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Novice Secondary Teachers' Perceived Efficacy and Projected Responses to Bullying Behaviors

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Abstract

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MHS, Lincoln University, 2005

BA, Millersville University, 1995

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This study was a quantitative exploration of the relationship between novice secondary teachers' perceived levels of self-efficacy and their projected responses to specific bullying behaviors. The theoretical foundation was Bandura's self-efficacy theory. The relationship between novice teachers' perceived levels of self-efficacy, their reported ability to recognize different types of bullying behaviors, their responses to these bullying behaviors, and importance of a mentoring program were explored in this quantitative study. The sample was a convenience sample consisting of 159 teachers in different school settings in Pennsylvania. Vignettes about different types of bullying behaviors were presented to the participants. Likert scale questions followed each vignette to ascertain perceived level of confidence in dealing with the identified bullying behavior and the participant's projected likelihood of intervening in the identified situation. Comparisons were made between perceived level of efficacy and importance of formal mentoring. Correlations were found between novice secondary teachers' levels of self-efficacy and the impact of formal mentoring on novice teachers' attitudes and actions towards different types of bullying behaviors. Implications for positive social change support increased education for novice teachers related to cyberbullying, modifications to teacher training program curriculums, and implementation of formal mentoring programs.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my husband and my son. Brian, you have loved, supported, and encouraged me throughout this very long process. I could not have done it without you. I am the person I am today because of you. Logan, you were a toddler when I started this process and now you are an independent teenager. You have been a great inspiration throughout this journey. You are my world. I love you both very much.

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Thank you to my family who has supported me throughout this journey. In the times when I could not see the end, you were always there to encourage me to keep moving forward in the process. I could not have completed this journey without you.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Important duties of teachers are effectively managing classroom behaviors (Egeberg et al., 2016), ensuring student safety, and preventing bullying (Garner, 2017). Teachers who are effective in developing expectations in the classroom create environments that support student learning and safety (Ayebo & Assuah, 2017). The effectiveness of teachers in managing classroom environments plays a key role in influencing the behaviors of students (Egeberg et al., 2016). Therefore, effective classroom management is an important factor in reducing bullying behaviors and the negative outcomes of bullying behaviors.

About one-fifth of students in middle and high school reported being the targets of bullying in 2017 (Masu et. al., 2018). Students in middle school reported higher rates of bullying than students in high school, with percentages ranging between 24% to 29% for middle school students and percentages ranging from 12% to 19% for high school students. The most bullying behaviors were reported by students in sixth grade with the least amount of bullying behaviors being reported by 12th graders. Students in rural areas reported the most bullying victimization. Fifteen percent of students indicated that they had been the targets of cyberbullying. While these statistics are based on the self-reporting of students, these numbers may not reflect the actual number of bullying episodes due to a variety of reasons (i.e., students' limited knowledge of bullying behaviors or students feeling these behaviors are normal as the result of a lack of teacher recognition or response to these behaviors).

Although preservice teachers, who are teachers planning to teach after they receive their teaching certifications, were able to identify episodes of bullying, they were not aware of the significant amount of bullying that was occurring or how to respond to the bullying incidents (Styron et al., 2016). Even though many preservice teachers had the ability to identify bullying behaviors, they lacked confidence in their abilities to effectively respond to bullying incidents (Styron et al., 2016). Additional preservice training in dealing with bullying was viewed as an important way to increase confidence in the teacher's ability to recognize and respond to bullying (Styron et al., 2016). Increasing confidence is important because self-efficacy related to bullying impacts a person's willingness to intervene in bullying behaviors (Garner, 2017).

Background of the Study

Different forms of school violence, including bullying, have become significant problems for children and adolescents (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2016) and have created a worldwide public health concern (CDC, 2016). One of the most reported types of school violence is bullying (CDC, 2016). Many negative short-term and long-term effects of bullying have been identified (Masu et al., 2018).

Physical harm (Masu et al., 2018) social concerns, emotional concerns (VanZoeren & Weisz, 2018), behavioral problems (Masu et al., 2018), and death (Masu et al., 2018) have been linked to both covert and overt bullying behaviors. Bullying behaviors have been linked to depression, anxiety, and substance use (CDC, 2016). Bullying behaviors have also been linked to suicidal ideations and behaviors (CDC, 2016). Due to these detrimental outcomes, it is important that teachers are confident in

their abilities to recognize and to effectively address these behaviors. Students spend most of the school day with teachers, therefore it is pertinent that teachers are able to recognize and address bullying behaviors.

Teachers have a key role in preventing bullying behaviors and in decreasing the number of students impacted by bullying behaviors (Garner, 2017). In 2015, with the initiation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) worked to develop a state plan to address the goals of the ESSA (PDE, 2017). Several criteria were used to guide the development of the state plan, which identified the responsibility of school personnel to address students' physical and social-emotional safety. Teachers need to be given educational and professional resources, both preservice and in-service teachers, to help them create and maintain an environment in which academic and nonacademic concerns can be addressed. In this way, every student can be engaged and educated in a safe and supportive environment (PDE, 2017). If school personnel fulfill these criteria, then students will have the opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and nurturing environment. Unfortunately, teachers do not always have the skills and confidence to meet these expectations. When teachers are not confident in their abilities to effectively manage all components of the classroom environment, students can be negatively impacted by this lack of efficacy.

Novice teachers and veteran teachers report a difference in level of self-efficacy, with novice teachers reporting lower levels of confidence in their abilities to effectively manage classroom environments than veteran teachers. If preservice teachers are reporting that training programs are not preparing them to recognize and respond

effectively to bullying behaviors, it follows that novice teachers, who are often recent graduates of those programs, would not have the confidence and skills needed to identify and respond to bullying behaviors. Additionally, the more years a teacher has been in the field, the higher the likelihood of them intervening in bullying behaviors (VanZoeren & Weisz, 2018).

Although studies have identified a difference in the level of efficacy and response to bullying behaviors between novice and veteran teachers, there do not appear to be any studies that have explored the specific characteristics that may cause this difference between novice and veteran teachers or studies that explore the characteristics within a group of novice teachers that may increase feelings of confidence in recognizing and responding to bullying behaviors. Given that students of novice teachers may experience a large amount of bullying and experience many negative outcomes before novice teachers become veteran teachers with the perceived confidence and skills needed to effectively respond to bullying behaviors, this is an important area of research.

Problem Statement

Although bullying has been studied for decades, with the increase in the use and availability of technology and devices, cyberbullying has developed into a significant form of bullying in the past 20 years and has become a school-based problem (Smith, 2016) requiring increased awareness and intervention of school staff. Cyberbullying, which is the use of electronic media (Gul et al., 2019) including cellular telephones and the Internet to victimize others (Smith, 2016) is less often reported to classroom teachers than overt forms of bullying behaviors (Patterson et al., 2017). Cyberbullying has become

more prevalent in schools in the past two decades (Smith, 2016), but teachers feel unprepared to address cyberbullying (Styron et al., 2016; Wilford & Depaolis, 2016) and do not feel effective in responding to episodes of cyberbullying (Kavuk-Kalender & Keser, 2018; Styron et al., 2016; Wilford & Depaolis, 2016).

Preservice teachers have knowledge about the most prevalent forms of cyberbullying (Ozansoy et al., 2018; Styron et al., 2016) and have an understanding of the significant impact that cyberbullying has on students (Styron et al., 2016). However, even though there is recognition that the number of cyberbullying incidents is continuing to increase in the school environment (Ozansoy et al., 2018), preservice teachers have limited knowledge of the frequency of cyberbullying incidents. They also lack knowledge in understanding the most effective ways to prevent (Kavuk et al., 2016; Ozansoy et al., 2018) and to respond to cyberbullying behaviors (Styron et al., 2016). Preservice teachers also report lower levels of empathy toward the target of the bullying in all types of bullying situations (Begotti et al., 2017). Even though preservice teachers have knowledge about the most prevalent forms of cyberbullying and the impact of cyberbullying (Kavuk et al., 2016; Styron et al., 2016), they lack the confidence to intervene and manage cyberbullying incidents (Styron et al., 2016). Preservice teachers will enter the workforce and become novice teachers. For this reason, it is important to explore the change in knowledge and efficacy related to cyberbullying as a person transitions into the teaching profession.

Due to the methods used to carry out cyberbullying, teachers are often unaware of the behaviors (Redmond et al., 2018). It is difficult to respond to a bullying behavior

when the teacher is not aware that the behavior has occurred. However, responding effectively to cyberbullying, even when it is not initiated within the physical environment of the school building, is an important and required duty of teachers (Wilford & Depaolis, 2016). Because the behavior is not always easily identifiable, teachers need to be well educated about the potential impacts, such as changes in the classroom environment and changes in behaviors of individuals in order to recognize and respond to these behaviors (Redmond et al., 2018). It is unclear whether novice teachers have the needed knowledge and confidence to recognize and address cyberbullying incidents. This quantitative study contributed to the body of existing knowledge by exploring the relationship between novice teachers' levels of self-efficacy and their responses to bullying behaviors.

Purpose of the Study

This was a quantitative study that explored the relationship between novice teachers' perceived levels of self-efficacy and their attitudes and actions about bullying behaviors. I used a quantitative approach because I was interested in collecting and analyzing a large amount of descriptive data that was used to identify patterns within the selected sample that could be generalized beyond the sample to a larger population of novice teachers. I also sought to determine if teachers' levels of self-efficacy in responding to bullying behaviors were related to importance of formal mentoring.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

I developed the following research questions and hypotheses for the study:

RQ1: What is the relationship between novice middle school teachers' perceived levels of self-efficacy and self-reported responses to bullying behaviors?

$H_0$1 There is no correlation between novice middle school teachers' levels of perceived self-efficacy and their responses to bullying behaviors.

H_A1 There is a positive correlation between novice middle school teachers' levels of perceived self-efficacy and their responses to bullying behaviors.

RQ2: What is the association between the importance of a formal mentoring program and novice middle school teachers' responses to bullying behaviors and perceived levels of self-efficacy?

$H_0$2 Importance of a formal mentoring program has no association to novice middle school teachers' responses to bullying behaviors or perceived levels of self-efficacy.

H_A2 Importance of a formal mentoring program has a direct association to responses to bullying behaviors and an indirect association to bullying behaviors through perceived levels of self-efficacy.

Theoretical Framework

Self-efficacy is an important predictor of a teacher's ability to create classroom activities that foster students' positive attitudes toward learning and that increase students' beliefs in their cognitive competence (Bandura, 1997). High levels of teacher self-efficacy also enhance a teacher's belief about challenging students. Teachers with high teaching self-efficacy believe all students can learn. Self-efficacy has a significant impact on many different behaviors and expected outcomes.

Level of self-efficacy impacts every area of a person's life. For a person to effectively manage life experiences, they must be competent and confident in their ability

to exert control over the activities that directly impact them. To effectively address social problems, a person must be competent and confident that their attempts to exert control in specific situations will result in successful and positive outcomes (Bandura, 1977). A teacher's self-efficacy plays a vital role in creating and managing classroom environments that are conducive to learning (Bandura, 1997). If new teachers are expected to identify and intervene in episodes of bullying that may be impacting the classroom environment and the learning experiences of students, they must have confidence in their abilities to recognize and effectively manage these bullying incidents.

Nature of the Study

I selected a quantitative approach because I gathered and analyzed a large amount of descriptive data. I used the data gathered and analyzed to describe the perceived level of self-efficacy and projected attitudes and actions toward bullying behaviors for novice teachers in Grades 6 to 12. A quantitative approach allowed me the opportunity to gather data on existing variables, to identify patterns within the research, and to generalize the data to a larger population of novice teachers. Chapter 3 includes a more detailed description of the methodology.

I used the Bullying Attitude Questionnaire (BAQ) to ascertain teachers' personal understanding of bullying, their perception of the seriousness of bullying incidents, and the likelihood of them responding to each of the proposed bullying incidents (Craig et al., 2000). Modifications to the vignettes from Yoon and Kerber (2003) and cyberbullying vignettes created and utilized by Boulton et al. (2014) were also included in the study. Novice teachers in Grades 6 through 12, were given a total of eight vignettes, two

vignettes specific to each type of bullying: physical, verbal, relational, (Craig et al., 2000), and cyber (Boulton et al., 2014). Likert scale questions followed each vignette to determine the participant's perceived level of confidence in dealing with the identified bullying behavior and the participant's projected likelihood of intervening in the identified situation. The research was based on Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy framework, which is discussed further in the theoretical foundation section.

Definition of Terms

Bullying: Occurs when a person is exposed to negative actions repeatedly and over a period of time. A single person or a group of people can be responsible for the behaviors. An imbalance of power exists between the two parties (Menesini &Salmivalli, 2017)

Cyberbullying: The use of electronic media (Gul et al., 2019) including cellular telephones and the Internet to victimize others (Smith, 2016)

Physical bullying: Physical behaviors that include pushing, spitting, hitting, tripping, and threatening physical harm (National Centre Against Bullying, 2021).

Novice teacher: Teacher within their 1st year of teaching.

Relational bullying: Social exclusion, ignoring or using a social relationship or social status to intimidate, manipulate, or control others (Kiefer et al., 2021).

Self-efficacy: A person having confidence in their ability to address a specific situation with the belief that the outcome will be successful and positive (Bandura, 1977).

Verbal bullying: Derogatory comments, insults, name-calling, and teasing (National Centre Against Bullying, 2021).

Veteran teacher: Teacher with more than 1 year of teaching experience.

Assumptions

Several assumptions were included in this study. First, I assumed that all novice teachers in the survey had access to a computer and reliable Internet service. I also assumed that the participants had the skills and abilities needed to complete a web-based survey. Another assumption was that all participants were truthful in their answers to the survey questions and completed the survey as directed. The assumption that participants completed the survey with their own knowledge and not with knowledge they gathered from the Internet or from other individuals was also included.

Scope and Delimitations

The purpose of this study was to explore novice teachers' perceived self-efficacy and attitudes and actions about bullying behaviors. The study was delimited to secondary school teachers in the state of Pennsylvania. Because the study was delimited to secondary school teachers in the state of Pennsylvania, it was difficult to generalize the findings to teachers at all levels and in different states.

Limitations

Only novice teachers in the partner organization and novice teachers active on social media participated in the study. This may limit the generalizability of the study. Another limitation may be that this study used a sample of novice teachers from Pennsylvania. Because data was only gathered from teachers in a small geographical area of the United States, the study findings may not be true of novice teachers in different

states. The survey was only offered in English and limited the contributions of novice teachers with limited proficiency in English.

Significance of the Study

There is a large body of research to support the negative impact that different types of bullying behaviors have on individuals in the school setting. There is research to support that preservice teachers do not feel well equipped to recognize and respond to bullying behaviors, that they lack confidence in their abilities to effectively manage bullying behaviors. Many higher education programs do not provide adequate instruction about bullying in the school setting. New teachers are less confident in their abilities to identify and respond to bullying behaviors than veteran teachers. To expand the research, I studied the level of self-efficacy reported by new teachers in reference to their attitudes and actions related to bullying behaviors. I investigated specific individual characteristics that may create differing levels of efficacy within this group of teachers. I researched the relationship between teacher levels of efficacy and teacher attitudes and actions about bullying behaviors. By looking at differences in the group of novice teachers, the study supported the need for additional training modules in new teacher orientation programs. It provided insight into the specific characteristics that increased the reported self-efficacy of new teachers.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore Grade 6 through 12 novice teachers' personal understanding of specific types of bullying behaviors, perception of the perceived seriousness of specific bullying incidents, and the likelihood of them

responding to each of the presented bullying incidents. Literature relevant to the focus of this study is reviewed in Chapter 2. Additional information is provided about bullying behaviors in schools and teachers' responses to bullying behaviors. Self-efficacy is further defined and was explored in relation to teachers' behaviors, including response to bullying behaviors. The methodology for this quantitative study is detailed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review provides specific information pertinent to this study. The review starts with an overview of bullying behaviors. Next, I share a synopsis of bullying in the school setting. I discuss the role that teachers play in the prevention and intervention of bullying behaviors. I also discuss teacher efficacy as it relates to this study and present the role of formal mentoring in professional development. This review includes information on social cognitive theory and the construct of self-efficacy. Literature to support the chosen methodology is also included in the review. Lastly, I identify the expected social change outcomes.

Strategy for Searching the Literature

I obtained the literature reviewed for this study from journals and books published between 1977 and 2021. I used numerous online databases to obtain the literature, including ERIC, PsycINFO, SAGE, SocINDEX, PsycARTICLES, Academic Search Premier, Education Research Complete, Medline, and Google Scholar. Single and combination keywords in the search included *bullying, physical bullying, verbal bullying, relational bullying, social bullying, cyberbullying, covert bullying, overt bullying, bullying prevention programs, direct bullying, indirect bullying, traditional bullying, antibullying programs, bullying intervention programs, teachers, schools, educators, knowledge, beliefs, perceptions, responses, experiences, characteristics, effectiveness, self-efficacy, teacher efficacy, classroom management, novice teachers, beginning teachers, violence,* and *types of bullying in schools.*

Overview of Bullying Behaviors

Bullying consists of direct or indirect behaviors focused on a specific target. Direct bullying occurs when the person perpetrating the bullying behaviors confronts the target of the bullying (Olweus, 1988). Direct bullying is an overt form of bullying that is observable and often involves direct confrontation between the target and the perpetrator of the bullying (Olweus et al., 2007). Direct bullying behaviors include physical and verbal bullying behaviors such as hitting, kicking, name-calling and insulting remarks (Olweus et al., 2007). Indirect bullying is a more covert form of bullying that occurs when the bullying behaviors are discrete or hidden (Olweus et al., 2007). In indirect bullying, the target may not be aware of the identity of the perpetrator (Olweus et al., 2007). There are several aspects that characterize behavior as bullying behavior:

- Bullying occurs in a relationship where an imbalance of power or strength (physical or psychological) exists between the parties involved (Olweus, 1988).
- Bullying is generally characterized as negative behavior that occurs repeatedly and over a period of time (Olweus, 1988).
- Bullying behavior is aggressive and purposeful behavior and often occurs without threat or aggravation from the target (Olweus, 2003).

Physical bullying involves physical behaviors, including tripping (CDC, 2016), punching, pushing, and kicking (Reisen et al., 2019). Personal property being damaged is a frequent result of physical bullying (Reisen et al., 2019).

Verbal bullying does not have a physical component but consists of behaviors such as name-calling (CDC, 2016; Reisen et al., 2019), criticizing physical appearance (Barbosa de Andrade et al., 2019) and teasing (CDC, 2016). Verbal bullying can be one of the most harmful types of bullying (Barbosa de Andrade et al., 2019). It occurs frequently (Antiri, 2016; Barbosa de Andrade et al., 2019; Chiu et al., 2017; Reisen et al., 2019) and is often only detected by the target of the bullying (Barbosa de Andrade et al., 2019; Reisen et al., 2019).

Relational bullying is a third form of bullying behaviors and is also called social bullying. In relational bullying, a person uses a social relationship or social status to intimidate, manipulate, or control others (National Centre Against Bullying, 2021; Olweus, 1988). Targets of relational bullying may be excluded from specific social groups or activities, (CDC, 2016).

Electronic aggression (CDC, 2016) or cyberbullying is the most recently identified form of bullying (Smith, 2016). With more prevalent access to electronic devices and more efficient technology, cyberbullying incidents are rising (Gul et al., 2019). Students who engage in cyberbullying behaviors use technology to carry out the behaviors (Redmond et al., 2018). Cyberbullying includes many of the same components as traditional bullying behaviors. Similar to traditional bullying, cyberbullying is an intentional behavior that is repeated over time and causes harm to the target of the behaviors (Gul et al., 2019).

Bullying in Schools

School bullying is a global problem (Reisen et al., 2019). Both traditional bullying, which includes physical, verbal, and relational bullying, and cyberbullying are present in the school environment (Keith, 2018; Vieira et al., 2019). Students who have experienced bullying victimization are more likely to feel afraid (Keith, 2018) and unsafe at school than students who have no history of victimization (Bowser et al., 2018; Keith 2018). In 2015, almost one-fourth of female students and about one-fifth of male students between the ages of 12 and 18 were the targets of bullying behaviors in school settings (Masu et al., 2018), with younger students being victimized more often than older students (Chiu et al., 2017; Demirbağ et al., 2016; Reisen et al., 2019). About 10% of these students were the targets of physical bullying or physical threats (Masu et al., 2018). One-fifth of students were the targets of relational bullying, which included being the subject of rumors and being excluded from social groups and social activities. Almost 15% of students had been subjected to verbal bullying behaviors, and 15% of students were subjected to cyberbullying. Bullying behaviors are widespread in school environments, produce many negative outcomes for members in the school setting, and can be detrimental to both the target and the perpetrators of bullying behaviors.

Bullying behaviors in schools have produced many short-term and long-term adverse outcomes for targets of bullying (Masu et al., 2018). The adverse outcomes are similar for targets of both traditional bullying and cyberbullying (Keith, 2018). Bullying victimization negatively impacts school involvement (Lacey et al., 2017; Masu et al., 2018) and academic achievement (Lacey et al., 2017; Masu et al., 2018; Smith & Skrbis,

2016; Torres et al., 2020). Physical manifestations of bullying victimization have also been identified (Moore et al., 2017). Bullying victimization significantly impacts the mental health of students (Chiu et al., 2017; Moore et al., 2017). It can result in increased levels of psychological distress (Chiu et al., 2017; Demirbağ et al., 2016; Masu et al., 2018; Moore et al., 2017), including increased feelings of depression (Masu et al., 2018; Moore et al., 2017). Suicidal ideations and behaviors are also higher in students who have been victimized (Crepeau-Hobson & Leech, 2016; Masu et al., 2018; Moore et al., 2017). Homicidal thoughts and behaviors have also been connected to bullying behaviors (Su et al., 2019). If bullying behaviors are not identified and addressed, the effects can last long after the bullying behaviors end (VanZoeren & Weisz, 2018). Teachers can play an important role in decreasing the adverse outcomes associated with bullying victimization and can improve the academic experience of students impacted by bullying behaviors.

Academic involvement is lowered for students who experience bullying (Lacey et al., 2017). Decreased engagement in the classroom can result in decreased academic achievement (Lacey et al., 2017). Students who report bullying victimization experience less academic success than their peers. Students who experience bullying have lower levels of academic ranking than students who do not report a history of bullying (Smith & Skrbis, 2016). In schools where there is a high level of bullying, academic performance is negatively impacted and standardized test scores are lower (Lacey et al., 2017). These students are also less likely to pursue postsecondary education (Smith & Skrbis, 2016). These academic indicators may be related to increased physical symptoms resulting from bullying victimization and manifesting in increased absences from school.

There have been several different types of physical symptoms connected to bullying victimization (Moore et al., 2017). Students who have been victimized more often report stomach problems and headaches than their peers (Moore et al., 2017). They also report more sleep disturbances than other students (Moore et al., 2017). An increased risk of weight problems is connected to bullying victimization (Moore et al., 2017). In addition to the physical impact of bullying victimization, there is also a psychological impact for the victimized students.

Bullying victimization has a significant impact on psychological functioning. Psychological distress is higher for students who have been victimized and the higher the number of victimization experiences, the higher the psychological distress level (Chiu et al., 2017). Older students experience higher levels of psychological distress related to victimization than younger students even when reported levels of victimization are lower for the older students (Chiu et al., 2017). Anxiety symptoms are increased for students experiencing bullying victimization, especially those over the age of 13 (Moore et al., 2017). Different types of anxiety disorders, including posttraumatic stress disorder and social phobia are more prevalent among students who have experienced victimization (Moore et al., 2017). Bullying victimization increases feelings of depression (Moore et al., 2017). Students who have experienced traditional forms of bullying report higher levels of depressive feelings than peers (Kim et al., 2018). Depressive symptoms are also more prevalent in students who have experienced cyberbullying (Kim et al., 2018). Female students who have experienced bullying are more likely to experience depression than male students. Feelings of depression are related to suicidal ideations and an

increased level of suicidal behaviors (Kim et al., 2018). When depressive symptoms are present, female students are more likely to engage in suicidal behaviors than males (Kim et al., 2018).

Suicidal ideations and suicidal behaviors are serious and life-threatening outcomes related to bullying victimization. Both male and female students who experience bullying are more likely to report suicidal behaviors than peers who have not experienced bullying victimization (Crepeau-Hobson & Leech, 2016; Kim et al., 2018; Moore et al., 2017). Suicidal behaviors were 6 times more prevalent in males who were the targets of bullying (Crepeau-Hobson & Leech, 2016) than males who were not. Females who reported bullying victimization were 10 times more likely to engage in suicidal behaviors than students who did not report bullying victimization (Crepeau-Hobson & Leech, 2016). These outcomes were related to both traditional and cyberbullying victimization (Crepeau-Hobson & Leech; Kim et al., 2018). Bullying victimization not only increases a student's risk of thoughts and behaviors of harm to self, but also increases thoughts and behaviors of harm to others.

Bullying behaviors have been found to increase homicidal thoughts and behaviors (Su et al., 2019). Bullying victimization has been connected to an increase in homicidal thoughts for traditional types of bullying and cyberbullying (Guo-Bao et al., 2019). Students targeted through cyberbullying also have an increased risk of homicidal behaviors. Perpetration of bullying behaviors also correlates with homicidal thoughts and behaviors. A positive school environment can mitigate the level of distress experienced by students who have been victimized (Chiu et al., 2017). Teachers play a major role in

encouraging and supporting students to engage in positive behaviors that result in a more positive educational environment.

Teachers play a significant role in creating a safe environment for students (Garner, 2017). Their involvement is necessary to decrease and eliminate bullying behaviors in order to mitigate the negative outcomes for students (Juvonen et al., 2016). Teachers' effective implementation of positive classroom management techniques (Egeberg et al., 2016) decreases bullying victimization (Smith, 2016). Since both positive and negative educational experiences have a significant impact on children's development (Murphy et al., 2018) it is important for teachers to recognize and respond to all types of adverse situations, including bullying behaviors.

Teacher Response to Bullying Behaviors

Teachers are an important component of bullying prevention and intervention in school settings (Garner, 2017). They are the primary implementers of bullying prevention programs (Smith, 2016) and play a significant role in decreasing episodes of bullying behaviors (Garner, 2017). For these reasons it is important for teachers to be willing to address all types of bullying behaviors.

Numerous variables have been correlated to a teacher's ability and willingness to intervene when aware of bullying behaviors. These include: perceived seriousness of the bullying behaviors (Begotti et al., 2017; VanZoeren & Weisz, 2018), level of empathy (Wilford & Depaolis, 2016), support of building level administrators (Farley, 2018) and self-efficacy (Begotti et al., 2017; Garner, 2017; Wilford & Depaolis, 2016). These

variables are important indicators of a teacher's willingness to respond to bullying behaviors.

The more serious a bullying behavior appears to a teacher, the more likely the teacher is to intervene in the bullying situation (Begotti et al., 2017; VanZoeren & Weisz, 2018). By increasing a teacher's knowledge and understanding of the significant short-term and long-term effects of bullying behaviors, including the negative effects on social and emotional development, the likelihood of intervention is also increased (VanZoeren & Weisz, 2018). In addition to increasing the likelihood of intervention, the perceived seriousness of a bullying situation increases feelings of empathy for the targets of bullying behaviors (Begotti et al., 2017).

Feelings of empathy toward the targets of bullying behaviors increase the likelihood of intervention (Begotti et al., 2017; VanZoeren & Weisz, 2018). If a teacher feels empathy for the target of the bullying behavior, the teacher is more likely to intervene in the situation than a teacher who reports little or no empathy towards the target. Increasing the feelings of empathy experienced by teachers can result in higher levels of intervention and lower levels of victimization.

Administrator support is an important predictor of teacher response to bullying behaviors (Farley, 2018). When teachers feel a high level of support from their building administrator they are more likely to intervene in bullying behaviors. Teachers who feel a high level of support from their building administrator also report higher levels of self-efficacy. When administrator support is high, teachers report feeling more efficacious in

their perceived ability to intervene successfully in a bullying situation and a higher likelihood of addressing bullying behaviors.

Self-efficacy impacts teacher response to bullying behaviors (Begotti et al., 2017; Garner, 2017; Wilford & Depaolis, 2016). Teachers who report higher levels of self-efficacy are more likely to intervene in bullying situations (Begotti et al., 2017). Confidence in a person's ability to effectively manage classroom behaviors increases the person's willingness to address bullying behaviors. The more effective a person feels in their ability to successfully intervene in a bullying situation, the more likely they are to become involved in the situation (Wilford & Depaolis, 2016). Feeling effective in managing bullying situations increases the likelihood of intervention, which in turn decreases the negative consequences of bullying behaviors (Garner, 2017). Teacher efficacy is important in the overall success of teachers. It plays a significant role in the retention and job satisfaction of novice teachers.

Teacher Efficacy

One of the biggest challenges for novice teachers is learning to manage the classroom environment, especially student behaviors (Ergunay & Adiguzel, 2019; Grube et al., 2018). Gaining the skills necessary to manage the classroom environment the way experienced teachers do, is an important goal of novice teachers (Grube et al., 2018). Novice teachers struggle to balance classroom management with academic engagement. Novice teachers want to earn the respect of their students and may feel that disciplining students will interfere with their ability to build positive relationships with their students.

This belief can result in a classroom environment in which negative behaviors, including bullying, may go unaddressed.

A sense of confidence and feelings of efficacy are important characteristics of successful teachers. The more experience a teacher gains, the higher the level efficacy (George et al., 2018). Teachers who teach younger students report higher levels of efficacy in classroom management and student engagement than teachers who teach older students. Since teachers with limited confidence in their effectiveness can have a detrimental effect on the classroom environment (Bandura, 1995), it is important for teachers to have high levels of efficacy. Level of student victimization is directly correlated to teacher efficacy (Gregus et al., 2017). Teacher level of efficacy can decrease the negative outcomes for targets of bullying behaviors.

Victimization is lowest in classrooms where teachers possess a moderate level of efficacy (Gregus et al., 2017). More anxiety symptoms were present when teachers' perceived levels of efficacy were lower (Guimond et al., 2015). For these reasons, teacher level of self-efficacy is important in addressing bullying behaviors (Gregus et al., 2017) and the resulting detrimental outcomes.

Years of teaching experience are related to increased levels of efficacy (George, et al., 2018). In-service teachers report a higher level of self-efficacy than pre-service teachers (Gregus et al, 2017). Once teachers are actively in the profession, veteran teachers have higher levels of self-efficacy than novice teachers (Yerli Usul & Yerli, 2017). Novice teachers are less confident in their abilities than teachers with more experience. Experience plays a significant role in influencing a teacher's feelings of

efficacy. Years of teaching experience are related to a teacher's ability to recognize and utilize effective strategies to address bullying behaviors (Gregus et al., 2017). Although education programs provide pre-service teachers with necessary skills and training for their jobs, much of the learning takes place in the work environment (Miles & Knipe, 2018).

The process of learning to be an effective teacher requires on the job training (Miles & Knipe, 2018). Experience in the classroom is important in the development of novice teachers' knowledge and competency. Since novice teachers who have higher levels of self-efficacy have higher levels of confidence in their abilities to modify student behavior and to impact school success (Aus et al., 2017) the timeliness of this personal learning process is important to the success of novice teachers. This confidence results in higher levels of effectiveness in managing the classroom environment. For this reason it is important to provide novice teachers with support and resources to increase the teacher's level of efficacy near the beginning of the person's career (Sowell, 2017). Peer mentoring is one method for increasing beginning teacher effectiveness.

Mentoring of novice teachers by veteran teachers increases the confidence of novice teachers (Gohlam, 2018; Nolan & Molla, 2017; Rohmah, 2018). Novice teachers feel more confident and effective when mentored by veteran teachers (Rohmah, 2018). This increase in feelings of self-efficacy is important to the overall success of novice teachers. Mentors can assist novice teachers in developing an effective classroom management plan (Grube et al., 2018). Mentors assist novice teachers in improving classroom management skills and skills related to discipline within the classroom

(Morettini, 2016; Wang & Apraiz, 2018; Yirci, 2017). Mentoring is important in helping novice teachers to learn and to implement school policies and procedures (Lisenbee & Tan, 2019), including policies and procedures related to bullying prevention and intervention programs within the school environment.

Bullying Prevention

In order to address bullying in schools, a school-wide, long-term bullying program is needed (Limber et al., 2018). All members of the school community must be involved in all aspects of the school-wide bullying prevention program in order for it to be successful (Letendre et al., 2016). Three popular school-wide approaches that are implemented to address and decrease bullying behaviors are: the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) (Limber et al., 2018) the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) Program (De Shannon Lawrence, 2017; Ostrander et al. 2018), and character education programs (Lewis et al., 2016).

The OBPP has been implemented in over 300 schools in the state of Pennsylvania (Limber et al., 2018) and the effectiveness of the program was evaluated over a two-year period. Less bullying behaviors were reported in these schools. Teachers displayed an increased awareness of bullying behaviors and an increased willingness to address bullying behaviors with support of the OBPP. The longer the program was implemented, the more the positive changes in attitudes and actions related to bullying behaviors increased for both students and teachers. The implementation of a whole-school approach to address bullying plays an important role in decreasing victimization and in creating a safe and positive school environment. The effectiveness of school-wide bullying

prevention efforts can be increased by implementing the OBPP in conjunction with other bullying programs, such as the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) Program.

The Bullying Prevention component of the PBIS Program is another school-wide, evidence based approach for addressing bullying behaviors in the school setting (De Shannon Lawrence, 2017; Ostrander et al., 2018). This program has been used in 28 states with thousands of school personnel (Ostrander et al., 2018). The strategies used in the PBIS program are designed to give all members of the school community a common language for identifying, reporting, and addressing bullying behaviors.

Character education programs and social emotional learning programs can also support the development of a positive school climate (Lewis et al., 2016; Parks & Oslick, 2021). Character education programs encourage the development of caring relationships and socially responsible behaviors that can support a decrease in bullying behaviors. Teaching students to be respectful, responsible, and caring toward others (Parks & Oslick, 2021) creates a positive classroom experience that increases student safety and well-being. For this reason, it is important for teachers to be able to implement different bullying prevention programs. However, several factors have been found to limit the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs.

Time limitations resulting from increased demands for curriculum can decrease teachers' abilities to implement bullying prevention programs (Cunningham et al., 2016). An increase in covert bullying behaviors also decreases the effectiveness of traditional bullying prevention programs. Lack of support from coworkers and administrators can

also decrease the effective implementation of bullying prevention programs. Identifying and working to mitigate the factors that can decrease the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs, can help teachers to feel supported, invested, and confident in their bullying prevention efforts.

Theoretical Foundation: Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and Self-Efficacy Construct

Social cognitive theory views a person as an agent in the creation of their life circumstances and their life course (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Humans, as agents, are not dormant spectators in the development and outcome of their lives, but are active architects and intentional participants. Human agency consists of four foundational elements. The four elements are intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness (Bandura, 2006).

With human agency, people want to live meaningful and purposeful lives. In order to achieve meaning and purpose, people develop plans and methods for achieving their goals (Bandura, 2006). Plans and methods alone do not result in purposeful and meaningful lives. Intentional action is needed. A desire to create a cohesive system results in compromise and the development of a collective purpose. Individuals need to learn to coexist and cooperate with others in order to be successful agents. Forethought opens individuals to further success as human agents.

Forethought is the second foundational element of human agency (Bandura, 2006). In order to achieve future-oriented goals, people need to be able to conceptualize that there is a future. Even thought the future can have no direct effect on a person, the

person's cognitive ability to look forward to the future assists a person in developing a course of action in the present that will allow the person to fulfill future goals. A person's ability to develop a plan and to look forward to visualize outcomes serves as a source of motivation for current behaviors.

It is not enough for a person to develop a plan and to visualize outcomes. Human agency also requires the ability to identify strategies for carrying out a person's plan (Bandura, 2006). The third foundational element of human agency is self-reactiveness. The self-reactiveness element encompasses a person's ability to develop effective strategies and their ability to carryout the strategies in a manner that will achieve the desired outcomes. Being able to evaluate personal behaviors and outcomes is the final foundational element.

The final foundational element is self-reflectiveness (Bandura, 2006). With self-reflectiveness a person can monitor current functioning. A person can ascertain whether current actions and level of functioning will fulfill their desired purpose. Self-reflectiveness also provides a person with the ability to reflect on their purpose and modify expectations and actions as needed to satisfy desired outcomes. The ability to self-reflect allows a person to assess level of self-efficacy and steps needed to increase their feelings of efficacy. This is important since self-efficacy is at the core of human agency.

Level of self-efficacy impacts every area of a person's life (Bandura, 1977). In order for a person to effectively manage life experiences, they must be competent and confident in their ability to exert control over the activities that directly impact them. In

order to effectively address social problems, a person must be competent and confident that their attempts to exert control in specific situations will result in successful and positive outcomes. There are four sources that have been found to effect a person's perception of efficacy.

The first source that can be used to develop feelings of efficacy is mastery experiences (Bandura, 1995). In mastery experiences a person builds feelings of efficacy based on successes in specific situations. If a person fails in attempts to manage dynamic life-situations, they may never develop feelings of efficacy or may have decreased feelings of efficacy as a result of failures. Through successfully mastering experiences, a person is able to develop the resources and capacities needed to successfully manage life-situations. Successful management of life situations can also be supported by vicarious experiences.

The second source for the development of efficacy is vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1995). By witnessing a person with similar characteristics successfully manage a life-situation; a person may develop feelings of efficacy. The more closely a person relates to the model, the more likely the person is to increase personal efficacy through the vicarious experience. Vicarious experiences have little impact on development of efficacy, if the person feels no connection or similarity to the person engaging in the situation. Social connection can be an important component of efficacy development.

Social persuasion is the next source of efficacy development (Bandura, 1995). Through social persuasion, a person is willing to involve themself in a situation based on the verbal suggestion by others that the person could successfully manage or change the

situation. Although suggestions of ability to be successful may move a person to involve themself in a situation, efficacy is developed following successes and self-affirming attitudes that result from the success within the specific situation.

The fourth source of efficacy development is related to a person's physiological and emotional state (Bandura, 1995). A person often judges their ability to be successful within the context of a situation based on physiological and emotional resources. Feelings of tension or a strong physiological reaction to stress in specific situations may decrease a person's feelings of efficacy in that specific situation. Even if a person successfully manages a situation, feelings of efficacy may be decreased as a result of physiological and emotional reactions to the situation. These four sources impact the two dimensions of self-efficacy, perceived self-efficacy or efficacy expectations and expectation outcomes (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy is a two-dimensional model consisting of perceived self-efficacy, also known as efficacy expectations, and outcome expectations (Bandura, 1977). Outcome expectation is the idea that an identified outcome will be produced by engagement in a specific behavior. Efficacy expectation relates to a person's perception of their ability to successfully carry out the specific behavior necessary to fulfill the identified outcome. Even though a person may recognize the steps needed to produce a specific outcome, if the person lacks confidence in their ability to successfully carry out the steps, then the outcome expectation will not impact the person's behavior.

Confidence in a person's level of efficacy influences their willingness to become involved in or to try to manage a specific situation (Bandura, 1977). A person is likely to

avoid situations that they feel are impossible to manage. When a person is confident in their ability to manage an uncomfortable or unsafe situation, the person will become involved in the problematic situation. Level of self-efficacy also impacts the amount of time and effort a person will put forth in resolving the situation. Persistence and successful management of perceived problematic situations increases a person's confidence in their ability to manage future problems. The quicker a person gives up in the face of adversity the more likely they are to avoid adversity in the future. Although other factors, such as motivation, influence a person's willingness to tackle a problematic situation, perceived efficacy is a significant factor in the person's willingness to become involved in a problematic situation and influences the amount of time and energy the person will devote to addressing and resolving the situation.

Level of perceived efficacy can be categorized by magnitude, generality, and strength (Bandura, 1977). Individual efficacy expectations impact a person's willingness to tackle tasks based on the perceived level of difficulty, or magnitude, of the task. Efficacy expectations can also be categorized by generality. A person may feel efficacious in tackling tasks perceived as easy, but may avoid tasks perceived as more difficult. Success with certain tasks may create a feeling of efficacy that is restricted to that specific task or to similar tasks. Other times success creates an overall feeling of efficacy that allows a person to feel successful in many different situations. Strength is the third categorization of efficacy expectations. The strength of a person's efficacy expectation impacts the time and energy a person will put into tackling an adverse situation. A person with a strong efficacy expectation will expend more time and effort in

working to resolve a problem than a person with a weaker efficacy expectation. A sufficient measurement of self-efficacy needs to explore both dimensions of self-efficacy: perceived self-efficacy, or efficacy expectations, and outcome expectations.

Further study of the construct of teacher efficacy reinforced the two-dimensional model presented by Bandura and resulted in a new tool to measure self-efficacy (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). The study occurred in three stages. The first stage explored the specific dimensions of self-efficacy and sought to determine the internal consistency of the measure, while working to develop an understanding of how the dimensions related to Bandura's self-efficacy construct. In stage two the ability to separate self-efficacy from other concepts was investigated. The third stage focused on how level of efficacy impacts teacher behavior in the classroom.

From stage one, two important aspects were discovered (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). The findings in stage one corresponded with the two dimensions of Bandura's construct: perceived self-efficacy and outcome expectancies. Stage two looked at determining if an overall measurement of efficacy could be gathered from different methods and if the construct could be distinguished from other concepts. Data gathered from different methods could be combined to identify perceived self-efficacy. Self-efficacy was determined to be a separate measureable construct from verbal ability and flexibility, two constructs previously connected to the effectiveness of teachers. In the third stage promising evidence emerged related to level of efficacy and teacher behavior in the classroom. The study and development of the Teacher Efficacy Scale served to support

existing aspects of the construct of self-efficacy and to further evolve the meaning of the construct.

As the construct of teacher efficacy has continued to evolve, two primary aspects of efficacy have emerged (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Even though there has been a lack of consensus on the meaning of these aspects, many researchers have adopted the idea that personal teaching efficacy is one aspect of the concept of teacher efficacy. Personal teaching efficacy establishes a teacher's level of confidence in their teaching abilities. General teaching efficacy is the second aspect tied to teacher efficacy, but has been the subject of more disagreement. In an effort to develop a more universal measurement of teacher efficacy, the Ohio State teacher efficacy scale, also known as the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), was developed (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

The TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) was developed through a series of three studies, which included both active and pre-service teachers. The end result was a scale with two versions and three subcategories of efficacy within each version. The two resulting versions were a 24-item long form and an 18-item short form. The three efficacy subcategories reflected perceived effectiveness in classroom management, instructional strategies, and classroom lessons. A teacher's level of self-efficacy plays a vital role in creating and managing classroom environments that are conducive to learning (Bandura, 1997). It is important to recognize and understand the role that efficacy plays in the overall success from the beginning to the end of one's teaching career (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Increasing efficacy in

classroom lessons, instructional strategies, and classroom management at the beginning of a teacher's career can be an integral part of supporting and guiding novice teachers into veteran ones.

As previously indicated, school environments are largely affected by teachers' feelings of efficacy (Bandura, 1995). Self-efficacy is having the confidence to create and maintain change in problematic situations (Bandura, 1977). Feeling confident in a person's ability to control and change situations and the outcomes of specific situations is an important predictor of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995). A person must be competent and confident that their attempts to exert control in specific situations will result in successful and positive outcomes, if they are to effectively address social problems and effect positive social change.

Bullying is one social problem that can be positively affected by a high level of reported efficacy. Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy are confident in their ability to positively influence the lives of students (Bandura, 1995). A teacher's level of self-efficacy is important in managing student behaviors (Aus et al., 2017; Egeberg et al., 2016) and plays a vital role in creating a safe and enriching classroom experience (Bandura, 1997). Level of self-efficacy impacts a person's willingness to tackle and work to resolve challenges. Therefore, understanding specific factors that may impact novice teachers' levels of self-efficacy and responses to bullying behaviors, can serve to improve the educational experience for all students. Furthermore, exploring the relationship between implemented bullying prevention programs, mentoring, and level of self-

efficacy can provide information on the best methods for encouraging, engaging, and educating novice teachers related to bullying intervention.

Literature To Support Chosen Methodology

A person uses a quantitative method when they want to study the relationship between specific variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study variables in a quantitative study are often times measured using specific instruments. The data collected from the instruments can be analyzed using statistical procedures. A survey design can be used to study a sample of a specific population that results in a quantitative outcome of the study variables. The results gathered from the sample can be used to gain a general understanding of the specific population. An online survey was used to collect the data. I used an online survey so I could collect data from locations throughout the state of Pennsylvania, in a quicker and more efficient manner than paper surveys. The survey was a cross-sectional survey and not a longitudinal survey. All data was collected at a single point in time because I was not seeking to understand differences over a period of time.

An online approach can be used in order to have access to a large group of possible participants (Hewson, 2017). The ability to access a specific population is also a benefit of online research (Hewson, 2017). This approach allows for collection of data in an organized and efficient manner (Hewson, 2017). An online research method increases the diversity of the participants (Hewson, 2017). Participants may feel more comfortable participating in online research because online research can be seen as more private and anonymous than other types of research (Hewson, 2017).

Summary

This chapter presented a review of the literature related to types of bullying behaviors, bullying behaviors in the school environment, teacher responses to bullying behaviors, literature on the construct of self-efficacy, specific information about teacher efficacy related to bullying prevention and intervention, and common schoolwide programs for addressing and decreasing bullying behaviors.

Although numerous bullying studies have focused on teachers and factors related to their responses to bullying behaviors, continued research opportunities exist for studying specific groups of teachers, such as novice teachers, and their responses to different types of bullying behaviors, specifically cyberbullying behaviors (Lester et al., 2018).

Self-efficacy has been found to be an important factor in motivating teachers' actions in the school environment (Bandura, 1995; Gregus et al., 2017). Numerous studies have been completed regarding teacher level of self-efficacy and responses to bullying behaviors (Gregus et al., 2017). Studies have also investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and the implementation of bullying prevention programs such as the OBPP. However, no research was found regarding the possible effects of a formal mentoring program and teacher level of self-efficacy and responses to cyberbullying behaviors. In order to add to the body of research, I focused on additional teacher characteristics related to teachers' responses to cyberbullying versus traditional bullying behaviors. Also, I sought to determine if familiarity with a specific bullying program or a specific type of bullying program correlated with level of efficacy and response to

bullying behaviors. In chapters 3, 4, and 5 I discuss the methodology for completing the study, an analysis of the findings, and recommendations for future studies.

Chapter 3: Research Method

This research study was a quantitative study through which I sought to identify a relationship between teachers' levels of self-efficacy, importance of formal mentoring, and their attitudes and actions towards overt and covert bullying behaviors. In this chapter I discuss the research design and rationale, including the study variables and the alignment between the research design and the identified research question. I also identify the methodology and provide an overview of the setting, sampling procedures, recruitment, data collection, operational definitions of the variables, and information about the instruments used to gather the data. Data analysis is included in the chapter. I also discuss threats to validity and ethical considerations.

Research Design and Rationale

As previously stated, I sought in this study to identify the level of self-efficacy of the participants as it related to recognizing and intervening in specific overt and covert bullying situations. I looked to identify the relationship between the participant's level of self-efficacy and their attitudes and actions toward the bullying behaviors in the presented vignettes. I used the findings of the study to increase the current literature related to teachers' level of self-efficacy and their attitudes and actions towards bullying behaviors. The findings also served to identify specific differences in response to bullying behaviors and perceived effectiveness among teachers who identified formal mentoring as important to their professional development. The mediating effects of self-efficacy were explored. At the conclusion of the study, I used the findings to identify relationships

between novice teachers' levels of self-efficacy, their identified importance of formal mentoring, and their responses to bullying behaviors.

I used a cross-sectional research design with a web-based survey methodology. I used SurveyMonkey to gather the data for the study. The web-based survey included three different instruments: a demographic survey, the TSES, and the BAQ. A survey design can be beneficial when attempting to identify patterns within a specific population. I used a survey design for my research study because I was seeking to determine specific patterns in teachers' behaviors based on school and teacher characteristics. A web-based survey allowed me to gather information from different geographic areas within the state of Pennsylvania. Reminders could be sent quickly to potential participants regarding the survey invitation. It was also more efficient than paper surveys. I used SurveyMonkey to collect the data and the data was directly analyzed with SPSS. A web-based survey was also more cost effective than a paper survey. By using SurveyMonkey, I controlled the information that was provided to me regarding participants' identities. I excluded any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

Methodology

Population

The population in my study was teachers employed in educational institutions in Pennsylvania. The focus of the study was novice secondary teachers. Teachers from both traditional classroom settings and virtual settings were included in the study. According to the PDE (2017), there were approximately 405,000 students enrolled in Grades 6-8 in

Pennsylvania in the 2018-2019 school year. The ratio of teachers to students in 2018-2019 in Pennsylvania was approximately 15 students for every teacher. Therefore, it was estimated that there were about 27,000 middle level teachers in Pennsylvania. The U.S. Department of Education reported that approximately 2% of teachers reported being in their 1st year of teaching (2015). Therefore, there were approximately 540 novice teachers at the middle level in Pennsylvania. With a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 7, I sought a sample size of 144 for the study. I determined sample size by using an online sample size calculator from Qualtrics (2020). Due to a low response rate, the target population was expanded to include novice teachers in Grades 6-12 in the state of Pennsylvania.

Sampling and Sampling Procedure

My sample was gained through one educational agency in Southeastern Pennsylvania. I also utilized social media platforms to reach potential participants. The sample focused on novice teachers with less than 1 year of teaching experience.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I sent a letter of request to the executive director of an educational agency in Southeastern Pennsylvania requesting to partner with the agency in order to recruit participants. The partner agency sent the survey invitation link to potential participants on my behalf. I also posted invitations to participate in the survey on social media platforms to increase the participant pool.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

I used a demographic questionnaire to gather specific data about each participant. Demographic data was gathered about gender, age, employment category, and months of teaching experience. I used the TSES to identify the perceived effectiveness of each participant. This scale was used to ascertain level of teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). I used the BAQ to ascertain teachers' personal understanding of bullying, their perception of the seriousness of bullying incidents, their perceived level of empathy for the target, their level of confidence in addressing the behavior, and the likelihood of them responding to bullying incidents (Craig et al., 2000). I used an updated tool with modifications from Yoon and Kerber (2003) and Boulton et al. (2014) in the research. To use the existing scales in my research, I sought and received permission from the authors and developers of the original scales. The letters of permission can be viewed in Appendix A.

Demographics Questionnaire

I used a general demographic questionnaire to gather data on specific school characteristics and specific teacher characteristics. School characteristics included the following: number of students in the school, current implementation of an antibullying program, context of school, and type of school. Teacher characteristics included age, gender, and number of years of service. The importance of a formal mentoring program to professional development was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale with responses ranging from *unimportant* to *very important*. The demographic questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale

Self-efficacy was measured using the short form of Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy's TSES (2001). The scale consisted of 12 questions. The participants were asked to identify how much they feel they can do in the identified situations. The responses ranged from *nothing* to *a great deal* and had numeric values ranging from one to nine. The scale was used to identify a total score for teacher efficacy. The total efficacy score was computed by adding the scores together for each of the 12 questions.

Bullying Attitude Questionnaire

I used the BAQ developed by Craig et al. (2000) and modified by Yoon and Kerber (2003) and Boulton et al. (2014) to ascertain teachers' personal understanding of bullying, their perception of the seriousness of bullying incidents, their perceived level of empathy for the target, their level of confidence in addressing the behavior, and the likelihood of the teacher responding to each of the bullying incidents. The BAQ was developed with 18 vignettes covering three types of bullying: physical, verbal, and social (Craig et al., 2000). Six vignettes depicted each type of bullying, three in which the person witnessed the bullying and three in which the person did not witness the bullying. There were three questions that followed each vignette. The accompanying questions were about seriousness of the situation, likelihood of intervention, and if the scenario involved bullying. The first two questions asked participants to respond on a scale of 1 to 5. Participants were asked to reply yes or no to the final question. Yoon and Kerber (2003) modified the vignettes to be clearer and only include witnessed behavior. The number of vignettes was decreased to six, two for each type of bullying. The participants

were asked to rate the projected seriousness of the incident, level of empathy to the victim, and likelihood of intervening on a scale from 1 to 5. Participants were also asked to identify strategies they would use if they were to intervene in the situation. Boulton et al. (2014) further modified the BAQ. The most significant modification was the addition of two cyberbullying vignettes. Participants were asked to answer four questions following each of the eight vignettes about physical bullying, verbal bullying, relational bullying, and cyberbullying. The participants were asked to rate the projected seriousness of the situation, level of empathy to the victim, level of confidence with coping with the situation, and likelihood of intervening on a scale from 1 to 5.

In the present study participants were asked to read the eight vignettes, two for physical bullying, two for verbal bullying, two for relational bullying, and two for cyberbullying. Each vignette was followed by questions about perceived seriousness of the situation, level of empathy to the victim, level of confidence in addressing the situation, and likelihood of intervening in the situation. A 5-point Likert-type scale accompanied each question. Each question was rated on a scale from 1 to 5.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of the TSES was studied during development. Initially developed as the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale, the scale was developed in response to the need for a valid and reliable way to measure teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The scale was evaluated in three separate studies and compared to existing self-efficacy scales. There were two separate questionnaires developed, a long version consisting of 24 questions and a short version consisting of 12 questions. Factor

analyses were completed with both preservice teachers and active professionals. It was found that the two scales were positively correlated with previous self-efficacy scales and were found to be valid and reliable. The construct validity of the TSES has been supported through past research and its correlation with other efficacy scales, such as the *Teacher Efficacy Scale* (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), Teacher Locus of Control Scale (Rose & Medway, 1981), and RAND Corporation's Self Efficacy Scale (Armor et al., 1976). The TSES has been validated with both in-service and preservice teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001).

The BAQ reliability and validity has also been supported through numerous studies (Craig et al., 2000; Yoon & Kerber, 2003). The internal consistency for the questions with each vignette has been confirmed through previous research (Boulton et al, 2014: Craig et al, 2000; Yoon & Kerber, 2003). In the study conducted by Craig et al. (2000), 87% of the participants reported having between 1 and 3 months of teaching experience, and Boulton et al. (2014) gathered data on preservice teachers. The participants in my study were novice teachers with less than 1 year of teaching experience.

Ethical Considerations

I sought permission to complete the research from the Walden University Internal Review Board (IRB). The IRB approval is in Appendix C. This permission served to ensure the ethical treatment of all participants, including decreasing possible risk to participants and ensuring confidentiality. My study focused on adults, so no children under the age of 18 were included in the research. It was possible that a member of a

vulnerable population, such as a pregnant female or a person living with HIV, could have been among the targeted group. Due to the nature of the study, there were no expected risks to the safety or the health of the participants. Prior to participation in the study, each participant was provided with an informed consent about participation in the study. Participants were informed of their rights and responsibilities. The participants were informed that their participation in the research study was voluntary and that they had the right to terminate participation at anytime during the research. Participants were given information about the confidentiality of their demographic information and all responses. The participant's received information about the intended purpose of the study. They were also informed about the intended use of the data gathered from the research study. I used SurveyMonkey to collect the data from the participants. The participants were informed that participation in the survey was implied consent to be a part of the research study. Participants were encouraged to complete all questions on the three instruments. However, at any point during the survey, participants could cease participation in the study. Partially completed surveys were not used in the final study.

Role of the Researcher

Over the past decade I have worked directly with teachers in different districts within Pennsylvania. For this, reason an online survey format was used to collect the data for the study. I used an online survey format so the identity of each participant was anonymous. Because I worked within the educational agencies from which the sample was drawn, the online format was used to make the participants feel more comfortable in completing the survey. I used an online survey format to decrease the likelihood that

participants would volunteer for the study because of a feeling of obligation related to a current or previous professional relationship I may have had with them.

Proposed Statistical Analyses

I used level of perceived self-efficacy as the predictor variable and the criterion variable was self-reported responses to bullying behaviors in order to test the first hypothesis. To test the second hypothesis, I used the predictor variable of importance of a formal mentoring program and the criterion variable of self-reported responses to bullying behaviors. Self-efficacy was included in the hypothesis as a possible mediating variable between the importance of a formal mentoring program and responses to bullying behaviors.

Summary

The purpose of the web-based quantitative study was to identify the relationship between teacher level of self-efficacy and responses to bullying behaviors. I also gathered information about any differences existing between teachers implementing the OBPP and teachers implementing another bullying prevention program. The information I collected included efficacy and responsiveness to both overt and covert bullying situations, by utilizing the TSES and the BAQ. I used descriptive statistics to evaluate the data. In chapter 4 I included a discussion of the research questions and the data collected. I also, discussed the results in chapter 4. I used tables to display and explain the data results.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore and compare sixth through 12th grade novice teachers' attitudes and perceived actions connected to four types of bullying behaviors: physical, verbal, relational, and cyber. The attitudes and actions were studied in relation to participants' levels of self-efficacy and their identified importance of a formal mentoring program to professional development. I used the BAQ (Craig et al., 2000), with modifications from Yoon and Kerber (2003) and Boulton et al. (2014), to ascertain attitudes and perceived actions focused on (a) seriousness of the bullying behavior, (b) empathy related to the target of the bullying behavior, (c) level of confidence in coping with the bullying behavior, and (d) likelihood of intervention in the bullying behavior. I used the TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) to measure reported levels of self-efficacy. The importance of a formal mentoring program to professional development was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale.

I used descriptive statistics, including frequencies, measures of central tendency, and variability, to describe the study data. I used a basic Pearson correlation for each type of bullying behavior to measure linear correlation between the variables. The results were used to answer the first research question. Regression analyses were completed for the second research question, which focused on understanding the relationship between importance of a formal mentoring program and teacher responses to the paired questions for each type of bullying behavior. The analyses also provided information about the mediating effects of self-efficacy on teacher responses to the paired questions for each type of bullying behavior. Chapter 4 includes the research questions and hypotheses for

the study, information about the data collection process, a discussion of the analysis of the data, and the study findings.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses set the parameters for the study:

RQ1: What is the relationship between novice secondary school teachers' perceived levels of self-efficacy and self-reported responses to bullying behaviors?

$H_0$1: There is no correlation between novice secondary school teachers' levels of perceived self-efficacy and their responses to bullying behaviors.

H_A1: There is a positive correlation between novice secondary school teachers' levels of perceived self-efficacy and their responses to bullying behaviors.

RQ2: What is the association between the importance of a formal mentoring program and novice secondary school teachers' responses to bullying behaviors and perceived levels of self-efficacy?

$H_0$2: Importance of a formal mentoring program has no association to novice secondary school teachers' responses to bullying behaviors or perceived levels of self-efficacy.

H_A2: Importance of a formal mentoring program has a direct association to responses to bullying behaviors and an indirect association to bullying behaviors through perceived levels of self-efficacy.

Results

The quantitative web-based survey included a demographic questionnaire, the TSES Short Form (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), and the BAQ (Craig et al., 2000), with modifications from Yoon and Kerber (2003) and Boulton et al. (2014). I used a demographic questionnaire to gather specific data about each participant. Demographic data included gender, age, employment category, months of teaching experience, and the perceived importance of a formal mentoring program on professional development. The importance of a formal mentoring program to professional development was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale with responses ranging from 1 = *unimportant* to 5 = *very important*. I used the 12-question TSES Short Form to identify the perceived effectiveness of each participant in three areas, classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement, and to ascertain a total score for teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Participants were asked to identify how much they felt they could do in certain situations. The responses ranged from *nothing* to *a great deal* with scores ranging from 1 to 9 for each situation. I used the BAQ (Craig et al., 2000), with modifications from Yoon and Kerber (2003) and Boulton et al. (2014), to gather data about teachers' attitudes and actions related to four different types of bullying. Participants were asked to read eight vignettes, two for physical bullying, two for verbal bullying, two for relational bullying, and two for cyberbullying. Each vignette was followed by questions about perceived seriousness of the situation, level of empathy to the target, level of confidence in addressing the situation, and likelihood of intervening in the situation. Each was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale that

follows: seriousness of the situation ranged from 1 = *not at all serious* to 5 = *very serious*; level of empathy to the target ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*; level of confidence in addressing the situation ranged from 1 = *not at all confident* to 5 = *very confident*; and likelihood of intervening in the situation ranged from 1 = *not at all likely* to 5 = *very likely*.

On March 22, 2021, following IRB approval, I forwarded the quantitative web-based survey to the contact at the partner organization in Southeastern Pennsylvania. The partner organization representative forwarded the web-based survey to the specified target population in the organization. A flyer for the survey was also posted to social media platforms. The recruitment strategy was modified prior to IRB approval to include the partner organization. The initial recruitment plan included sending a letter of intent to recruit participants to superintendents in school districts in Pennsylvania. After attempted contact with several superintendents and receiving no response, the recruitment plan was modified to include the partner organization in Southeastern Pennsylvania and the use of social media platforms.

An estimated 540 novice middle level teachers were employed in Pennsylvania at the start of this research study. With a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 7, I sought a sample size of 144 for the study. I determined sample size using an online sample size calculator from Qualtrics (2020). After 7 weeks of data collection, only 46 participants had completed the survey. A request was made to IRB to amend the target population to include novice teachers in Pennsylvania teaching in Grades 6 to 12 instead of Grades 6 to 8. The online survey was closed on June 3, 2021. At the completion of the

data collection phase, a total of 159 participants had completed surveys. This was a larger sample size than was initially sought for the study.

I used IBM SPSS Statistics Version 27.0 to analyze the data collected. Of the 159 respondents, the majority of the respondents were female (86%) and worked full-time (94%) in their schools. Most of the participants were between 20 and 30 years old (93%) and had been teaching for 8–11 months (93%). Even though the target population was modified from novice teachers in Grades 6 to 8 to include novice teachers in Grades 6 to 12 in the state of Pennsylvania, only 5% of the respondents taught in Grades 9 to 12. The remaining 95% of the respondents taught in Grades 6 to 8. Over three fourths of the respondents taught in a suburban setting, and the majority (93%) of respondents taught in a public-school setting. Over 80% of the novice teachers taught in buildings with more than 500 students. Almost all the participants (95%) reported that their building had a bullying prevention program. Three quarters of the participants reported that their school used the PBIS Program to address bullying. About one fifth of the participants shared that their school used the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. More than two thirds of the participants reported that a formal mentoring program was important (33%) or very important (34%) to their professional development.

I completed Pearson correlations for RQ1 to determine the relationship between novice secondary school teachers' perceived levels of self-efficacy and self-reported responses to bullying behaviors. I used Pearson correlations to examine the relationship between the predictor variable of level of self-efficacy and the criterion variable of responses to bullying behavior. Pearson correlations were completed in previous studies

that used the BAQ (Boulton et al., 2014; Craig et al., 2000; Yoon & Kerber, 2003). The statistical analyses were used to examine the responses for each set of paired questions for the four types of bullying behaviors.

Responses to bullying behaviors were determined by the individual scores for each of the four questions related to seriousness of the situation, empathy for the target, confidence in coping, and likelihood of intervention that followed each vignette. Because there were two scenarios for each type of bullying behavior, the two scores for each of the paired questions were added together for each type. The two scores for seriousness of situation, empathy for the target, confidence in coping, and likelihood of intervention were added together for each type of bullying behavior. I completed Cronbach's alpha for each set of paired questions for each type of bullying behavior to determine the internal consistency of the paired questions. The results are listed in Table 1. Each set of paired questions for seriousness of situation, empathy for target, confidence in coping, and likelihood of intervention for each of the four types of bullying behaviors had a high level of internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha between 0.93 and 0.99 for all pairs.

Table 1

Internal Consistency of Paired Questions

	Physical		Verbal		Relational		Cyber	
	Cronbach's alpha	# of items	Cronbach's alpha	# of items	Cronbach's alpha	# of items	Cronbach's alpha	# of items
Seriousness	0.95	2	0.96	2	0.97	2	0.97	2
Empathy	0.93	2	0.94	2	0.97	2	0.98	2
Confidence	0.99	2	0.99	2	0.99	2	0.99	2
Intervention	0.99	2	0.99	2	0.99	2	0.97	2

I completed a Pearson correlation for each type of bullying behavior and each of the four scores for a total of 16 correlations. The correlations showed a positive correlation between total efficacy and each of the four categories (seriousness of the situation, empathy for the target, confidence in coping, and likelihood of intervention) for each type of bullying behavior (physical, verbal, relational, and cyber). The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Correlations for Level of Efficacy and Paired Questions

Efficacy	Physical bullying			Verbal bullying			Relational bullying			Cyberbullying		
	x̄	*sd*	*r*	x̄	*sd*	*r*	x̄	*sd*	*r*	x̄	*sd*	*r*
Seriousness	4.69	0.63	0.49**	4.24	0.78	0.56**	3.81	0.83	0.59**	3.01	0.94	0.44**
Empathy	4.75	0.44	0.52**	4.40	0.69	0.47**	4.06	0.68	0.50**	3.58	0.87	0.52**
Confidence	4.05	0.90	0.80**	4.08	0.90	0.80**	4.04	0.89	0.80**	3.13	0.99	0.56**
Intervention	4.40	0.81	0.72**	4.36	0.83	0.75**	4.15	0.87	0.71**	3.15	0.96	0.46**

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

The results of the Pearson correlations provided evidence to show a significant relationship between the variables. The level of significance (< .001, 2-tailed) supported that the correlations most likely existed within the population and were not due to chance. The range for the paired questions for the four types of bullying behavior was $r = .44$ to $r = .80$. The weakest correlation existed between level of self-efficacy and seriousness of cyberbullying behaviors. The strongest correlations existed between level of self-efficacy and confidence in coping with physical bullying, confidence in coping with verbal bullying, and confidence in coping with relational bullying. The three correlations had

identical strength. The correlation for level of self-efficacy and seriousness of the situation were most strongly correlated for relational bullying.

Participants identified physical bullying as being the most serious type of bullying ($\bar{x}$ = 4.69), followed by verbal bullying ($\bar{x}$ = 4.24), relational bullying ($\bar{x}$ = 3.81) and cyberbullying ($\bar{x}$ = 3.01). A similar pattern emerged for level of empathy for the target with empathy being the highest for targets of physical bullying ($\bar{x}$ = 4.75) and the lowest for targets of cyberbullying ($\bar{x}$ = 3.58). Perceived level of seriousness of a bullying behavior increases feelings of empathy for the targets (Begotti et al., 2017). The confidence with coping score was almost identical for verbal ($\bar{x}$ = 4.08), physical ($\bar{x}$ = 4.05), and relational bullying ($\bar{x}$ = 4.04). Again, the confidence with coping score was lowest for cyberbullying situations ($\bar{x}$ = 3.13). Participants reported the highest likelihood of intervening in physical bullying situations ($\bar{x}$ = 4.40). Participants were the least likely to intervene in cyberbullying situations ($\bar{x}$ = 3.15). The scores in the four categories were lowest for cyberbullying. Table 1 displays the scores.

Regression analyses were completed to determine a relationship between importance of a formal mentoring program and responses to bullying behaviors and to determine a possible mediating effect of level of self-efficacy. The use of the meditational model requires a statistically significant correlation between the predictor variable and the mediator variable, a statistically significant relationship between the predictor variable and the criterion variable, and a statistically significant relationship between the mediator and the criterion variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). To determine a possible mediating effect, three specific regression analyses should be completed (Baron

& Kenny, 1986). A regression analysis should be completed to regress the mediator variable on the predictor variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The criterion variable needs to be regressed on the predictor variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). A third regression analysis should be completed to regress the criterion variable simultaneously on the predictor variable and the mediator variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The mediator variable, level of self-efficacy, was regressed on the predictor variable, importance of a formal mentoring program to determine if a statistically significant relationship existed between the two variables. Regression analyses were completed to determine if a statistically significantly correlated relationship existed between importance of a formal mentoring program, the predictor variable, and each of the criterion variables (seriousness of the situation, empathy for the target, confidence in coping, and likelihood of intervention) for each type of bullying behavior (physical, verbal, relational, and cyber). Lastly, each of the criterion variables was regressed on both the predictor variable and the mediator variable.

An initial regression analysis was completed to regress the mediator variable of level of self-efficacy on the predictor variable of importance of a formal mentoring program. The regression analysis evidenced a statistically significant relationship between level of self-efficacy and importance of a formal mentoring program. The results provided evidence to support that for an increase of one point in the importance of a formal mentoring program to professional development the level of self-efficacy score would increase by 6.8 points. From the regression analysis, importance of a formal mentoring program had a statistically significant impact on level of self-efficacy with a p-

value of less than 0.05. The importance of a formal mentoring program accounted for 39% of the variance in level of self-efficacy.

With the next set of regression analyses, regressing the criterion variables on the predictor variable, the results further supported a statistically significant relationship between all but one of the criterion variables and importance of a formal mentoring program. The results are shown in Table 3. The criterion variable of seriousness of the situation for physical bullying was regressed on the predictor variable for comparison in the regression analysis, even though the previously completed Pearson correlation evidenced no statistically significant relationship between the two variables. The regression analysis provided evidence to show that the highest amount of change in the criterion variables per one unit change in the importance of formal mentoring scores were highest for the confidence in coping and likelihood of intervention scores for physical, verbal, and relational bullying. Mentoring supports novice teachers in learning policies and procedures within the school environment (Lisenbee & Tan, 2019), including how to recognize and intervene in bullying behaviors. It was predicted that the score for confidence in coping and likelihood of intervention would increase by more than half a point when the importance of a formal mentoring program increased by one point. In the cyberbullying category the highest expected increase was in the empathy score (0.38) and the confidence score (.41). The percentage of variance in the criterion variables that was accounted for by the predictor variable was the highest for the paired questions for confidence and intervention for physical bullying, verbal bullying, and relational bullying. Twenty-two percent of the variance of confidence in coping with physical

bullying behaviors was attributed to the importance of a formal mentoring program. Confidence in coping with verbal and relational bullying followed with 19% of the variance attributed to the importance of a formal mentoring program. Only 7% of the variance in the confidence in coping score for cyberbullying was explained by the importance of a formal mentoring program. For the likelihood of intervention score for cyberbullying only 4% of the change in the variable was explained by the importance of a formal mentoring program. When reviewing the data analyses for the paired questions for seriousness of the situation and empathy for the target for all four bullying types, less than 10% of the variance of the variables could be explained by the importance of a formal mentoring program.

Table 3

Regression of Paired Questions on Mentoring

	Importance of formal mentoring		
	B	*SD*	*p-value*
Confidence related to physical bullying	0.63**	0.95	0.000
Confidence related to verbal bullying	0.59**	0.10	0.000
Confidence related to relational bullying	0.59**	0.10	0.000
Intervention related to verbal bullying	0.53**	0.10	0.000
Intervention related to relational bullying	0.53**	0.10	0.000
Intervention related to physical bullying	0.52**	0.87	0.000
Confidence related to cyberbullying	0.41**	0.11	0.000
Empathy related to cyberbullying	0.38**	0.10	0.000
Seriousness related to relational bullying	0.32**	0.10	0.001
Intervention related to cyberbullying	0.31**	0.11	0.006
Seriousness related to cyberbullying	0.30**	0.11	0.006
Seriousness related to verbal bullying	0.29**	0.90	0.002
Empathy related to verbal bullying	0.22**	0.07	0.001
Empathy related to relational bullying	0.19**	0.08	0.016
Empathy related to physical bullying	0.16**	0.05	0.002
Seriousness related to physical bullying	0.12	0.07	0.116

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

The final regression analysis regressed each of the criterion variables (seriousness of the situation, empathy for the target, confidence in coping, and likelihood of intervention) for each type of bullying behavior (physical, verbal, relational, and cyber) simultaneously on importance of a formal mentoring program and level of self-efficacy. Table 4 shows the results of the regressions. This final regression analysis demonstrated that level of self-efficacy was statistically significantly correlated with all of the criterion variables. When level of self-efficacy was added to the final regression analysis, the

statistically significant relationship between importance of a formal mentoring program and the criterion variables was no longer supported. This change in the significance of the relationship between the importance of a formal mentoring program and the criterion variables when level of self-efficacy was added provides evidence that the relationship between importance of a formal mentoring program and responses to bullying behaviors is completely mediated by level of self-efficacy. The adjusted r squared values significantly increased when level of self-efficacy was added to the regression analysis. As with the importance of a formal mentoring program, the highest percentage of variance of the criterion variables attributed to the mediator variable was found in the paired questions for confidence in coping and likelihood of intervention for physical bullying, verbal bullying, and relational bullying. The highest percentage of variance of the criterion variables attributed to the mediator variable for the paired questions for cyberbullying was for empathy to the target of the bullying and confidence in coping with cyberbullying. Sixty-five percent of the variance in the confidence in coping variable for physical bullying was explained by level of self-efficacy. For verbal bullying and relational bullying, 64% of the variance in the confidence in coping variable was attributable to level of self-efficacy. The percentage of variance in the confidence in coping variable for cyberbullying that could be explained by level of self-efficacy was only 32%. The variance for seriousness of the situation that was explained by level of self-efficacy ranged from 19% for cyberbullying to 36% for relational bullying. For empathy to the target the range of variance accounted for was 23% for verbal bullying to 29% for physical bullying.

Table 4

Regression of Paired Questions on Mentoring and Level of Self-Efficacy

	Importance of mentoring programs				Level of self-efficacy		
	B	*SD*	*p value*	Adjusted r^2	*B*	*SD*	*p value*
Seriousness–physical	–0.26**	0.08	0.001	.285	0.06**	0.01	0.000
Empathy–physical	–0.08	0.06	0.148	.287	0.04**	0.02	0.000
Confidence–physical	–0.06	0.08	0.485	.648	0.10**	0.01	0.000
Intervention–physical	–0.02	0.09	0.781	.527	0.08**	0.01	0.000
Seriousness–verbal	–0.17	0.10	0.073	.326	0.07**	0.01	0.000
Empathy–verbal	–0.07	0.08	0.351	.228	0.04**	0.01	0.000
Confidence–verbal	–0.10	0.08	0.463	.638	0.10**	0.01	0.000
Intervention–verbal	–0.06**	0.08	0.000	.564	0.09**	0.01	0.000
Seriousness–relational	–0.19	0.10	0.066	.355	0.08**	0.01	0.000
Empathy–relational	–0.16	0.09	0.062	.265	0.05**	0.01	0.000
Confidence–relational	–0.10	0.08	0.221	.635	0.10**	0.01	0.000
Intervention–relational	–0.05	0.09	0.341	.500	0.06**	0.01	0.000
Seriousness–cyber	–0.12	0.13	0.006	.190	0.12**	0.07	0.000
Empathy–cyber	–0.04	0.11	0.710	.267	0.06**	0.01	0.000
Confidence–cyber	–0.17	0.13	0.181	.316	0.09**	0.01	0.000
Intervention–cyber	–0.14	0.13	0.290	.205	0.07**	0.01	0.000

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

I also planned to provide data to determine if familiarity with a specific bullying program or a specific type of bullying program correlated with level of efficacy and response to bullying behaviors. Due to limited variability in the responses related to type of bullying program, and implementation of more than one program within a building, an analysis was not completed to compare data related to type of bullying program and level of efficacy and response to bullying behaviors.

Summary

Chapter 4 highlighted the purpose of the study, the two research questions, data collection tools, analysis of the data, and results of the findings of the study. Novice secondary teachers in Southeastern Pennsylvania provided information about the attitudes and actions connected to four types of bullying behaviors: physical, verbal, relational, and cyber. I also gathered information from participants about levels of self-efficacy and importance of a formal mentoring program to professional development. With the support of one partner organization and social media postings, 159 participants completed the web-based survey. Pearson correlations provided evidence to support that physical bullying was viewed as the most serious and that novice secondary teachers felt the most empathy for targets of physical bullying behaviors. Participants in the study were the most confident in coping with physical, verbal, and relational bullying situations. Likelihood of intervention was highest for physical bullying situations. Cyberbullying was ranked the lowest for all four categories. Regression analyses supported a relationship between importance of formal mentoring program to professional development and response to bullying behaviors. Level of self-efficacy was found to fully mediate the relationship between importance of a formal mentoring program and responses to all four types of bullying behaviors. Chapter 5 includes an interpretation of the research findings and the social change implications of the research study. Limitations of the current research study and recommendations for future research are included in the chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of the study was to explore and compare sixth through 12th grade novice teachers' attitudes and actions connected to four types of bullying behaviors: physical, verbal, relational, and cyber. I evaluated participants' level of self-efficacy and perceptions of the importance of a formal mentoring program to professional development to determine a possible connection between these variables and participants' attitudes and actions related to the four types of bullying behaviors. I used the TSES Short Form (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001); the BAQ (Craig et al., 2000), with modifications from Yoon and Kerber (2003) and Boulton et al. (2014); and Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977) to explore the relationship between level of self-efficacy and responses reported for the four types of bullying behaviors.

Interpretations of the Findings

The statistical analyses provided evidence to support that level of self-efficacy had a positive, direct, and significant relationship to novice secondary teachers' responses to the four types of bullying behaviors (physical, verbal, relational, and cyber). This finding is consistent with previous research findings that teachers with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to respond to bullying behaviors than teachers who report lower levels of self-efficacy (Begotti et al., 2017; Garner, 2017; Wilford & Depaolis, 2016). Level of efficacy is an important indicator of a person's willingness to become involved in challenging situations (Bandura, 1977). The more confident a person is in their ability to manage unsafe situations, the more willing the person is to intervene in a problematic

situation (Bandura, 1977). Level of confidence also impacts the amount of time and effort the person is willing to devote to a problematic situation.

The results of the study showed that participants identified physical bullying as the most serious type of bullying behavior and reported the highest level of empathy for targets of physical bullying behaviors. The confidence in coping score was similar for physical, verbal, and relational bullying behaviors. Participants reported the highest likelihood of intervening in physical bullying situations. This finding is similar to previous research that identified that a teacher's willingness to intervene in bullying behavior is impacted by the seriousness of the bullying behavior and the level of empathy felt for the target (Begotti et al., 2017; VanZoeren & Weisz, 2018). Because the participants in the study identified physical bullying as the most serious type of bullying and reported the highest level of empathy for targets of physical bullying behavior, it follows that the participants would also report a higher level of intervention in physical bullying behaviors.

Responses to verbal and relational bullying were found to have similar strength relationships to the level of self-efficacy but were not as strongly correlated as the relationship between level of self-efficacy and response to physical bullying behaviors. Although the relationship between level of self-efficacy and responses to cyberbullying behaviors was found to have a significant correlation, the strength of the linear relationship was weaker than the relationship between level of self-efficacy and the other three types of bullying behaviors. Overall results indicated a positive, direct, and significant relationship between level of self-efficacy and each of the individual score

categories for all four types of bullying behaviors. When level of self-efficacy was correlated with the reported seriousness of each type of bullying behavior, it was discovered that the strongest correlation existed between level of self-efficacy and perceived seriousness of relational bullying behaviors. The weakest correlation existed between level of self-efficacy and perceived seriousness of cyberbullying behaviors. This finding is similar to other studies. Kavuk-Kalender and Keser (2018) reported that a significant number of educators perceived cyberbullying to be less harmful than other types of bullying behaviors.

Level of self-efficacy was correlated to level of empathy for the targets of physical bullying behaviors, and the strongest linear relationship existed between level of self-efficacy and empathy for targets. The next strongest correlation was found between level of self-efficacy and empathy for targets of cyberbullying behaviors. The weakest correlation was found to exist between level of self-efficacy and empathy for targets of verbal bullying. When reviewing the average scores assigned by participants to empathy for the targets of each type of bullying behavior, physical bullying had the highest score followed by verbal bullying and relational bullying. Empathy for the targets of cyberbullying had the lowest average scores assigned by participants. The average scores for empathy for the targets of physical bullying were more than 1 point higher than the average scores for targets of cyberbullying behaviors. Given that the relationship between empathy for the target and response to bullying behaviors has been established in previous research (Begotti et al., 2017; VanZoeren & Weisz, 2018), this is an important finding. Because teachers who report a higher level of empathy for the target of bullying

behaviors also report a higher level of intervention, novice teachers may be less willing to respond to cyberbullying behaviors due to a lower level of reported empathy for the targets of this type of bullying behavior.

As with empathy for the target, the strongest correlation was found between level of self-efficacy and confidence in coping with physical bullying behaviors. However, the relationship between self-efficacy and confidence in coping with bullying behaviors was only slightly stronger than the strength of the relationship between self-efficacy and confidence in coping was for verbal bullying and relational bullying. The weakest relationship was found between self-efficacy and confidence in coping with cyberbullying behaviors. Even though cyberbullying has become a significant school-based problem in the past 2 decades (Smith, 2016), many teachers feel ineffective in responding to episodes of cyberbullying (Kavuk-Kalender & Keser, 2018; Styron et al., 2016; Wilford & Depaolis, 2016). Teacher participants in past studies have reported feeling unprepared to respond to cyberbullying behaviors (Styron et al., 2016; Wilford & Depaolis, 2016) and have identified a lack of effectiveness in responding to cyberbullying behaviors (Kavuk-Kalender & Kesser, 2018; Styron et al., 2016; Wilford & Depaolis, 2016). It can also be difficult for teachers to identify cyberbullying behaviors because the behaviors may not be initiated in the school environment (Redmond et al., 2018).

I analyzed the relationship between self-efficacy and likelihood of intervention for each type of bullying behavior. The strongest correlation was identified between level of self-efficacy and likelihood of intervention in verbal bullying situations. Level of self-

efficacy had the weakest correlation with likelihood of intervention in cyberbullying situations. Other researchers have found that teachers do not feel prepared to intervene in cyberbullying situations (Styron et al., 2016; Wilford & Depaolis, 2016), which might explain the findings in the current study.

A statistically significant relationship was identified between level of self-efficacy and importance of a formal mentoring program to professional development. Importance of a formal mentoring program had a statistically significant impact on level of self-efficacy. The relationship between mentoring and efficacy has been established in past studies. When veteran teachers mentor novice teachers, the confidence of novice teachers increases (Gholam, 2018; Nolan & Molla, 2017; Rohmah, 2018). Relatedly, novice teachers reported a higher level of efficacy when mentored by veteran teachers in research by Rohmah (2018).

Further analyses supported a statistically significant relationship between importance of a formal mentoring program on professional development and responses (seriousness of the situation, empathy for the target of the bullying behaviors, confidence in coping with the bullying behaviors, and likelihood of intervention) to the four types of bullying behaviors (physical, verbal, relational, and cyber). Importance of a formal mentoring program was not statistically significantly correlated with seriousness of the situation for physical bullying behaviors. Importance of a formal mentoring program had the most significant impact on confidence in coping and intervention scores for physical, verbal, and relational bullying. The impact of importance of formal mentoring on the confidence in coping score and intervention score was much lower for cyberbullying than

for the other three types of bullying behaviors. Importance of a formal mentoring program was statistically correlated with seriousness of the situation and empathy scores for all bullying types but explained less of the variability in the scores than with the confidence in coping and likelihood of intervention scores.

Perhaps most importantly, the current study showed that self-efficacy mediates the relationship between the importance of a formal mentoring program and responses to bullying behaviors. The most statistically significantly correlated relationships were between level of self-efficacy and the scores for confidence in coping and likelihood of intervention for physical, verbal, and relational bullying. As with importance of formal mentoring, level of self-efficacy had a smaller impact on confidence in coping and likelihood of intervention for cyberbullying situations. The study finding about self-efficacy as a mediator contributes to the literature related to novice teachers by increasing knowledge about the relationship between self-efficacy, formal mentoring programs, and responses to bullying behaviors.

Limitations of the Study

The study limitations included the target population. Because only novice teachers of the partner organization in Southeastern Pennsylvania and members of specific social media platforms who had access to the survey were included in the study, the study's generalizability to the entire population of novice teachers may be limited. The fact that only novice teachers in the state of Pennsylvania were included means that the study findings may not be true of novice teachers in other states and countries. The majority of the participants were female, which may limit the ability to generalize the

study to all genders. Additionally, the majority of the participants had worked for 8 to 11 months in the field. Novice teachers with fewer months of service may not exhibit the same characteristics as the participants of this study. Furthermore, as many of the survey participants taught in public schools in a suburban environment, the study results may not transfer to novice teachers in other school types and contexts. The survey was only offered in English, which therefore limited the participation of volunteers who spoke different languages. The online survey limited participation, excluding people who use alternative forms of communication, such as braille. It may be that the participants were willing to complete the survey because they had high levels of self-efficacy and felt competent to engage in the study. For this reason the self-efficacy scores may not be representative of the population.

Recommendations for Future Research

I recommended that future researchers include a sample that is more representative of the population of novice teachers. I recommend improving recruitment to include a sample with more diversity in type of school and school context. I also recommend including more gender diversity to increase the generalizability of the data. Obtaining a sample that is more representative of all categories of months of experience could also increase the generalizability of the data. In addition, future research should include participants from a wide range of geographical areas to the extent that they have been exposed to similar bullying prevention programs. Also, using additional measures to gather data on the importance of a formal mentoring program to professional

development could provide additional insight into the impact formal mentoring has on the professional development and the level of efficacy of novice teachers.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study can be used to create positive social change in several different areas. The findings support that novice teachers' attitudes and actions toward cyberbullying are not the same as their attitudes and actions related to the other three types of bullying behaviors. This finding supports the need for additional education related to cyberbullying behaviors. Increased education for novice teachers related to cyberbullying behaviors could be beneficial to new hires. Administrators and others responsible for the orientation of novice teachers could develop new hire curriculum that is specific to cyberbullying behaviors. Because cyberbullying often occurs outside of the school building, teachers may not feel that it is their responsibility to address cyberbullying behaviors. However, it is important for teachers to be aware of the impact that cyberbullying behaviors have on student learning and engagement in the school environment (Wilford & Depaolis, 2016) and to recognize the behaviors resulting from victimization (Redmond et al., 2018).

Additionally, educational leaders at institutions of higher learning could modify the curriculum of teacher education programs to increase education about cyberbullying behaviors. Implementation of a formal mentoring program or improvement to a current mentoring program could benefit inexperienced teachers entering the field. Providing support and guidance to new hires could improve classroom management, retention, and level of self-efficacy. The efficacy of teachers is a key factor in managing the classroom

environment, in influencing positive student behavior (Ayebo & Assuah, 2017; Egeberg, 2016) and in decreasing the negative outcomes of bullying behaviors (Gregus et al., 2017). Teacher level of efficacy is directly correlated with student victimization (Gregus et al., 2017); therefore it is important to increase novice teachers' feelings of efficacy. Investing time into educating and mentoring new teachers could result in increased levels of efficacy and decreases in levels of bullying behaviors and the negative outcomes related to bullying behaviors.

Conclusion

Research shows a variety of short-term and long-term negative outcomes that are connected to bullying behaviors in schools globally, including the United States (Masu et al., 2018). Students who are the targets of both traditional bullying and cyberbullying (Keith, 2018) experience many adverse outcomes. Level of school involvement (Lacey et al., 2017; Masu et al., 2018) and level of academic achievement (Lacey et al., 2017; Masu et al., 2018; Smith & Skrbis, 2016; Torres et al., 2020) are negatively impacted for students who experience bullying victimization. Bullying victimization can result in many physical ailments (Moore et al., 2017) and significant mental health challenges (Chiu et al., 2017; Moore et al., 2017). Increased psychological distress (Chiu et al., 2017; Demirbağ et al., 2016; Masu et al., 2016; Moore et al., 2017) is connected to bullying victimization, including increased feelings of depression (Masu et al., 2018; Moore et al., 2017), increased suicidal ideations and behaviors (Crepeau-Hobson & Leech, 2016; Masu et al., 2018; Moore et al., 2017), and homicidal thoughts and behaviors (Su et al., 2019). The impact of bullying behaviors can last long after the

bullying behaviors end (VanZoeren & Weisz, 2018). Continued awareness, education, and efficacy of novice teachers could be the combination of factors that results in the creation of a positive, safe school environment that mitigates the long-term adverse outcomes of bullying behaviors and leads to the eventual elimination of bullying behaviors in the school environment.

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Appendix A: Author Permissions to Use Tools

RE: Permission to Use Bullying Scenarios
Wendy Craig
Mon 1/25/2021 10:58 AM
To: Jennifer Greineder
Jennifer:
Happy to share the measure. I am attaching the scenarios we used at the time. Please ensure you cite the original article when referring to the measure.

> Craig, W. M., Henderson, K., & Murphy, J. (2000). Prospective teachers' attitudes toward bullying and victimization. International Journal of School Psychology, 21, 5-21.

Thanks and best of luck with your work.
Wendy
Wendy Craig, PhD., FRSC, O.C., O.Ont
Professor of Psychology

Re: Permission to Use Study Materials
From: Yoon, Jina –
Sent: Saturday, January 16, 2021 3:23 PM
To: Jennifer Greineder >
Subject: RE: Permission to Use Study Materials
Hi Jennifer,
Hope all goes well with your study. See attached.
Best,
Jina
Jina Yoon, Ph.D.
Professor, Disability & Psychoeducational Studies
Faculty Chair, School Psychology Program

Re: Permission to Use Bullying Scenarios
From: Mike Boulton
Sent: Sunday, January 24, 2021 5:29 PM
To: Jennifer Greineder
Subject: Re: Permission to Use Bullying Scenarios
Dear Jennifer - please feel free to use these or any of the other measures we have published. And very best wishes for your research. Enjoy every minute of it as it's a rather special activity.
Kind regards
Mike

January 26, 2021

Jennifer, You have my permission to use the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (formerly called the Ohio State Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale), which I developed with Anita Woolfolk Hoy, in your research. You can find a copy of the measure and scoring directions on my web site at http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/mxtsch. Please use the following as the proper citation: Tschannen-Moran, M & Hoy, A. W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. Teaching and Teacher Education, 17, 783-805. I will also attach directions you can follow to access my password protected web site, where you can find the supporting references for this measure as well as other articles I have written on this and related topics.

All the best,

Megan Tschannen-Moran

Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your identified gender? a. female b. male
2. What is your age group? a. 20-30 b. 31-40 c. 41-50 d. 51-60 e. 61-70 f. 71+
3. How many months of experience do you have in teaching? a. 0-3 months b. 4-7 months c. 8-11 months d. 12-15 months e. more than 15 months
4. What grade level do you teach? a. K b. 1 c. 2 d. 3 e. 4 f. 5 g. 6 h. 7 i. 8 j. 9 k. 10 l. 11 m. 12
5. What is the context of your school? a. urban b. suburban c. rural
6. What is your school type? a. public b. private c. charter d. cyber e. other
7. How many students are in your school? a. less than 100 b. 100 – 200 c. 201-300 d. 301-400 e. 401-500 f. 501-600 g. 601-700 h. 701-800 i. 801-900 j. 901-1000 k. more than 1000
8. What is your employment category? a. full-time district employee b. long-term substitute c. short-term substitute d. other
9. Does your school have a current anti-bullying program? a. yes b. no If yes what program is being implemented in your building? a. Olweus Bullying Prevention Program b. Positive Behavior Support and Intervention c. Character Education d. Other
10. How important has a formal mentoring program been to your professional development? 1 = unimportant, 2 = slightly important 3 = somewhat important, 4 = important, 5 = very important.

Appendix C: Walden University Institutional Review Board Approval

Approval # is 03-09-21-0157319.

IRB approval expires on March 8, 2022.