, PSP or similar device	84.6% (132)	10.9% (17)	4.5% (7)	1.3077
... I have cyberbullied someone on Facebook	81.4% (127)	17.3% (27)	0.6% (1)	1.2710
... I have cyberbullied someone through computer instant messages	86.5% (135)	11.5% (18)	1.2% (2)	1.1935
... I have spread rumors about someone online	88.5% (138)	10.3% (16)	1.3% (2)	1.1667
... I have cyberbullied someone in a chat room	89.1% (139)	9.7% (15)	0.6% (1)	1.1419
... I have posted mean or hurtful comments about someone online	90.4% (141)	9.0% (14)	0.6% (1)	1.1346
... I have cyberbullied someone through cell phone text messages	90.4% (141)	8.3% (13)	0.6% (1)	1.1161

**Note: n = 156*

Table 15

Least Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Offenders in Seventh Grade at a West Michigan Middle School (Lowest to Highest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have posted a mean or hurtful video online of someone	100.0% (156)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.0000
... I have cyberbullied someone through PictureMail or VideoMail	98.7% (154)	0.6% (1)	0% (0)	1.0065
... I have cyberbullied someone in virtual worlds such as Second Life, Gaia, or Habbo Hotel	98.7% (154)	1.2% (2)	0% (0)	1.0192
... I have created a mean or hurtful web page about someone	98.7% (154)	1.2% (2)	0% (0)	1.0192
... I have cyberbullied someone on Twitter	97.4% (152)	1.9% (3)	0% (0)	1.0194
... I have cyberbullied someone through email	96.2% (150)	3.2% (5)	0% (0)	1.0323
... I have posted a mean or hurtful picture online of someone	96.2% (150)	3.8% (6)	0% (0)	1.0449

*Note: n = 156

Table 16

Most Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Offenders in Eighth Grade at a West Michigan Middle School (Highest to Lowest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have cyberbullied someone while playing online with Xbox, Wii, Playstation, PSP or similar device	82.9% (116)	13.6% (19)	2.8% (4)	1.3022
... I have cyberbullied someone on Facebook	85.0% (119)	13.6% (19)	1.4% (2)	1.2357
... I have posted mean or hurtful comments about someone online	86.4% (121)	12.9% (18)	0.7% (1)	1.1857
... I have threatened to hurt someone online	90.0% (126)	8.6% (12)	1.4% (2)	1.1357
... I have cyberbullied someone while playing a massive online multiplayer game	92.1% (129)	5.7% (8)	1.4% (2)	1.1151
... I have cyberbullied someone through computer instant messages	90.0% (126)	10.0% (14)	0% (0)	1.1143
... I have spread rumors about someone online	92.9% (130)	7.1% (10)	0% (0)	1.0857

**Note: n = 140*

Table 17

Least Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Offenders in Eighth Grade at a West Michigan Middle School (Lowest to Highest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have created a mean or hurtful web page about someone	100.0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.0000
... I have cyberbullied someone in email	100.0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.0000
... I have cyberbullied someone on Twitter	100.0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.0000
... I have cyberbullied someone through PictureMail or VideoMail	100.0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.0000
... I have pretended to be someone else and acted in a way that was mean or hurtful to them	99.3% (139)	0.7% (1)	0% (0)	1.0071
... I have posted a mean or hurtful video online of someone	99.3% (139)	0.7% (1)	0% (0)	1.0071
... I have posted a mean or hurtful picture online of someone	98.6% (138)	0.7% (1)	0% (0)	1.0072

**Note: n = 140*

A moderate number of the 8th grade students at this west Michigan middle school have cyberbullied someone before. However, only a very small number of these students have cyberbullied someone “often.” Most of these students have not cyberbullied someone recently (in the last 30 days).

The 8th grade offenders most commonly cyberbully others through gaming systems, Facebook, multiplayer online games, and computer instant messages. They are likely to threaten to hurt someone online, spread rumors about someone online, and post mean or hurtful comments about someone online. None of the 8th graders students at this middle school have cyberbullied others through email, Twitter, and PictureMail or VideoMail. They also have not cyberbullied others by creating a mean or hurtful web page about someone. The least common methods include pretending to be someone else online, acting in a way that was mean or hurtful, and posting a mean or hurtful picture or video of someone else online.

Comparison between the seventh and eighth grade. The 7th and 8th grade students demonstrated many similarities in prevalence of cyberbullying and in specific cyberbullying behaviors. This was observed for the cyberbullying victimization and offender scale. However, 14 of the 8th grade students (10.0%) reported threatening to hurt someone online. This was not reported as a frequent occurrence among the 7th grade students. There were eight 7th grade students (5.1%) who reported threatening to hurt someone online.

Results by Gender

The data were also compared by gender in order to see if any differences existed in cyberbullying behaviors between the male and female students at this west Michigan middle school.

Cyberbullying victimization scale. Reported results on the CVS items for the male and female students are presented in Table 18. The most common and least common reported victim survey items for males are presented in Tables 19 and 20. Following are Tables 21 and 22, which present the data related to the most and least common reported survey items for the females.

Table 18

Cyberbullying Victimization Scale for Male and Female Students at a West Michigan Middle School

Item	Males				Females			
	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
I have seen other people being cyberbullied	20.2% (33)	51.5% (84)	27.6% (45)	2.8765	5.6% (7)	50.0% (63)	44.4% (56)	3.4524
In my lifetime, I have been cyberbullied	54.6% (89)	38.1% (62)	6.7% (11)	1.8148	28.6% (36)	51.6% (65)	19.8% (25)	2.5000
In the last 30 days, I have been cyberbullied	88.3% (144)	9.2% (15)	1.8% (3)	1.1728	64.3% (81)	29.4% (37)	5.6% (7)	1.6160

**Note: n = 163 for males and n = 126 for females*

Most of the male students at this middle school have seen other people being cyberbullied before. A little more than a third have been cyberbullied and the majority

Table 19

Most Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Male Victims at a West Michigan Middle School (Highest to Lowest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have been cyberbullied while playing online with Xbox, Wii, PSP, Playstation or similar device	71.8% (117)	20.3% (33)	8.0% (13)	1.5706
... I have been cyberbullied while playing a massive multiplayer online game	86.5% (141)	10.4% (17)	3.0% (5)	1.2638
... I have been cyberbullied on Facebook	83.4% (136)	14.7% (24)	1.2% (2)	1.2284
... someone spread rumors about me online	83.4% (136)	14.7% (24)	1.2% (2)	1.2284
... someone threatened to hurt me online	85.9% (140)	13.5% (22)	0% (0)	1.1779
... I have been cyberbullied through computer instant messages	89.6% (146)	9.2% (15)	1.2% (2)	1.1472
... someone threatened to hurt me through a cell phone text message	89.0% (145)	10.5% (17)	0% (0)	1.1472

*Note: n = 163

Table 20

Least Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Male Victims at a West Michigan Middle School (Lowest to Highest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... someone posted a mean or hurtful video online of me	99.4% (162)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.0000
... I have been cyberbullied through email	98.8% (161)	1.2% (2)	0% (0)	1.0123
... I have been cyberbullied through PictureMail or VideoMail	98.2% (160)	1.2% (2)	0% (0)	1.0123
... I have been cyberbullied on Twitter	98.2% (160)	1.2% (2)	0% (0)	1.0185
... someone created a mean or hurtful web page about me	96.9% (158)	1.8% (3)	0% (0)	1.0186
... I have been cyberbullied in virtual worlds such as Second Life, Gaia, or Habbo Hotel	98.8% (161)	0% (0)	0.6% (1)	1.0247
... someone posted a mean or hurtful picture online of me	96.9% (158)	2.4% (4)	0% (0)	1.0309

**Note: n = 163*

Table 21

Most Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Female Victims at a West Michigan Middle School (Highest to Lowest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have been cyberbullied on Facebook	57.1% (72)	31.8% (40)	11.1% (14)	1.8810
... someone spread rumors about me online	61.1% (77)	29.4% (37)	8.8% (11)	1.7520
... I have been cyberbullied through cell phone text messages	66.7% (84)	23.8% (30)	9.6% (12)	1.6905
... I have been cyberbullied through a cell phone	65.9% (83)	26.2% (33)	8.0% (10)	1.6587
... I have been cyberbullied through computer instant messages	70.6% (89)	23.0% (29)	6.4% (8)	1.5873
... someone posted mean or hurtful comments about me online	66.7% (84)	28.6% (36)	4.8% (6)	1.5635
... I have been cyberbullied on a different social networking web site (other than Facebook)	73.8% (93)	24.6% (31)	1.6% (2)	1.4286

*Note: n = 126

Table 22

Least Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Female Victims at a West Michigan Middle School (Lowest to Highest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... someone created a mean or hurtful web page about me	96.8% (122)	2.4% (3)	0% (0)	1.0240
... someone posted a mean or hurtful video online of me	96.0% (121)	2.4% (3)	0.8% (1)	1.0480
... I have been cyberbullied on Twitter	96.0% (121)	4.0% (5)	0% (0)	1.0556
... I have been cyberbullied while playing a massive multiplayer online game	96.0% (121)	3.2% (4)	0.8% (1)	1.0635
... I have been cyberbullied on YouTube	92.1% (116)	7.2% (9)	0.8% (1)	1.1190
... I have been cyberbullied through PictureMail or VideoMail	91.3% (115)	8.8% (11)	0% (0)	1.1190
... I have been cyberbullied in virtual worlds such as Second Life, Gaia, or Habbo Hotel	94.4% (119)	3.2% (4)	2.4% (3)	1.1270

*Note: n = 126

has not been recently (in the last 30 days) cyberbullied. Male victims usually experience cyberbullying through gaming systems, multiplayer online games, Facebook, computer instant messages, and cell phone text messages. They commonly have experienced someone spreading rumors about them online and someone threatening to hurt them online. They do not usually experience cyberbullying through email, Twitter, virtual worlds, and PictureMail or VideoMail. Uncommon methods include someone posting a mean or hurtful picture or video of them online and someone creating a mean or hurtful web page.

Almost all of the female middle school students have seen other people being cyberbullied. Most of them have experienced cyberbullying before. About a third of the female middle school students had been cyberbullied in the last 30 days.

The female victims usually experience cyberbullying through Facebook, computer instant messages, cell phone text messages, cell phones, and different social networking sites, other than Facebook. These students are frequently cyberbullied by offenders spreading rumors about them online and posting mean or hurtful comments about them online. The female victims are less frequently cyberbullied on Twitter, multiplayer online games, YouTube, PictureMail or VideoMail, and virtual worlds. Uncommon methods include someone creating a mean or hurtful web page about them or someone posting a mean or hurtful video of them online.

Cyberbullying offender scale. Results for the male and female offenders scales are presented in Table 23. The most common and least common survey items for male offenders are presented in Table 24 and Table 25. Table 26 and Table 27 present the most and least common reported COS survey items for the female students.

Over half of the male students at this west Michigan middle school have not cyberbullied someone in their lifetime. However, there were a moderate number of students who admitted to cyberbullying “once” or “a few times.” The majority of male students have not cyberbullied someone recently (in the last 30 days).

Table 23

Cyberbullying Offender Scale for Male and Female Students at a West Michigan Middle School

Item	Males			Mean	Females			Mean
	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)		Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	
In my lifetime, I have cyberbullied others	58.9% (96)	38.1% (62)	3.1% (5)	1.6871	45.2% (57)	46.8% (59)	7.9% (10)	1.9524
In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied others	87.1% (142)	11.7% (19)	1.2% (2)	1.1902	78.6% (99)	21.4% (27)	0% (0)	1.2778

**Note: n = 163 for the male students and n = 126 for the female students*

The male offenders are more likely to threaten to hurt someone online and post mean or hurtful comments about someone online. They are also likely to cyberbully others through gaming systems, Facebook, online games, in a chat room, and through cell phone text messages. No male offender reported to cyberbullying someone by posting a mean or hurtful video, through email, Twitter, and PictureMail or VideoMail. The male offenders do not usually cyberbully through Instagram and YouTube or create a mean or hurtful webpage about someone.

Slightly more than half of the female students at this west Michigan middle school have cyberbullied others in their lifetime. Less than a quarter admitted to

Table 24

Most Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Male Offenders at a West Michigan Middle School (Highest to Lowest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have cyberbullied someone while playing online with Xbox, Wii, PSP, Playstation, or similar device	76.1% (124)	17.1% (28)	6.1% (10)	1.4691
... I have cyberbullied someone on Facebook	89.0% (145)	9.2% (15)	1.8% (3)	1.1656
... I have cyberbullied someone while playing online in a massive multiplayer game	89.0% (145)	9.2% (15)	1.2% (2)	1.1605
... I have threatened to hurt someone online	92.0% (150)	7.3% (12)	0.6% (1)	1.0982
... I have posted mean or hurtful comments about someone online	93.9% (153)	6.1% (10)	0% (0)	1.0798
... I have cyberbullied someone in a chat room	94.5% (154)	5.5% (9)	0% (0)	1.0736
... I have threatened to hurt someone through a cell phone text	95.7% (156)	4.3% (7)	0% (0)	1.0675

*Note: n = 163

Table 25

Least Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Male Offenders at a West Michigan Middle School (Lowest to Highest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have posted a mean or hurtful video online of someone	100.0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.0000
... I have cyberbullied someone through email	100.0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.0000
... I have cyberbullied someone through PictureMail or VideoMail	100.0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.0000
... I have cyberbullied someone on Twitter	100.0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.0000
... I have created a mean or hurtful web page about someone	99.4% (162)	0.6% (1)	0% (0)	1.0061
... I have cyberbullied someone on Instagram	99.4% (162)	0.6% (1)	0% (0)	1.0123
... I have cyberbullied someone on YouTube	98.8% (161)	1.2% (2)	0% (0)	1.0123

*Note: n = 163

Table 26

Most Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Female Offenders at a West Michigan Middle School (Highest to Lowest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have cyberbullied someone on Facebook	75.4% (95)	24.6% (31)	0% (0)	1.3810
... I have cyberbullied someone through computer instant messages	79.4% (100)	19.1% (24)	1.6% (2)	1.2857
... I have posted mean or hurtful comments about someone online	81.0% (102)	17.5% (22)	1.6% (2)	1.2698
... I have spread rumors about someone online	83.3% (105)	15.1% (19)	1.6% (2)	1.2302
... I have cyberbullied someone through cell phone text messages	87.3% (110)	11.9% (15)	0.8% (1)	1.1667
... I have cyberbullied someone in a chat room	88.1% (111)	11.1% (14)	0.8% (1)	1.1587
... I have cyberbullied someone through a cell phone	88.9% (112)	11.1% (14)	0% (0)	1.1508

*Note: n = 126

Table 27

Least Commonly Reported Items for Cyberbullying Female Offenders at a West Michigan Middle School (Lowest to Highest)

Item (In the last 30 days...)	Never % (n)	Rare % (n)	Often % (n)	Mean
... I have posted a mean or hurtful video online of someone	99.2% (125)	0.8% (1)	0% (0)	1.0079
... I have cyberbullied someone through PictureMail or VideoMail	99.2% (125)	0.8% (1)	0% (0)	1.0079
... I have created a mean or hurtful web page about someone	99.2% (125)	0.8% (1)	0% (0)	1.0159
... I have cyberbullied someone on Twitter	97.6% (123)	2.4% (3)	0% (0)	1.0238
... I have cyberbullied someone through email	96.0% (121)	4.0% (5)	0% (0)	1.0397
... I have cyberbullied someone while playing a massive multiplayer online game	96.8% (122)	2.4% (3)	0.8% (1)	1.0476
... I have posted a mean or hurtful picture online of someone	96.0% (121)	4.0% (5)	0% (0)	1.0476

*Note: n = 126

cyberbullying others within the last 30 days. The female offenders usually cyberbully others through Facebook, computer instant messages, cell phones and cell phone text messages, as well as chat rooms. They are more likely to post mean or hurtful comments about someone online and spread rumors about someone online. They less commonly post a mean or hurtful video or picture of someone online and create a mean or hurtful web page about someone. Other uncommon methods include Twitter, email, multiplayer online games, and PictureMail or VideoMail.

Comparison between male and female students. Most of the differences observed in the data occurred between genders. Female students are victims and offenders of cyberbullying more than the male students at this school. While overall the methods of cyberbullying are quite similar for males and females, male victims and offenders experience more cyberbullying through threats and online games. Female victims and offenders have a higher frequency than males of cyberbullying through cell phones, text messages, and online websites. Female offenders also cyberbully others more frequently through computer instant messages and spreading rumors about others online.

Qualitative Data

The needs assessment asked three open-ended questions. All three questions were related to how cyberbullying could be prevented by three groups of individuals: teachers, peers, and parents. The qualitative data were analyzed for frequency of content categories. The most prevalent responses are discussed below. The quotes presented in each section are direct and have not been changed despite spelling or grammar errors.

What Could Teachers Do to Prevent Cyberbullying?

Out of 296 completed surveys, 35 (11.8%) students did not provide an answer for this question. The most predominant response identified was that teachers could prevent cyberbullying by talking about it more with students, specifically teaching lessons in class about cyberbullying. One response was “they could talk with students in classes about what it can do to a person.” Two other common responses included that teachers could monitor students’ online activity and not allow Internet or phone usage during school hours. Nineteen students (7.3%) stated that teachers should have accounts on social networking sites in order to help monitor cyberbullying behaviors. Some of the students’ responses related to no Internet or phone use during school hours included “shut down wifi in school except for teachers each havin individual codes” and “lock any access to Facebook or Twitter, misc.”

There were twenty-one students (8%) who stated that teachers could not do anything to prevent cyberbullying. One student stated “nothing cause its on the internet and once its up it can’t go down.” Another stated, “nothing it is inevitable.” Others included “you can’t stop cyberbullying” and “nothing cyberbullying happens everyday and they never say or do anything about it.”

What Could Your Peers Do to Prevent Cyberbullying?

Thirty-seven students (12.5%) did not provide an answer for this question. One of the most prevalent ideas identified as a way for peers to prevent cyberbullying was for students to stand up for each other. Some responses included “if someone cyberbullying say would you like that if they did that to you?” and “I could stick up for someone who is being cyberbullied and even mark the bully’s post or comment as spam or harassment.”

Another common idea identified was for peers to simply not participate in cyberbullying. Students' responses ranged from "just don't do it," "they could not do it themselves and if you don't do it than it won't happen," and "make an end to it just cause they see someone doing it does not make it okay for them to do it." One other common response was to report cyberbullying activity. One student stated, "go to the principal! Or other teachers." Another student stated, "tell a teacher, guardian, and/or loved one about whats happening." Avoiding the Internet and social media was another idea identified. Students indicated that if peers did not utilize these forms of technology, then they would not be cyberbullied.

Twenty-nine students (11.2%) who answered this question were also unsure or did not think peers could do anything to prevent cyberbullying. Some responses related to these beliefs included, "there's not really much, other than not doing it and they don't have much power to stop. Even parents and teachers cyberbully and they should stop" and "nothing cause its on the internet and once its up it can't do down."

What Could Parents Do to Prevent Cyberbullying?

Only twenty-nine students (9.8%) did not provide an answer for this question. The most common response for how parents could prevent cyberbullying was to monitor their child's cyber activity. Roughly 36% of the students at this school wrote a response corresponding to this topic. Responses included, "watch what their kids are doing and saying online and watch all their kids social media" and "check their kids phones or online messaging regularly." Many of these responses mentioned how parents should have the password to their child's social media accounts and how the family computer

should be in a common area in their house to ensure parents can easily monitor online activities.

The second most prevalent area was that parents could limit or put restrictions on Internet and social media use. Many students suggested that parents could delete applications that kids are getting bullied on or simply not allow kids to use those applications or websites. Some responses included “not let their kids go on certain social media until they are the right age” and “restric internet privilages.” The last common idea identified was that parents should talk about cyberbullying more. This included talking about cyberbullying not only with their children, but also involving teachers, the school, police, and parents of the bully.

Conclusion

The results of this scholarly project have been presented. These results are specific to this west Michigan middle school and cannot be generalized to other populations. Many students at this school have been victims of cyberbullying as well as offenders of cyberbullying. There were not many differences observed between the seventh and eighth grade students. However, the eighth grade students reported more instances of threatening behaviors. There were many differences observed between the male and female students. Overall, female students at this school experienced cyberbullying more than the male students. This was observed for both cyberbullying victims and offenders. The methods of cyberbullying also differed, primarily in frequency, between the male and female students. It is notable, that these middle school students did not participate in the more complex media activities, such as creating a webpage about someone or uploading videos.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the findings from this scholarly project. The findings are discussed related to the literature review and conceptual frameworks. The findings from the initial literature review focused on prevention and age. More recent research has explored differences in age and gender. These studies are discussed in comparison to the findings from this scholarly project. Sustainability of the project is then considered. The roles and essentials, identified by the American Association of Colleges of Nurses (AACN, 2006) of the doctorally prepared nurse in practice and their relation to this scholarly project are reviewed. Finally, the limitations and recommendations of this project are discussed.

Summary of the Findings

As presented in Chapter 5, the results were analyzed for the entire middle school, by individual grade, and by gender. Each analysis will be summarized and discussed below followed by a summary of the qualitative findings.

School

Some of the findings from this needs assessment are consistent with the findings found in the literature. In general, this west Michigan middle school demonstrated a higher prevalence of cyberbullying victimization (43.2%) and offenders (41.2%) than some of the findings demonstrated in the literature. However, the majority of the cyberbullying was reported as occurring rarely. This needs assessment analyzed the prevalence and frequency of cyberbullying, whereas other studies only examined the

prevalence. Therefore, it is difficult to determine how comparable these findings are with other studies.

Scholarly project findings. For this west Michigan middle school, most students (85.5%) had seen other students being cyberbullied and most (55.4%) had also been victims of cyberbullying. However, the majority of these students fell under the “rare” category. About 51.3% of the students had rarely seen other people being cyberbullied and 43.2% had rarely been cyberbullied. Even fewer students (3.4%) had been cyberbullied recently, which was defined as “in the last 30 days.” In fact, 78.4% stated they had not been cyberbullied recently. About half (46.3%) of all the students had cyberbullied someone before, while only a few (16.1%) had recently cyberbullied. Again, the majority of the offending students (41.2%) fell into the “rare” category. Where cyberbullying occurs and how it occurs were similar for both the cyberbullying victims and offenders. The least commonly reported items were also similar for victims and offenders.

Findings from the literature. The National Crime and Prevention Council (2007) reported that roughly 43% of the adolescents in the United States (U.S.) have experienced cyberbullying. Among the 7,182 U.S. students in grades 6-10 who were surveyed, Wang, Iannotti, and Nansel (2009) found that 13.6% of adolescents had either been victims or offenders of cyberbullying. Mishna et al. (2011) discussed how prevalence rates of cyberbullying can range anywhere from 10-35%. Patchin and Hinduja (2012a) conducted a literature review related to the prevalence of cyberbullying. A total of 71 articles all published in peer-reviewed journals were included. The results for cyberbullying victimization and offending included a very wide range. Studies found that

2.3% to 72% (21% average) of adolescents had been victims of cyberbullying, whereas 1.2% to 44.1% (15% average) had been offenders of cyberbullying. Similarly, results from Patchin and Hinduja's (Cyberbullying Research Center, 2015) last eight survey studies from 2007-2014 supported that on average, 25.2% of adolescents have been victims of cyberbullying and 16.6% have been offenders.

Grade

Student reports of cyberbullying between the 7th and 8th grade groups were essentially the same. One distinction observed was that the 8th grade students reported the use of threats more frequently, though still infrequently. There are not many studies that specifically compare the methods and prevalence of cyberbullying according to individual grade. Therefore, it is difficult to determine how comparable the data from this scholarly project related to individual grade are with findings from the literature.

Scholarly project findings. The results for the cyberbullying victimization scale were similar by grade. Most of the 7th (85.3%) and 8th (85.7%) grade students had seen others being cyberbullied and most had also been cyberbullied themselves (57.7% for 7th grade and 52.9% for 8th grade). Fewer students had experienced recent (in the last 30 days) cyberbullying: 23% of students in the 7th grade and 20.8% of students in the 8th grade. The majority of the victims for both grades fell under the rare category.

The results were also similar by grade for the cyberbullying offender scale. About half (48.7% for 7th and 59.3% for 8th) of the students in each grade reported that they had never cyberbullied others before. The remaining students (47.4% for 7th and 34.3% for 8th) had cyberbullied others only rarely. Again, many of the 7th (17.3%) and 8th (15%) grade students had not recently cyberbullied someone.

Findings from the literature. Some of these findings correspond to the literature. In a study conducted by Wang et al. (2009), there was no difference found in cyberbullying victimization or offending between grades 6-8. Kowalski and Limber (2007) found no difference in the involvement of cyberbullying between 7th and 8th grade students among the 3,767 U.S. middle school students in grade 6-8 who were surveyed.

For this west Michigan middle school, both grades demonstrated many similarities related to where cyberbullying was experienced and tactics offenders often used. One difference that was found included that threats were a more common cyberbullying method for the 8th grade class, but not the 7th grade class. Students in 8th grade who had been victims of cyberbullying reported this as one of the most common methods. Similarly, 8th grade cyberbullying offenders also reported this as one of the most common methods used to cyberbully someone.

Again, there is a limited amount of literature regarding these phenomena. No studies specific to cyberbullying threatening behaviors were found. However, Ybarra and Mitchell (2007) reported that as age increased so did the frequency of cyberbullying among students. Their study was conducted using a telephone survey of 1,500 students ages 10-17 across the U.S. Likewise, Bauman (2009) surveyed 221 students in grades 5-8, living in the U.S., and found no significant differences in cyberbullying between grades.

Ybarra and Mitchell (2007) explored this association in more detail throughout their study. They proposed the power dynamics online are different and more attractive to older youth. Kiriakidis and Kavoura (2010) discussed how the prevalence of cyberbullying increases with age and how this may be related to certain power dynamics

among youth. Juvonen and Graham (2014) mentioned how a social hierarchy is formed during adolescence, which allows youth to socially explore one another and establish their position. The authors suggested that this is a common reason why middle school students experience cyberbullying the most. It is possible then that the 8th grade students are exploring the social hierarchy and/or trying to establish their position by using more threatening behaviors online.

Gender

There were many distinctions observed in the findings from this needs assessment related to gender. Overall, the female students at this middle school reported that they have been victims of cyberbullying more than the male students. The female students also reported that they cyberbullied others more than the male students. The reported cyberbullying methods varied between the male and female students at this middle school. The findings found in the literature related to cyberbullying and gender are inconsistent. Therefore, it is difficult to determine how the findings from this scholarly project compare.

Scholarly project findings. The female students (94.4%) stated they had seen others being cyberbullied more often than males (79.1%). Similarly, more female students (71.4%) than male students (44.8%) reported that they had been cyberbullied before. A little more than a quarter (28.6%) of the female students reported that they had never been cyberbullied in their lifetime. In comparison, a little more than half (54.6%) of the male students reported that they had never been cyberbullied in their lifetime. A little more than a third (35%) of the female students had been cyberbullied recently, while only 11% of the male students reported this. A little more than half (54.7%) of the

female students compared to less than half (41.2%) of the male students reported to cyberbullying in their lifetime. For recent offenders, these numbers decreased for both females (21.4%) and males (12.9%).

Both female and male victims reported commonly experiencing cyberbullying through Facebook, instant messages, and text messages. Both genders also commonly reported someone spreading rumors about them online. Male students reported they were commonly bullied by someone threatening them or by using gaming systems and multiplayer online games. This contrasted with the female students who did not report any of those, but commonly reported being cyberbullied through cell phones and different social networking sites other than Facebook. The least common ways male and female students reported that they experienced cyberbullying at this school were similar.

Both male and female offenders reported that they commonly cyberbullied someone through Facebook, text messages, or in a chat room. Posting comments about someone online was a common method for both genders as well. Distinctions in how males or females cyberbully someone were similar to what the victims reported. The male offenders reported that they usually cyberbullied someone through gaming systems and multiplayer online games. They also were more likely to report that they cyberbullied someone by threatening him or her. This contrasted to the female offenders who were more likely to indicate that they cyberbullied through cell phones and instant messages. They indicated with more frequency that they spread rumors about someone online. Both genders indicated that they usually do not cyberbully others through Twitter, email, and PictureMail or VideoMail. It was not common for them to create a web page about someone or post a mean video online of someone.

Findings from the literature. Findings from the literature are inconsistent regarding gender differences and cyberbullying. Some studies have found no difference in cyberbullying behaviors and gender (Hinduja & Patchin, 2007; Strohmeier, Spiel, & Gradinger, 2008). Kowalski and Limber (2007) reported that females participated in cyberbullying more than males. Smith et al. (2008) found that females were more likely to be victims of cyberbullying as well as perpetrators of cyberbullying. Other studies found females were more likely to be victims of cyberbullying, but males were still more likely to be perpetrators of cyberbullying (Bhat, 2008; Li, 2005; & Wang et al., 2009). In contrast, a study done by Li (2007) found that males were more likely to be victims of cyberbullying.

Bauman (2009) discussed that the differences in findings could be due to varying cyberbullying methods between genders. Kowalski and Limber (2007) examined gender differences and methods of cyberbullying. The authors reported few differences between males and females and the most frequent methods were instant messaging, chat rooms, websites, and email. Although email was not a common method for either males or females at this west Michigan middle school, instant messaging, chat rooms, and Facebook were. The similarities found between Kowalski and Limber (2007) and the findings from this scholarly project could imply that middle school adolescents mostly use the Internet. This implication is supported by a study conducted by Madden et al. (2013), which found that 95% of adolescents, who were living in the U.S. and were from the ages 12-17 (n = 802), accessed the Internet. Internet usage was also found to be higher than cell phone usage.

Bauman (2009) found that females were more likely to cyberbully through email and blogs than males. Keith and Martin (2005) found that females commonly cyberbullied others through chat rooms and instant messages whereas males made online threats and created web sites. The male victims at this middle school reported that they commonly experienced cyberbullying through threats and the perpetrators in this study cited this as a common way to cyberbully someone. Overall, there are similarities between the literature and the findings from this scholarly project.

Qualitative Findings

The participants identified ways that teachers could prevent cyberbullying including that they could talk about it more, monitor student's activities, and restrict phone and Internet use. For peers it was suggested that they could stand up for each other, not participate in cyberbullying, and report it. It is interesting to note, that many students stated that there was nothing teachers or their peers could do to prevent cyberbullying. For parents, the approaches identified were to monitor cyber activity, limit or put restrictions on electronics, and talk about cyberbullying more.

Given that cyberbullying is a newer phenomenon, there have been a limited number of studies on the topic. There have been even fewer qualitative studies on the prevention of cyberbullying. Vandebosch and Van Cleemput (2008) did a study on adolescents' perceptions regarding cyberbullying but did not address prevention. Mishna, Saini, and Solomon (2009) explored adolescents' perceptions on the characteristics of cyberbullying, but did not explore prevention. Mishna, McLuckie, and Saini (2008) investigated adolescents' perceptions on the impact of cyberbullying abuse as well as reasons for fear of reporting the behavior to a trusted adult, but did not consider

prevention. Varjas, Talley, Meyers, Parris, and Cutts (2010) explored high school students' perceptions on motivation for cyberbullying, but did not address prevention. Overall, no qualitative studies were found related to cyberbullying prevention. Therefore, the qualitative findings from this scholarly project cannot be compared to the literature.

Findings Related to Social Learning and Social Cognitive Theories

The SLT and the SCT were used as conceptual frameworks for this scholarly project. Both were chosen to better understand the phenomenon of cyberbullying. When analyzing the findings from this project within these theories, certain implications can be made.

These theories suggest that adolescents, who are in an environment where they are exposed to cyberbullying and observe this behavior being modeled, are more likely to participate in cyberbullying. Likewise, adolescents are not as likely to participate in cyberbullying if they are in an environment where they do not observe this behavior being modeled. According to these theories, adolescents will also tend to avoid cyberbullying behaviors if they know it will lead to punishment. They tend to participate in this behavior if they think it will lead to a reward (Swearer et al., 2014). The reported frequency of cyberbullying victims and offenders at this school was somewhat higher than what was found in the literature. Based on the SLT and SCT, it is possible that the students at this west Michigan middle school see cyberbullying modeled or believe cyberbullying will lead to a reward. It is also likely that the environment at school or home is one where the students are highly exposed to cyberbullying.

The SLT and SCT state that adolescents' beliefs play a role in whether they will cyberbully someone. Adolescents' beliefs highly influence their behavior, despite that

they may see cyberbullying through observational learning (Swearer et al., 2014). Since the rates of cyberbullying are relatively higher at this middle school compared to other rates reported in the literature, it is likely that the offenders believe cyberbullying to be an acceptable behavior. In other words, even if some of these adolescents are in an environment where cyberbullying is not being modeled, they still are going to have their own beliefs regarding this behavior. If they believe this behavior to be acceptable, they will most likely participate in cyberbullying. In comparison, if adolescents do not believe this behavior is acceptable, they most likely will not participate in this behavior regardless of whether or not they are in an environment where it is frequently modeled. All of these implications can be made based on the SLT and SCT.

Given that the rates of reported cyberbullying are higher at this west Michigan middle school than findings found in the literature, these theories can also be used to guide prevention efforts. Based on the SLT and SCT theories, efforts should be made to decrease the frequency of cyberbullying behaviors. If adolescents are not exposed to this behavior, they are less likely to model it. Efforts should also be made to decrease rewards for cyberbullying behaviors and increase efforts to make the behavior less rewarding. Adolescents are less likely to model a certain behavior if they know it will lead to punishment.

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Roles and Essentials

During the implementation of this scholarly project, a variety of DNP roles were utilized. These roles include: clinician, scholar, leader, and educator.

Clinician

The role of clinician was highly utilized in the beginning of this project. As a nurse who currently works in the pediatric intensive care unit, adolescents suffering from suicidal thoughts and depression were seen frequently. Observing the outcomes of cyberbullying firsthand is what served as an inspiration for this project. The DNP essential most involved during this role was Essential VIII: Advanced Nursing Practice.

Scholar

As this project developed, the role of scholar was highly utilized. Using the model for evidence-based practice change, the scholar role was facilitated by having a questioning attitude, conducting an assessment of the phenomenon, and then identifying that a problem existed. Exemplars of this role included conducting a thorough review of the literature, analyzing and evaluating the evidence, translating the findings into practice, identifying a survey instrument, and connecting with experts in the field of cyberbullying. The DNP essentials involved during this role were: (a) Essential I: Scientific Underpinnings for Practice; (b) Essential III: Clinical Scholarship and Analytical Methods for Evidence-Based Practice; (c) Essential VI: Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes; (d) Essential VII: Clinical Prevention and Population Health for Improving the Nation's Health; and (e) Essential VIII: Advanced Nursing Practice.

Leader

The leadership role was applied by serving as the director for this scholarly project. Exemplars of this role included serving as the liaison between the college of nursing and this west Michigan middle school, attending various meetings regarding

involvement for this project, researching and outlining the plans for this project, and coordinating efforts with key stakeholders related to its implementation. The DNP essentials that were integrated were: (a) Essential II: Organizational and Systems Leadership for Quality Improvement and Systems Thinking; (b) Essential V: Health Care Policy for Advocacy in Health Care; (c) Essential VI: Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes; and (d) Essential VIII: Advanced Nursing Practice.

Educator

During implementation of this scholarly project, the educator role evolved. Competencies demonstrated regarding this role included teaching key stakeholders on the rationale for the project as well as the phenomenon of cyberbullying. Stakeholders educated were parents, teachers, students, and board members at this west Michigan middle school. The essentials utilized throughout this role were: (a) Essential VI: Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes and (b) Essential VIII: Advanced Nursing Practice.

Limitations and Strengths

With any survey methodology, certain limitations occur. First, missing data can interfere with the representativeness of the sample (Coughlan, Cronin, & Ryan, 2009). For this scholarly project, there were missing data. This occurred randomly throughout the survey, but mainly occurred for the open-ended questions. It is important to mention that prior to the survey, students were instructed that if they did not feel comfortable answering a question they did not have to answer.

Second, it can be difficult to read or interpret responses to qualitative questions. Improper interpretation can lead to bias with results (Coughlan et al., 2009). Some of the qualitative responses on the needs assessment were difficult to read due to illegible handwriting. When this happened, the responses were not included and, therefore, treated as missing data. This was done versus attempting to interpret the responses in order to eliminate any bias from the results.

Third, the validity and accuracy is sometimes questioned with survey methodology (Polit & Beck, 2012). In other words, the findings from this study are only valid if the participants were truthful in their responses. Fourth, response bias is another potential issue. One example of this is extreme responses, which is when participants consistently select the extreme alternatives (Polit & Beck, 2012). There were several surveys that had “never” selected for every question. This would indicate that the student had never been cyberbullied in his or her lifetime as well as had never cyberbullied another student before. These answers could be true of the respondent; it could also be an example of extreme alternative response bias, or it could be because the student did not want to take the survey and circled the first answer for every question without reading it. Unfortunately, this behavior was observed while some of the students were taking the survey.

Fifth, the subjectivity of the qualitative findings could be viewed as a limitation. However, the findings from this scholarly project are not intended to be generalizable to other populations. Sixth, many of the students did not know what a “peer” was. After a few students voiced this concern, a definition was provided with the introduction of the survey for the remainder of the classes. Prior to that, this misunderstanding could have

led to some students not answering that question. Last, the list of responses for the ethnicity question was not exhaustive.

Despite the limitations, this scholarly project has strengths. The project provided this middle school with baseline data related to cyberbullying. It confirmed that cyberbullying is occurring and to what degree. The data are valuable in that it assists in supporting future prevention efforts. The organization can also use these data to decide on which areas they would like to focus. The organization can use these data as a reference point and compare it with future assessments once prevention efforts are underway. Additionally, the project had a sound methodology and most of the middle school students completed the survey. This ensures that the data are fairly representative of the sample. The qualitative findings provide the organization with their students' beliefs and perceptions regarding cyberbullying.

Sustainability and Recommendations

This scholarly project has served as a pilot study to confirm the degree of cyberbullying at a west Michigan middle school. The findings are meaningful to this organization and can be used to guide future prevention efforts. The findings also provide baseline data to which the results of future prevention efforts can be compared. At this time the project of a needs assessment has been completed. Based on feasibility, key stakeholders from this organization will choose the next appropriate step in addressing cyberbullying at this west Michigan middle school.

It is important to determine what the appropriate next step could be for this west Michigan middle school. Due to the limited amount of evidence found in the literature related to cyberbullying, many investigators are in support of what has already been

found as an effective intervention for traditional bullying: a whole-school approach. A whole-school approach is one that involves the school system, parents, and sometimes the community (Beale & Hall, 2007; Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use, 2005; Feinberg & Robey, 2009; Patchin & Hinduja, 2012b; Stopbullying.gov, n.d.a; von Mares & Petermann, 2012). Based on the findings from this project, this would be an appropriate recommendation for this organization.

In relation to a whole-school approach, one thing this organization already does to prevent cyberbullying includes incorporating bullying lessons into the 7th grade students' health class. These lessons are taught once a week for six-weeks. However, the needs assessment demonstrated that a significant number of 7th grade students at this middle school are already experiencing cyberbullying. Therefore, it is recommended to educate the students at this school on cyberbullying before they enter 7th grade, perhaps as early as 4th or 5th grade. At this west Michigan middle school there is one part-time counselor for the elementary students. Therefore, this recommendation is more likely to be accomplished if more school counselors are available to the elementary students.

Another recommendation would be to tailor cyberbullying lessons based on the findings from the needs assessment. One example would be to incorporate differences in cyberbullying methods between males and females. It could also be beneficial to offer after school groups and activities for girls who have experienced cyberbullying. Having more options for girls at this school might be necessary since girls experienced cyberbullying more often than boys. Another role included within a whole-school approach is the parents. At this west Michigan middle school, parental involvement

regarding cyberbullying is limited. It is recommended to educate the parents on cyberbullying and gain commitment from them toward cyberbullying prevention.

Parents should be educated on how and where cyberbullying occurs and ways to monitor or prevent it (Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use, n.d). Parents should also be educated on the importance of having routine discussions with their son or daughter about cyberbullying (Hilt, 2013). These discussions can inform adolescents about the outcomes of cyberbullying as well as strengthen parent-child relationships. Strengthening this relationship can encourage adolescents to report cyberbullying to their parents (von Marees & Petermann, 2012). Beale and Hall (2007) discussed the importance of parents monitoring adolescents' cyber activity as well as being knowledgeable about popular social media sites and chat rooms adolescents commonly access. The results from this survey have provided this organization with where these students most commonly experience and participate in cyberbullying. All of these guidelines coincide with the recommendation of involving the parents at this west Michigan middle school.

Finally, as this school continues to work to prevent cyberbullying, another potential recommendation would be to update their policy on bullying. Currently, the policy does include a clause that addresses cyberbullying. However, as more information is obtained about the cyberbullying behaviors at this school, it would be appropriate to further develop the policy. For example, the school's policy regarding bullying can include information specific to the needs of their students. It would also be important and recommended to make sure the policy remains consistent with "Matt's Safe School Law" (Legislative Council, State of Michigan, 2009).

Overall, a whole-school approach requires commitment and utilizes a variety of individuals and resources. In order to accomplish this, it is recommended that more school counselors are available at this school. It is also recommended that this school become involved with an APRN or school-based health clinic. An APRN is a valuable resource that can help assist with bullying efforts and the outcomes associated with bullying.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) Role

Since cyberbullying is a phenomenon that can occur secretly and is not always transparent, it often can be disregarded as to whose responsibility it is to manage. Parents and teachers do not always see it occurring or are not always aware of it. Therefore, it is crucial for APRNs to have a role in addressing this problem. APRNs who care for children and adolescents need to be aware of this newer phenomenon and incorporate it into health screenings. Since cyberbullying behaviors change as the adolescent ages, specific questions regarding cyberbullying should be asked at all appointments. APRNs also need to be knowledgeable regarding this topic so they educate adolescents and parents about the impact it has and important safety measures.

APRNs should also make an effort to establish relationships with school systems. Collaboration between a school and APRNs is an effective way to help adolescents manage various health-related conditions (Shaw, Clayton, Dodd, & Rigby, 2004). This could be another way to help the students at this west Michigan middle school. Overall, APRNs have a clear role in helping to address cyberbullying.

Conclusion

The results from this scholarly project have been summarized and discussed in relation to the literature and conceptual frameworks. The DNP roles and Essentials have also been outlined in relation to this scholarly project. Limitations and strengths have been reviewed and a recommendation for this organization has been made in order to help prevent cyberbullying. The APRN role has also been reviewed in relation to cyberbullying prevention.

APPENDIX A

Sample Characteristics Questions

Please circle **ONE** answer for each question

1) How old are you?

11 12 13 14 15 16

2) What grade are you in?

7th 8th

3) Are you a boy or a girl?

Boy Girl

4) Do you receive free or reduced meals at school?

Yes No I don't know

5) Circle which ethnicity you are:

- Non-Hispanic White
- Black-African American
- Latino or Hispanic
- American Indian
- Multi-ethnic
- I prefer not to answer

6) What could teachers do to prevent cyberbullying?

7) What could parents do to prevent cyberbullying?

8) What could your peers do to prevent cyberbullying?

APPENDIX B

Cyberbullying and Online Aggression Survey Instrument
by Sameer Hinduja Ph. D. and Justin Patchin Ph. D. (2014 version)

To protect your privacy, please do NOT put your name any of the pages

Cyberbullying is when someone repeatedly harasses, mistreats, or makes fun of another person online or while using cell phones or other electronic devices.

Circle **ONE** answer for each statement

1) I have seen other people being cyberbullied.

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

2) In my lifetime, I have been cyberbullied.

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

3) In the last 30 days, I have been cyberbullied.

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

4) In the last 30 days, someone posted mean or hurtful comments about me online

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

5) In the last 30 days, someone posted a mean or hurtful picture online of me

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

6) In the last 30 days, someone posted a mean or hurtful video online of me

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

7) In the last 30 days, someone created a mean or hurtful web page about me

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

8) In the last 30 days, someone spread rumors about me online

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

9) In the last 30 days, someone threatened to hurt me through a cell phone text message

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

10) In the last 30 day, someone threatened to hurt me online

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

11) In the last 30 days, someone pretended to be me online and acted in a way that was mean or hurtful to me

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

12) In the last 30 days, I have been cyberbullied in a chat room

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

13) In the last 30 days, I have been cyberbullied through email

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

14) In the last 30 days, I have been cyberbullied through computer instant messages

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

15) In the last 30 days, I have been cyberbullied through cell phone text messages

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

16) In the last 30 days, I have been cyberbullied through a cell phone

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

17) In the last 30 days, I have been cyberbullied through PictureMail or VideoMail

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

18) In the past 30 days, I have been cyberbullied on Facebook

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

19) In the past 30 days, I have been cyberbullied on a different social networking web site (other than Facebook)

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

20) In the past 30 days, I have been cyberbullied on Twitter

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

21) In the past 30 days, I have been cyberbullied on YouTube

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

22) In the past 30 days, I have been cyberbullied on Instagram

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

23) In the past 30 days, I have been cyberbullied in virtual worlds such as Second Life, Gaia, or Habbo Hotel

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

24) In the past 30 days, I have been cyberbullied while playing a massive multiplayer online game such as World of Warcraft, Everquest, Guild Wars, or Runescape

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

25) In the past 30 days, I have been cyberbullied while playing online with Xbox, Playstation, Wii, PSP or similar device

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

Cyberbullying is when someone repeatedly harasses, mistreats, or makes fun of another person online or while using cell phones or other electronic devices.

Circle **ONE** answer for each statement

1) In my lifetime, I have cyberbullied others.

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

2) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied others.

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

3) In the last 30 days, I have posted mean or hurtful comments about someone online

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

4) In the last 30 days, I have posted a mean or hurtful picture online of someone

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

5) In the last 30 days, I have posted a mean or hurtful video online of someone

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

6) In the last 30 days, I have spread rumors about someone online

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

7) In the last 30 days, I have threatened to hurt someone online

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

8) In the last 30 days, I have threatened to hurt someone through a cell phone text message

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

9) In the last 30 days, I have created a mean or hurtful web page about someone

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

10) In the last 30 days, I have pretended to be someone else online and acted in a way that was mean or hurtful to them

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

11) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied someone in a chat room

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

12) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied someone through email

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

- 13) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied someone through instant messages
- | | | | | |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| Never | Once | A few times | Several times | Many times |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
- 14) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied someone through cell phone text messages
- | | | | | |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| Never | Once | A few times | Several times | Many times |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
- 15) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied someone through a cell phone
- | | | | | |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| Never | Once | A few times | Several times | Many times |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
- 16) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied someone through PictureMail or VideoMail
- | | | | | |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| Never | Once | A few times | Several times | Many times |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
- 17) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied someone on Facebook
- | | | | | |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| Never | Once | A few times | Several times | Many times |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
- 18) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied someone on a different social networking web site (other than Facebook)
- | | | | | |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| Never | Once | A few times | Several times | Many times |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
- 19) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied someone on Twitter
- | | | | | |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| Never | Once | A few times | Several times | Many times |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
- 20) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied someone on YouTube
- | | | | | |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| Never | Once | A few times | Several times | Many times |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
- 21) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied someone on Instagram
- | | | | | |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| Never | Once | A few times | Several times | Many times |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
- 22) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied someone in virtual worlds such as Second Life, Gaia, or Habbo Hotel
- | | | | | |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| Never | Once | A few times | Several times | Many times |
|-------|------|-------------|---------------|------------|

23) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied someone while playing a massive multiplayer online game such as World of Warcraft, Everquest, Guild Wars, or Runescape

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

24) In the last 30 days, I have cyberbullied someone while playing online with Xbox, Playstation, Wii, PSP or similar device

Never Once A few times Several times Many times

APPENDIX C

Permission for Use of the Instrument

University of Wisconsin
Eau Claire

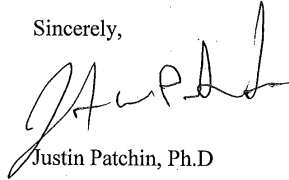
Department of Political Science
Hibbard Hall 401
www.uwec.edu/polisci
715-836-5744 | 715-836-6036 fax

December 5, 2014

To whom it may concern,

I grant Ashley Eggleston, doctor of nursing practice student at Grand Valley State University, permission to use the Cyberbullying and Online Aggression Survey Instrument created by myself, Justin Patchin, and Sameer Hinduja. I also grant permission for her final dissertation work to be uploaded into Grand Valley State University's library program titled ScholarWorks, with proper attribution for our survey instrument.

Sincerely,



Justin Patchin, Ph.D

APPENDIX D

Letter of Support for the Scholarly Project from the Parent Club

To whom it may concern,

Ashley Eggleston, doctor of nursing practice student at Grand Valley State University, has been attending the Oakridge parent club meetings. During this time, she has presented her project and has been available to answer any questions or concerns from the parents and/or teachers. All the members really like her ideas and her project has the support from the Oakridge parent club.

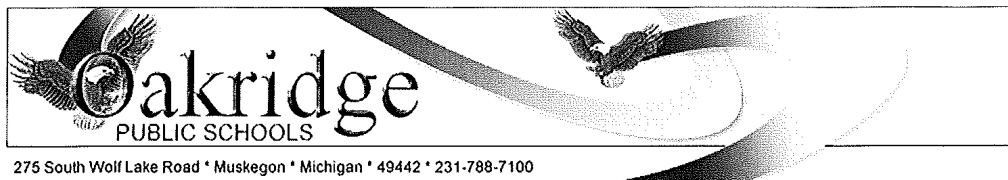
Thank you,



Jessica Norton
President of Oakridge Parent Club

APPENDIX E

Letter of Support for the Scholarly Project from the Principal

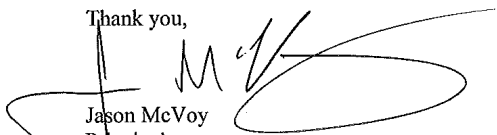


January 15, 2015

To Whom It May Concern,

I have discussed with Ashley Eggleston the details and intention of her final scholarly project: a cyberbullying needs assessment of middle school students. I support the implementation of this project at Oakridge Middle School and look forward to the results.

Thank you,



Jason McVoy
Principal
Oakridge Middle/High School

APPENDIX F

White Paper on Cyberbullying

Background



Adolescents have always been a population that has heavily used technology. However, researchers have now concluded that there has been a drastic *change in American culture*: instead of adolescents using technology only while at home or school, adolescents are now constantly using technology. This shift in culture and widespread use of technology allows for multiple venues for cyberbullying to occur (Lenhart, 2012; Madden, Lenhart, Duggan, Cortesi, & Gasser, 2013).

Over half of the adolescents living in the United States have been cyberbullied. Half of these adolescents have also participated in **cyberbullying** themselves (Family First Aid, 2013c; United States Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS, n.d.]). About 73% of adolescents have witnessed frequent cyberbullying and 68% feel that cyberbullying is a serious problem (DoSomething.org, n.d.).

Researchers have also found that adolescents are more likely to participate in this kind of bullying versus traditional bullying because it is not face-to-face (Hilt, 2013). In other words, cyberbullying may be easier for adolescents to carry out since they are communicating through technology and not directly to the individual. Unfortunately, this permits more and more adolescents to participate in cyberbullying.

Addressing the issue of cyberbullying coincides with Oakridge public schools value system. Oakridge public schools are committed to a healthy learning environment and culture as stated in the mission statement. This is also one of the seven strategic goal areas set forth by the community, staff, students, and school board of Oakridge (Oakridge Public Schools, 2014).

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to provide Oakridge middle school (MS) with more information about cyberbullying and their students. This information can then be used to tailor specific interventions as an effort to help decrease cyberbullying at Oakridge. The following white paper includes a recommendation for a needs assessment at Oakridge MS. This project will not require a modification in current practice or require a change in purchasing.

Significance

Cyberbullying is capable of producing detrimental outcomes for adolescents. Victims of cyberbullying are more likely to use **drugs and alcohol** and do poorly in school (USDHHS, n.d.). These victims are also more likely to enter into the criminal justice system. Furthermore, victims suffer from low self-esteem, physical and mental health disorders like depression and anxiety, and subsequently are **more likely to consider suicide** (Bucchianeri, Eisenberg, Wall, Piran, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2014; Family First Aid, 2013d; USDHHS, n.d.).



adolescents are also more likely to enter into the criminal justice system. Furthermore, victims suffer from low self-esteem, physical and mental health disorders like depression and anxiety, and subsequently are **more likely to consider suicide** (Bucchianeri, Eisenberg, Wall, Piran, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2014; Family First Aid, 2013d; USDHHS, n.d.).

Cyberbullying also affects the school and community negatively. Adolescents who do poorer in school, transfer schools, or drop out can result in a loss in revenue for the school as well as wasted education public spending (Highmark Foundation, n.d.; Perezniето, Harper, Clench, & Coarsa, 2010). Cyberbullying affects the overall community and economy. Businesses tend not to choose to invest in a community associated with bullying, house prices remain low, and microeconomics may also suffer. Consumers produce this from a general lack of investment. The result is an overall decrease in value of the school and surrounding community (Perezniето et al., 2010).

Current Practice

Currently, Oakridge MS has participated in a variety of anti-bullying efforts. One example is incorporating bullying lessons during some of the health classes. Oakridge has also brought in professional speakers to talk during a pep assembly. Another is the “Be Nice November,” and “Don’t Be Mean December” campaign. These are month long events with various activities for the students to participate in each week. The parent club also plans an event and fundraiser related to bullying. Oakridge is also involved in a three county wide anti-bullying task force. This group meets monthly to discuss and support prevention bullying efforts.

New Evidence

Despite the increasing prevalence of cyberbullying among adolescents, there has been **little research** conducted at the highest level of evidence regarding cyberbullying prevention and/or intervention. Therefore, researchers and professional organizations recommend **beginning with a needs assessment**. A needs assessment is part of the planning phase. It gathers information related to a specific area of concern within an organization.

Benefits of conducting a needs assessment:

- ✦ Identifies the incidence of a problem
- ✦ Guides prevention efforts
- ✦ Pinpoints areas of concern
- ✦ Enhances understanding of the problem
- ✦ Enhances awareness
- ✦ Motivates individuals to do something about the problem
- ✦ Enhances support/buy-in
- ✦ Validates the magnitude of the problem
- ✦ Identifies risk and protective factors
- ✦ Findings can serve as a baseline and later be used to evaluate whether current prevention efforts are working or not



Gathering information through a needs assessment is a critical step in addressing cyberbullying

(Feinberg & Robey, 2008; Feinberg & Robey, 2009; The Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use, 2005; The National Association of School Psychologists, n.d.; USDHHS, n.d.; Willard, 2011).

Intervention

The proposed intervention is to **conduct a cyberbullying needs assessment of the middle school students at Oakridge**. Prior to the students completing the survey, an informational letter will be sent home to the parents of the seventh and eighth grade students. Parents will have the option of excusing their child from completing the survey, if preferred. During health class, the students will receive a lesson on cyberbullying and then complete the survey. The survey will be anonymous and no identifying information will be collected. The completed surveys will be stored at GVSU's research lab in a locked drawer.

The survey to be used is the *Cyberbullying and Online Aggression Instrument* (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014). This survey assesses for adolescents who participate in cyberbullying as well as those who have been victims of cyberbullying. This survey has been used in six different research studies from 2007-2014. It was also pilot-tested and refined in four different studies from 2003-2007. It has been administered in over 90 schools and approximately 15,000 adolescents' ages 11-18 have taken the survey.

Cost Analysis

Oakridge has not adopted nor participates in a formal bullying program. Therefore, there is zero cost to the current bullying efforts that occur at Oakridge MS. The needs assessment is projected to have **no additional cost** to Oakridge. The survey is free to use. The only foreseen cost is time that the students will need to complete the survey. Having the DNP student facilitate the project and administering the survey during an already scheduled bullying lesson during health class will combat this issue. Information from the survey could eventually be utilized to help address the issue of cyberbullying at Oakridge. The findings could also have an impact on the associated financial burdens already discussed.



Considerations

In 2013, Oakridge participated in the Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth survey. This survey assessed for high-risk behaviors such as substance abuse, weapon use, sexual activity, and bullying. Unfortunately, only three questions were asked regarding cyberbullying (Michigan Department of Education, 2014). Therefore, **Oakridge still has limited knowledge related to their student's cyberbullying tendencies.** Information from this cyberbullying needs assessment will help guide future prevention/intervention strategies for the students of Oakridge MS.

Recommendations

The recommendation of this white paper is to permit a cyberbullying needs assessment of the middle school students at Oakridge. Based on the results from this survey, further recommendations related to future cyberbullying prevention efforts can be made.



Contact Information

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact the facilitator of this project:

Ashley Eggleston BSN, RN, CCRN

GVSU DNP Student

thompsas@mail.gvsu.edu

APPENDIX G

Parental Notification Letter/Opt-out Form

Greetings! As you may remember, some of the middle school students participated in the Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth Survey a couple of years ago. This survey briefly asked about cyberbullying, but was not very specific. Cyberbullying is happening more and has terrible outcomes. The middle school students now have a chance to take part in another survey that is just related to cyberbullying. The survey will ask about cyberbullying behaviors of 7th and 8th grade students.

Students will be asked to complete the survey during a class period. Participation in the survey will cause little or no risk to any student. The survey has been designed to protect each student’s privacy. **Students will not be asked to provide their name or any other identifying information.** Also, no student will ever be mentioned by name in any reported results. The results of this survey will help students in the future by providing teachers and staff with information that is specific to cyberbullying that occurs within Oakridge. We would like all 7th and 8th grade students to take part in the survey, but the survey is voluntary. No action will be taken against the school, you, or the student if the student does not participate. Students can skip any question that they do not wish to answer. In addition, students may stop participating in the survey at any point without penalty.

The surveys are available at the school for your review. If you have any questions you may contact Ashley Eggleston (thompsas@mail.gvsu.edu or 231-499-8640) or Dr. Andrea Bostrom (bostroma@gvsu.edu or 616-331-7172).

If you object to your child’s participation in the survey, please complete the form below. **You only need to return this form if you do not give your child permission to take the survey.** Please see the other side of this form for more facts about the survey. Thank you.

Student’s Name: _____ Grade: _____

I have read and understand this form concerning the cyberbullying survey.
[] My child **does not** have my permission to participate.

Parent’s Signature: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Date: _____

Note: You DO NOT need to return this form if you give your child permission.

Fact Sheet for Parents/Guardians

Q. Why is the survey being done?

A. The Michigan Departments of Education and Community Health survey provided information that Oakridge students have experienced cyberbullying, but we would like more information about this. This survey asks more details about where cyberbullying is occurring and how it is occurring. Based on the information from the survey, teachers and staff can address specific needs of students at Oakridge middle school.

Q. What kinds of questions are asked on the survey?

A. The survey includes questions about a range of cyberbullying behaviors, including different ways kids experience cyberbullying and how often it occurs.

Q. Will student participation be anonymous? Will student privacy be protected?

A. Yes. Survey administration procedures have been designed to protect student privacy and allow for anonymous participation. Students will not enter their names or other identifying information at any point during this survey.

Q. Will students be surveyed again to see how their behavior changes?

A. No. It will be impossible to track students who participate because no identifying information will be collected.

Q. How was my child selected?

A. All students in grades 7 and 8 are invited to participate in the survey. Research shows this is the most frequent age group that is cyberbullied or participates in cyberbullying.

Q. How long will it take to fill out the survey?

A. It will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

APPENDIX H

Script

Hello everyone. My name is Ms. Ashley. I have been listening and coming to some of your health classes where you have been talking about bullying. Cyberbullying is when someone repeatedly harasses, mistreats, or makes fun of another person online or while using cell phones or other electronic devices.

The teachers and staff want to know more about this kind of bullying, but since it happens through electronic devices it is sometimes hard to know if it is happening at all. The information from this survey will let your teachers know if cyberbullying is happening at your school. It could even help stop cyberbullying.

Today in class you will be doing a survey. You will be answering some questions about cyberbullying. You also will be answering a few questions about yourself. I want you to know that if you do not feel comfortable answering any question, then you can leave it blank. If at anytime you have a question about the survey, raise your hand and someone will be around to help you.

This survey does not count for a grade. You will also notice that at the top of the page, there is no spot for you to write your name. Please do not write your name anywhere on the survey or mention anyone else's name. All of the answers will be kept secret. No one will know who answered the questions. When you are finished, place your survey in the envelope and seal it before turning it in. The surveys will be kept at Grand Valley in a locked drawer.

Does anyone have any questions?

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