GUARDIAN PERCEPTIONS OF CYBERBULLYING AT THE JUNIOR HIGH LEVEL

A Record of Study

by

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ABSTRACT

Cyberbullying is a modern threat that continues to plague vulnerable adolescent children. As their access to technology increases, so does their risk for cyberbullying. Schools have a unique challenge to utilize technology for learning while keeping children safe from online harassment. This mixed-methods study was designed to examine guardian perceptions of cyberbullying at the junior high level. Specifically, this included the determination of issues and concerns held by the students' guardians and the extent to which they believe cyberbullying is a problem at their campus. In addition, the study intended to identify the wants and needs of guardians in order for them to be empowered to intervene should cyberbullying issues occur with their students. The quantitative portion of the study included a survey shared electronically with guardians. The qualitative portion of the study involved a focus group held with guardians via Zoom. The findings from this study identified several key pieces of data: guardians perceive cyberbullying to be a critical issue, the majority of guardians indicated cyberbullying to be either somewhat of a problem or a problem to a great extent at their school, and guardians indicated a need for targeted education on specific topics for themselves and their students. Conclusions drawn from this study generated three recommendations for the campus: to offer targeted guardian-education sessions, to vary the types of communication platforms between the school and guardians, and to improve existing student education on the topic of cyberbullying.

DEDICATION

This record of study is dedicated to my parents, Kim and Carol Bennetts. Without their encouragement and reassurance, I would not have had the courage to pursue this degree. Without their unwavering support of my husband and children, I would not have been given the gift of time to be able to complete the requirements of this degree. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for being there any given Sunday, for taking the kiddos for lunches and long drives, for bath time, for dinners and jammies, and for many hours of emotional counseling and support. I love you both.

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NOMENCLATURE

AA/AS   associate of arts/science

app   application

BA/BS   bachelor of arts/science

DHHS   Department of Health and Human Services

FDA   Food and Drug Administration

GOF   goodness of fit

IRB   Institutional Review Board

ISD   independent school district

LSSP   licensed specialist in school psychology

MA/MS   master of arts/science

MCAR   missing completely at random

PE   physical education

PM   private message

PTA   parent–teacher association

RQ   research question

SD   standard deviation

SNS   social-networking site

SPSS   Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

TV   television

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

The Context

Multiple factors impact the school experiences of junior high students. Students face the difficult task of navigating coursework that will prepare them for the rigors of high school and postsecondary settings while also navigating interpersonal peer relationships. Schools are focused on building communities of learners where students not only develop academic knowledge bases but also their identities (Kaplan & Flum, 2012). As though these factors are not challenging enough, students of this age are also undergoing developmentally driven physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioral changes (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010; Wang & Gu, 2019).

The ways in which adolescents interact with their peers can have a lasting impact on how they approach future social situations (Barth, 2015). The need to feel connected to peer groups is a common experience for adolescents as they work to create their own identities away from their parents (Barth, 2015; Felt & Robb, 2016). Students' desire for feedback and connection with others is heightened when they have immediate access to social media and internet sites (Marwick & boyd, 2014). While this interaction can boost an adolescent's self-esteem and confidence by giving them a platform on which to practice developing and sustaining relationships with others, it is important that guardians and teachers closely monitor their use of social media and internet sites (Wang & Gu, 2019).

Technology has had a significant impact on the experience had by students in school today. Advancements in technology provide learners the ability to access digital content, which increases their breadth of subject knowledge and gives them an opportunity

to interact in different ways with the world around them (Hoffmann & Ramirez, 2018). In working to support 21st-century learning, teachers have brought technology into their classrooms at increasing rates because they have seen how technology positively impacts their instruction and engages students in the lesson cycle (Alismail & McGuire, 2015). While technology has streamlined the ability to reach out to others easily, possible consequences exist for increased use. Students who use the internet and internet tools for lengthy periods of time are significantly more likely to be cybervictims, cyberbullies, or both (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010; Rice et al., 2015).

When guardians feel that their children require access to technology for learning, they begin to purchase devices for them to use such as tablets, e-readers, or smartphones. A study by Felt and Robb (2016) noted that these devices not only enable access to educational content, but they also provide a way for students to connect with their family members and peers through social-networking applications (apps) and social-networking sites (SNSs). This rise in global access by students, combined with the increased use of social media and apps, has created an environment in which students are vulnerable to—and at risk for— cyberbullying. Researchers have broadly defined cyberbullying as intentionally using technology to hurt, harm, harass, bully, or be cruel toward another person (Elledge et al., 2013; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Olweus and Limber (2018) specifically defined cyberbullying as "bullying via electronic forms of contact or communication- such as emails, mobile, chat room, instant messaging and websites" (p. 139).

The Problem

Cyberbullying is a major issue for students across the United States today (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Lancaster, 2018). One of the issues faced by students is their continual victimization online and through social media. The rise in bullying happening online and through social media has been so swift that administrators and guardians struggle to stay informed (Young et al., 2017). Cases reported to school staff are being addressed, sometimes resulting in disciplinary consequences, yet students continue to participate in this toxic behavior. Many campuses attempt to inform students on how to be safe online through digital citizenship programs or curricula (Lancaster, 2018). However, Young et al. (2017) noted a continued need to teach responsible use of technology in the United States in order to address cyberbullying. While some intervention programs exist, most have not been evaluated for their impact on cyberbullying behaviors and may not be developmentally appropriate for their intended audience (Lancaster, 2018; Young et al., 2017).

Bullying is a common topic of discussion in educational work (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011, 2013). While traditional bullying was the primary focus of research for many years, Olweus and Limber (2018) noted the rise of cyberbullying due to increased access to technology by students today. Felt and Robb (2016) found that 67% of teenagers own a smartphone and that over half of them feel an "addiction" to their device. This access allows students a way to communicate with others in positive and supportive ways but also in cruel and hurtful ways, sometimes anonymously.

Cyberbullying is similar to traditional bullying in that both methods involve an imbalance of power between the victim and the bully. With cyberbullying, the imbalance

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of power is in the bully's technological access. A bully can commit online harassment at any time of day and completely anonymously, which gives them power over their victim (Elledge et al., 2013). The intent and/or ability to spread a hurtful message to a large audience over time can create a pattern of abuse. Distributing the message to multiple people or posting it in a public place where others can view the content means that the victim could face repeated negative messages over time (Olweus & Limber, 2018).

Given recent state legislation mandating schools to address and intervene in bullying situations, schools not only have an ethical obligation to address bullying, but they also have a legal obligation (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011; Kowalski et al., 2014). Some school districts have worked to develop a clear definition of bullying and have implemented education outreach for both students and guardians on what bullying is and what it is not. In Texas, Kameron Independent School District (ISD) (2019a) has defined bullying as "a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct" (p. 4). To meet the criteria for bullying, these acts must cause harm or intend to cause harm to the victim, create a threatening environment, disrupt the educational environment, or infringe on the rights of the person while they are at school (Kameron ISD, 2020a). The same criteria apply when attempting to determine whether an incident is considered cyberbullying. Kameron ISD (2018) has defined cyberbullying as "bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant

messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an internet website, or any other internet-based communication tool" (p. 1).

Researchers are obligated to "articulate definitions of bullying and cyberbullying that are valid, reliable, and replicable, but also in ways that can inform the work of school administrators, legislators and policymakers" (Patchin & Hinduja, 2015, p. 70). A clear definition of what bullying is and what it is not can allow stakeholders to determine whether the behavior is considered bullying so that they are able to respond appropriately. As administrators investigate reports of bullying and cyberbullying, they must consider all these factors to determine whether the student behavior taking place meets the criteria for bullying or cyberbullying.

Significance of the Problem

Cyberbullying is a problem that affects many individuals. Hinduja and Patchin (2012) canvassed approximately 4,400 students, and of these students, 20% indicated having been a victim of cyberbullying. Surprisingly 20% also indicated having bullied someone online, while 10% of participants indicated having been both a victim and a bully online. Cases of cyberbullying have continued to increase. Adolescent and teen victimization rose from 18.8% in 2007 to 34% in 2015. It is important to note that these numbers only include reported cases—which means that the actual number of cases could be much higher (Miller, 2017).

Cyberbullying is an extremely serious issue because of the many negative consequences that can arise. Cyberbullying can impact a victim's desire to attend school, cause low self-esteem or depression, create problems within the family or the school environment, and even elicit suicidal thoughts (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Miller, 2017;

Patchin & Hinduja, 2010). In severe cases, the victim may exhibit self-harming behaviors or even take their own life (van Geel et al., 2014). Students who have experienced cyberbullying are more than 5 times more likely to have suicidal thoughts and 11 times more likely to attempt suicide (Hinduja & Patchin, 2019). Research has indicated a correlation between using online SNSs and an increased likelihood of self-harming behaviors and psychological distress (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014; Memon et al., 2018).

Because cyberbullying can result in negative consequences for a victimized child at school, it is important that schools be prepared to address the issue (Young et al., 2017). Hinduja and Patchin (2013) examined adolescent influences related to cyberbullying and found teens to be less likely to participate in bullying when they believe that their parents will punish them. In addition, the study recommended that schools work to develop a culture where bullying is not tolerated in order to impact how students interact with one another in more respectful ways. Young et al. (2017) found that schools should also work with parents to ensure student safety through a partnership between the school administrators and parents.

Guardian Factor

Unfortunately, many guardians often struggle with how to appropriately monitor their children online (Legate et al., 2019). The extent to which a guardian monitors a child's online presence is a difficult-to-measure variable. Reid Chassiakos et al. (2016) noted that the way in which a guardian interacts with social media is a strong indicator of how their child will interact with social media as well. Guardians who use a device in front of their children model the length of time spent on social media, as well as the type of social media apps and sites that are acceptable (Reid Chassiakos et al., 2016). In addition,

when a child uses social media, their guardian's ability to interact with them verbally and emotionally is hindered. Whether or not a child has face-to-face interaction with those around them has an impact on the formation of their relationships (Barth, 2015). Lastly, the SNSs accessed by guardians can expose children to content that is not age-appropriate. Children can become desensitized to adult content simply by viewing it over time, such as watching online videos (Reid Chassiakos et al., 2016).

Midamba and Moreno (2019) examined the difference between parent and adolescent views on cyberbullying with the use of focus groups. They solicited the impressions and opinions of each group and cataloged strengths and weaknesses for each based on feedback. The adolescent group expressed wanting more support from their parents in being safe online, while parents expressed feeling helpless in being able to guide them effectively. When analyzing how parents monitor their children's online presence, only one-half of parents of "tweens" (ages 8 to 12) monitor their children online, and only one-quarter of parents of teens (ages 13 to 18) monitor their children online (Rideout & Robb, 2019). When parents take an active role and are educated on mediating their children's online presence, they are better able to discuss possible challenging situations and guide their children through difficult issues to reduce the likelihood of a problem (Hutson et al., 2018; Wright, 2017). These data clearly identify a specific area of growth for guardians that can be addressed through education and outreach.

School Factor

Through my own personal experience as an educator and the process of researching this topic, I see the importance of continued support on the topic of cyberbullying. In Kameron ISD, some data are collected on student experiences with bullying. Historically,

these data have addressed traditional bullying, with some questions related specifically to cyberbullying. Surveys often rely on students self-reporting concerns and their personal perception of the frequency and impact of bullying. Unfortunately, not all students complete the survey, and many students choose not to take the survey seriously. In addition, data are collected by individual teachers who administer the survey. If teachers do not take the time to share it with students, then large groups of students will not be able to provide feedback on the topic.

While schools are attempting to address cyberbullying, many incidents go unreported or administrators struggle to know how best to handle them when balancing complicated district policy and state laws (Young et al., 2017). Some districts, such as Kameron ISD, have chosen to provide methods for students to communicate anonymously, through an app or website, any student behaviors that they believe are specific to bullying, are generally harmful, or are inappropriate. Unfortunately, some students will not disclose bullying or cyberbullying events for fear of repercussion. In Kameron ISD, the anonymous-reporting feature has been effective in collecting specific details from those who are willing to share their concerns.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this mixed-methods study:

1. What are guardian perceptions of cyberbullying and to what degree do guardians perceive cyberbullying to be a problem at their child's school?

2. What do guardians need and/or want to be empowered to intervene and/or prevent cyberbullying?

Based upon the data collected during this study, I supplied recommendations to the administration of the campus under study regarding how they can educate and support guardians on this topic as students transition from elementary school to junior high school and beyond. The goal of this study was to provide recommendations for Twin Cities Junior High to reduce the number of cyberbullying incidents experienced by students at the school.

Personal Context

I have experienced firsthand the pain endured by a child when bullied. My father's job required our family to relocate every 2 years from the time I was in kindergarten until sixth grade. This meant that I was often the "new" student in the room. I was overweight, much taller than my same-age peers, and therefore frequently teased by other students. As I grew older, I continued to observe bullying taking place in the halls of my schools, on the school bus, and in the neighborhood areas where children gathered. Experiencing bullying firsthand was a transformative experience for me as I realized the impact it can have on a child.

My 18-year career in education has involved several different roles. I have served as a band director, counselor, testing coordinator, and assistant principal. As a classroom teacher, I had a zero-tolerance policy for bullying. I modeled how to be kind and respectful to one another, and I found that establishing clear expectations for my students' behavior caused them to be less likely to treat each other in cruel ways. When transitioning to serve as a counselor, I spent a majority of my time helping students navigate interpersonal relationship issues and bullying. These experiences led me to develop and present an annual campus-wide antibullying program that taught students how to build coping skills

and elicit help from school staff. Now, as a school administrator, I see the full range and severity of bullying. I am responsible for enforcing laws and policies that protect students and enact harsh punishment for confirmed cases of bullying, along with educating students and guardians regarding what bullying is and what it is not.

I have seen the full spectrum of bullying behavior, from verbal and physical bullying to online harassment and cruelty. I have observed the ever-expanding presence of technology while teaching in my classroom and supervising the hallways, cafeteria, and school grounds. As the availability of technology has increased, so have the issues faced by students. Some of these issues involve accessing inappropriate content, sending inappropriate messages, and theft or even vandalism of others' devices. Verbal and physical bullying is overt and easily identifiable through eyewitness accounts or security-camera footage. Cyberbullying, on the other hand, can be done without the victim having any knowledge of who is bullying them, which makes investigating the situation reliant on evidence found through technological expertise.

Significant Stakeholders

Guardians of junior high students are the target population of this study. Because Kameron ISD allows phones to be carried on campuses, many students possess them. While some students do not own a phone, many use tablets and are able to access apps and texting features using campus Wi-Fi. As students transition to the junior high level, many students and guardians are not prepared for the difficulties they may encounter using personal devices.

Campus administrators support students as they navigate junior high experiences. Their goal is to ensure student safety as they travel to and from school, as well as while

they are on campus. When students encounter difficult situations or make poor choices, administrators must address all parties appropriately with the goal of reducing future issues. This study aimed to identify guardian perceptions of cyberbullying, as well as how the campus can support guardians on the topic of cyberbullying. In order to support the administration with educating guardians, I shared the results of this record of study with the campus leadership team so that they can continue to empower guardians and students to address cyberbullying.

Important Terms

Block. Restricting access to a site or app; removing the access of another user to one's content.

Bully-victim. One who has been bullied themselves and then becomes a bully toward others.

Bystander. One who watches a bullying situation unfold.

Campus administration. Campus principal and four assistant principals at Twin Cities Junior High School (three grade-level and one for student support).

Cyberbullicide. When a victim commits suicide following intense harassment online.

Cyberbullying. Malicious or cruel behavior that takes place using a variety of electronic means (instant messaging, social networking, chat tools, smartphones, etc.) that is intended or perceived as done intentionally to harm another individual.

Follow. A one-way connection on a social media site allowing only the user to view content posted on another party's page or platform. This is often associated with public figures or businesses.

Friend. The act of adding someone to a list of "friends" on a social media platform. This is a two-way connection and allows both parties access to one another's content, as well as the ability to communicate through the app or site.

Guardian. A biological parent, parent guardian, or primary caregiver who is responsible for the student and/or has been legally granted the ability to make educational decisions. The terms "guardian" and "parent" are used interchangeably to reflect the multifaceted ways in which caregivers and families can be represented.

Guardian mediation. The way in and extent to which a guardian monitors their child's digital presence online.

Guardianship. Varying levels of protection in place to keep a child safe from a threat.

Junior high school. Grades six to eight.

Like. A digital expression of support for a post.

Online disinhibition effect. Behavior that many people exhibit when they do and say things online that they would not normally do or say in face-to-face interactions.

Participant-bully. One who also makes negative comments in addition to the primary bully.

Post. A social media status update or an item shared on a blog or forum.

Social media/networking. Technologies and apps that allow users to connect with, communicate with, and participate in various communities and situations.

Texting. Using a smartphone to send a written message or a visual symbol to another smartphone.

Third-person effect. Guardian belief that their child is less susceptible to cyberbullying situations than other children.

Traditional bullying. Verbal, physical, or emotional harassment that is intended to harm another individual and that creates an imbalance of power.

Zoom. Online platform for holding meetings virtually.

Closing Thoughts on Chapter I

As access to technology and platforms for communication continue to increase, cyberbullying is an issue that will not go away. The digital world is becoming more and more convenient, and children are gaining access at younger ages. The need for schools to educate and support students and guardians is critical to reduce the issues faced by children. While schools continue to respond to cyberbullying issues that arise, they also must find ways to proactively educate students and guardians on the increasing risk associated with digital access and social media. Guardians entrust their children to teachers with the expectation that they will be kept safe. While protecting students' physical safety is proving an easier task for schools, they must also maintain their safety in the digital world as well.

The goal of this study was to identify the perceptions of guardians of students at Twin Cities Junior High School on cyberbullying. This was accomplished using an online survey to identify guardian perceptions, as well as a focus group to determine ways in which the junior high staff can empower guardians to intervene and/or prevent cyberbullying. With the data collected from this study, recommendations were made to the campus administration on ways that they can better support guardians regarding cyberbullying.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Adolescents face many issues as they navigate the path from childhood to adulthood. One of the more common issues encountered by adolescents during this transition is bullying (Lancaster, 2018). Kameron ISD (2020a) has defined bullying as "a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct" (p. 4). Advancements in technology, as well as the platforms where communication takes place, have transformed the means with which bullies operate into a digital version of bullying known as cyberbullying. Adolescents today grow up in a world in which internet-based SNSs serve as the primary method of staying in communication with others rather than face-to-face interaction (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). The internet allows instant access to users across the globe, and the rise in social media use has changed the way that people connect and stay connected (Batool et al., 2017).

Digital interaction is as common as face-to-face interaction and takes place in both schools and homes (Rideout & Robb, 2019). Over 97% of youth across the United States have access to the internet, and much of the access comes in the form of tablets, smartphones, and smart televisions (TVs) (Rideout & Robb, 2019). Technological devices, including computers, tablets, and smartphones are readily available in classrooms and in homes. Smartphone ownership has increased dramatically for 12-year-olds, up from 41% in 2015 to 69% in 2019. These numbers increase with age, indicating that as many as 83% of 15-year-olds possess a smartphone. The amount of screen time that children are

spending on their devices clocks in, on average, at 4 hr, 44 min per day for tweens (8- to 12-year-olds) and 7 hr, 22 min per day for teens (13- to 18-year-olds) (Rideout & Robb, 2019).

While devices give adolescents access to the digital world, they have also been tied to a significant increase in cyberbullying, which has the potential to impact children of all ages and genders (Morgan, 2013). According to a 2010 study, 20% to 40% of children will encounter a cyberbullying issue at some point in their youth, and the age at which cyberbullying is most apparent is between 12- and 14-years-old (Tokunaga, 2010). Results for 2017 of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System showed 14.9% of students surveyed to have been bullied through electronic means within the last 12 months (Kann et al., 2018). Selkie et al. (2016) found that the number of adolescents reporting being victims of cyberbullying in the last 12 months ranged from 1% to as high as 41%. Those reporting having participated in cyberbullying as the bully ranged from 15% to 41%.

While the internet and the use of personal devices have been associated with significant advancements in technology, critics believe that their use has created major problems with social interaction and communication (Yust, 2017). Researchers around the world have identified cyberbullying as one of the foremost issues faced by adolescents, and one which impacts all cultures and geographic locations (Craig et al., 2009; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Lancaster, 2018). While many studies have been conducted on cyberbullying, unanswered questions unfortunately still abound, and the topic continues to be discussed by guardians, school staff, and legislators.

Defining Bullying and Cyberbullying

The rise in various bullying behaviors has led to variations in the definition. Kueny and Zirkel (2012) defined bullying as "a pattern of physical or emotional abuse that some students intentionally inflict on less powerful peers" (p. 22). Direct forms of bullying can involve physical aggression or verbal aggression. Indirect bullying comes in the form of exclusion, gossip, and rumors (Craig et al., 2009). Almost all definitions include repeated patterns of negative behavior by an individual or group where there is an imbalance of power (Olweus & Limber, 2018). While face-to-face bullying served as the primary means for inflicting harm and harassment for many years, the rise of technological access has led to a new form of bullying known as cyberbullying.

Research on bullying as a social problem dates back to the 1970s (Olweus, 1997). It was not until the 21st century, however, that cyberbullying became a topic for scholarly articles (Zych et al., 2015). Mark and Ratliffe (2011) defined cyberbullying as "the intentional act of online/digital intimidation, embarrassment, or harassment" (p. 92). Hinduja and Patchin (2014) defined cyberbullying as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices" (p. 2). Joining multiple definitions together, Tokunaga (2010) described cyberbullying as "any behavior performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others" (p. 278). While the definitions of cyberbullying may vary, all involve intentionally using technology or technological devices to harass and harm others.

Cyberbullying remains closely connected to traditional bullying. Hinduja and Patchin (2008) stated that cyberbullying has developed from the combination of

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"adolescent aggression and electronic communication" (p. 131), and the fact that it has risen in frequency is unsettling. Research has indicated a significant overlap existent between incidents of traditional bullying and incidents of cyberbullying (Coelho & Romão, 2018). Patchin and Hinduja (2015) found that students who are victims of traditional bullying at school are at greater risk for becoming victims of cyberbullying. Another study found that 90% of students who had experienced cyberbullying also reported experiencing at least one incident of traditional bullying (Olweus & Limber, 2018). Coelho and Romão (2018) found 52.4% of perpetrators of cyberbullying to also be traditional bullies.

One major difference between traditional bullying and cyberbullying is that cyberbullying victims can be harassed outside of school—in the community, in their home environment, or anywhere access to the internet is available (Tanrikulu, 2018). Others have noted that the number of possible victims is infinite because so many individuals have access to the internet all over the world (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Mesch (2018) noted that many individuals hold a greater risk for being victimized given their exposure to risky online situations. Unfortunately, this accessibility has complicated researching and analyzing important factors because both technology and access are constantly changing. Suler (2004) described a phenomenon called the "online disinhibition effect" (p. 321). This effect describes the behavior that many people exhibit when they do and say things online that they would not normally do or say in face-to-face interactions. Individuals who desire to be mean or even cruel to a person now have the means to do so with a large audience and with little fear of being discovered.

While it is easy for cyberbullies to remain anonymous online, Juvonen and Gross (2008) found 73% of their study's respondents to be fairly sure of their bullies' identities.

Hinduja and Patchin (2008) noted that in some cases, a victim of traditional bullying, who may be physically smaller, may choose to go online and bully the perpetrator because the internet hides their physical attributes. Bauman (2013) determined that some victims who experience harassment may become aggressive themselves and choose to cyberbully others. Also, the negative comments made often go back and forth online, resulting in both parties becoming part of the problem.

Rise of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a serious problem facing children of all ages. Patchin and Hinduja (2018) noted that while researchers have long studied the topic, bullying continues to harm the "emotional, psychological, academic, and behavioral development of youth" (p. 198). Because of the anonymous nature of their activity, cyberbullies can cause serious emotional and psychological harm to their victims that can have a lasting impact. Cyberbullying is made even more severe because bullies can cause this harm often without facing any repercussions (Morgan, 2013). When harassment takes place digitally, the victim may not know the identity of the bully, and therefore, the bully escapes consequence.

Because cyberbullying allows for anonymous negative behavior to take place, a cyberbully can often hide and therefore not have to deal with a negative response from the victim. Likewise, the anonymous nature of cyberbullying means that the bully can sometimes avoid consequence. Hinduja and Patchin (2008) noted that cyberbullies may be less inclined to use mean and cruel words if they were to deal with the victim face to face rather than from a remote location. In many cases, having to witness the negative reaction of another person may act as prevention for bullying and harassment (Hinduja & Patchin,

2008). Cyberbullies are often bolder because they are not addressing the victim face to face (Miller, 2017).

Mehari et al. (2018) looked at youths', guardians', and primary care providers' perceptions of cyberbullying. Both youths and providers indicated a large barrier to guardian monitoring of media use to be the guardians' lack of knowledge of technological skills. Guardians reported the most significant barrier to monitoring their children online to be time and the many other demands placed on them such as work, caring for other children, and taking care of the home. All three groups communicated fear of repercussions as a reason for lack of reporting cyberbullying.

Researchers continue to look at factors that contribute to adolescents becoming cyberbullies. In a study by Mark and Ratliffe (2011), the main reason given by cyberbullies as to why they commit bullying was retaliation for a negative act done to them by someone else. Bullies in the study justified their mean behavior toward the victim as "deserved" given a previous negative interaction, while victims have reported perceiving bullying as random and unwarranted (Fluck, 2017). Rice et al. (2015) found a relationship between students who have high internet use (more than 3 hr per day) and being cyberbullies, victims, or both. Students who spend a significant amount of time using electronic devices increase their likelihood of becoming a victim of cyberbullying (Ahlfors, 2010). On the other hand, Cho and Yoo (2017) found amount of internet use not to impact the likelihood of someone being a cyberbully, rather the nature of the content accessed playing a role. All these factors contribute to adolescents being impacted by cyberbullying.

Ramifications of Bullying

Research has indicated that incidents of bullying can cause serious physical and emotional harm to both the victim and the bully. Batool et al. (2017) stated that cyberbullying impacts one's life "emotionally, academically, and socially" (p. 135). Kwak and Oh (2017) found a high occurrence of bullies participating in both traditional bullying and cyberbullying. Factors correlated with bullying behaviors include high levels of aggression and low levels of self-control, as well as lack of social support, particularly for cyberbullying.

Anxiety and Depression

Because of repeated negative interactions between bullies and victims, victims often exhibit high levels of anxiety (Bauman et al., 2013; Coelho & Romão, 2018). In their study, Batool et al. (2017) reported 27.5% of victims of cyberbullying to feel their anxiety impacting their ability to leave the house, causing them to always feel anxious when leaving the house. Coelho and Romão (2018) found all students involved in bullying or cyberbullying to report significantly higher levels of social anxiety and social withdrawal. The highest levels of social anxiety and withdrawal in this study were found in bully-victims, those who have been bullied themselves and then become a bully toward others.

Depression is a serious issue for anyone to face, especially someone who is victimized (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014; Kowalski et al., 2014). Victims of bullying often exhibit symptoms of depression (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014; Kowalski et al., 2014). In some cases, mean and cruel treatment through cyberbullying can cause an individual to withdraw and can also cause serious physical and emotional issues (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). In a study by Batool et al. (2017), 25.1% of respondents reported always feeling depressed after

receiving threats on SNSs. While victims who experience anxiety and depression are encouraged to visit their healthcare providers, there is limited intervention available in the healthcare setting for victims of cyberbullying (Hutson et al., 2018).

Truancy and Academic Issues

As the severity of cyberbullying increases, so can the desire to avoid the school environment and schoolwork. Victims who experience serious cyberbullying may struggle academically and consider dropping out of school (Mark & Ratliffe, 2011). Students who are bullied miss school more frequently and have significantly lower grades (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). When bullying happens (either face to face or in digital form), it can cause students to have negative feelings toward the school environment and want to avoid being there (Payne & Hutzell, 2017). This desire of a victim to avoid encountering a bully can impact not only their current situation, but also their future potential in school and in their career.

Isolation

The ability to access the internet anywhere has led to individuals no longer needing human contact to complete tasks previously done face to face. Batool et al. (2017) found that cyberbullying affects relationships and causes victims to feel isolated. In fact, 40.6% of their study respondents reported rumors on social media causing them to feel isolated from their friends. Juvonen and Gross (2008) noted that incidents of cyberbullying can be especially difficult for students to handle as they are often by themselves when online, which contributes to a feeling of isolation. When cyberbullying uses indirect forms such as exclusion, it can cause a victim to feel isolated further (Hicks et al., 2016). Continued

feelings of isolation can make an individual desire less connection with others and perpetuate the problem (Batool et al., 2017).

Suicide

The most severe consequence of cyberbullying is when a person is driven to commit suicide (Reid Chassiakos et al., 2016). Yust (2017) described incidents of "cyberbullicide": when a victim commits "suicide following intense harassment online" (p. 111). Victims of cyberbullying may also consider committing acts of physical violence (Mark & Ratliffe, 2011). Several cases of children who have committed suicide due to cyberbullying have made national headlines. In 2010, 18-year-old Tyler Clementi committed suicide by jumping off a bridge in New York after a private kiss with another male was shared on the internet by his roommate. In 2012, 15-year-old Amanda Todd committed suicide due to torment she received from strangers over a photo showing her topless that had been shared on the internet. In 2013, 14-year-old Hannah Smith took her life after she experienced harassment on an SNS by anonymous users (Davis & Koepke, 2016). Unfortunately, these are only a few of the many incidents of suicide that have been documented as attributed to cyberbullying.

<div align="center">

Impact of Gender and Age

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Age has an impact on bullying methods. Typically, younger children, who have underdeveloped emotional capacities, resort to direct forms of bullying such as physical and verbal aggression. These students often deal with face-to-face bullying including physical contact and negative rumors. As students' emotional maturity develops, an increase in indirect forms of bullying occurs (Craig et al., 2009). Tokunaga (2010) synthesized the literature on various age groups impacted by cyberbullying and determined

that seventh and eighth graders face the greatest risk for cyberbullying. As children

transition from elementary to high school and begin to have access to more technology,

bullying moves into cyberbullying such as harassing and mean text messaging (Payne &

Hutzell, 2017). Patchin and Hinduja (2018) examined cyberbullying prevalence in 10- to

15-year-old students. Their data showed 20.3% of students to report having bullied

someone and 27% to report having "called other students mean names, made fun of, or

teased" (p. 198).

There are many factors that can impact a child's formation and the ability to

navigate difficult bullying situations. Craig et al. (2009) identified three areas that affect

the prevalence of bullying at different ages. The first area is how children's psychological,

physical, and cognitive skills develop. The development of a child's skills may make them

susceptible to becoming a bully or a victim. The second area is a child's level of

development of social skills and the social experiences they have. The better equipped the

child is for dealing with social situations, the more prepared they will be for handling

difficult ones that arise. The third area is the academic and social demands at varying

levels of education (elementary, junior high, and high schools). As children navigate the

school environment at different ages and levels, they are presented with complex academic

and social situations (Craig et al., 2009).

Gender can also play a factor in bullying issues. Across all age groups, Craig et al.

(2009) noted that traditional-bullying rates appear to be higher in males than in females;

however, reports of victimization are higher in females than in males. When it comes to

direct versus indirect means, some researchers have noticed a difference between males

and females. Males tend to bully others using direct means such as physical aggression and

verbal aggression, while females typically utilize indirect means (Craig et al., 2009; Payne & Hutzell, 2017). The indirect issues faced by females are rumors, being left out of situations, and general teasing, while males are physically harmed or have their belongings tampered with. While the methods of bullying may differ between males and females, the impact on their emotional well-being is similar and significant (Tokunaga, 2010).

Helping both females and males develop appropriate relationships can be a complicated process. Because females typically have higher rates of relational aggression, some studies have indicated higher rates of cyberbullying as well because cyberbullying can be a form of relational aggression (Rice et al., 2015). In a study by Batool et al. (2017), females reported feeling that cyberbullying had damaged their relationships, whereas males reported feeling neutral. The researchers concluded that cyberbullying affects females more than males in the areas of emotional impact and academic performance (Batool et al., 2017). Because females often place more value on the emotional aspects of their relationships, bullying can cause significant harm to their academic and career goals.

Cyberbullying Methods

The rise of cyberbullying has had a significant impact on adolescents' ability to participate safely online (Tokunaga, 2010). Bullies have unlimited access to their victims through multiple methods of digital access including social media, the internet, and text messaging. These forms of bullying can be done anonymously, and a negative message can be distributed quickly to a large audience. The ease and intensity with which harassment takes place can cause increased harm to the victim (Feinberg & Robey, 2009). Cyberbullying can be both severe and incessant.

Social media has made instant connection to friends and family around the world possible. A variety of SNSs have been around since the 1990s when America Online and Yahoo offered ways for people to connect via the internet (Kite et al., 2010). Hicks et al. (2016) described the rise in SNSs such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat as increasing in popularity significantly over time and becoming new avenues where cyberbullying can take place. These SNSs allow users to post content and comment on others' content. Snapchat, for instance, grants users the ability to post content that will "disappear" after a predetermined amount of time. While the original post may no longer be visible on the poster's feed, other users can still preserve the post, however, and even distribute it to other people. The "disappearing" feature has also created a way for bullies to post what they believe to be temporary mean messages or images (Hicks et al., 2016). Hicks et al. (2016) also described the concept of "subtweeting," where a Twitter user creates a fake account for the sole purpose of making mean, cruel, and often false comments on other users' feeds (p. 381). Berriman and Thomson (2015) described YouTube "vlogging," where individuals can create a video blog and post it for others to watch, comment on, and share. SNSs also often serve as places where school issues continue to play out after students are no longer on campus (Marwick & boyd, 2014). Students use these sites to garner followers and find people who will join them in choosing sides in a contested situation. To complicate matters, even though SNSs typically ask that children be 13-years-old for usage, many children begin using them at a much younger age, both with and without the knowledge of their guardians (Weeden et al., 2013).

Methods used to bully and harass others online can take many forms. These methods include text messages, phone calls, e-mails, chat rooms, instant messages, role-

playing games, online voting booths, and SNSs (Feinberg & Robey, 2009). Bullies may

choose to victimize others by sending mean text messages, making negative comments on

SNSs, sharing inappropriate pictures, or making intimidating statements (Batool et al.,

2017). Others have defined another method of cyberbullying called "sexting," which is

"the posting or texting of sexually explicit images" (Yust, 2017, p. 114). This method of

communication can lead to cyberbullying when one party pressures another to send

explicit pictures.

Feinberg and Robey (2009) found that cyberbullying can involve "stalking, threats,

harassment, impersonation, humiliation, trickery, and exclusion" (p. 26). Willard (2006)

defined various forms of cyberbullying as follows:

- flaming—directing angry and vulgar language against another, akin to fighting
  online

- harassment—sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages repeatedly

- denigration—"dissing" someone online; sending or posting cruel gossip about a
  person to damage their reputation

- impersonation—breaking into someone's e-mail account, posing as that person,
  and sending messages to make the person look bad or get them into trouble

- outing—sharing someone's secrets, embarrassing information, or images online

- exclusion—excluding someone from an online group like a "buddy list"

- cyberstalking—sending messages intended to threaten or intimidate someone
  (p. 56)

In a study by Davis and Koepke (2016), 40% of the student sample reported

someone having said "nasty" things about them online (p. 521). The researchers also noted

a greater correlation between participants who had used phones to access digital content being victimized as compared with participants who had utilized the internet. Possible reasons for this could be that most people prefer to use their phones for the purpose of communicating with others, thus making them more vulnerable for negative interaction (Davis & Koepke, 2016).

The internet is a common place for adolescent issues to play out because many adolescents seek attention from large groups of peers (Sasson & Mesch, 2014). Yust (2017) found that bullies often seek others to join with them, either as a participant-bully, who also makes negative comments, or as a bystander, who watches the situation unfold. Berriman and Thomson (2015) identified four types of adolescent digital user: incompetent/victim, fan/lurker, geek, and e-celeb (see Figure 1) (p. 588). The four types are related to the amount of digital presence they have online (visibility) and the types of activity they utilize online (participation). The researchers described that there are characteristics of each of these types that put them at risk for cyberbullying situations. *Fans/lurkers* have low visibility and low participation because they typically only like and comment on others' posts rather than add new content themselves. *Geeks* have high participation and low visibility because they typically create interesting new content but often use an alias or do so anonymously. *E-celebs* have high visibility and high participation as they share everything they do online and seek as much attention and as many followers as possible. *Incompetents/victims* have high visibility and low participation due to other people sharing things on their behalf or tagging them. This group is the most at risk given their increased exposure online and their lack of participation, thus allowing other users to bully them and spread their content to others in mean ways.

Figure 1

Four Types of Adolescent Digital User (Berriman & Thomson, 2015)

High Participation

3. The geek
animations
lets play
music videos
fan fiction
fake identity channels

4. The e-celeb
celebrity
daily vlogging
YouTuber
Twitter

Low Visibility

High Visibility

2. The fan/lurker
commenting
following
liking
sharing
lurking

1. The incompetent /victim
tagged
shared
fraping
sexting

Low Participation
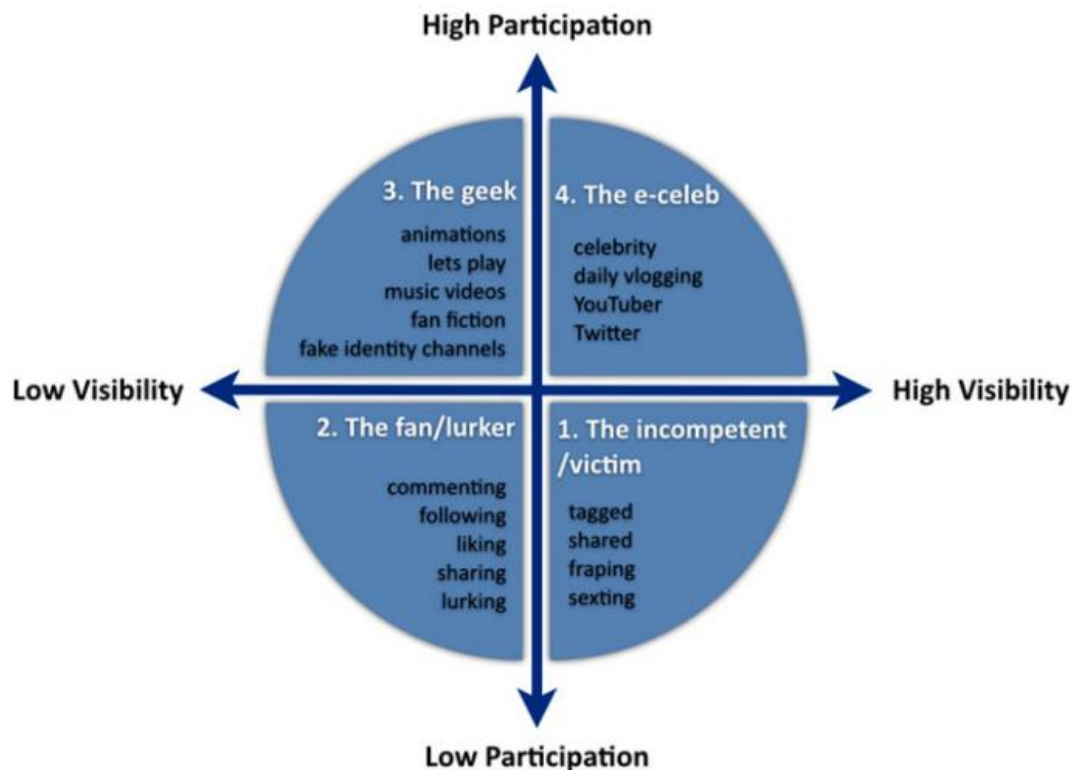
Legislation

As the severity and number of victims has risen, legislators have realized the need

for laws to address this problem. Kueny and Zirkel (2012) noted that antibullying laws

have increased over the years as states have faced more court cases and deaths due to

bullying. At 15-years-old, Phoebe Prince committed suicide after months of bullying,

prompting Massachusetts to pass an antibullying law (Kueny & Zirkel, 2012). A challenge

faced by legislators is how to create legislation that addresses the issue of cyberbullying

but does not infringe of the First Amendment rights of students as protected under the

United States Constitution (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011). To make the matter more complicated, research has indicated that the bullying legislation of many states does not define what bullying is (Kueny & Zirkel, 2012). With an unclear definition of bullying, incidents can be wrongly classified and data regarding the prevalence inaccurately reported.

The United States federal government has left addressing the issue of bullying up to individual state legislatures. While the First Amendment gives citizens the right to free speech, a state can prosecute when it crosses the line into being harmful (Yang & Grinshteyn, 2016). State legislatures have enacted laws and policies across the United States to address bullying and cyberbullying. While most states have enacted both policies and laws, eight states, including Texas, have only implemented laws (Cyberbullying Research Center, n.d.a). Those that have enacted policies intend to give direction and information to districts as they address it (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS], 2017). The amount of legislation related to cyberbullying has steadily increased over the years, and legislators continue to see the need for legal support.

State laws across the United States vary greatly in how they address issues of bullying. In some states, the law explicitly indicates how each school district will handle bullying situations, while other states leave it to the discretion of each school district (Yang & Grinshteyn, 2016). Legal standards indicate that a school can intervene when the misconduct causes a significant issue for the school or impacts the rights of other students (Willard, 2006). Once a cyberbullying situation becomes a disturbance on campus, the school has jurisdiction to investigate and address it.

In Texas, there are several laws that address bullying and allow authorities to prosecute offenders. House Bill 1942, signed into law in 2011, was the first measure in Texas to address bullying. This bill requires schools to have policies in place to clearly define bullying, specify how bullying situations will be addressed, and implement prevention measures (An Act relating to bullying in public schools, 2011). The bill specifically addresses bullying and cyberbullying and allows for guardians whose children are bullied to be transferred to another campus (Kelly, 2016). Senate Bill 179, also known as David's Law, was signed by the governor in June 2017 and gives Texas schools the authority to investigate and address bullying incidents, even when they take place off the school grounds. David's Law was named for David Molak, who was a victim of cyberbullying and committed suicide (Cyberbullying Research Center, n.d.b). The increase in the number of laws put into place across the country confirms the severity of cyberbullying in the eyes of lawmakers.

<div align="center">**Role of the School**</div>

School Staff

Teachers have an important role in determining and addressing bullying situations. Students' beliefs about support from their teachers can impact their motivation to report to the school. In a study by Mark and Ratliffe (2011), students disclosed the belief that their teachers are more informed on incidents of cyberbullying taking place than their own guardians. Students indicated overwhelmingly feeling that teachers would stop perpetrators from bullying, but their guardians would not. Several studies have found a positive correlation between students' perception of teacher protection against bullying and the number of bullying incidents taking place (Elledge et al., 2013; Kearney & Smith, 2018).

Others have shown that teachers lacking the belief that it is their role to guard their students against bullying have reported more incidents of bullying taking place in their classrooms (Kearney & Smith, 2018). This finding indicates that classrooms where teachers take an active role in intervening to address bullying see a reduction in the number of incidents taking place. When school staff ignore bullying situations or fail to act, they may be silently contributing to the problem (Mark & Ratliffe, 2011).

The climate and culture of a school can prevent and/or provoke bullying behaviors. Davis and Koepke (2016) concluded that one of the more effective ways for a school to prevent cyberbullying issues is to create a positive school environment for students. Likewise, Swearer et al. (2010) found that schools with success in addressing cyberbullying issues work to shift the school climate and change the way that students treat each other. Schools may have greater success in reducing incidents of cyberbullying by focusing on how students treat and interact with each other face to face rather than limiting the use of devices (Davis & Koepke, 2016). In a study by Varjas et al., (2009), a correlation was found between students being bullied and students feeling unsafe at school. This indicates a need for schools to address the climate and culture within which students operate. Schools where bullying and aggressive behaviors are not tolerated are likely to see fewer cases (Tulane et al., 2017). Patchin and Hinduja (2018) found that when students perceive they will be punished by the school for participating in cyberbullying, they are significantly less likely to participate—even more so than fear of police involvement. While many schools have rules regarding how students will be treated, research has indicated that how well these are enforced and communicated to students matters a great deal (Tulane et al., 2017).

Investigating cyberbullying can be a complicated task for school administrators.

When physical aggression or verbal aggression takes place, it is often simple to identify the involved parties. On the other hand, the identification of cyberbullies can be made difficult given the common use of fake names and phone numbers. Because students often access digital content during the school day, schools must have rules to address appropriate use while on campus to keep students safe (Rice et al., 2015). In order to prevent incidents of bullying taking place, many schools and school districts set up firewalls to block use of certain SNSs and websites on campus (Feinberg & Robey, 2009). While these measures prevent some incidents, they do not prevent all because students can easily utilize their own cellular data on their devices to access blocked sites.

To ensure student safety online, a combination of education and supervision by both guardians and schools is necessary (Kite et al., 2010). One complicating factor in addressing incidents of cyberbullying is the lack of knowledge possessed by adults, including guardians and school staff, about how bullies operate (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014). The combination of children who fail to report and school staff and guardians who do not address cyberbullying issues, either because they do not know about them or because they do not believe they are serious, leads to a considerable problem for schools to address (Mark & Ratliffe, 2011). By working together as a team and opening lines of communication regarding both prevention and education, guardians and schools can impact the prevalence of cyberbullying.

Incident Reporting

As children age, they begin to rationalize cyberbullying behavior and make excuses for why it happens rather than reporting it. When children fail to report cyberbullying,

bullies thrive and, in many cases, become much more persistent. Children fail to report for many reasons, including desensitization due to the frequency of the mean behavior taking place or the fact that they, as bystanders, feel guilt in having not reported it. Many students do not want to admit that they are aware of the harassment taking place (Leduc et al., 2018).

One of the most difficult issues in addressing cyberbullying is the reporting of incidents. In a study by Kite et al. (2010), 44% of students reported that they would tell an adult if they had been a victim of cyberbullying. On the other hand, another study found 90% of students failing to report to an adult that had been victimized by cyberbullying (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Another study found that certain groups, including younger students, females, and previous victims, are more likely to report bullying issues when they observe them (Allison & Bussey, 2017). Without reports of bullying, adults struggle to support and address students involved.

Many adults believe that bullying behaviors and situations are normal for adolescents to experience. Some adults see bullying as a "rite of passage" for children to experience. Similarly, others feel that cyberbullying is a less serious form of violence or hostility faced by children (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014). In a study by Juvonen and Gross (2008), students reported not alerting their guardians to a bullying situation because of feeling like their guardians' response would be for them to handle it on their own. In a study by Patchin and Hinduja (2018), approximately two-thirds of students reported feeling that their guardians would punish them for cyberbullying. Many students fear reporting because it may lead to having their technology taken away, and they are willing

to risk the possibility of being cyberbullied to prevent device removal (Juvonen & Gross, 2008).

<h2 style="text-align:center">Role of the Guardian</h2>

Guardian-Perceived Risk

The fundamental impact on guardians' motivation to monitor their children online is how serious they perceive the online risk to be, and some guardians struggle to take cyberbullying issues seriously or may choose to ignore them. Ho et al. (2019) described the idea of the "third-person effect" related to cyberbullying. Under this concept, some guardians may believe their children to less susceptible to cyberbullying situations than other children, such as a child being perceived as smarter and more capable of navigating a difficult situation online than their peers, thus reducing worries about them encountering a problem. Taking this stance can lead to a guardian who is less prepared for their child to encounter a problem and to a reduced likelihood of proactive monitoring (Ho et al., 2019).

Lee (2013) noted that guardian perceptions of media influence, including video games and TV, have an impact on the motivation to monitor student access. Guardians who perceive media as having a negative effect on their children are more motivated to monitor usage. Other factors influencing guardian motivation include the age of the child, the maturity of the child, and even the guardian's knowledge of the current media types. All these factors can play a role in how guardians monitor and restrict their children's media use. Lee (2013) noted that guardians' knowledge of the internet and digital use can help them monitor their children online by being able to address multiple ways to keep them safe. Guardians who are knowledgeable of online threats themselves are informed on how they can occur and are able to keep a closer eye on their children. On the other hand, a

guardian's lack of knowledge can hinder their ability to monitor online use if they are not familiar with the sites and/or devices being used. This lack of monitoring can cause a child to be in a risky situation, not only as a victim but even as a potential bully, all without the guardian's knowledge.

Guardians may struggle to monitor their children online because their view of cyberbullying threats is different from that of their adolescent children. Midamba and Moreno (2019) studied how adolescents view cyberbullying as compared to guardians, and several themes emerged for each population. For guardians, the three themes were *feelings of hopelessness*, *perceptions of adolescent communication*, and *consequences*. Parents expressed feeling a sense of helplessness due to the inability to identify the person committing the cyberbullying and the consequent inability to reach out to the cyberbully's guardian or even know how to respond. Also, they acknowledged their struggle to understand how adolescents interact with technology because it is different from their own social interactions, such as texting each other within the same room versus having a face-to-face conversation. Adolescent themes that emerged during the study included *relationships* and *power imbalance*. They reported cyberbullying to come from someone with whom one has a relationship or from a stranger. Adolescents also reported viewing the bully as wanting power over the other person or being motivated to gain popularity. Both adolescents and guardians stated that guardians should do more to monitor their children online, including becoming more familiar with social media tools and apps so that they are better able to guide their children regarding safe use.

Monitoring and Mediation

With rapidly changing technological devices and sites, guardians face a difficult task in supporting their children online. There are several ways by which guardians can gain information regarding their children's activities. The primary way that guardians learn about their children is through *child disclosure,* where children voluntarily share what is going on in their lives and what they are doing online. The second way, which is deemed to be less effective, is from *behavioral control,* where guardians set rules and boundaries to control their children and the things they are doing online. A third way in which guardians gain information is through *parent soliciting*, which is seeking out information from their children, their children's friends, or other adults (Mesch, 2018; Smetana, 2008). Whether a child discloses information directly to their guardian or a guardian gathers the information themselves, knowing what a child is doing online allows a guardian to determine the level of threat and to develop an appropriate plan of action to monitor and address their behavior.

A study by Sung Hong et al. (2016) found that any efforts by guardians to monitor their children online will result in a decreased risk of cyberbullying. One of the ways that students are protected is through guardianship, which is defined as the varying levels of protection in place to keep a child safe from a threat. These can include community or neighborhood support, family support, and even individual support (Ahlin & Lobo Antunes, 2017). These supports can also include digital software, computer child-locks, or filters that allow for monitoring of the use of the device by another party (Kalia & Aleem, 2017). These safety measures prevent the user from visiting websites that may put them at risk or that are inappropriate for their age. In some cases, a child simply knowing that the

safety measure is in place and that their guardian could monitor it may be enough to deter them from attempting to visit a site. While computers and software programs have safety settings and filters available to use, many students fail to utilize them to protect themselves (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). It is a false assumption to believe that simply because blocks and filters are present for use, individuals always choose to use them.

Another way in which guardians address cybersafety is through guardian mediation, which can come in several different forms (Lee, 2013). *Restrictive mediation* is when a guardian restricts the time and access of their child using a device or media (Lee, 2013). *Active* or *instructive mediation* is when a guardian takes an active role monitoring media use, such as helping their child to navigate it or teaching them about it and how to be safe when using it. *Co-use* or *co-viewing* is when a guardian and child access the media together for entertainment or pleasure. As children grow into adolescence, this third form is less common because adolescent children may not desire to view media with their guardians by this age (Lee, 2013; Mesch, 2018).

In a study by Warren and Aloia (2019), a direct link was found between parenting style and phone mediation. Guardians who adopted an authoritarian parenting style, exercising power and control over their children, were shown more likely to use restrictive mediation. *Permissive parents*, who allow their children to be in control and make decisions, were correlated with co-use phone mediation. *Authoritative parents*, who operate by guiding and teaching their child, were linked to utilizing active phone mediation.

Researchers have cited two types of parenting approaches that can impact how a child manages media use. *Autonomy-supportive parents* allow their children to give input

or feedback, provide explanations for the decisions they make, and respond positively to their children, even when they make what the guardians consider to be a poor choice. This allows the children to have a voice and to feel comfortable openly communicating with their guardians regarding struggles and issues. On the other hand, *controlling parents* use threats and punishment to motivate their children to change, and they withhold positive regard until their children have demonstrated the desired behavior (Katz et al., 2019; Legate et al., 2019). These two parenting styles can have a significant impact on how children approach online use and communicate with their guardians regarding future issues.

Hwang and Jeong (2015) determined three factors related to how guardians mediate their children online: *parent level of addiction to their own smartphone*, *parent assessment of the degree of child smartphone addiction*, and *parent personality traits*. Not only are guardians who are addicted to their own smartphone less likely to monitor their children's use, but they also can inadvertently model the addictive behavior for their children, which may cause their children to be at increased risk for addiction. In contrast, guardians who perceive their children to be more at risk are more likely to mediate their own use. This means that they are also more likely to mediate their behavior when they perceive the phone as a negative tool.

Warren and Aloia (2019) examined how guardian stress impacts their mediation. The researchers found guardians indicating stress to be more likely to take an authoritarian approach regarding mediating their children's access. This could be caused by the guardians' desire to gain control over their children's online use when their own stress causes them to feel out of control. One interesting finding of the study was that guardians

utilizing a permissive parenting style and undergoing a stressful time are more likely to allow their children increased access to media and even participate with them in co-use mediation. The researchers found guardian stress more significantly impacting how guardians monitor their children's media use than their parenting style. In many cases, guardians who lack control over their children may choose to increase their monitoring to overcompensate for their lack of control, which in turn causes the children to exhibit more rebellious behaviors (Sasson & Mesch, 2014). Families in which guardians practice highly restrictive mediation (strict control over online use) are more likely to see their children engaging in risky online behaviors (Sasson & Mesch, 2014). Some researchers have found that the most successful way to reduce risky behavior online is not through guardian mediation, but through open communication (Sasson & Mesch, 2014).

Reducing Risk

Guardians may choose to monitor their children online in a variety of ways. A study by Mesch (2018) noted that some guardians "friend" their child on an SNS platform to monitor their activities. The results of the study indicated that this can be effective in reducing negative online incidents. One of the reasons for this may be that the presence of an adult figure in the online platform may deter others from being mean or inappropriate because that behavior would be visible to the guardian. Also, because the child has freely agreed to being "friends" with the guardian, they may limit their own negative behavior knowing that the guardian will have access to the content as their "friend."

In a study by Tripp (2011), the researcher analyzed the internet and media use and literacy of seven families in an urban area of Los Angeles, California. While guardians expressed believing that access to the computer and internet is key to their children's

success in school, they also expressed concern about their children's online activities, especially if communicating with their peers or friends. Because the digital literacy skills of the children in the study were dramatically higher than those of their guardians, it was difficult for the guardians to know how to successfully monitor their children online. To keep their children safe, guardians reported using creative methods such as placing the computer in the kitchen or primary living area where they could easily supervise it, allowing internet access at a neighbor's house limited to only a couple of times per week, and even taking the power cord with them when leaving the house to prevent computer use while not on site.

Other researchers have noted that using a computer in a private space increases the risk for online bullying. Sengupta and Chaudhuri (2011) stated that having a computer in a public area can be more effective in protecting a child from online threats than installing software to protect them. In addition, simply blocking children from getting online is not enough to protect them. The study reinforced the importance of physically monitoring children and communication regarding online use. The study also recommended educating children regarding online threats as an important protection factor.

Elsaesser et al. (2017) also noted that working with a child to identify threats online can be effective in reducing the risk of cyberbullying. This partnership between the guardian and the child allows the child to "translate" what they are viewing online because many guardians may not understand the language or images that they are seeing in order to determine if they are threatening. A study by Katz et al. (2019) described the most important factor in decreasing the chances of cyberbullying being guardian consistency in monitoring a child's online presence. When a guardian is inconsistent in how they monitor

their child online, there is an increased likelihood that their child could become affected by cyberbullying.

In fact, Mishna et al. (2012) found a link among bullies, victims, and bully-victims. The researchers found all three groups to have increased access to computers when compared to those not involved in cyberbullying. In the study, these populations indicated having shared their log-in information with friends, and all three groups indicated involvement in some form of traditional bullying such as physical or verbal aggression. Data have shown that children who spend more time online are at higher risk for participating in cyberbullying in some way. This could be caused by a variety of reasons, including exposure to others who are participating in cyberbullying or simply the intent to harm another person. Rice et al. (2015) noted that homes with rules about accessing the internet or devices are less likely to be places where cyberbullying occurs. Homes with structure and supervision can have an impact on whether its children use the internet appropriately.

Closing Thoughts on Chapter II

Cyberbullying continues to be a rapidly growing issue for both children and adults. Cyberbullying has many similarities to its predecessor, traditional bullying, in the intent to cause harm to another. However, cyberbullies having unlimited access to their victims via the internet and personal devices and having the ability to be anonymous in their torment have allowed the severity of their mistreatment to worsen. This cruel treatment can cause permanent physical, educational, social, and psychological damage to both the victim and the bully.

While adults may have the ability to navigate their own difficult cyber situations, children do not have the necessary maturity and skills. Some guardians naturally take on the responsibility of monitoring their children online, but many lack the skills or motivation to properly do so. This results in children who face serious cyberbullying issues with little oversight and support. Effectively addressing the issue of cyberbullying will require a collaborative approach from all parties, including children, guardians, school staff, and law enforcement, to ensure that children are safe.

Use of technology in schools has brought unprecedented access to learning and digital content, but it has also brought many problems with supervision and safety. With the rising severity of cyberbullying, there is an increased need for prevention and intervention. Because many incidents of cyberbullying either take place on school grounds or carry over into the school day, schools have an obligation to intervene. While this task can be complex, Texas state law mandates the legal obligation for schools to investigate and address incidents. Therefore, cyberbullying issues must be addressed through a collaborative effort between school staff and guardians.

CHAPTER III

SOLUTION AND METHOD

Proposed Solution

The nature of cyberbullying is complex and evokes strong psychological and emotional responses from those impacted (Batool et al., 2017). Schools have ethical and legal obligations to intervene with students and guardians when cyberbullying occurs, as the effects can be harmful and long-lasting (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011). The overall intent of this study was to identify guardian perceptions of cyberbullying at the junior high level and to determine what guardians need and/or want from the school for them to be empowered to intervene in or prevent cyberbullying issues. The goal was that by identifying this information, Twin Cities Junior High School will be better prepared to educate and support guardians. Increased support for guardians will result in improved support for students, ultimately leading to a reduction in cyberbullying issues for the campus.

This study examined guardian perceptions of cyberbullying at the junior high level beginning with a survey. The purpose of the survey was to identify key issues faced by guardians so that the school can provide education and support related to these issues. Following the survey, a focus group was conducted to identify what support, information, and/or education guardians need from the school on the topic of cyberbullying.

Study Context and Participants

Participants and Sample

The participants in this research study included guardians of junior high students at Twin Cities Junior High School. The campus serves approximately 1,580 students in

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grades six to eight. The campus, which opened its doors in August 2013, is 1 of 16 junior high schools in the school district and is located next door to one of the two high schools, into which it feeds.

Selecting participants for this study was of critical importance. Those participating needed to have a desire to better their own sense of how to monitor and address cyberbullying issues. A guardian may have been motivated or concerned given their child's experience with cyberbullying or their own personal experience. During the first part of data collection, a survey was administered to guardians of students attending Twin Cities Junior High School. These data were collected using convenience sampling. Convenience sampling, a form of nonprobabilistic sampling, involves choosing participants who are readily available to participate in the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). A message was sent to all guardians through the campus e-newsletter asking for their participation in a survey regarding their perceptions of cyberbullying at the junior high level. Those who agreed to take the survey provided consent within the survey, and their data were collected through Qualtrics, an online survey generator. Appendix A shows the e-newsletter message, and Appendix B shows the survey itself.

The second data collection point, the use of a focus group, followed the guardian survey and utilized purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling, also known as purposive sampling, allowed me to deliberately choose participants who have knowledge of the topic being studied or who have experienced it personally (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). As the study examined junior high guardian perceptions, participants were purposefully chosen from Twin Cities Junior High School, having been e-mailed to solicit their participation (shown in Appendix C). To identify demographic information from the

population in the focus group, a brief survey was administered as part of the informed consent document completed by guardians prior to the focus group. This survey asked guardians to create a personal identifier known only to them and to answer demographic questions. Once they completed the survey, they were allowed entry into the focus group. For the focus group, only the guardians' chosen names served as their personal identifiers, as the focus group took place online with participant cameras turned off. This strategy allowed me to identify and analyze which populations were represented in the focus group. During the focus group, open-ended questions were asked to allow participants to share their perceptions of cyberbullying, as well as how the school can support them regarding cyberbullying (shown in Appendix D).

A few concerns with participation may have arisen during the implementation of this study. The guardian survey took place within the first few months of the school year, which may have had an impact on the number of participants choosing to take the survey, as well as the number of guardians participating in the focus group. A reduction in these numbers could have been caused by the first months of the school year being a very busy time of year. In order to reduce risk due to the impact of COVID-19, the focus group was performed via Zoom, which could have impacted participation due to limited technological access or aversion to online-meeting platforms. Participation could also have been impacted based on guardian perception of a child not having encountered any cyberbullying issues so far during the year, thus causing them to be less interested in the topic. On the other hand, the interest of guardians on the topic of cyberbullying may have been piqued because children may have recently received a device at the start of the school year.

Setting

Twin Cities Junior High School serves students in grades six, seven, and eight. According to the 2020-2021 Campus Improvement Plan, campus enrollment for the 2020-2021 school year was 1,580 students. This is a significant decrease in student enrollment from 2 years prior of 2,050 students due to the opening of a new junior high school that relieved the campus. The breakdown of demographics for Twin Cities Junior High is 13.3% economically disadvantaged students, 8.6% English-language learners, 7.9% special-education students, and 20% gifted-and-talented students. The student population includes 27% Hispanic students, 8% African-American students, 33% Caucasian students, and 29% Asian students. This also includes 18.8% at-risk students (Kameron ISD, 2020b). The Texas Education Code identifies students as being "at risk" using a variety of predetermined criteria (Kameron ISD Interventions, n.d.).

The survey was conducted using Qualtrics, an online survey generator, and shared via e-mail so that guardians could complete it at their convenience. The minimum response rate goal for the survey was 10% of the total population of guardians, which would have been approximately 158 respondents. In the initial e-mail communication to guardians, I indicated that they had the option of taking the survey at the school should they not have access to a computer or internet. If they chose to utilize this option, they could contact a campus administrator to schedule an appointment time. While on campus, they would use a computer located in a private area to ensure response confidentiality.

To ensure the physical safety of participants during the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus group was administered online via Zoom. Participants were given a link to access the meeting and the link was unique to the focus group meeting. As participants joined the

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Zoom meeting, they began in a "waiting room" so that I could confirm their completion of the consent document prior to allowing them entrance into the meeting. The Zoom meeting was recorded using the recording feature embedded in the program, as well as Rev Recorder, a recording app.

Proposed Research Paradigm

To delve into the topic of guardian perceptions of cyberbullying in a thorough manner, appropriate selection was warranted of research questions and methods that examine how guardians perceive cyberbullying. The primary research questions for the study included the following:

1. What are guardian perceptions of cyberbullying at the junior high level and to what degree do guardians perceive cyberbullying to be a problem at their child's school?

2. What do guardians need and/or want to be empowered to intervene and/or prevent cyberbullying?

For this study, I chose a mixed-methods research design approach, which allows the incorporation of both quantitative data and qualitative data to support the investigation (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). Quantitative data from the survey helped determine the specific issues perceived by guardians. Qualitative data from the open-ended survey questions and focus group helped clarify these issues and determine what guardian support was needed from the campus in order to address the issues. Other qualitative data included my journal and field notes with my observations and reflections from the focus group.

Mixed-methods research provides a comprehensive and thorough picture. Plano Clark and Ivankova (2016) described how quantitative research "examines the

relationships between variables by collecting and analyzing numeric data expressed in numbers or scores" (p. 4). Quantitative data were necessary to identify patterns of issues faced by guardians. The quantitative research collected in this study provided valuable insight into the broad topics and themes regarding how guardians perceive cyberbullying. A portion of this research focused on compiling how and why guardians behave the way they do regarding cyberbullying. This includes understanding how a guardian monitors their child online, their understanding or definition of cyberbullying, to what extent they have observed cyberbullying, how they have responded to what they have observed, what access they and their child have to social media, and their perspective on the need for intervention when cyberbullying takes place at school.

The use of a survey allowed a large amount of quantitative data to be collected from guardians, which allowed me to identify gaps or misconceptions in guardian knowledge. Once the survey was complete, a statistical analysis was conducted to determine several data points, including guardian knowledge of social media apps or sites and guardian confidence in monitoring their child online, protecting their child online, and protecting their child from cyberbullying.

The qualitative portion of the study helped me dig into specifically what guardians need and/or want from school leadership to feel empowered on the topic of cyberbullying. The nature of cyberbullying is deeply personal, impacting an individual across mental and emotional states. Qualitative research is complex and involves gathering the perspectives of the participants, including their beliefs and opinions about the phenomenon being investigated. Yilmaz (2013) defined qualitative research as "an emergent, inductive, interpretive and naturalistic approach to the study of people, cases, phenomena, social

situations and processes in their natural settings in order to reveal in descriptive terms the meanings that people attach to their experiences in the world" (p. 312).

The use of a focus group to gather information directly from guardians provided key insight into the experience of guardians regarding cyberbullying, as well as how Twin Cities Junior High School can support them. As a former school counselor, I know from experience that the thoughts and opinions of the populations with which I work hold practical value. Yilmaz (2013) described the "process, context, interpretation, meaning or understanding through inductive reasoning" of qualitative research as having value (p. 313).

The transition years between elementary and high school are crucial and complicated years in student development, requiring extensive and informed support and education for guardians. While numerical data may be able to capture information from guardians, I believe that gathering the personal experiences of the participants firsthand allowed for a richer understanding of their feelings and concerns. A mixed-methods approach was appropriate because both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Plano Clark and Ivankova (2016) defined mixed-methods research as joining both quantitative and qualitative methods throughout the research process, including data collection and analysis. The information gleaned from this research allowed me to identify specific cyberbullying issues faced by guardians of junior high students so that I could make recommendations to school administrators on how they can support both students and guardians.

Data Collection Methods

Instrumentation

The guardian survey was administered anonymously to encourage open and honest responses. This survey involved several different types of questions. The benefit of using a variety of questions types is that I could collect concrete numerical information, along with open-ended responses. The first series of questions involved collecting demographic information for the guardian respondents and their children. This information included guardian age, gender, and ethnicity, as well as child gender and grade level. The next series of questions involved guardian disclosure of how they monitor their child online. Specific questions were asked regarding guardian knowledge of online monitoring, as well as apps that are frequently used by junior high students. Areas of need were identified based on gaps in guardian knowledge of specific ways to monitor their child online. The survey used five scaled responses to ensure that the participant could provide a measurable response and that the data collected using the scale were also valid (Wigley, 2013). The use of closed-ended questions allowed me to collect definitive answers from the population being surveyed (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The second method of data collection was a focus group conducted with guardians online via Zoom. Participants gave consent prior to the start of the focus group. The consent allowed them to participate in the focus group, as well as for the session to be audio-recorded. Consent also addressed that should a participant begin to feel uncomfortable during the focus group, they may choose to leave the group at any time. As participants entered the meeting, they began in a "waiting room" so that I could confirm

their completion of the consent document prior to granting them access to the meeting. Once consent was given, the participants were allowed entry into the focus group.

Open-ended questions used during the focus group allowed participants to share their personal experiences and opinions in their own words. Yilmaz (2013) described the use of open-ended responses and the use of direct quotations, which allow participants to express thoughts and emotions that resonate with them at that moment rather than predicting in advance what they will say. The focus group was semistructured in that some questions were preplanned to ensure specific content related to their experiences and perceptions of cyberbullying. Other questions were asked as follow-up questions to responses received from the respondents during the focus group to gather additional information. My own reflections and preparation for the focus group contributed to the success of the group and my ability to shift, adjust, and respond to the answers given helped participants share meaningful responses. Gill and Baillie (2018) recommended the use of a topic guide to keep the interview on track with the questions to be asked. The guide in this study included open-ended questions that encouraged participants to provide more detailed information regarding the topic discussed. Also important was that the focus group setting was quiet and comfortable to ensure that a relaxed and informative interview took place.

Quantitative Data Sources and Analysis

Quantitative data analysis associated with the study was conducted using the 27th version of IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The first point of data analysis was performed on the guardian survey collected at the start of the study. The e-mailed survey was completed by guardians who volunteered to participate. Some of the

survey data collected were nominal in that they contained demographic information such as gender and age. Other data collected in the survey used ordinal and itemized rating scales to determine responses.

The study's quantitative aspect of the mixed-methods design was addressed through preliminary analyses and one specifically stated research question. Preliminary, foundational analyses included evaluations of missing data, internal reliability, demographic identifiers, and response set data not addressed in the formally posed research question. The study's quantitative research question was addressed through a layered approach.

The study's missing data were evaluated using primarily descriptive statistical techniques. Frequency counts (n) and percentages (%) represented the specific means by which the extent of missing data was assessed. The randomness of missing data was assessed using Little's missing-completely-at-random (MCAR) statistical technique. The internal reliability of study participant responses to specific items on the research instrument was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha (*a*) test statistic.

The study's demographic identifiers (person-level data) were evaluated using primarily descriptive statistical techniques. Frequency counts (n) and percentages (%) represented the specific means by which demographic-identifying information was assessed. Preliminary, foundational analyses included the use of frequency counts (n), percentages (%), measures of typicality (mean scores) and variability (standard deviations [SDs]), and effect-size measurement (Cohen's *d*).

The study's quantitative research question was addressed in a layered approach using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The threshold for statistical

significance of finding for both parametric (one-sample *t*-test) and nonparametric

(binomial test; chi-square [x^2] goodness-of-fit [GOF] test) statistical techniques was

established at $p \leq 0.05$. The magnitude of study participant response effect was evaluated

using Cohen's *d* and *g* statistical technique. Sawilowsky's (2009) conventions of effect-

size interpretation were adopted for use in the study as the means by which assignment of

qualitative descriptors for respective numeric effect-size values achieved in the study

(small, medium, large, very large, and huge) were made.

Qualitative Data Sources and Analysis

The focus group was recorded using NVIVO software. All audio-recording data

collected during the focus group were transcribed. These data, along with my journal and

field notes, were categorized and analyzed with emergent coding to identify themes.

Ivankova (2015) noted that emergent codes are identified using inductive reasoning by

studying text without predetermined ideas or themes in mind. I read through all transcripts

looking for codes that stood out related to the topic. Rather than preparing the codes in

advance, I developed them as the data analysis process took place to determine specific

thoughts or ideas arising most frequently for guardians. I used emergent coding so that I

could clearly identify themes to present findings from participants. Ivankova (2015)

defined emergent coding as the researcher analyzing textual data to determine common

themes. These codes determined from the analysis were classified into broader themes.

Chenail (2012) described the coding process as the search for meaningful

qualitative units. Rather than coding line by line or word by word, I searched for chunks of

material identifying a central theme. This process allowed me to avoid missing key

information. Because the data collected during the focus group were qualitative, it was

important for the data analysis to be thorough and rich in its description of the data. Yilmaz (2013) described that data are deemed credible if they are so descriptive that the reader can easily understand the perspectives of those in the study and their perceptions of the topic being addressed.

Using the quantitative data, identifying areas of concern for guardians, along with qualitative data collected from the focus group, I synthesized all information so that I could identify overall themes. These themes guided my recommendations for the campus on ways to support guardians on the topic of cyberbullying—the goal being for these recommendations to improve how the school is able to assist and educate guardians so that they are better able to support their children online, which will ultimately reduce the number of cyberbullying incidents occurring at the junior high level. Table 1 shows a timeline of all the study's activities.

Table 1

Timeline for Study

Task	2020 Date
Test survey with 20 participants	August 31–September 16
Send survey link to guardians via e-newsletter	October 4
Send survey link with focus group date via e-newsletter	October 11
Conduct practice focus group with five participants	October 14
Send focus group link to guardians via email	October 18
Close survey	October 19
Conduct focus group via Zoom	October 21

Reliability and Validity Concerns or Equivalents

Confidentiality

Participant confidentiality is of the utmost importance. When collecting data from the survey, I was the only person with access to this information. Once downloaded, data were stored on a password-encrypted drive kept in a locked cabinet in my office. Other data collected, including audio-recordings and field notes from the focus group, were also password-encrypted and stored on the encrypted drive.

When sharing the results of the qualitative research, I was careful not to include too much specific demographic information of the participants to the point where it would be possible to identify them. This concern is especially important for studies with a limited number of participants (Wester, 2011). To address this concern, participants each chose a personal identifier to use in communication. They entered the focus group using their personal identifier to ensure confidentiality. I only had access to the demographic information connected to their personal identifier and did not have access to their actual name. This information was only accessible by me and was stored on a password-encrypted drive and kept in a locked cabinet in my office.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was granted on October 25, 2019 with a letter stating the following: "The Institution determined that the proposed activity is not research involving human subjects as defined by DHHS and FDA regulations as the results of this program evaluation will not be generalized outside of the institution" (shown in Appendix E).

External Validity

There was no attempt to generalize the findings of this study to other schools in this school district or any other school district. The results of this study are intended to support the guardians, students, and administration at the school involved in this research study. Other schools in the same district may choose to use this study as a guide for guardian education on this topic; however, this study did not attempt to generalize the findings to another campus.

Instrument Validity

The survey incorporated questions framed after similar cyberbullying surveys completed with both students and guardians. The closed- and open-ended questions on the survey were adapted from valid surveys previously used by other researchers.

Reliability

Reliability relates to whether the study results are consistent over time (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). To ensure reliability, the survey was field-tested with a small group of participants to gather feedback prior to sharing it with the targeted population.

Researcher's Resources and Skills

It was important for me to be clear about any bias that could have surfaced so that I could address it prior to the start of the study. Because the study population included guardians with students attending the junior high school where I am an administrator, I made it clear to them during the informed consent process that their participation or lack of participation would not impact them or their children in any way, negatively or positively. Because I had worked on the campus for several years, I was hopeful that the reputation I

had built within the community would allow guardians to feel comfortable participating in the study.

I needed to ensure that all participants trusted that their information would remain confidential and that they would not be specifically named during the presentation of results. Wester (2011) described the need for the researcher to ensure transparency so that the reader can clearly see all aspects of the study laid out. This includes being clear about any chance for bias and how they plan to ensure credibility and validity in their findings.

Because I examined perceptions of cyberbullying from the viewpoint of junior high guardians, the mixed-methods design of this study allowed me to dig deep into this topic. Having worked directly with guardians and students in navigating cyberbullying situations as both an administrator and a school counselor, I see the need for continued research and guidance in this area. I believe that the experiences had by guardians in educating, monitoring, and supporting their children online are critical to healthy and successful adolescent development. Helping adolescents learn to be responsible digital citizens is a critical task. By identifying issues of guardians regarding this topic throughout this study, the school will be able to provide improved educational support related to cyberbullying.

Closing Thoughts on Chapter III

Cyberbullying is an issue that is not going away. In fact, schools continue to search for ways to support students and guardians on this complicated topic. This study was intended to determine guardian perceptions of cyberbullying and how their child's school can support them. Using a survey and focus group, I collected and analyzed data to support guardians as they help their children navigate the digital world. The goal was that by identifying guardian perceptions of cyberbullying, as well as how school leadership can

support them, I would be able to make recommendations to the campus administration

regarding targeted education and support. By increasing guardian knowledge, guardians

will be empowered to prevent issues and to intervene should an issue occur with their

child. This increased support for students will then result in a decrease in the number of

cyberbullying incidents on the campus.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS, RESULTS, AND FINDINGS

Chapter IV contains a formal report of the study's findings that inform the implications and recommendations presented in Chapter V. The goal of this mixed-methods study was to provide recommendations and strategies for Kameron ISD to reduce the number of cyberbullying incidents encountered by students at the study's targeted junior high school. The data collected and examined focused on the following two research questions:

1. What are guardian perceptions of cyberbullying and to what degree do guardians perceive cyberbullying to be a problem at their child's school?

2. What do guardians need and/or want to be empowered to intervene and/or prevent cyberbullying?

Quantitative Data Introduction

The quantitative portion of the study was nonexperimental within the study's overarching explanatory, sequential, mixed-methods (quantitative-qualitative) research design (Fraenkel et al., 2019). A survey research methodology was adopted in addressing both the study's topic and research problem within the quantitative dimension of the study. One two-part quantitative research question was posed to specifically address the study's research investigation. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to evaluate the quantitative research question.

Survey's Missing Data

The extent of missing data for the quantitative portion was evaluated using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The person-level missing data of 19.21% (n = 320) was well below the acceptable threshold of 30% (Newman, 2014). Moreover, missing data were sufficiently random in nature (MCAR $x^2_{(24)} = 22.12$; $p = 0.57$). Missing data within the study's response sets varied greatly according to each survey item, with higher rates expected for some items that included options for nonresponse.

Using Cronbach's alpha (*a*) to assess the internal reliability of survey items where appropriate, an approximately excellent level (*a* = 0.89) was achieved for the 17 items associated with the study participants' perceptions of ability to use various apps and sites represented on the research instrument. A very good level of internal reliability (*a* = 0.82) was achieved for the seven items on the research instrument associated with the study participants' perceptions of scenarios that may be interpreted as cyberbullying under the State of Texas code definition of cyberbullying. George and Mallery (2016) noted that Cronbach alpha levels of $a \geq 0.80$ are very good, with $a \geq 0.90$ considered to be an excellent indicator of internal reliability.

Survey Participant Demographics

Nearly three-quarters (72.2%; n = 140) of study participants identified themselves as female by gender, with the remaining 27.8% (n = 54) identifying as male (see Figure 2). Slightly over 4 in 10 participants (41.3%; n = 81) were 40 to 44 years of age, with nearly three-quarters (71.4%; n = 140) of study participants being 40 to 49 years of age. Regarding ethnicity, just under one-quarter of respondents (24.6%; n = 46) were Hispanic or Latino, with the remainder being not Hispanic or Latino. Slightly over three-quarters

(76.2%; n = 144) identified as White. The second highest participant response was Asian (17.46%; n = 33), followed by Black or African American and two or more races, which had equal responses (3.17%; n = 6) (see Figure 3).
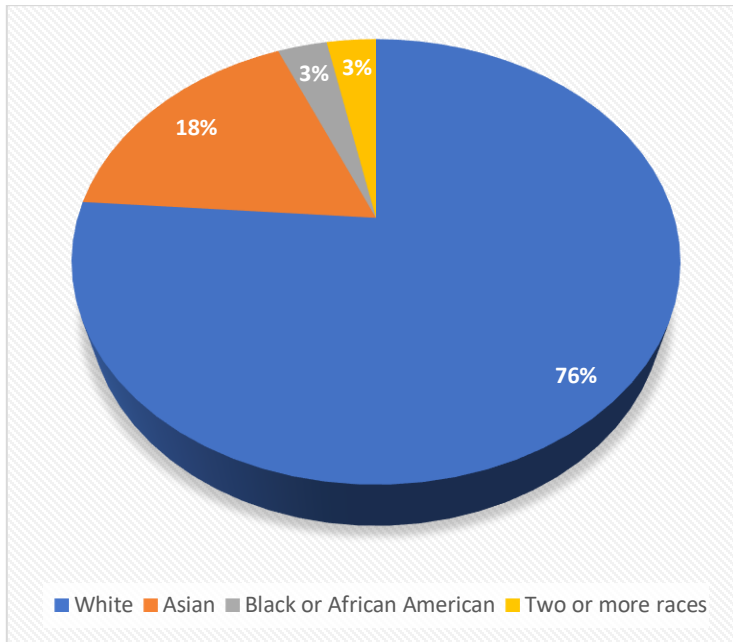
Figure 2

Survey Participant Gender
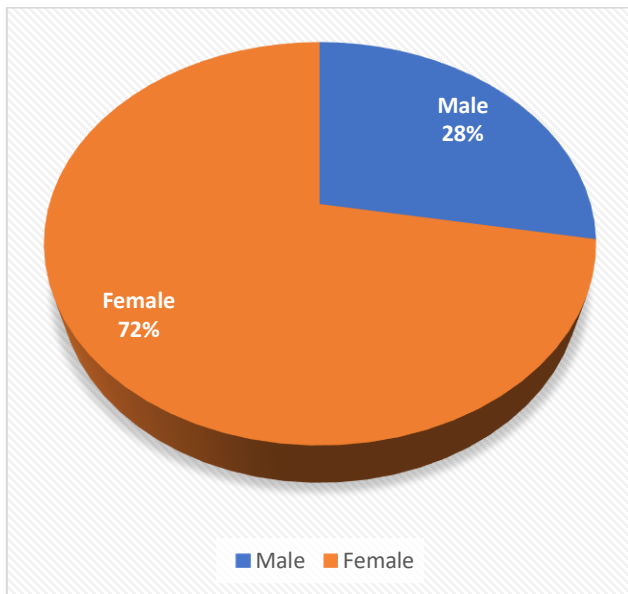
Figure 3

Survey Participant Ethnicity

Regarding the education level of study participants, slightly over half (53.1% n =

103) possessed an undergraduate degree (associate/bachelor of arts/science [AA/AS,

BA/BS]). Nearly 4 in 10 study participants (36.6%) possessed graduate degrees (master of

arts/science [MA/MS], doctorate, professional degree). Nearly 7 in 10 study participants

(66.2%; n = 127) described their total household income as ranging from $100,000 to

$249,999. The highest level of household income was $150,000 to $199,999 (18.2%; n =

35).

The gender of study participants' students was nearly equivocal, with 51.8 % (n =

100) identifying their child as male and 48.2% (n = 92) identifying their child as female.

Regarding study participants' students' grade level, 35.6% (n = 69) were identified as sixth

graders, 32.0% (n = 62) were identified as seventh graders, and 32.4% (n = 63) were identified as eighth graders.

Findings

Survey questions posed within the research instrument focused on eliciting information about study participants' monitoring techniques, actions taken in instances of actual cyberbullying, ability to use various apps or sites, to which app or sites the children of study participants have access, and roadblocks to monitoring online behavior.

Regarding study participants' monitoring techniques, the most frequent technique expressed within the survey was discussions (n = 158), closely followed by parent approval requirement (n = 143) and random checks (n = 141). The selection option indicating no monitoring was not chosen by study participants within the response set. Table 2 contains a complete summary of findings for study participants' monitoring techniques of their children's use of apps and sites.

Table 2

Monitoring Techniques

Monitoring technique	n
Internet filters	97
Parent control app	57
Random checks	141
Parent approval requirement	143
Time limits	113
Discussions	158
Other	7
No monitoring	0

Study participants' actions taken in the wake of instances of cyberbullying varied. The leading action taken by study participants in instances where their children had been cyberbullied was to use the situation as an example in discussion (n = 13), closely followed by blocking the cyberbully (n = 12). Contacting the school counselor and administrator were the next two highest responses (n = 8). These numbers indicate that guardians view contacting the school as a necessary action item possibly because the other student involved attends the school and/or the situation is impacting their child while at school. The option of other technique was included so that guardians who utilize a unique method of monitoring specific to their households would have the option to indicate so. Table 3 contains a summary of actions taken by study participants in response to instances in which their children had been cyberbullied.

Table 3

Actions Taken in Response to Cyberbullying

Action taken	n
Called the other child's parent/guardian	7
Blocked the cyberbully	12
Reported incident to the app	7
Deleted app or account	4
Took away child's device	1
Responded electronically to the cyberbully	3
Contacted child's teacher	5
Contacted child's school counselor	8
Contacted school administrator	8
Reported incident on school district's reporting app	5
Used situation as an example for discussion purposes	13
Contacted law enforcement	1
Other	3

When study participants were asked to rate their ability to use various apps or sites, a six-point Likert-type scale was used to elicit responses. Cohen's *d* statistical technique was used to assess the magnitude of effect for study participant response with the apps or sites represented in the study's research instrument.

In 12 of the 17 apps or sites (71.6%) represented on the study's research instrument, an inverse effect was reflected, indicating inability of use for the respective app or site. Study participants' ability to use YouTube reflected the greatest magnitude of effect (ability) ($d = 1.60$), closely followed by Facebook ($d = 1.50$). The greatest magnitude of inverse effect (inability) was reflected for Whisper ($d = -2.49$). The finding that study participants lack knowledge regarding 12 of the 17 apps or sites is critical information. It indicates that the guardians indicated a lack knowledge of many popular social media apps or sites accessed by adolescents. This lack of knowledge prevents a guardian from being able to appropriately monitor their child when the app or site is being used. Table 4 contains a summary of study participant response effects for perceptions of ability to use apps or sites.

Table 4

Study Participant Comparison of Perceived Ability to Use Apps/Sites

App/site	n	Mean	SD	d
Instagram	174	4.39	1.60	0.56
Snapchat	173	2.97	1.81	–0.29
TikTok	172	2.90	1.74	–0.34
YouTube	174	5.10	1.00	1.60[b]
Twitter	171	3.92	1.86	0.23
VSCO	173	1.41	1.12	–1.87[b]
Discord	170	1.54	1.22	–1.61[b]
Facebook	173	5.24	1.16	1.50[2]
GroupMe	171	3.16	2.10	–0.16
HouseParty	175	1.86	1.56	–1.05[c]
KJK	173	1.47	1.18	–1.71[b]
Monkey	174	1.34	1.02	–2.11[a]
Periscope	174	1.60	1.33	–1.42[b]
Tumblr	174	1.76	1.46	–1.19[c]
Twitch	173	1.54	1.26	–1.55[b]
WhatsApp	172	4.13	1.99	0.32
Whisper	173	1.31	0.99	–2.49

Note. SD = standard deviation

[a] Huge effect ($d \geq 2.00$)

[b] Very large effect ($d \geq 1.20$)

[c] Large effect ($d \geq 0.80$)

Study participants were asked to which apps or sites their children have access and use on a regular basis. YouTube reflected the greatest degree of use ($n = 157$) by the children of the study participants, followed by TikTok ($n = 78$). The other most popular apps or sites used included Instagram ($n = 62$), Snapchat ($n = 51$), and WhatsApp ($n = 45$). While technical knowledge and use of YouTube was indicated for guardians and children,

respectively, their knowledge and use diverged for other apps or sites. Guardian participants indicated having a knowledge of Facebook; however, they lack knowledge of many of the most popular apps their children may be accessing. This is an area of concern as guardians may have little to no understanding of how to monitor their children while using the more popular apps or sites. Because a guardian without knowledge would not be aware of any risks or issues that their child may encounter, the guardian may grant the child access to the app or site prior to the child being developmentally ready to handle using it. Table 5 contains a summary of study participants' children's use of apps and sites represented on the research instrument.

Table 5

Use of Apps/Sites by Children of Study Participants

App/site	n
Instagram	62
Snapchat	51
TikTok	78
YouTube	157
Twitter	16
VSCO	6
Discord	20
Facebook	13
GroupMe	12
HouseParty	12
KJK	1
Monkey	2
Periscope	1
Tumblr	1
Twitch	13
WhatsApp	45
Whisper	1

Study participants were asked to rate roadblocks that challenge their ability to monitor the online behavior of their children. The roadblock receiving the most first-place selections was rapid advances in technology, (n = 44), closely followed by parent/guardian availability of time (n = 36). As technology advances, guardians continue to fall behind in their ability to stay up to date with popular apps and sites that children may use. There are many factors that impact a guardian's amount of time available to devote to monitoring their child online. Some of these factors may include work demands, home tasks or duties, or the needs of other children in the home. This lack of time to appropriately monitor can

pose an issue when a child is able to access social media and the guardian is not able to block content or intervene when issues arise.

Identifying the greatest roadblocks to monitoring is helpful to the school campus so that it can implement needed supports to address the specific roadblocks to guardians. These roadblocks can be grouped into thematic categories. The first category of *time* includes parent/guardian available time, other duties in the home, other duties outside the home, and shared custody of the child. The second category of *knowledge* includes rapid advances in technology and lack of technical expertise. The third category of *privacy* includes desire to respect the child's privacy and the child's efforts to conceal online activity. Of these three categories, the greatest response from guardians overall was in the category of knowledge (n = 61). The next greatest category was time (n = 53), followed by privacy (n = 25). These data create an opportunity for the campus to target guardian knowledge to reduce these areas as roadblocks. Table 6 contains a summary of findings for study participant perceptions of first-place selections of roadblocks to monitoring their child's online behavior.

Table 6

Roadblocks to Monitoring Children's Online Behavior

Roadblock	n
Parent/guardian available time	36
Rapid advances in technology	44
Lack of technical experience	17
Desire to respect child's privacy	14
Child's efforts to conceal online activity	11
Other duties in the home	11
Other duties outside the home	5
Shared custody of the child	1
Other	1

Qualitative Data Introduction

The qualitative data for this study were collected using a focus group format. The focus group was facilitated by me, along with a colleague who monitored the "waiting room" and verified that participants had completed a brief survey prior to granting them entrance to the group. The brief survey asked for participant consent, along with demographic information of the participant and their child. Participants each selected a personal identifier to identify themselves upon entering the focus group to ensure confidentiality. The focus group lasted approximately 55 min.

Participants

A total of nine participants accessed the focus group via Zoom. Table 7 shows demographic information for the nine participants.

Table 7

Demographic Information of Focus Group Participants

Identifier	Guardian demographics				Child demographics			
	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Race	Grade	Gender	Ethnicity	Race
22	45–49	Female	Not Hispanic or Latino	White	8	Male	Not Hispanic or Latino	Two or more
Chanel	40–44	Female	Not Hispanic or Latino	White	7	Female	Hispanic or Latino	White
Louie	50–54	Female	Hispanic or Latino	White	6	Male	Hispanic or Latino	White
12	40–44	Female	Not Hispanic or Latino	White	8	Male	Not Hispanic or Latino	White
Volleyball	45–49	Female	Not Hispanic or Latino	White	8	Female	Not Hispanic or Latino	White
1219	40–44	Female	Not Hispanic or Latino	White	7	Female	Not Hispanic or Latino	White
3636	50–54	Female	Hispanic or Latino	White	7	Female	Hispanic or Latino	White
Fried Chicken	40–44	Female	Not Hispanic or Latino	Asian	7, 8	Male	Not Hispanic or Latino	Asian
87401	50–54	Female	Not Hispanic or Latino	White	8	Male	Not Hispanic or Latino	White

Analysis Method

The focus group was recorded using the recording option embedded in the Zoom program settings and resulted in both an audio-recording and a chat text file. As a backup, the focus group was also recorded using the Rev Recorder application and transcribed using the Rev Recorder transcription feature. I listened to the full recording to ensure that there were no errors in the transcription, and any minor errors were corrected to be sure that all text was captured in its entirety. I reviewed the recording a second time so that text entered by participants on Zoom's concurrent chat feature could be added to the transcript at the specific time when the verbal responses were provided during the group. Accuracy was ensured for these instances because each time comments were made in the chat feature, I made verbal reference to them, as evidenced on the recording. This process ensured that all chat responses were specifically and chronologically correlated with the question or topic under discussion.

A two-phase process was used to code the transcript (Patton, 2015). During the first phase, I read through the transcript multiple times to gather a sense of the thoughts and perceptions of the participants. After this initial read-through phase, open coding was used to identify preliminary codes based on the responses from the participants. In the second phase of the analysis, the preliminary codes were grouped by similar topics to identify themes. A total of five themes were identified from the focus group data: *harm*, *roadblocks*, *guardian action*, *guardian education*, and *student education*. Once these themes were identified and named, the transcript was entered into NVIVO to correlate specific participant responses with the theme to which they corresponded.

An additional data point was used to examine Research Question 2: What do guardians need and/or want to be empowered to intervene and/or prevent cyberbullying? The guardian survey contained open-ended questions to gather guardian perceptions of the role of the school, the role of the parent/guardian, and the role of the student. The first question, "What can the school do to help prevent cyberbullying?", resulted in qualitative data tied to Research Question 2. These data were coded, and three themes were identified: *guardian education*, *student education*, and *school action*. The first two themes, guardian education and student education, corresponded to the previous themes identified in the focus group, and all data directly supported the information provided for these two themes. The third theme identified, school action, was a new theme from which two subthemes emerged: *consequences* and *restrictions*.

Findings

Six main themes emerged in the qualitative portion of this study: *harm*, *roadblocks*, *guardian action*, *guardian education*, *student education*, and *school action*.

Harm

Guardians shared concerns about the harmful effects of cyberbullying, including the ability of bullies to remain anonymous, making it difficult to determine who is committing the cyberbullying and to therefore be able to put a stop to it. 3636 noted that many bullies are empowered because of the anonymity they experience. They hide behind the screen so that they can say things that they would not say in person. The ability of cyberbullies to remain anonymous allows anyone at any location to be able to commit cyberbullying toward others, as shared by Fried Chicken:

It's not apparent who is the bully anymore. So, typically, when we were growing

up, you had these types right. You could kind of smell a bully from far away, and if

you chose to, you could avoid the situation or you could work really hard to stay

out of it. Now, you never know who is a bully, because all it takes is a few clicks of

a button to spread hurtful and mean things. So, I think it is just even harder for

children to navigate the situation now.

The rise in social media and increased accessibility for adolescents has also created

an environment in which they are more connected than ever. This connection allows users

to share unfiltered details about their life, interests, and thoughts. In many cases, users

choose to post a "highlight reel" of their lives, which focuses on the most interesting or

exciting aspects rather than on the mundane or negative aspects. This connection can

sometimes cause other children or students to envy what they see online or to feel left out

of a situation in which others may be participating. This concern was expressed by 3636:

Well, like friends that are getting together and they're posting that they're here. And

then, I get asked, "Well, why can't I go there, and their parents let them do this?"

My answer is, "I'm not their parent." But they see what their other friends are doing

on social media because these kids are posting everything that they're doing. So,

they want to do it, too, but that can't happen.

Similarly, 12 expressed that what a child sees on social media can cause issues

between the guardian and the child when the guardian must determine whether to allow the

child access to the desired activity:

I know that, for my son, he has a phone that has Wi-Fi access, and so he can access

some apps, but he can't text his friends and do things like that. So, I feel like, for

him, sometimes he's kind of missing out because he can't communicate. That's how

all of his friends communicate. And so, I feel like sometimes he's left out of

situations if a mom doesn't text me or something like that.

Another concern expressed by 87401 is the rapid speed with which content can spread:

The buzz on social media travels so fast. So, they will just come home from school

and be like, "Oh, today, we heard blah, blah, blah, and we saw blah, blah, blah."

It'll be something I hadn't even heard yet. I mean, it's almost instant. They have

instant access to anything that happens.

Another issue shared by participants is the lasting impact that cyberbullying can

have on the individual, including the risk for their physical safety. 87401 noted, "I don't

think they realize that once they post something, it's there forever." Several participants

reported the concern that predators monitor social media, and they worry that their children

may post identifying information that can put them at risk.

Roadblocks

Time was reported by guardians in the focus group as the primary roadblock to

monitoring—time to monitor their children appropriately, time to have discussions with

their children, or even time to research apps that their children request to use. Several

participants noted that this issue can be exacerbated as apps evolve and technology shifts.

Even though guardians monitor their children online, it can be difficult to keep up, as noted

by 3636:

Just because we're busy all the time and running them around from place to place.

It's a reminder. You got to stop and figure out what to look at, the text, the posts.

The posts, I get alerted, so I look at the posts all the time. But just that, the time.

And also, how it changes. Social media changes all the time, and what they can do, and sometimes you find out about it later. Like the other parent mentioned, it's only certain people can see that. Well, when did that happen? It's changing all the time with what they can do, and it's hard to keep up with all of that.

Child maturity level is another roadblock shared by guardians. This can impact whether a guardian allows their child to have access to a device or certain apps. This can also be an issue when a child demonstrates a lack of maturity to handle using the device or app appropriately, as shared by 12:

For me, it's a straight-up maturity issue. I don't think that he completely understands all of the aspects of what goes into it, and I'll give you an example. When he was a little bit younger, he downloaded Instagram, and created his own account. I discovered it quickly, but he made it public and not private, and he had identifying information on there. So, I just talked to him about what he's doing and how anybody in the world could find him, and how scary that could potentially be. So, to me, it's just a maturity and lack of knowing what really could happen.

As technology changes and the apps used by adolescents evolve, it can be difficult for guardians to have the technical knowledge to know the types of risk that their children may encounter. Louie noted that sometimes children find ways to modify how they are accessing social media to prevent their guardians from seeing everything:

I have two older kids and then him, and so, of course, I am on their Insta[gram]s and their Snapchats. But from what I understand, there's like the ones that people can see and then the ones that they have certain people that they want to see. So, if there's like two different . . . I don't know exactly how it works. I've tried to ask,

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and I'm like, "Well, why would you need two different accounts?" And one of

them's like, "Well, I just don't want your friends to see this or you to see this." I

mean, we're pretty open. We try to talk about stuff, but I guess they don't want

other adults or whatever to see what they're posting, which is probably

inappropriate.

Guardian Action

One of the ways in which some adolescents may avoid many of the pitfalls of

social media is that they have had the opportunity to learn from older siblings. These

experiences can also help to educate the guardian, who must navigate the situation

alongside the child. Louie shared that having older siblings who have experienced issues

with cyberbullying can help younger siblings realize how easily it could impact them:

> So, I have older kids, and so we've dealt with some cyberbullying. We kind of just
>
> let him know that those things have already happened to somebody that he knows,
>
> and just trying to let him know that it does happen. We can say all day, "Well, this
>
> is what they're saying is happening," but when you tell him that, "This happened to
>
> your sister." Or, "This happened to your brother. This is not a good thing."

A guardian who believes that their child is ready to access social media may choose

to put certain requirements or expectations in place for use. Several guardians shared the

expectation that they must approve an app for it to be downloaded. Some guardians choose

to put requirements in place such as no phone access in child bedrooms. It can be a

difficult decision for a guardian to determine whether a child is ready to have access to

social media. Fried Chicken shared that trust could play a role in how access is granted and

how the child is monitored:

Mine are just using YouTube so far, but what I do is I do keep safe restrictions on, and it's interesting that you use the word trust. Of course, trust is a factor, but I think with the age and maturity, it takes just a second and just one word here or there for it to set something off. So, that is why my kids know that their devices are not their private property, and I do conduct periodic checks on them. I let them know, this is just to keep them safe. As you said, just putting something out there. So, they are just teenagers, barely. So, that is why they know that everything will be monitored by a parent, and they know to expect that. And I think that does keep them in line, yeah.

87401 shared a creative way for the family to determine whether a child is ready to have access to a particular app:

I had ours write an essay on how he would benefit from the app. So he asked for Instagram a couple years ago, and we asked him to write an essay on why he would benefit from having Instagram, and he gave up and said, "I don't think I would benefit." So, then, this year, when he started eighth grade this year, we had him do it again. He was able to complete the essay with reasons why, how he could stay connected to friends and family who don't live in Texas, and how dangerous it would be to post stuff that wasn't uplifting or whatever. It was a really good chance for us to have a family discussion around the dangers of social media.

One of the most common ways in which guardians monitor their children is through random checks of the device. 3636 shared that all posts are checked, and if they seem inappropriate, they must be deleted. For many guardians, the primary way in which they educate their children online is through discussions. This may include giving

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examples of how they may be at risk or unsafe, or it may be discussing the expectations

that are in place for use. Louie shared how her family discusses being safe online:

> We talk about the dangers and give examples of what can happen if you post your
>
> information or inappropriate things. What I found was a big thing is YouTube. You
>
> can click from one thing to the next and it'd be inappropriate, whether it's nudity or
>
> bad words or just the content in itself. And so, that's what's hard with all of these
>
> apps. So, if we happen to, because we can see anything that they download on
>
> YouTube, or look at on YouTube, and I'm like, "Why were you watching this?"
>
> "Well, I just clicked on it for a second." You hear things like that. So, then, we just
>
> kind of reiterate these are inappropriate things.

Guardians acknowledged that sometimes giving their children consequences is

what is necessary to help them understand the repercussions of their choices. 12 shared that

her child lost access to his phone because of something he posted on Instagram. In severe

cases of cyberbullying, it may be necessary to involve school authorities who can act on

the child's behalf. These authorities may include the counselor or administrator or even

law enforcement. Louie shared two instances where involving school officials was the

action taken:

> Unfortunately, I have dealt with it with both of my older children. The first one was
>
> somebody did create another profile and started not saying very nice things about
>
> other people, and it looked like my daughter was doing that. We took snapshots and
>
> we did speak with the counselor. Of course, there's not a lot you can do because
>
> you can't really prove who did it. You could go on to the police and try to have
>
> them track that person down. In the end, it was in junior high and we had ideas of

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who it might be, and then it was like, "Do we really want to really hurt this person?" So, it was taken down and it didn't happen again. She just steered clear of that. The second instance was a little more dramatic. It was some of the friends got mad at her for some reason and they put a picture of a knife cutting their wrist, and said, "Why don't you go do this?" On one of her pages. And the same thing. We did see the principal, or the [assistant principal], and we went, the counselor, and the students were handled, I guess, because it just kind of went away. Nothing happened after that. It was quiet, which was kind of weird. She didn't even really know about it because it was a friend of mine that was checking up on her daughter, or her daughter said, "Hey, I'm a little concerned about so and so because I saw this on Snapchat." I couldn't even remember what it was at that time. So, they brought it to my attention. Then they started sending me the pictures, and a lot of people had seen it, but for some reason, she hadn't seen it anyway.

Guardian Education

Guardians expressed a desire for support and continuing education from the school. Several topics of interest were shared that could empower guardians to better support their children. 12 shared that clarification of cyberbullying definitions would help:

I saw the definition of cyberbullying, but I still have some confusion on what actually qualifies. Making sure that kids know that it's not a bad thing for kids to report behavior that appears to be cyberbullying. I think more education on what specific things are actually cyberbullying would help me.

Louie shared that having a better understanding of what steps a guardian should take if their child is cyberbullied would beneficial. This would assist a guardian dealing with a

difficult situation to know how to move forward to best support their child. 12 shared that helping guardians begin to have conversations with their children could be helpful:

> Maybe even some ways to help kids understand the gravity of things that they may post, or they think something's kind of joking or whatever, and they don't understand the full implications. So, even ways for parents to kind of address that with their kids in a nonlecturing kind of way, that just helps them understand, I guess, a little more.

To address the lack of knowledge of technological advancements, several guardians expressed a desire for hands-on training regarding specific apps accessed by adolescents, as well as training on operating specific devices. The struggle for guardians to know what risks their children may have ahead of them is evidenced by concerns shared by 3636:

> I think having technology people come talk to us about the newest apps out there that they've seen. Just a parent how-to, to find out what's out there, what kids are doing. Because sometimes our kids don't tell us everything. Well, I know they don't tell us everything, but I think sessions like that, that make us aware of what's going on, on social media, would help a lot.

Likewise, Volleyball shared that adolescents are using all kinds of different devices and that training on using these could prove beneficial to guardians:

> Also, settings for the phones, too. Not just apps, but almost like a visual to show, "Okay, this is what you need to do for your phones." And not just one type of phone. There are different types of phones out there, so having that visual would help, too.

Student Education

During the focus group, participants examined specific scenarios to determine whether they felt the act would be considered cyberbullying. They also discussed factors affecting this determination. Several guardians shared the belief that intent matters. If the person's intent is to be mean or make fun of the other person, then the behavior should be considered cyberbullying. In addition, guardians shared that if the targeted person does not have knowledge that it is happening, then it should be considered cyberbullying. Lastly, if the comment or post puts that person in a negative light, then it should be considered cyberbullying. During the focus group session, several areas were identified by guardians on which to educate students. The specific areas that guardians requested be addressed included educating students on the seriousness of cyberbullying, when and how to make a report, and resources and help for victims.

Primarily, guardians believe that, in many cases, students do not realize the seriousness of the situations in which they are participating. Many children lack the ability to identify inappropriate situations and to act or remove themselves from these situations. 1219 shared that children may minimize the situation or their response to the situation:

> I also think that a lot of times, kids don't necessarily know what cyberbullying looks like in their day-to-day life. For example, the group chat example we looked at, I mean, how many of our kids are in group chats, and they wouldn't necessarily think, "I'm being a part of bullying." Because that word bullying has such a heavy connotation. But they don't see the day-to-day things that they may do, or they may be a part of. They may just sit aside and laugh at or like. They may not think it's a big deal. They may not consider it actually bullying. But in the end, it really is. So,

a lot of times, they don't even understand the gravity of what they're doing, because it is a bit anonymous, and they may think, "Oh, that's not a big deal." They don't know. Or I just laughed at that. Or maybe I just didn't say anything. Maybe I didn't stand up for it. But they don't understand how much they're actually contributing to the problem because to them, it doesn't seem like a big deal.

Guardians believe that children need more options and continuing education on reporting situations of cyberbullying. 87401 shared that some students may know something is not right but be too afraid to speak up. This can prevent appropriate authorities from being able to intervene. Encouraging students to report to an adult can be a difficult task, and several guardians expressed the desire for their own children to be willing to report. In cases where students are emotionally or psychologically harmed, it may be helpful to involve the school counselor or licensed specialist in school psychology (LSSP) when appropriate. Louie shared that involving these staff members may help: "I think a lot of kids try to play it off as not a big thing but inside they are being hurt. Letting them know that it's okay to go talk to the counselor and knowledge about an LSSP."

Several guardians reported that one of the ways they choose to act regarding cyberbullying issues is having conversations with their children. Likewise, many guardians feel that the school should also be having conversations with students about the topic of cyberbullying. These conversations would allow the school and guardians to be a united front in addressing the issue, which may help students to better process the information being communicated. 1219 shared that sometimes children need to hear it from another source:

I think the more our kids hear it from other people than us, the better. Parents, they

get really tired of hearing from us, and so I think, whenever they hear it from

maybe a teacher they respect or they're having those conversations at school, I do

think it's helpful because they're hearing it in more than one place. And then, even

if the school could give parents the information, so that we could follow up at

home, that at least they're hearing the conversation from someone else other than

us. Because then we just, I feel like, a lot of times, turn into the bad guys that are

just the police of the internet for them.

Several guardians indicated that the campus had previously done some form of a

student-wide assembly to educate students. Participant 22 shared that bringing in guest

speakers to talk with guardians would be helpful and that offering sessions where both

students and guardians could attend together would be helpful. 3636 shared that continuing

to address digital citizenship for students on a more regular basis would also be beneficial

so that the conversations continue throughout the year.

School Action

Many open-ended responses on the survey addressed the guardian concern that

additional support is needed from the school to address cyberbullying issues. Guardians

indicated several areas where the school could improve upon or change the way it

approaches cyberbullying. These areas were grouped into the subthemes of consequences

and restrictions.

Consequences. A common topic identified in the responses was that guardians

would like to see more harsh consequences for cyberbullying behavior. Guardians noted

that the school should set expectations for students regarding consequences at the start of

the school year and strictly enforce them, as noted by one guardian who shared, "Take proper action against any perpetrators, the same as if any other rule were broken. Explain these rules at the beginning of each school year." Another guardian agreed and suggested that cyberbullying be taught and addressed in a way similar to other student discipline issues:

> Adopt a zero-tolerance stance where any student engaging in cyberbullying is expelled. This would require an initial warning to the entire school with numerous examples of cyberbullying. At the school they had a presentation on dress code, and they had a multitude of photos showing what is allowed and what is not allowed. Something similar with cyberbullying. And, quite frankly, bullying in general.

Restrictions. Another frequent suggestion shared by guardians is the belief that the use of phones should be restricted while at school. Several guardians said that devices should not be used in class unless under the direct supervision of the teacher. They expressed that educational content could be delivered using more traditional methods rather than employing technology, which could pose a risk. Some guardians also mentioned a desire for devices to be restricted so that the students can only access district resources and websites. These restrictions should include students not being able to use their devices at lunch, as noted by one guardian:

> Limit device use to educational activities during school, don't allow devices to be used during lunch, hallways, put away phones during class; the kids today have constant access to technology. I don't feel they need it during school unless the device is being used for school purposes. I don't think texting during class

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constitutes educational activity. Not too many years ago, we didn't have personal devices at all, and we survived just fine. It's fine to use technology but access should be limited.

Overall, guardians reported concern over the amount of time that students are able to access their devices. They indicated disagreement with some campus policies that allow students to use their phones in various areas of the building:

Phones should not be allowed during class unless specifically for lesson use or as allowed by the teacher. I hear of kids using their phones for personal reasons throughout the school day. This is utterly disrespectful to the teachers. Phones should live in backpacks and only be checked on breaks. As a parent, I was surprised when I called to notify my son of something and was told to "text him, we don't call the classrooms." Seriously??? You're encouraging students to NOT pay attention in class and to be attentive to their phones during class time. A school nurse friend has story after story of kids coming to the clinic then proceeding to surf on their phones while they "rest" for some invisible affliction. Take away the nonstop device use and cyberbullying will drop dramatically. Are the teachers allowed to use their phones while walking in the hallways and while students are doing classwork? I sure hope not!!

The qualitative data collected during both the survey and focus group provide insight into the guardian experience with cyberbullying. The findings collected indicate several areas with which guardians continue to struggle in addressing cyberbullying. The findings also point to several areas for which guardians would like support from the school. The six theme areas, *harm*, *roadblocks*, *guardian monitoring*, *guardian education*,

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student education, and *school action*, not only provide key information to the campus in identifying guardian perceptions of cyberbullying, but they also report specific ways that the campus can better empower and educate guardians regarding cyberbullying. Table 8 shows participants' responses coded to one of the six identified themes.

Table 8

Qualitative Themes with Focus Group and Survey Question Responses

Theme	Participant responses
Harm	"I don't think they realize that once they post something, it's there forever."
	"Not sure who can see their posts. Creepers out there."
	"Predators are out there!"
	"Well, like friends that are getting together and they're posting that they're here. And then, I get asked, "Well, why can't I go there, and their parents let them do this?" My answer is, "I'm not their parent." But they see what their other friends are doing on social media because these kids are posting everything that they're doing. So, they want to do it, too, but that can't happen."
	"I know that, for my son, he has a phone that has Wi-Fi access, and so he can access some apps, but he can't text his friends and do things like that. So, I feel like, for him, sometimes he's kind of missing out because he can't communicate. That's how all of his friends communicate. And so, I feel like sometimes he's left out of situations if a mom doesn't text me or something like that."
	"My son wants apps his friends are using."
	"But all my friends have it."
	"The buzz on social media travels so fast. So, they will just come home from school and be like, "Oh, today, we heard blah, blah, blah, and we saw blah, blah, blah." It'll be something I hadn't even heard yet. I mean, it's almost instant. They have instant access to anything that happens."
	"It's not apparent who is the bully anymore."
	"So, typically, when we were growing up, you had these types right. You could kind of smell a bully from far away, and if you chose to, you could avoid the situation or you could work really hard to stay out of it. Now, you never know who is a bully, because all it takes is a few clicks of a button to spread hurtful and mean things. So, I think it is just even harder for children to navigate the situation now."
	"It can be anonymous."
	"How quickly it travels to everyone."
	"They're so young and it can be crushing."
	"They HIDE behind the screen so they say something that they wouldn't say in person."
	"It's easy for the student being bullied to hide it from adults that could do something."

Table 8 *Continued*

Theme	Participant responses
Roadblocks	"For me, it's a straight-up maturity issue. I don't think that he completely understands all of the aspects of what goes into it, and I'll give you an example. When he was a bit younger, he, sorry, there's some squirrels torturing our dog. When he was a little bit younger, he downloaded Instagram, and created his own account. I discovered it quickly, but he made it public and not private, and he had identifying information on there. So, I just talked to him about what he's doing and how anybody in the world could find him, and how scary that could potentially be. So, to me, it's just a maturity and lack of knowing what really could happen."
	"I do. I have two older kids and then him, and so, of course, I am on their Insta[gram]s and their Snapchats. But from what I understand, there's like the ones that people can see and then the ones that they have certain people that they want to see. So, if there's like two different . . . I don't know exactly how it works. I've tried to ask, and I'm like, 'Well, why would you need two different accounts?' And one of them's like, 'Well, I just don't want your friends to see this or you to see this.' I mean, we're pretty open. We try to talk about stuff, but I guess they don't want other adults or whatever to see what they're posting, which is probably inappropriate."
	"Just because we're busy all the time and running them around from place to place. It's a reminder. You got to stop and figure out what to look at, the text, the posts. The posts, I get alerted, so I look at the posts all the time. But just that, the time. And also, how it changes. Social media changes all the time, and what they can do, and sometimes you find out about it later. Like the other parent mentioned, it's only certain people can see that. Well, when did that happen? It's changing all the time with what they can do, and it's hard to keep up with all of that."
	"Time."
	"Knowledge and time."
	"All of those!"
	"Taking the time to investigate"
	"Apps evolve faster than our knowledge does!"
	"We become complacent that everything is okay."
	"Tremendously!!! That is how kids are learning about new things and outsmarting us!"
Guardian action	"So, for me, personally, it's so hard to keep up with social media, but what I try and do is belong to a lot of parent forums online, and I do use a lot of social media for networking and for academic and professional reasons, too. But I do belong to a lot of groups, and that's what I mainly use my Facebook for. That is where, because there is no way you can keep up with the younger generation, bless you. So, there's no way you can keep up with them, other than to learn about it. And I as a parent utilize social media, as I said, for academic, for professional growth, and also to share professional experiences. That's my two cents on that."
	"I try to check their phones and research latest apps."

Table 8 *Continued*

Theme	Participant responses
Guardian action	"My kids, my parent and teacher friends and students at the school."
	"Talking to my friends and older children"
	"I learn from my adult child, adult niece and my coworkers."
	"I get a lot of information from coworkers and my son."
	"I gave in because they were saying that TikTok, there was only a certain time, you had that weekend to download it, and I gave in. But my thing was, you can't post. You can just watch."
	"Okay, so he asked for Instagram a couple years ago, and we asked him to write an essay on why he would benefit from having Instagram, and he gave up and said, "I don't think I would benefit." So, then, this year, when he started eighth grade this year, we had him do it again. He was able to complete the essay with reasons why, how he could stay connected to friends and family who don't live in Texas, and how dangerous it would be to post stuff that wasn't uplifting or whatever. It was a really good chance for us to have a family discussion around the dangers of social media."
	"Mine are just using YouTube so far, but what I do is I do keep safe restrictions on, and it's interesting that you use the word trust. Of course, trust is a factor, but I think with the age and the maturity, it takes just a second and just one word here or there for it to set something off. So, that is why my kids know that their devices are not their private property, and I do conduct periodic checks on them. I let them know, this is just to keep them safe. As you said, just putting something out there. I have even seen adults who don't realize the repercussions of the things that they're putting out there. So, these are just teenagers, barely. So, that is why they know that everything will be monitored by a parent, and they know to expect that. And I think that does keep them in line, yeah."
	"Talk about the dangers and give examples of what can happen if you post your information or inappropriate things."
	"I am on the same apps. We randomly check their devices. We have the ability to add apps disabled on their phones."
	"If they post an inappropriate post/text it can hurt them later in life."
	"Apps have to be approved before they're installed. No phones in bedrooms."
	"Any apps downloaded go on my phone as well."
	"Talk about how to safely use them and talk about the risks. We do random checks of his phone."
	"So, I have older kids, and so we've dealt with some cyberbullying. We kind of just let him know that those things have already happened to somebody that he knows, and just trying to let him know that it does happen. We can say all day, 'Well, this is what they're saying is happening,' but when you tell him that, 'This happened to your sister.' Or, 'This happened to your brother. This is not a good thing.'"

Table 8 *Continued*

Theme	Participant responses
Guardian action	"My child has heard everything from the older sibling, so she's kind of learned. So, right now, I haven't really had any big issues because of the experience with the older. And so that's kind of helped right now."
	"What I found was a big thing is YouTube. You can click from one thing to the next and it'd be inappropriate, whether it's nudity or bad words or just the content in itself. And so, that's what's hard with all of these apps. So, if we happen to, because we can see anything that they download on YouTube, or look at on YouTube, and I'm like, 'Why were you watching this?' 'Well, I just clicked on it for a second.' You hear things like that. So, then, we just kind of reiterate these are inappropriate things. 'I know you accidentally clicked on it, but if that happens again, then we need to put some sort of something on it to not do that. Or just click off of it and let us know.' Things like that."
	"We share an Apple account so we have to input a password before anything can be downloaded. and phone checks."
	"He lost his phone because of the Insta[gram] situation, and also he posted something that wasn't the best on TikTok, and he lost his phone for a while after that . . . and a lot of conversations about why that was inappropriate"
	"We had to take the phone from our older siblings and turn off data so they could only use [Kameron] ISD Wi-Fi."
	"I check all posts on Instagram and if I think it's inappropriate or looks inappropriate, I make them delete the post."
	"Based on older kids, we put on guards on the younger kids' phones for explicit language/content."
	"Unfortunately, I have dealt with it with both of my older children. The first one was somebody did create another profile and started not saying very nice things about other people, and it looked like my daughter was doing that. We took snapshots and we did speak with the counselor. Of course, there's not a lot you can do because you can't really prove who did it. You could go on to the police and try to have them track that person down. In the end, it was in junior high and we had ideas of who it might be, and then it was like, 'Do we really want to really hurt this person?' So, it was taken down and it didn't happen again. She just steered clear of that. The second instance was a little more dramatic. It was some of the friends got mad at her for some reason and they put a picture of a knife cutting their wrist, and said, 'Why don't you go do this?' On one of her pages. And the same thing. We did see the principal, or the [assistant principal], and we went, the counselor, and the students were handled, I guess, because it just kind of went away. Nothing happened after that. It was quiet, which was kind of weird. She didn't even really know about it because it was a friend of mine that was checking up on her daughter, or her daughter said, 'Hey, I'm a little concerned about so and so because I saw this on Snapchat.' I couldn't even remember what it was at that time. So they brought it to my attention. Then they started sending me the pictures, and a lot of people had seen it, but for some reason, she hadn't seen it anyway. So, it all worked out. It could have been not so good, depending on the child. And then I've even had a situation where it was the opposite. I have too many kids, sorry. Where my child, I was called by the principal saying that my child was bullying by forwarding a message that somebody had sent to her, and just kind of spreading the gossip. So, kind of all those situations."
	"Mine haven't been but my first action would be to shut down social media accounts and change phone numbers. If it persisted, I would get authorities involved."

Table 8 *Continued*

Theme	Participant responses
Guardian education	"I think having technology people come talk to us about the newest apps out there that they've seen. Just a parent how-to, to find out what's out there, what kids are doing. Because sometimes our kids don't tell us everything. Well, I know they don't tell us everything, but I think sessions like that, that make us aware of what's going on, on social media, would help a lot."
	"Also settings for the phones, too. Not just apps, but almost like a visual to show, 'Okay, this is what you need to do for your phones.' And not just one type of phone. There are different types of phones out there, so having that visual would help, too."
	"I also think, too, even some, and I know you said for parent education sessions, maybe even some ways to help kids understand the gravity of things that they may post or they think something's kind of joking or whatever, and they don't understand the full implications. So, even ways for parents to kind of address that with their kids in a nonlecturing kind of way, that just helps them understand, I guess, a little more."
	"I like the idea of a parent how-to."
	"Agreed—apps to look out for and be aware of."
	"Letting parents know the process on how to handle things when their student is being bullied."
	"Yes! How to restrict phones or apps to mirror phones."
	"Education of parents. Information, what is cyberbullying, access to resources, ongoing interactive conversations between school and parents."
	"I saw the definition of cyberbullying, but I still have some confusion on what actually qualifies. Making sure that kids know that it's not a bad thing for kids to report behavior that appears to be cyberbullying. I think more education on what specific things are actually cyberbullying would help me."
	"I think sessions for both students and parents would be great! We all learn from those."
	"Information sessions and guest speaker. Maybe some sessions for both kids and parents can attend."
	"Be active in halls of school watching kids and taking phones away when situations occur. Advising parents the reason phone taken and making parents accountable also."
	"Engaging parents apart of classwork about cyber bullying"
	"Some of the info [especially] kinds of cyber bullying that I just read on this survey is info I wasn't aware of. Maybe the school can send articles on how to discuss cyberbullying with a child."

Table 8 *Continued*

Theme	Participant responses
Guardian education	"Start with the parents!"
	"Continuously inform the kids and parents about the topic."
	"Educate the kids and the parents."
	"Education of kids and parents. Taking appropriate action on all reported incidents, including retraining of the kids involved. If we catch and retrain for smaller incidences, it might lead to fewer egregious ones."
	"Keep supporting students and informing parents when their student is being cyberbullied (in case they are not aware)."
	"Make it known to parents and kids what is not acceptable and the consequences. It would be helpful to show or link what apps, how to monitor or where to go to find out how."
	"Make some meetings with the students and parents to talk about it."
	"Provide direct information on cyberbullying, provide workshops and outreach."
	"Provide education to students and parents about cyberbullying. Parents need to talk to their kids about it."
Student education	"I think number one would definitely be just because there's intention to harm the student, whether that's socially or academically, or have them have consequences at school. But there's definite intention to harm."
	"Yes bullying- since it's based on rumors"
	"I'm not sure . . . unless it was a repeated action."
	"Posting rumors that harm a reputation is a form of bullying."
	"Yes, because it's based on a rumor."
	"Definitely the first one. And then the second one it's a picture. It also depends on the picture. Like, if it's a picture that's making them look bad, then yes. But it depends on the situation. If it's a picture that's not making them look bad, then that's not cyberbullying. However, they also do need to get their permission if they are going to post something about them."
	"Yes, because it is done without their knowledge. [Number] four depends on the situation."
	"I think it comes down to intention like was said before, if it's intended to harm them or their reputation, it's bullying."

Table 8 *Continued*

Theme	Participant responses
Student education	"And if it's the first occasion or one of many."
	"One thing with number three that kind of stands out is, the way it reads, it's like that person started it. So, I think it's one thing if you're in a group text and you just receive it. Maybe you don't say anything. But if you're initiating the group text with the sole intent to mock or ridicule someone, I would definitely say yes."
	"I also think, too, even some, and I know you said for parent education sessions, maybe even some ways to help kids understand the gravity of things that they may post or they think something's kind of joking or whatever, and they don't understand the full implications. So, even ways for parents to kind of address that with their kids in a nonlecturing kind of way, that just helps them understand, I guess, a little more."
	"I think the posters on the school walls with the snap code that connects kids to be able to report a complaint/situation— that is an excellent idea. Maybe more visibility for that poster."
	"I think the more our kids hear it from other people than us, the better. Parents, they get really tired of hearing from us, and so I think, whenever they hear it from maybe a teacher they respect or they're having those conversations at school, I do think it's helpful because they're hearing it in more than one place. And then, even if the school could give parents the information, so that we could follow up at home, that at least they're hearing the conversation from someone else other than us. Because then we just, I feel like, a lot of times, turn into the bad guys that are just the police of the internet for them."
	"I know we've had a couple of assemblies that has been about cyberbullying and I think those are really effective. So, whenever we have that opportunity again, I think that's a really good thing to have."
	"I agree with that wholeheartedly (to 1219)!"
	"I saw the definition of cyberbullying, but I still have some confusion on what actually qualifies. Making sure that kids know that it's not a bad thing for kids to report behavior that appears to be cyberbullying. I think more education on what specific things are actually cyberbullying would help me."
	"I think sessions for both students and parents would be great! We all learn from those."
	"Information sessions and guest speaker. Maybe some sessions for both kids and parents can attend."
	"Yes! I don't think they are clear either."
	"I also think that a lot of times, kids don't necessarily know what cyberbullying looks like in their day-to-day life. For example, the group chat example we looked at, I mean, how many of our kids are in group chats, and they wouldn't necessarily think, 'I'm being a part of bullying.' Because that word bullying has such a heavy connotation. But they don't see the day-to-day things that they may do or they may be a part of."

Table 8 *Continued*

Theme	Participant responses
Student education	"They may just sit aside and laugh at or like. They may not think it's a big deal. They may not consider it actually bullying. But in the end, it really is. So, a lot of times, I don't even understand the gravity of what they're doing, because it is a bit anonymous, and they may think, 'Oh, that's not a big deal.' They don't know. Or I just laughed at that. Or maybe I just didn't say anything. Maybe I didn't stand up for it. But they don't understand how much they're actually contributing to the problem because to them, it doesn't seem like a big deal."
	"I know the district focuses on digital citizenship for one week during the school year but we need to maybe focus on it at least once a month."
	"Letting kids know it's okay to trust their gut. if it seems wrong, report it. always better to be safe"
	"I think a lot of kids try to play it off as not a big thing but inside they are being hurt. Letting them know that it's okay to go talk to the councilor and knowledge about an LSSP."
	"I also want to say one more thing. Maybe reading articles or something within the classroom might help with that, too. Novels is a big thing, so maybe a read-aloud or something like that could help with cyberbullying, too."
	"I think literature is a great way to get that across."
	"Building our kids up so they are confident enough to stand up when they see it or stick up for their friends."
	"There are books out there now that deal with social media issues so book clubs might be good to discuss social media situations."
	"Continuously inform the kids and parents about the topic."
	"Education of kids and parents. Taking appropriate action on all reported incidents, including retraining of the kids involved. If we catch and retrain for smaller incidences, it might lead to fewer egregious ones."
	"Keep supporting students and informing parents when their student is being cyberbullied (in case they are not aware)."
	"Make it known to parents and kids what is not acceptable and the consequences. It would be helpful to show or link what apps, how to monitor or where to go to find out how."
	"Make some meetings with the students and parents to talk about it."
	"Provide direct information on cyberbullying, provide workshops and outreach."
	"Provide education to students and parents about cyberbullying. Parents need to talk to their kids about it."
	"Act when cyberbullying is reported, seek to resolve the situation peacefully, and have the students take courses on cyberbullying in their health or PE class with a certificate required for completion."
	"Awareness, education, consequences."

Table 8 *Continued*

Theme	Participant responses
Student education	"Be accessible if kids need it."
	"Be more involved with what students use on social media."
	"Continue school-wide programs promoting relationships and cyberbullying information"
	"Counselors should try to get closer to kids so they can express themselves"
	"Dedicated lectures to students about cyberbullying."
	"Define rules and consequences."
	"Educate and offer counseling."
	"Educate the kids on the [effects] of cyberbullying."
	"Educate them on the apps that the children are using."
	"Education, communication, consequences."
	"Educational talks."
	"Educations and monitoring phone usage and time allowed for phones."
	"Encourage in-person relationships and interactions."
	"Engage with students to answer any questions that may come up. And provide a safe avenue for reporting cyberbullying, as well as ensuring a thorough investigation with a fair and reasonable outcome."
	"Frequently explain to the students what cyberbullying is and how it impacts a student."
	"Give education about the correct use about social media and internet"
	"Give the kids examples like the questions above to educate them on what cyberbullying is and is not."
	"Have a program(presentation) for all grade levels""
	"Have discussions with students and discuss the ramifications of what will happen if he/she are caught."
	"Have more discussions with students."
	"Have talks at school. Have a hotline where kids can report anonymously."

Table 8 *Continued*

Theme	Participant responses
Student education	"Help children to understand the limits between teasing/joking and bullying." "In a social setting with students at school, have student testimonies shared aloud/on video." "Inform all students about consequences of cyber - personal bullying." "Information, information, information and open reporting." "Instate good values in students and provide opportunities for students to talk about it." "Keep communication open and easy way to report it." "Keep explaining the repercussions towards other kids over and over." "Listen to children and parents who have experienced cyberbullying and have a clear policy for reprimanding any child found to be a bully." "More discussions with kids about the harm it causes." "Offer an open and safe space for parents and children that have been bullied or have bullied." "Prevention education." "Provide periodic lessons on social media safety, cyberbullying (what that is and how to report it)." "Providing a safe haven for parents and children to share their experiences and seek guidance." "Reinforcing the reporting of bullying." "Rely less on electronics and teach kids about respect and empathy from a young age." "Remind and help educate about what exactly is cyberbullying. They might not realize that something is consider cyberbullying." "Require a class that kids need to take so they can see the effects cyber bullying has and provides examples of cyberbullying so the kids can see incidents they think isn't cyberbullying to them, can in fact be considered cyberbullying by others." "Talk to kids about the dangers and the risk of what it can do to someone." "Talk to students about the effects of cyberbullying." "Talk with kids about the dangers and effects of cyberbullying."

Table 8 *Continued*

Theme	Participant responses
Student education	"Teach kids about cyberbullying so they are aware of what not to do & the consequences if they do cyberbully someone; also teach how to know if they are a victim & how to respond appropriately to get the issue addressed. Teachers and staff be aware of what is going on with their students. Also teach respect of others & self to the students."
	"Teach students about cyberbullying. If it happens during school hours to talk to the students and parents."
	"Teach students not to."
	"Teach students what it is."
	"Watch for signs of it in classrooms and among student groups. Make the students aware of its harmful effects."
	"What we now consider privacy has new rules. such as do not copy and paste a message out of context to make fun of a person. These new rules should be made clear."
School action	"Also only allow online communication which is controlled or observed by the teacher or a staff member."
	"Block apps that cause it and have ability to trace it back."
	"I feel that they need to use less devices at school."
	"[Kameron] ISD utilizes Google slides which on a phone requires my student to log out of their family link Gmail account because they cannot switch accounts. Schools need all their technology solutions to integrate with family monitoring apps and approval processes."
	"Limit device use to educational activities during school, don't allow devices to be used during lunch, hallways, put away phones during class; the kids today have constant access to technology. I don't feel they need it during school unless the device is being used for school purposes. I don't think texting during class constitutes educational activity. Not too many years ago, we didn't have personal devices at all and we survived just fine. It's fine to use technology but access should be limited. In addition, taking reported cases of bullying seriously."
	"Limit unsupervised phone use, education."
	"Limit/control device usage at school."
	"Minimize phone usage or devices with cameras at school."
	"No phone access except for [Kameron] ISD sites."

Table 8 *Continued*

Theme	Participant responses
School action	"Not allow cell phones to be out in school, especially during class period. We are told to send devices for our children however we refuse to buy devices to prevent these issues. The schools need to have less reliance on electronics and more on traditional education like books, paper, discussions, etc."
	"Not allow personal devices during school hours."
	"Not allow phone usage at school or restrict to [Kameron] ISD websites only."
	"Phones should not be allowed during class unless specifically for lesson use or as allowed by the teacher. I hear of kids using their phones for personal reasons throughout the school day. This is utterly disrespectful to the teachers. Phones should live in backpacks and only be checked on breaks. As a parent, I was surprised when I called to notify my son of something and was told to 'text him, we don't call the classrooms.' Seriously??? You're encouraging students to NOT pay attention in class and to be attentive to their phones during class time. A school nurse friend has story after story of kids coming to the clinic then proceeding to surf on their phones while they 'rest' for some invisible affliction. Take away the non-stop device use and cyberbullying will drop dramatically. Are the teachers allowed to use their phones while walking in the hallways and while students are doing classwork? I sure hope not!!"
	"Prohibit phones in classrooms."
	"Restrict use of devices while on school property."
	"Restrictions on phone use."

Note. PE = physical education

Statistical Significance of Findings

The study's quantitative research question was addressed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The threshold for statistical significance of findings was established at $p \leq 0.05$. The magnitude of study participant response effect was evaluated using Cohen's d statistical technique. Sawilowsky's (2009) conventions of effect-size interpretation were adopted for use in the study to assign a qualitative descriptor for respective numeric effect-size values achieved in the study (small, medium, large, very large, and huge). The following represents the findings achieved in the quantitative research question (Research Question 1) posed in the study: What are guardian perceptions of cyberbullying and to what degree do guardians perceive cyberbullying to be a problem at their child's school?

Study participants were asked if their child had ever been cyberbullied. In response, 11.5% (n = 19) indicated that their child had been cyberbullied, with 17.0% (n = 28) indicating that they were not sure if their child had been cyberbullied. The majority of study participants (71.5%; n = 118) indicated that their child had not been cyberbullied. Using the chi-square (x^2) GOF test for statistical significance–testing purposes, the distribution of responses for study participant perceptions of their child having been cyberbullied is statistically significant ($x^2_{(2)} = 108.98$; $p < 0.001$). The magnitude of effect (Cramer's V) for this finding is considered large ($V = 0.81$).

Study participants were similarly asked if their child has knowledge of someone who had been cyberbullied; 29.0% (n = 48) indicated their child having knowledge of someone who had been cyberbullied. The remaining 71.0% (n = 117) of study participants indicated their child having no knowledge of someone who had been cyberbullied. Using

the nonparametric binomial test statistic, this finding is statistically significant. Using

Cohen's *g* to evaluate the magnitude of effect in the comparison, the effect is considered

medium (*g* = 0.21). Table 9 contains a summary of findings for study participant responses

to the question of their child's knowledge of someone who had been cyberbullied.

Table 9

Response Proportion: Study Participant Knowledge of Someone Having Been Cyberbullied

Response category	n	Observed proportion	Test proportion	*p*
Yes	48	.29	.50	.000*
No	117	.71		

* p < .001

Study participants were asked if they had received communication from their

child's school on cyberbullying. In response, 64.8% (n = 105) indicated that they had

received communication from the school on cyberbullying, 18.5% (n = 30) indicated not

being sure if they had received communication from the school on cyberbullying, and

16.7% (n = 27) indicated not having received communication from the school on

cyberbullying. Using the chi-square (x^2) GOF test for statistical significance–testing

purposes, the distribution of responses for study participant perceptions of their child

having been cyberbullied is statistically significant ($x^2_{(2)}$ = 72.33; *p* < 0.001). The

magnitude of effect (Cramer's *V*) for the finding is considered large (*V* = 0.67).

In response to the question, "Do you believe cyberbullying is a problem at your

child's school?", 60.7% (n = 96) of study participants indicated it being either somewhat of

a problem or a problem to a great extent. Only 7.6% (n = 12) of study participants said that

cyberbullying at the school is not a problem at all. Using the one-sample t-test for statistical significance–testing purposes, the mean score response (2.34; SD = 0.80) to study participant belief that cyberbullying is a problem at the school is statistically significant ($t_{(157)} = 2.58$; $p = 0.01$). Using Cohen's d test statistic to evaluate the magnitude of effect for study participant response to the belief of cyberbullying being a problem at the school, the effect is considered small ($d = 0.21$).

Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

A large amount of both quantitative data and qualitative data was collected in this study. Because this is a mixed-methods study, it is important to make connections between the two types of data so that appropriate conclusions and recommendations can be drawn. There are several connections that can be made between the quantitative and qualitative findings.

A common theme that both survey and focus group guardians indicated is a lack of knowledge of social media apps and sites. While many indicated possessing some knowledge via the survey, most indicated a lack of knowledge of several of the popular apps included in the survey list. In the focus group, guardians also expressed concern over having appropriate knowledge of the apps and sites that their children are accessing to be able to monitor them appropriately. In the survey, the apps of which guardians indicated having knowledge did not match the top apps accessed by their children. This result indicates that children are using apps or sites without appropriate monitoring from their guardians. This data piece tells us that guardians do not have the knowledge to appropriately monitor their children online, yet they continue to allow their children access to apps or sites for which they are not educated or possibly not prepared to use. These data

further express a serious need for guardians to receive specific information and/or continuing education regarding popular apps that adolescents are using. This would help them to become aware of the risks for their children so that they can make an informed decision on whether their children are prepared to use an app or site and how they can appropriately monitor their children while they do use the app or site.

Guardians also expressed concerns in both the survey and focus group regarding roadblocks to monitoring their children online. Roadblocks are those issues that prevent them from being able to appropriately monitor their children online. The primary roadblocks were consistent across both types of data. The top two roadblocks indicated were *rapid advances in technology* and *parent/guardian available time*.

Survey respondents and focus group participants indicated that the speed with which technology changes makes it difficult for them to keep up. This means that the popular apps used by adolescents are constantly changing and that new apps and sites are constantly being created. In addition, new features are added to existing apps and sites while guardians continue to struggle to stay informed. This roadblock coincides with the data collected that guardians lack knowledge of apps and sites to appropriately monitor their students.

The second roadblock guardians indicated was parent/guardian available time. Seven out of 10 survey respondents indicated an annual household income over $100,000, meaning that most guardians are working to support their families. The duties and requirements of their jobs can cause reduced time devoted to home activities and responsibilities. When a guardian must work in this way to intentionally prioritize their time for home activities, monitoring their child's social media may not rank high on their

list of priorities. Thus, their child may have access to apps or sites that are not age-appropriate or that put them at risk for potential cyberbullying situations.

Interaction Between the Research and the Context

Several factors impacted the interaction between the research and the context. Initially, it was challenging to gain district approval from Kameron ISD to conduct this study. To obtain guardian e-mail addresses for sharing the survey, I applied for a public information request through the district office. I received a phone call from a district employee stating that my request was denied because e-mail addresses are not a data piece that can be shared through a public information request. I consulted with the campus principal to discuss other options for sharing the guardian survey. I then reached out to the assistant superintendent to seek approval to send the information through the campus's e-newsletter, as the principal and I identified this as the only direct avenue to share the survey with guardians who would be involved in this study. After a lengthy period, permission was eventually granted to share the survey with guardians through the principal's weekly e-newsletter. Fortunately, I had previously received support from the campus principal and coordinator of bullying prevention and student support. As the survey remained open and I continued to check the number of guardian responses, I noticed that there were not as many respondents as I had initially hoped after 1 week of the survey being available, so I asked the campus principal if the survey could be shared with guardians a second time as a stand-alone e-mail. The principal agreed and sent the link to guardians via e-mail a second time.

To be sure that I was adequately staffed to conduct the focus group, I enlisted a colleague to help me conduct the group. At our first meeting, I provided an overview of the

flow of the topics. The second time we met, we went onto the Zoom platform and practiced sharing screens, running the "waiting room," and accessing the Google Form to ensure that respondent responses were being recorded in real time. I attended the campus parent–teacher association (PTA) board meeting and presented information about the study and the focus group in the hopes that members of the group might participate and disseminate information to their neighbors and friends.

During the actual focus group meeting, members shared openly about their experiences with monitoring their children online, their own experiences and knowledge of technology, and how cyberbullying had impacted their children. Several guardians shared deeply personal stories of how their child had dealt with a cyberbullying situation and how the guardian had responded as well. All members of the focus group were highly respectful toward one another, both in open conversation and in the chat responses.

Impact of the Context on the Results

Several factors impacted the results collected from both the guardian survey and focus group. One of the primary factors that impacted results is that guardians have increased access to technology due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the point of the study, many guardians were either working from home and/or their child was attending school from home. This resulted in increased technological use due to the increase in electronic communication (virtual meetings, e-mails, etc.). The increased demands placed on guardians by working at home and having their children schooled at home may have resulted in less time to complete the survey and/or participate in the focus group.

In addition, because of safety protocols in place due to the impact of COVID-19, a face-to-face focus group was not able to be held. The focus group held via Zoom was

successful; however, it is possible that participation was limited because of guardians being less motivated to attend *another* virtual meeting, an activity that had taken a toll on employees and families during the pandemic. Other factors that could have impacted the number of participants is that families have evening commitments that do not allow the use of a computer during a specified time, or they may have concerns sharing personal information with other guardians on a sensitive topic. Because the focus group invitation was sent via the campus e-newsletter, it is also possible that many guardians did not read the newsletter to see the invitation, further reducing the number of participants.

Impact of the Research on the Context

The results collected directly impact both guardians and students at the junior high school in this study. The preliminary findings were shared with the Campus Leadership Team, which consists of the principals and assistant principals, counselors, instructional coaches, and testing coordinator. After discussing many of the concerns shared by guardians specifically regarding how the school can support guardians, the team brainstormed ideas for ways to use these data to make a campus impact. The team identified a primary goal to address guardian education on specific apps and sites. They were also interested in ensuring that students are educated on what is and what is not cyberbullying, as well as specific ways to respond, report, and get help should cyberbullying occur.

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Closing Thoughts on Chapter IV

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Chapter IV presented quantitative and qualitative data determined in this mixed-methods study gathered from multiple sources. These sources included both closed- and open-ended questions in the guardian survey, as well as open-ended questions in the focus

group. Using multiple data sources, a wide range of guardian perceptions were gathered to identify perceptions of cyberbullying at the junior high level. Six main themes emerged in the qualitative portion of this study: *harm*, *roadblocks*, *guardian action*, *guardian education*, *student education*, and *school action*. Conclusions and recommendations drawn from these findings are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The issue of cyberbullying is one that significantly impacts adolescents across the globe (Craig et al., 2009; Juvonen & Gross, 2008, Lancaster, 2018). The repercussions of cyberbullying are serious and impact emotional well-being, academic effectiveness, and social interactions (Batool et al., 2017). While traditional bullies have the power to cause harm to others face to face, cyberbullies have the power to wreak havoc on their victims in school, outside of school, at home, in the community, or anywhere there is access to technology (Tanrikulu, 2018). To complicate the matter further, adolescents must navigate these difficult situations while undergoing significant developmental changes (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010; Wang & Gu, 2019).

As children gain access to technology via smartphones and other devices at earlier ages, schools face challenges with issues arising from cyberbullying. Increased access to technology leads students to an increased risk for cyberbullying (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010; Rice et al., 2015). Likewise, teachers who incorporate technology in the classroom to increase student mastery must monitor student use of devices (Hoffman & Ramirez, 2018). The surge in technological access has created a burdensome task for schools to keep students safe and stay current with the risks posed (Young et al., 2017).

Studies on cyberbullying victimization have revealed that the number of adolescents who are victims range from 1% to as high as 41% (Selkie et al., 2016). Factors that affect these numbers include differences in time and differences in terminology used in collecting data. These numbers indicate a serious need to support adolescents encountering cyberbullying issues. Because adolescents spend most of their day at school,

this support must come not only from their guardians but also from school campus staff. Addressing cyberbullying is more challenging as many children do not report issues to those who can help. Further complicating is the fact that staff and guardians may not be aware of the issue and may not know how to address issues when they arise (Mark & Ratliffe, 2011).

A mixed-methods research design was employed to explore the topic of guardian perceptions of cyberbullying at the junior high level. Quantitative data were collected using a survey of students' guardians, and qualitative data were collected using a guardian focus group. This chapter reviews the research questions, findings, and conclusions of the study. Recommendations to address the issue of cyberbullying at Twin Cities Junior High School, as well as recommendations for future research associated with perceptions of cyberbullying, are presented in this chapter.

The purpose of this study was to identify guardians' perceptions of cyberbullying at Twin Cities Junior High School. This included determining which issues or concerns are held by the guardians and to what degree they believe cyberbullying to be a problem at this campus. In addition, the study intended to identify what guardians want or need to be empowered to address or intervene when cyberbullying issues occur. The following research questions guided this mixed-methods study:

1. What are guardian perceptions of cyberbullying and to what degree do guardians perceive cyberbullying to be a problem at their child's school?

2. What do guardians need and/or want to be empowered to intervene and/or prevent cyberbullying?

The guardian survey was disseminated via e-mail communication by the campus principal to all guardians at Twin Cities Junior High School. The survey remained open and available for 2 weeks, and a total of 238 responses were collected. A statistical analysis was conducted on the findings from the guardian survey, and several key guardian concerns were identified from the data collected.

A focus group was then conducted with guardian volunteers. A total of nine participants attended the focus group via a live Zoom meeting. Open-ended questions were used to gather guardian perceptions of various cyberbullying topics and issues. Participants responded aloud to the questions in real time and by posting responses in the chat function. Both the verbal and written elements (in the chat) were recorded and transcribed. An analysis was conducted to code the transcript to identify themes. Five themes were determined from the data collected in the focus group. In addition, data from one of the open-ended questions on the guardian survey, which correlated to the study's research questions, was also coded to identify themes. Three themes were identified from this question's responses, two of which matched the themes from the focus group session and one of which emerged as a new theme. A total of six themes were identified from both the open-ended responses to the survey, as well as responses provided during the focus group: *harm*, *roadblocks*, *guardian action*, *guardian education*, *student education*, and *school action*.

Discussion of Conclusions in Relation to the Extant Literature and Theories

In this section, I present conclusions related to each research question. Table 10 gives a summary of the overall conclusions drawn from the research questions.

Table 10

Research Questions with Conclusions

Research question	Conclusion
RQ 1 (a): What are guardian perceptions of cyberbullying?	• Guardians perceive cyberbullying to be a critical issue. • 10% of guardians' students have been cyberbullied. • 30% of guardians' students know someone who has been cyberbullied. • 40% of guardians have received no communication from the school on this topic or are unaware of any communication.
RQ 1 (b): And to what degree do guardians perceive cyberbullying to be a problem at their child's school?	60% of guardians believe cyberbullying to be somewhat of a problem or a problem to a great extent at the school.
RQ 2: What do guardians need and/or want to be empowered to intervene and/or prevent cyberbullying?	Guardians need targeted education regarding specific topics for themselves and for their children.

Note. RQ = research question

Missing Data and Internal Reliability

This study's missing data at the person level were well below the acceptable threshold as proposed by Newman (2014). Missing data in the response set varied greatly according to survey items, with some items including an option for nonresponse. For items where response was critical by participants, missing data were minimal and inconsequential.

Analysis indicated very good to excellent levels of internal reliability for the 17 items associated with study participant perceptions of ability to use various apps and sites, and a very good level was achieved for items associated with study participant perceptions of scenarios that may be interpreted as cyberbullying. This indicates that guardians were consistent in these two areas in their responses. The high rates of reliability are important because they validate the construct of what the study was measuring.

Foundational Findings

The responses collected in the guardian survey and during the focus group provided key pieces of data to guide the recommendations made in this study. Tables 2 to 6 shared in Chapter IV provide important information regarding guardian perceptions of cyberbullying specifically related to how the guardians interact with technology and monitor their children online. Conclusions drawn from the data collected in each of these tables were helpful in making recommendations for the campus.

Parent/Guardian Monitoring Techniques (Table 2). Guardians shared that the primary way by which they monitor their children's social media use is by having discussions with their children. Sasson and Mesch (2014) noted that open communication with a child is often an effective way for a guardian to monitor their child online.

Guardians who are educated about possible risks and take an active role in monitoring are better prepared to have discussions with their children regarding online risks (Hutson et al., 2018; Wright, 2017). Sung Hong et al. (2016) noted that any effort on the part of a guardian to monitor their child helps to decrease the risk of cyberbullying.

While open dialogue with a child is beneficial, many factors could impact the effectiveness of this strategy. Using only discussions with a child to monitor usage places full trust that the child is making appropriate decisions and is being completely honest with the guardian regarding their online activity. Children who make risky decisions with their apps or sites may not openly share what they are doing online for fear of being punished or losing access to their device or app (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Guardians who only use discussions to monitor may not actually view what children are posting or viewing online, which could leave them at risk for potential cyberbullying.

The next two methods used by guardians to monitor are parent approval requirement, followed closely by random checks. There are a variety of ways that the random-check strategy may be used. Some guardians have access to their children's device content through their own devices, while others must use the children's devices to access posted content. Guardian checks may be performed at the same time each day or randomly when the guardian feels it is needed. It is important to note that no guardian selected the option for no monitoring, which indicates that all guardians take at least some action regarding monitoring their children. During the focus group, guardians expressed similar responses to this question.

While access to social media can allow adolescents opportunities to practice social interaction and relationship building, it is important that guardians monitor this access

closely (Wang & Gu, 2019). A study by Rideout and Robb (2019) found that only about 50% of guardians of tweens (ages 8 to 12) monitor their children online and only 25% of guardians of teens (ages 13 to 18) monitor their children online. Researchers found that the stress level of a guardian has a more significant impact on the level of monitoring than does the parenting style employed (Warren & Aloia, 2019). Katz et al. (2019) noted that the most important factor in guardian monitoring being effective is that it be done consistently.

  Actions Taken in Response to Cyberbullying (Table 3). Guardians shared that the primary action they take in instances where their children are cyberbullied is to use the situation as an example for discussion purposes. This strategy aligns with responses in the previous section where guardians perceive discussions with their children to be an effective way to address cyberbullying. The second highest response shared was to block the cyberbully.

  Guardians in the focus group and in the open-ended survey responses also requested that both students and guardians receive education on how to report cyberbullying, including resources that would be helpful, particularly to victims. To accomplish this, the school could lead either separate or combined education sessions with students and guardians on these topics. Unfortunately for guardians, studies have indicated that most adolescents will not report cyberbullying incidents given the impact it could have on their peer relationships (Young & Tully, 2019).

  Kameron ISD has a program that allows students to anonymously report inappropriate behavior. Several guardians shared that students may not realize that they are involved in a cyberbullying situation and therefore would not think to report concerning or

problematic behavior. This is a specific sphere in which the school could educate students so that they are informed on what is and is not cyberbullying, as well as the consequences of such behaviors. Tulane et al. (2017) found that many schools have rules in place, but that they are often not consistently taught or enforced by school staff. Likewise, studies have shown that guardians continue to have questions about when and how to report (Young & Tully, 2019). Because guardians continue to struggle with dealing with the need to report and knowing how to report, this is an educational topic that could benefit from continued research.

   Comparison of Perceived Ability to Use Apps/Sites and Children's Use of Apps/Sites (Tables 4 and 5). While guardians indicated having some knowledge of the apps in the survey (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp), these apps did not align with the apps used by their children. The top five apps accessed by children, according to their guardians, include YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp. A study by Reid Chassiakos et al. (2016) found that adolescents learn about appropriate use of technology from their guardians. Guardians who use their devices for lengthy periods of time or access inappropriate content in front of their children may potentially teach that the practice or use is acceptable without realizing it.

   In both the focus group and open-ended survey responses, guardians requested specific education on how to use apps, including risky features and security settings. Because there is a discrepancy between the most used apps by children and those used by guardians, the school could initiate guardian education focusing on the use of these specific apps. The literature has indicated that guardians who have personal knowledge of technology can better protect their children online because they are knowledgeable of

multiple ways to monitor and keep their children safe (Lee, 2013). As the apps used by students evolve and change with trends and added features, the campus should continue to identify the most popular apps so that it can continue educating guardians.

Roadblocks to Monitoring Children's Online Behavior (Table 6). The most-shared guardian concern was rapid advances in technology, followed by time. These two issues go together, as guardians often do not have time to research this topic, and thus, they may continue to fall further behind. Mehari et al. (2018) found that both youth and guardians indicated lack of technological knowledge and time as roadblocks to online monitoring. Targeted education for guardians on specific apps accessed by children will directly impact this knowledge gap. These sessions would also address the issue of the guardians' available time to monitor by helping them set up security options, teaching them specific areas to check, and educating them on the risks for each app or site.

Research Question 1

The first research question guiding this study was as follows: What are guardian perceptions of cyberbullying and to what degree do guardians perceive cyberbullying to be a problem at their child's school? Research Question 1 is quantitative in nature and was addressed through a layered approach. Specifically, there were four distinct layers of study data associated with Research Question 1.

In Layer 1, study participants were asked if their child had ever been cyberbullied. Slightly over 10% of study participants indicated that their child had been cyberbullied, with another 17% indicating that they were not sure if their child had been cyberbullied. The distribution of study participant responses to this question is statistically significant with a large effect (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Layer 1 Quantitative Data
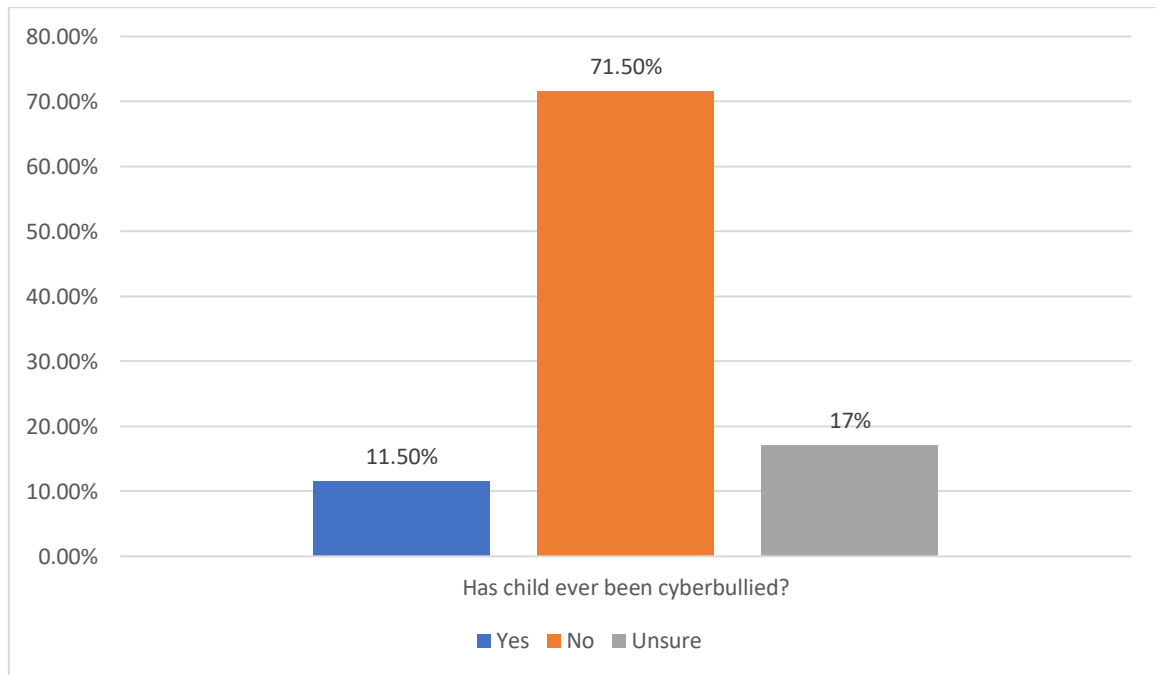
Most guardians at this junior high school indicated their child having not been cyberbullied. This finding may indicate that some supports are in place for children, either at home or at school, to prevent cyberbullying issues. These supports may include education on cyberbullying at the school level regarding online safety and/or consequences. Young et al. (2017) noted that schools should provide consistent education to students specifically related to cyberbullying. Schools would need to continue their efforts to educate both students and guardians with updated information each year.

Guardian-monitoring efforts also have an impact on reducing issues of cyberbullying for children. A troubling finding to note in this study is that 17% of guardians reported not knowing if their child had ever been cyberbullied. This finding indicates that guardians may not be monitoring their children online and likewise not

having discussions with their children. This conclusion is supported by participant

responses in the focus group that guardians struggle to stay informed of advances in

technology, resulting in the inability to appropriately monitor their children online.

Researchers also have noted that guardians struggle with appropriately monitoring their

children online (Legate et al., 2019).

In most cases, if a guardian is monitoring a child's online activity, they should be

able to note if there is a concern; however, many apps allow hidden ways in which children

can interact inappropriately and get into troublesome situations. In addition, children may

use coded language that may not carry meaning with adults but could carry inappropriate

content. In general, there are several ways that guardians gather information from their

children. These include *child disclosure*, in which the child shares freely, *behavioral*

control, which includes rules or limits to their activity, and *parent soliciting*, where the

guardian seeks information from the child and other sources to determine activity (Mesch,

2018; Smetana, 2008). To help facilitate conversations between guardians and their

children, the school could provide guardians with a set of guiding questions to initiate

discussions with their children. Guiding questions would allow guardians to inquire about

the children's online experiences in a safe environment and help their children feel

comfortable talking with them about this topic.

In Layer 2, study participants were similarly asked if their child has knowledge of

someone who has been cyberbullied. Approximately 3 in 10 study participants indicated

their child having knowledge of someone who has been cyberbullied. The finding for

Layer 2 is statistically significant with a medium effect (see Figure 5). This finding

indicates a need to educate students on reporting cyberbullying situations. Kameron ISD

uses an anonymous reporting app that allows students to make a report to the school about a problematic situation. Students have the option to attach screenshots or other evidence to the report. Campus administration can send a message to the reporting party asking follow-up questions, and the reporting party has the choice to respond or not. Reports from this app are investigated by campus administration and handled according to the district's Discipline Management Plan.

Figure 5

Layer 2 Quantitative Data
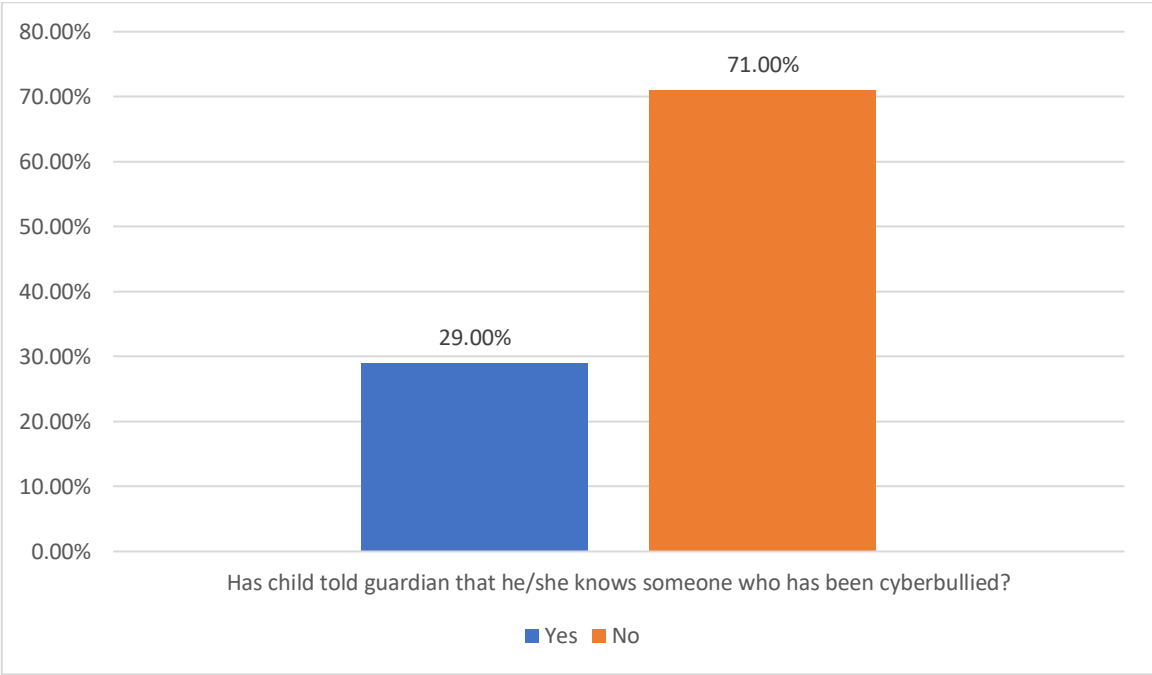
Guardians should also be educated on how to make reports to the school. Because many guardians reported having discussions with their children that could potentially result in discovering cyberbullying issues, they should be informed on how to report this information to the campus for investigation and action. Guardians should be educated on

using the district's reporting app as well, which would protect their anonymity, and also encouraged to speak directly to the campus counselor or administrator. It is crucial that both students and guardians report cyberbullying behavior as the school has a legal obligation to address it (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011; Kowalski et al., 2014).

In Layer 3, study participants were asked if they had received communication on cyberbullying. Slightly over 6 in 10 study participants indicated that they had received communication from the school on cyberbullying. Nearly 20% indicated not being sure if they had received any communication, and nearly 20% indicated having not received communication from the school on cyberbullying. The finding in Layer 3 is statistically significant with a large effect (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

Layer 3 Quantitative Data
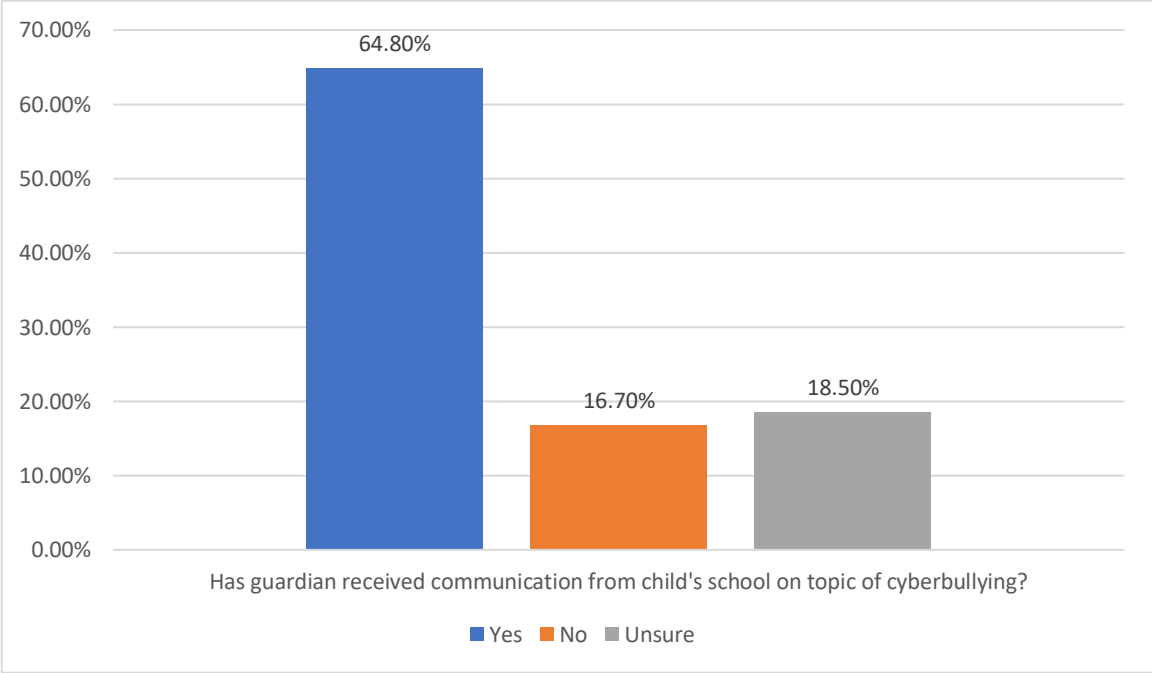
It is significant that 4 in 10 study participants either did not know if they had received communication or had not received communication from the school. This indicates that either the school's efforts to communicate with guardians are not effective or that there is a need to improve the school's efforts to communicate with guardians regarding cyberbullying issues.

Currently, the school's primary method of communication with guardians is via campus e-newsletter. A secondary communication method employed is the Remind app, which allows campus staff to send text messages to guardians who have elected to join this campus group. Some information is also available to guardians on the campus website as well, which is regularly updated by a staff member. Many guardians reported that they have not received information on the topic of cyberbullying from the school, which indicates a distinct need for improved communication with guardians. One way to accomplish this would be to use additional platforms to communicate with guardians. These platforms could include not only the campus e-newsletter and Remind, but also hard-copy dissemination. Communication could be through a specific content area's teacher communication messages, phone messages, or even in-person or virtual trainings. To ensure that all guardians have access to important shared materials, school staff must utilize as many communication methods as possible. To identify the most effective ways to communicate with guardians, a survey could be shared asking for guardians' preferred communication method. This would allow the campus to specifically target the most effective ways to communicate with the largest population of guardians.

In Layer 4, the final layer associated with Research Question 1, the question was asked, "Do you believe cyberbullying is a problem at your child's school?" In response to

the question, 6 out of 10 study participants indicated cyberbullying either being somewhat of a problem or a problem to a great extent. The finding in the fourth layer is statistically significant with a small effect (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

Layer 4 Quantitative Data
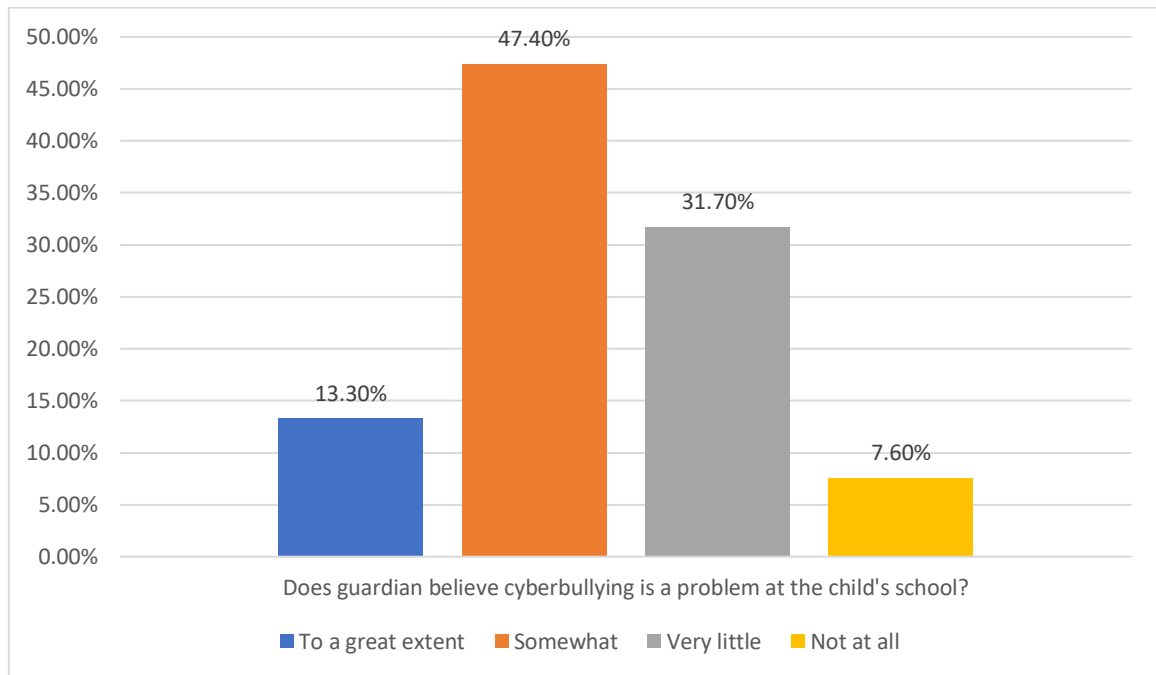
Research has indicated that guardians identify several factors impacting their perception of risk of cyberbullying. Ho et al. (2019) noted that many guardians feel the risk is higher for other children than for their own child, known as the third-person effect. This means that they assume other children to be more likely to encounter problems with cyberbullying and their own child to be less at risk. Likewise, a guardian's overall perception of the influence of social media on their child impacts their perception of the problem of cyberbullying for their child. Guardians who perceive the influence to be

negative have a much different perception than those who perceive the influence of social media in a positive light (Lee, 2013). Many guardians feel overwhelmed with the task of monitoring their children online, leading to a feeling of hopelessness, which can also impact their perception of risk (Midamba & Moreno, 2019). In the focus group, guardians expressed a desire for continued education in several targeted areas, including how to navigate the specific apps used by adolescents, as well as how to set up safety features within specific apps or on devices. Many schools across the country offer intervention programs to address cyberbullying, but the literature is still inconclusive on the effectiveness of these programs (Lancaster, 2018; Young et al., 2017).

The data collected in this study indicate a serious need for both student and guardian support and education on cyberbullying. The first step is to identify the extent to which students have or have not been cyberbullied. Data collection could be done using an anonymous student survey that would allow students to indicate what specific issues or problems they have personally had with cyberbullying. They could also indicate what behaviors they have observed taking place with other students, as some students involved in situations that would be considered cyberbullying do not realize it and/or do not take action to stop it. Identifying student perceptions of cyberbullying would be beneficial to the campus in identifying specific areas of concern to be addressed both through targeted student education and targeted guardian education. The goal for this effort would be to impact any cyberbullying issues taking place on the campus so that the number of instances would decrease.

Research Question 2

The second research question guiding this study was as follows: What do guardians need and/or want to be empowered to intervene and/or prevent cyberbullying? The second research question is qualitative in nature and was addressed using a focus group and open-ended responses embedded within the guardian survey. Six main themes emerged from the qualitative data collected in this study: *harm*, *roadblocks*, *guardian action*, *guardian education*, *student education*, and *school action*.

These themes, along with the quantitative data collected, led to the identification of specific tasks that can be undertaken by the school to empower guardians. Because cyberbullying is a complex problem, it will require a cohesive approach that involves the school staff, guardians, and students. Specifically, the school should provide targeted guardian-education sessions, should increase and vary its communication with guardians, and should improve student education on the topic of cyberbullying (see Figure 8).

Figure 8

Cohesive Approach to Empower Guardians
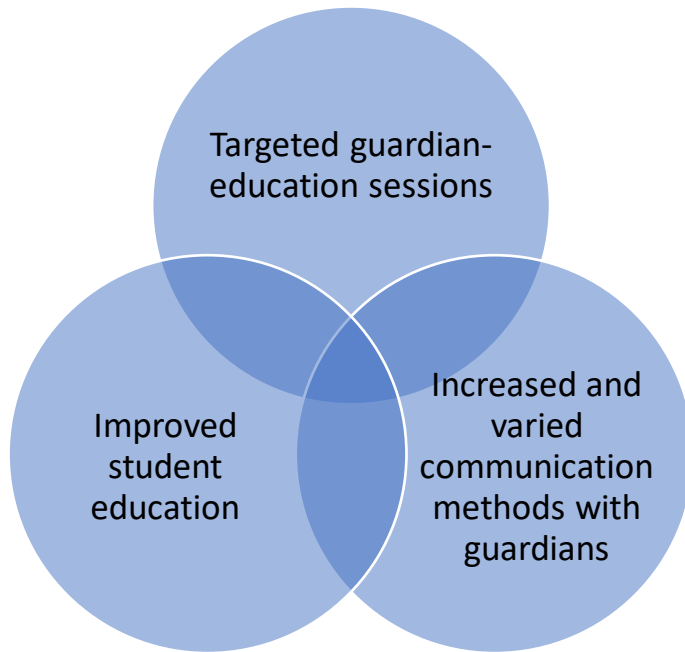
Discussion of Personal Lessons Learned

During this study, I learned many lessons about communication, distribution, and environmental challenges. The initial process of distributing the guardian survey was a significant roadblock. My original goal of sending the survey to guardians using e-mails collected from an open-records request was denied by the district, so the second option of communicating the survey via the campus e-newsletter was utilized. The use of the e-newsletter, in which the survey was embedded, may have impacted the number of initial participants. For guardians to find the link, they needed to scroll through other campus-related information. Because the number of responses collected during the survey's first open week were low, I asked the campus principal to send the survey a second time, this

time as a stand-alone e-mail. This allowed guardians to see the survey immediately upon opening the e-mail, and the responses quickly increased during the second week.

One of the primary challenges for setting up the qualitative portion of the study was the impact of COVID-19, with its resulting limitations on face-to-face gatherings due to district safety protocols. This caused the focus group to shift from a live venue to a virtual format, which may have impacted the number of guardian participants. On the other hand, because of the anonymity built into the format of the virtual focus group, including participant cameras being turned off and names changed to a confidential identifier, there were limited issues of bias present, and guardian participation may have been improved given this format. The method I employed to open the focus group, which included sharing the personal background of the study, allowed participants to be more comfortable and willing to share openly with the group. Those with any reservations with speaking aloud to the group had the option to utilize the chat function to share their responses.

This study was conducted at a junior high school in a large, fast-growing district in Texas. Because of the unique and diverse demographic information of each campus across the district, the findings determined in this study are not transferrable to any other campus. Findings such as these cannot be generalized or applied to a broader setting than the campus (Yilmaz, 2013). While some campuses in the district may have similar demographics, it would not be appropriate to assume that similar data would result at that campus. The survey and focus group components of this research study could easily be replicated at other campuses or even on a district-wide level for campuses to learn more about their guardians' perceptions of cyberbullying.

Implications

Implications for Practice

School staff continue to deal with issues of cyberbullying across all grade levels. While the severity of issues may vary depending on the age of the student population, students continue to encounter cyberbullying incidents. This study targeted the specific issue of guardian perceptions of cyberbullying in the hopes of identifying and addressing issues related to the guardian role in helping to prevent and/or respond to any cyberbullying encountered by their child. The findings of this study indicate that guardians have a great deal of experiences to share with the campus staff that can guide how the campus communicates and educates faculty, staff, administrators, students, guardians, and community members on this topic. Campus administrators who are tasked with investigating and addressing instances of cyberbullying should make efforts to partner with their guardian community on this topic. It is imperative that schools collaborate with guardians, as previous research has indicated that guardians may not have a clear understanding of cyberbullying definitions and issues (Campbell et al., 2019). The data collection methods in this study can be easily replicated at other campuses to identify areas of concern and ways in which the campus can continue to support and educate both guardians and students.

Implications for Field of Study

There is a pressing need for continued research on the topic of cyberbullying. Children continue to gain access to new technology for personal and academic reasons and at younger and younger ages (Alismail & McGuire, 2015; Marwick & boyd, 2014). Given the risk of cyberbullying issues, the need for education and support from both guardians

and schools is critical. This study identified guardian perceptions at Twin Cities Junior

High School, and therefore, the data and recommendations are only applicable to students,

guardians, and staff at this campus. Campuses that struggle with cyberbullying issues

could begin with a guardian survey to identify areas of concern and then move forward to

finding or creating programs that would support guardians and students. The issues faced

by guardians and students may differ from campus to campus because of factors such as

socioeconomic status; therefore, it is important that each campus first identify areas of

concern before making plans to address them. A school district could distribute a district-

wide survey to all guardians and provide the data received to each campus.

Recommendations for Twin Cities Junior High School

Time and time again, guardians have shared concerns about the seriousness of

cyberbullying including the anonymous nature of it, the emotional harm it may cause, and

the need for students to be educated in how to report it (Batool et al., 2017; Feinberg &

Robey, 2009). Based on the data collected in this research study, there are several

recommendations for this campus to implement to address these concerns.

First, the school should implement targeted guardian-education sessions. These

sessions should be presented in a variety of ways—face to face and virtual (which could

include prerecorded sessions to be shared with guardians who are unable to attend). Topics

for the sessions should address the specific apps used by students and the risks associated

with them. Also, sessions should address how guardians can better monitor their children

online, whether through external apps or capabilities built into devices. In addition,

guardians need to be educated on the overall online risks for their children and how they

can have conversations and discussion with their children to ensure their safety and

protection. The campus can provide topics and guiding questions for guardians to have these discussions with their children. Studies have indicated that a guardian having a positive relationship with their child helps to protect them from cyberbullying issues and that guardian education on this topic is helpful (Sampasa-Kanyinga et al., 2020). One suggestion from which guardians could benefit is for the campus to hold a panel of high school students sharing real-life examples of how they or their peers have had issues with social media and what junior high guardians should know about the risks.

The second recommendation is to increase and vary the types of communication from the school to the guardians. The school should utilize a guardian communication survey that would allow the campus to determine in what way guardians prefer to be communicated with. Guardians should be directed to the primary two methods of current communication (e-newsletter and Remind app) so that all guardians can take the time to access these important platforms. Because not all guardians will access these, other methods such as phone alerts and paper communication may be utilized for guardians who are unlikely to receive the campus information otherwise.

The third recommendation is to improve student education on the topic of cyberbullying. Students have knowledge of the problems and issues encountered by them or their peers. Initially, they must be educated on exactly what is acceptable and what is not acceptable online behavior. When students believe they will face disciplinary consequences from the school for participating in cyberbullying, they are less likely to engage in it (Patchin & Hinduja, 2018). Student education should include what school consequences are should a student choose to participate in cyberbullying as a bully or a

bystander. It would also be helpful to provide real-world examples of cyberbullying scenarios so that there is no doubt whether something is appropriate or not.

Students should also be educated on reporting cyberbullying through the district's reporting app. Some studies have indicated that slightly less than half of students would report cyberbullying happening to them, while other studies have indicated less than 10% of students reporting being a victim of cyberbullying (Kite et al., 2010; Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Unfortunately, many students are afraid to report because it would mean admitting their knowledge of cyberbullying happening (Leduc et al., 2018). Resources available to victims of cyberbullying should be shared campus-wide so that all students know that support is available should they encounter a difficult situation. Resources for victims could be shared with the entire student population via posters around the building, video announcements, and advisory lessons. Davis and Koepke (2016) noted that school staff may be more successful in decreasing the number of cyberbullying incidents if they focus on educating students on how they interact with one another rather than simply placing rules or limits on their device use. To be successful, schools should focus on addressing the culture and climate of the school in general and how students view and treat one another (Swearer et al., 2010).

Closing Thoughts on Chapter V

Cyberbullying is a serious and harmful act defined as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices" (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014, p. 2). The deleterious effects of cyberbullying are long-reaching and impact adolescents' lives in serious ways. Advancements in technology, accessibility of devices, and increased access to these devices at younger ages has created a situation

where many children are at risk. Guardians who lack technical expertise and the appropriate time to effectively monitor struggle to support their children when faced with potential risky situations.

This study focused on determining guardian perceptions of cyberbullying issues at the junior high level. In addition, the study aimed to identify what guardians want or need to be empowered to address cyberbullying issues. While many studies have examined student and staff perceptions of cyberbullying, there has been limited research on guardian perceptions of cyberbullying asking guardians to identify what the school can do to better support them. Schools play a critical role in helping children navigate the digital world, especially as children are granted access to technology. The data collected in this study will directly support the education of both guardians and students at Twin Cities Junior High School. Not only is targeted education a crucial piece of the puzzle in addressing cyberbullying, but also open and increased communication between the school and guardians is key. This includes communication regarding potential risks, as well as support for those affected by cyberbullying.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY RECRUITMENT

SLJH Parent Perceptions of Cyberbullying

October is National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month. Due to the increase in online learning that took place this year, students now have increased access to devices and technology. This rise in student access has created an environment in which students are vulnerable to, and at risk for, potential cyberbullying.

Mrs. Genevieve Lopardo, one of our campus administrators, is conducting research on the topic of Cyberbullying at the Junior High Level. Seven Lakes Junior High is partnering with her to seek out parent/guardian perceptions of cyberbullying. This data will help the school better support and provide educational opportunities for parents regarding cyberbullying issues that may arise.

This survey is designed to take fewer than 10 minutes and all data collected will remain anonymous. If you are available to participate in the survey, please click the below link to indicate your consent. If you do not have access to a computer, or would prefer to complete the survey at the school, please contact Seven Lakes Junior High at 281-234-2100 to schedule an appointment.

Following the survey collection period, a parent focus group will be conducted to gather additional feedback regarding parent knowledge and concerns. The focus group meeting will be held on October 22nd from 6-7 pm via Zoom. The Zoom link will be shared with participants via e-news on October 18th.

QUALTRICS SURVEY LINK:

https://tamucehd.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a9O4yxKW8B5ZbFj

QUALTRICS SURVEY QR CODE:

Parent/Guardian Perceptions of Cyberbullying at the Junior High Level

---

Start of Block: Instructions

Q2 Dear Parent/Guardian,

This survey will explore parent/guardian perceptions of cyberbullying at the junior high level. Cyberbullying includes bullying via email, text messaging, phone calls, video clips, and photos as well as through social media apps/sites.

All the information that you provide will remain anonymous. You may skip any question you prefer not to answer, and this will not affect the completion of the survey.

If you have multiple children attending this junior high, please answer the survey with only ONE child in mind. If you are willing to provide information regarding another child, please repeat the survey with your other child(ren) in mind.

 Thank you for your time and feedback.

End of Block: Instructions

Start of Block: Consent

Q41 Please indicate your consent to participate in this study. If you do not consent, you may stop the survey at this point.

○ Yes, I consent. (1)

○ No, I do not consent. (2)

End of Block: Consent

Start of Block: Demographic Information

Page 1 of 21

Q1 What is your age?

○ < 30 years (1)

○ 30-34 years (2)

○ 35-39 years (3)

○ 40-44 years (4)

○ 45-49 years (5)

○ 50-54 years (6)

○ 55-59 years (7)

○ 60-64 years (8)

○ > 65 years (9)

Q8 How do you describe your gender?

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

○ Other (3)

Q9 What is your ethnicity?

○ Hispanic or Latino (1)

○ Not Hispanic or Latino (2)

Q10 What is your race?

○ American Indian or Alaska Native (1)

○ Asian (2)

○ Black or African American (3)

○ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (4)

○ White (5)

○ Two or more races (6)

Q42 What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

○ Some high school coursework (1)

○ High school degree or equivalent (Ex: GED) (2)

○ Some college coursework (3)

○ Associate degree (Ex: AA, AS) (4)

○ Bachelor's degree (Ex: BA, BS) (5)

○ Master's degree (Ex: MA, MS, MEd) (6)

○ Professional degree (Ex: MD, DDS, DVM) (7)

○ Doctorate (Ex: PhD, EdD) (8)

Q43 What is your total household income?

○ Less than $50,000 (1)

○ $50,000 - $99,999 (2)

○ $100,000 - $149,999 (3)

○ $150,000 - $199,999 (4)

○ $200,000 - $249,999 (5)

○ $250,000 - $299,999 (6)

○ More than $300,000 (7)

○ Prefer not to answer (8)

Q11 What is your child's grade level? (If you have multiple children, please complete the survey with ONE child in mind.)

○ 6th Grade (1)

○ 7th Grade (2)

○ 8th Grade (3)

Q12 How do you describe your child's gender?

○ Male (1)

○ Female (2)

○ Other (3)

End of Block: Demographic Information

Start of Block: Child Technology Access

Q15
To which of the following apps/sites does your child have access? Check ALL that apply.

☐   Instagram (1)

☐   Snapchat (2)

☐   TikTok (3)

☐   YouTube (4)

☐   Twitter (5)

☐   VSCO (6)

☐   Discord (7)

☐   Facebook (8)

☐   GroupMe (9)

☐   Houseparty (11)

☐   Kik (10)

☐   Monkey (12)

☐   Periscope (13)

☐   Tumblr (14)

☐   Twitch (15)

☐   Whatsapp (16)

☐   Whisper (17)

☐   Other (If listing multiple, please separate with a comma) (18)

_____

☐   My child does not have access to any apps/sites. (19)

Q45 Does your child have a gaming device or console which allows them to communicate with others online?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

○ Not sure (3)

Q16 Where in the home does your child use his/her device the MAJORITY of the time?

○ Living room/family room (1)

○ Kitchen (2)

○ Office/study (3)

○ Game room/media room (4)

○ Bedroom (5)

○ Outdoors (6)

○ Other (7) _____

Q46 Where in the home does your child charge his/her device the MAJORITY of the time?

○ Kitchen (1)

○ Office (2)

○ Child's bedroom (3)

○ Parent/guardian's bedroom (4)

○ Common area of home (Ex: living room, family room) (7)

○ Other (5) _____

○ Not sure (6)

Q17 How many hours outside of school PER DAY (Monday through Friday) does your child actively engage with his/her device?

○ Less than 1 hour (1)

○ 1-3 hours (2)

○ 3-5 hours (3)

○ 5-7 hours (4)

○ More than 7 hours (5)

○ Not sure (6)

Q47 On the weekend, how many hours PER DAY (on average) does your child actively engage with his/her device?

○ Less than 1 hour (1)

○ 1-3 hours (2)

○ 3-5 hours (3)

○ 5-7 hours (4)

○ More than 7 hours (5)

○ Not sure (6)

End of Block: Child Technology Access

Start of Block: Parent/Guardian Monitoring

Q18 In what ways do you monitor your child's online presence? Check ALL that apply.

☐ Internet filters (1)

☐ Parent/guardian Control App (Ex: Net Nanny) (2)

☐ Random checks of the device (chats, messages, emails) (3)

☐ Require parent approval to download or purchase apps (4)

☐ Set time limits for use (5)

☐ Discussions about safety, dangers, and appropriate use (6)

☐ Other (7) _____

☐ I do not monitor. (8)

Q44
Please rank the THREE GREATEST roadblocks to being able to monitor your child online.
(1= greatest roadblock, 2= second greatest roadblock, and 3= third greatest roadblock)
_____ Parent/guardian available time (1)
_____ Rapid advances in technology (2)
_____ Lack of technical expertise (3)
_____ Desire to respect child's privacy (4)
_____ Child's efforts to conceal online activity (5)
_____ Other duties in the home (6)
_____ Other duties outside the home (7)
_____ Shared custody of the child (8)
_____ Other (9)
_____ I do not monitor my child online (10)
_____ No roadblocks (11)

End of Block: Parent/Guardian Monitoring

Start of Block: Guardian Knowledge of social media apps/sites

Q50
As a parent/guardian, how do you rate your ability to use the following apps/sites?

	No knowledge (1)	Very poor (2)	Poor (3)	Fair (4)	Good (5)	Very Good (6)
Instagram (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Snapchat (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○
TikTok (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○
YouTube (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Twitter (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○
VSCO (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Discord (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Facebook (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○
GroupMe (9)	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q22
As a parent/guardian, how do you rate your ability to use the following apps/sites?

	No knowledge (1)	Very poor (2)	Poor (3)	Fair (4)	Good (5)	Very Good (6)
Houseparty (10)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Kik (11)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Monkey (12)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Periscope (13)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Tumblr (14)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Twitch (15)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Whatsapp (16)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Whisper (17)	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Guardian Knowledge of social media apps/sites

Start of Block: Cyberbullying Scenarios

Q34
The Texas Education Code defines bullying as engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by the district that:1. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property, or2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

Cyberbullying is defined as bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a

computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

Q23 Based on the Texas Education Code definition of cyberbullying, how would you classify the following examples of student behavior listed on the chart below?

	Definitely not cyberbullying (1)	Probably not cyberbullying (2)	Probably cyberbullying (3)	Definitely cyberbullying (4)
1. Shared a photo altered to make a classmate appear heavier than in real life (1)	○	○	○	○
2. Posted rumors that a particular student was caught cheating on a test (2)	○	○	○	○
3. Posted rumors that a student was engaged in sexual acts at school (3)	○	○	○	○
4. Posted a picture or video of another student without that student's knowledge (4)	○	○	○	○
5. Sent a group text ridiculing a student who was not included in the group text (5)	○	○	○	○
6. Sent a DM (direct message) to another student through a social media app making fun of someone else (6)	○	○	○	○

| 7. Shared an explicit picture of someone without his/her knowledge (7) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

	Definitely not cyberbullying (1)	Probably not cyberbullying (2)	Probably cyberbullying (3)	Definitely cyberbullying (4)
8. Created a fake profile and used it to make fun of other people (8)	○	○	○	○
9. Clicked "like" on something online that openly mocked another person (9)	○	○	○	○
10. Took a screenshot of someone's post and shared it with others to make fun of him/her (10)	○	○	○	○
11. Posted a message making a threatening statement toward another person (11)	○	○	○	○
12. While playing an online video game, sent threatening messages to another player (12)	○	○	○	○
13. Used a friend's phone to share his/her personal video on social media without his/her consent (13)	○	○	○	○

Q35 To your knowledge, has your child ever been cyberbullied?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

○ Not sure (3)

Q39 Has your child told you that he/she knows someone who has been cyberbullied?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Q36 If your child has been cyberbullied, how did you FIRST find out about it? Choose ONE.

○ My child told me. (1)

○ I questioned my child. (2)

○ I found evidence on the device. (3)

○ Another child told me. (4)

○ Another parent told me. (5)

○ The school contacted me. (6)

○ Other (7) _____

○ My child has not been cyberbullied. (8)

Q37 If your child has been cyberbullied, what action(s) did you take? Choose ALL that apply.

- [ ] Called the other child's parent/guardian (1)

- [ ] Blocked the person doing the cyberbullying (2)

- [ ] Reported the incident on the app (Ex: Instagram, Snapchat) (3)

- [ ] Deleted the app or account (4)

- [ ] Took away my child's device (5)

- [ ] Responded electronically to the person doing the cyberbullying (6)

- [ ] Contacted my child's teacher (7)

- [ ] Contacted my child's school counselor (8)

- [ ] Contacted a school administrator (9)

- [ ] Reported the incident on the Katy ISD SpeakUp App (10)

- [ ] Posted on personal social media asking for help/advice (11)

- [ ] Used situation as an example to have a discussion with my child. (12)

- [ ] Contacted the police (13)

- [ ] Other (14) _____

- [ ] My child has not been cyberbullied. (15)

Q38 If your child has been cyberbullied, what was the resolution of the incident?

○ Fully resolved (1)

○ Partially resolved (2)

○ Not resolved (3)

○ Still on-going (4)

○ My child has not been cyberbullied. (5)

Q24 Have you received communication from your child's school on the topic of cyberbullying?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

○ Not sure (3)

Q25 Do you believe cyberbullying is a problem at your child's school?

○ To a great extent (1)

○ Somewhat (2)

○ Very little (3)

○ Not at all (4)

Q29 What can the school do to help prevent cyberbullying? Please describe.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q32 What can parents do to help prevent cyberbullying? Please describe.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q30 What can students do to help prevent cyberbullying? Please describe.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Role of the School

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP RECRUITMENT

As a follow-up to the Cyberbullying Parent survey, you are invited to participate in a **focus group discussion** on "Parent/Guardian Perceptions of Cyberbullying at Seven Lakes Junior High." During this meeting, you will have the opportunity to share additional feedback regarding your personal knowledge and concerns. Your experiences are extremely valuable in helping us improve how parents are supported and informed on the topic of cyberbullying. All communication during the focus group will be kept strictly secure and confidential.

Date: October 21st from 6:00-7:00 pm

Zoom link:
https://tamu.zoom.us/j/92550549846?pwd=NjU4QUdXdXhjaUg1R3dSQ25BcWZtdz09

Please note: In order to ensure confidentiality, you will be asked to complete a brief survey where you will choose a personal identifier that you will use as your screen name during the meeting.

FOCUS GROUP PRESENTATION

HELLO!

Thank you for being here!

Introductions:

Genevieve Lopardo, Host
Justin Williamson, Facilitator

1.

NORMS

2.

Purpose & Background

5

As a parent, how and/or where do you learn about social media?

How do you, as the parent, typically utilize social media?

6

WHAT ARE YOUR CHILD'S TOP 3 FAVORITE APPS/SITES?

WHAT ISSUES/CONCERNS DO YOU HAVE WITH THE USE OF THESE APPS?

Instagram
Snapchat
TikTok
YouTube
Twitter
VSCO
Discord
Facebook
GroupMe
Houseparty
Kik
Monkey
Periscope
Tumblr
Twitch
Whatasapp
Whisper

7

PARENTAL MONITORING

NAME ONE WAY IN WHICH YOU MONITOR YOUR CHILD ONLINE

8

Parental Monitoring

What is your biggest roadblock to monitoring your child online?

Peer Influence

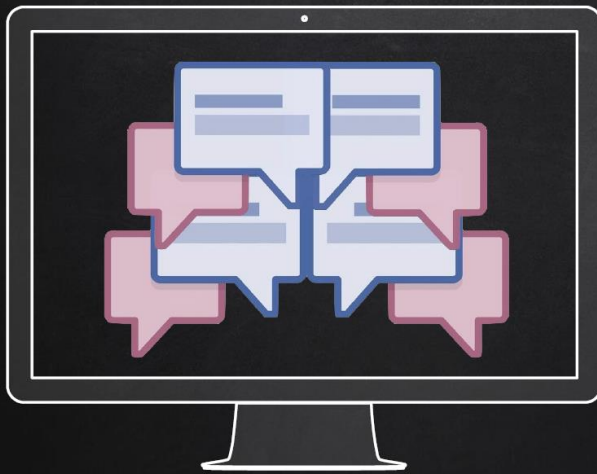### In what ways does peer influence play a role in social media use? Please share.

Bullying Definition:
(Texas Education Code)

1. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property, or

2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

13

Cyberbullying Definition:
(Texas Education Code)

– Bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

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STUDENT BEHAVIORS: SCENARIO DISCUSSION

1. Posted rumors that a particular student was caught cheating on a test
2. Posted a picture or video of another student without that student's knowledge

15

STUDENT BEHAVIORS: SCENARIO DISCUSSION

3. Sent a group text ridiculing a student who was not included in the group text
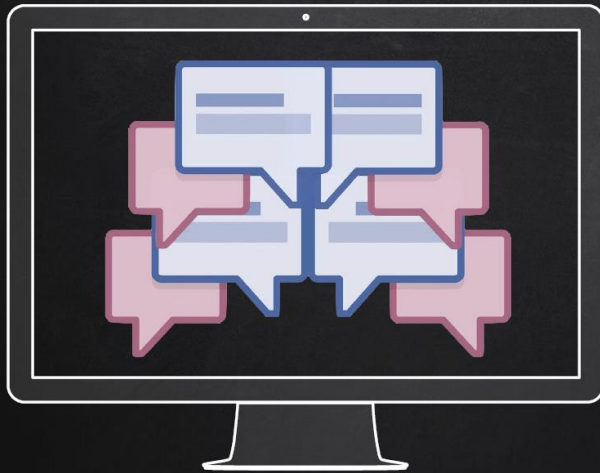4. Clicked "like" on something online that openly mocked another person

16

178

STUDENT BEHAVIORS: SCENARIO DISCUSSION

5. Created a fake profile and used it to make fun of other people
6. Posted a message making a threatening statement toward another person

17

NOW LET'S CHECK THE CHAT...

18

CYBERBULLYING

IF YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN CYBERBULLIED IN THE PAST WHAT ACTION(S) DID YOU TAKE?

IF HE/SHE HAS NOT BEEN CYBERBULLIED, WHAT ACTION(S) WOULD YOU TAKE IF HE/SHE WERE?

SUPPORT

WHAT CYBERBULLYING TOPICS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE COVERED AT PARENT EDUCATION SESSIONS?

SUPPORT

WHAT DO YOU NEED FROM THE SCHOOL IN ORDER TO BE EMPOWERED TO INTERVENE AND/OR PREVENT CYBERBULLYING?

21

THANK YOU!

Any questions?

Please email me at:
lopardogm@tamu.edu

22

APPENDIX E

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

ĀJM | TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY

NOT HUMAN RESEARCH DETERMINATION

October 25, 2019

Type of Review:	Submission Response for Initial Review Submission Form
Title:	A Tangled Web: Parent Perceptions of Cyberbullying at the Junior High Level
Investigator:	Robin Rackley
IRB ID:	IRB2019-0739
Reference Number:	096963
Funding:	
Documents Received:	IRB Application (Human Research) - (Version 1.0)
	Informed Consent Document (English) - (Version 1.0)
	Parent Pre-Survey - (Version 1.0)
	TAMU Letter - (Version 1.0)
	CITI Completion - (Version 1.0)
	Recruitment Email - (Version 1.0)
	Volunteer Google Form Tiny URL - (Version 1.0)
	Interview and Focus Group Questions - (Version 1.0)

Dear Robin Rackley:

The Institution determined that the proposed activity is not research involving human subjects as defined by DHHS and FDA regulations as the results of this program evaluation will not be generalized outside of the institution.

Further IRB review and approval by this organization is not required because this is not human research. This determination applies only to the activities described in this IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made you must immediately contact the IRB about whether these activities are research involving humans in which the organization is engaged. You will also be required to submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

Please be aware that receiving a 'Not Human Research Determination' is not the same as IRB review and approval of the activity. IRB consent forms or templates for the activities described in the determination are not to be used and references to TAMU IRB approval must be removed from study documents.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Administrative Office at 1-979-458-4067, toll free at 1-855-795-8636.

Sincerely,
IRB Administration