THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUSNESS AND BULLYING AMONG

PAROCHIAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE SOUTHEAST

By

Matthew Adam Willis

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

Bullying and peer abuses are persistent problems in the educational community. Many studies have been undertaken that focus on the aftermath of bullying or prevention of abuse, but few have focused on social variables and their relationship to bullying and peer abuses. The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is any relationship between an individual's self-reported levels of religiousness and their perspectives on bullying. The study used a correlational design. This design analyzed students who have taken the Olweus bullying scale and a religious commitment survey. The surveys were analyzed using the Stepwise regression model. Understanding the correlation between religiousness and bullying perspectives could help build a knowledge base for all social factors affecting bullying. The model expressing the relationship between females who self-report as bullies and the religious variable of Extrinsic(personal) was found to have a statistically significant relationship.

Keywords: Bullying, middle school, high school, gender, faith, religiousness

Dedication

To Dr. Ellen Black for teaching me awareness and how to be a better student.

To my grandfather who taught me to love knowledge.

To my wife for her undying support and patience.

To my children, who although too young to understand, their love and smiles sustained me.

To my sister, my very best friend.

To my mother, my greatest cheerleader and mentor

To my father, without his instillation of work ethic this work would never have been completed.

To my brother, who often absent from sight, is never absent from heart.

To my grandmother, whose nurturing spirit taught me to love others.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank the school who allowed me unfettered access to their students in order to complete this research. May God bless them and their students.

I want to thank my dissertation committee for the constructive criticism and their faith in me even when I lost faith in myself.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a relevant and pervasive problem across the nation. Research shows that between 45% and 77% of all sixth to 12th grade students report an act of bullying during the school year (Carran & Kellner, 2009). As technology becomes more prevalent, the number of students who suffer from bullying increases (Willard, 2011). Bullying comes in a variety of forms, all of which cause harm to a student (Perkins, Craig, & Perkins, 2011). The need for understanding the causes and effects of bullying is paramount. With the number of students resorting to violence among themselves or others growing, understanding bullying has become more urgent. There is a gap in literature dealing with bullying, itself a social construct, as it relates to other social constructs.

Dr. Olweus, a world-renowned expert in bullying and bullying tendencies, has been studying the phenomenon since the early 1970s when he began to question the abuses suffered by the children in his community (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). The problem has existed for decades, but it was not until the early 1980s that researchers and schools began to take the problem seriously and devoted time to understanding it (Fox & Boulton, 2003). Bullying has become a global concern and media reports about bullying and its consequences has increased (Fox, Elder, Gater, & Johnson, 2010).

Bullying is a problem in our educational system. For decades, it has existed and a myriad of programs and studies have been created to curb the activity, if not eliminate it all together. Unfortunately, many still do not believe that bullying is a problem (Jing, W., Iannotti, R. J., Luk, J. W., & Nansel, T. R. 2010). There are many voices in the educational system that believe that bullying is a part of life, something that is

unavoidable (Frey & Fisher, 2008). For those individuals who believe in the many myths that surround bullying, there is little hope for change. However, for those individuals who recognize the damage caused by a persistent lack of regard for those students being made victims every day, there is great hope for improvement.

One of the most important realities that educators must understand about bullying is the myths that surround them. Scarpaci (2006), a leader in the field of bullying, compiled a list of myths through extensive research. There are ten central myths that can affect the beliefs of educators and students:

1. Bullying is just teasing. "I was just kidding around!" is a refrain educators often hear from bullies.

2. Some people deserve to be bullied.

3. Only boys are bullies.

4. People who complain about bullies are babies.

5. Bullying is a normal part of growing up.

6. Bullies will go away if you ignore them.

7. All bullies have low self-esteem. That is why they pick on others.

8. It is tattling to tell an adult when you're being bullied.

9. The best way to deal with a bully is by fighting or trying to get even.

10. People who are bullied might hurt for a little while, but they will get over it.

    (Scarpaci, 2006)

These myths reinforce the culture of bullying. The backdrop to all bullying is the belief that some, if not all, of these myths are true. Many students suffer in silence, believing they are alone. Many of these students suffer physical ailments like headaches and

stomachaches in addition to the psychological damage bullying can cause (Accordino, & Accordino, 2011).

A recent study by Frey and Fisher (2008), determined three separate, yet distinct, forms of bullying that can occur in an educational atmosphere. The researchers concluded that all bullying inherently has a level of humiliation involved. This common denominator helped the researchers to divide bullying into the three categories of bullying, teacher behavior, and remedial classes. The first is the act of bullying, which is defined as "when a more powerful person hurts, frightens, or intimidates a weaker person on a continual and deliberate basis" (Scarpaci, p. 178, 2006). In a practical sense, this form of bullying is the physical, verbal, or emotional abuse between students or between teachers and students. The second form of abuse was found in teacher behavior. The researchers determined that when teachers use sarcasm or humiliation as a means of gaining control over a classroom, they are, in essence, bullying a student. Many students in their study reported an "anticipatory embarrassment," which the students described as a fear of being embarrassed repeatedly by a teacher (Ahmed, E., & Braithwaite, V. 2012). The last distinct form of humiliation found in schools is remedial classes. Students understand the purpose of remedial classes, so they understand that when a student must attend those classes, they are struggling in an educational area. This type of public knowledge of academic deficiency led to embarrassment among the students.

After Frey and Fisher (2008) published their study pertaining to the primary methods of humiliation and embarrassment found within the educational experience; they discovered that a new method of embarrassment has increased in popularity: cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined as "the use of electronic communication

technologies to intentionally engage in repeated or widely disseminated cruel acts towards another that results in emotional harm" (Willard, p. 81, 2011). This type of bullying has become increasingly common among females more than males, and allows the victimizer to maintain a level of anonymity while continuing to abuse other students (Vandebosch, H., Poels, K., & Deboutte, G. 2014). Most often, this type of bullying occurs on social media networks or through cell phone usage. What makes this style of bullying so difficult to control is that it often happens off campus, and is therefore out of the control of the school system; however, its effects are felt in the educational environment (Willard, 2011).

The problem of bullying is not only an American problem. In fact, many countries are dealing with the same issues as the United States, and their response has been similar to that of our school system. Norwegian scholar, Dr Dan Olweus (1972), coined bullying as "mobbing" and defined it as an individual or group of individuals harassing, teasing, or pestering another person. However, it was not until 1982 that school officials in Norway turned their attention to school bullying; they did so only after three 14-year old boys committed suicide due to experiencing extreme harassment from classmates (Olweus, 1993).

Olweus has since become one of the world's foremost authorities on bullying, including its long-term effects. The current studies are simply insufficient for a complete understanding of the phenomenon of bullying. As society has advanced technologically, the manner in which bullying occurs has also shifted. The advent of the Internet has made bullying more of a global phenomenon (Law, Shapka, Domene, & Gagne, 2011).

Many of the studies written regarding bullying focus on the aftermath of the bullying experience and the terrible consequences that can often be present with those victims years after the abuse has ended (Hemphill, S. A., Tollit, M., &Kotevski, A. 2012). Bullying has been linked to deficiencies in self-esteem, depression, aggression, isolationism, and violence (Hixon, pg. 446, 2009). Hawker and Boulton (2000), after 20 years of longitudinal research, concluded, "There are strong *a priori* reasons to hypothesize that the pattern of results, from cross-sectional studies of peer victimization and psychosocial maladjustment, will show that these two experiences are positively related." Studies have shown that the effects of bullying follow students throughout their educational career. Sixty-five percent of students bullied in high school continue to be bullied throughout their college life (Adams & Lawrence, 2011). There is a clear relationship between bullying and psychosocial concerns.

The majority of other research has focused on prevention and program creation to curb the bullying occurring in schools. What is interesting, however, is that many of the programs touting prevention use social skills to establish change (Packman, Lepkowski, Overton, & Smaby, 2009). The use of peer groups and peer mediation seem to be the core of many of these programs. In fact, the use of Social Skills Training (SST) has shown significant results in prevention and mediation of bullying when SST may help modify peer attitudes towards victimized children (Fox & Boulton, 2003).

Bullying has long been studied as an example of social propagation and control. Bullying exists in a variety of social settings and can even be found in animal societies (Book, Volk, & Hosker, 2012). Bullying is believed to be a means by which society controls itself and can even be considered an evolved adaption. In some cases, the bullies

themselves receive no negative consequence for their behavior and can find themselves in a higher social standing than individuals who are bullied. The social information processing theory acknowledges that all people enter social situations with a set of biological and physiological responses based on experiences (Ayenibiowo & Akinobode, 2011). Students who are bullied enter a situation with a different view of society than those who bully. This perspective of social situations and interactions changes the manner in which each person views those situations.

If SST, SIP, and other social factors can influence bullying, then it is reasonable to assume that other social constructs will also show effect. Throughout the history of the United States, many of the policies and procedures have been motivated by religion (Hugen & Venema, 2009). Before the advent of government help-agencies, the religious community was the driving force behind social services. Religion is a powerful commodity in the lives of human beings and can shape the manner in which individuals view others. In a study of social programs, Hugen and Venema (2009) found that this idea is addressed in a profound way when they stated that "faith-based agencies simply care more deeply, demonstrating a persistence and willingness to remain committed to people over the long haul, and do so because of their religious understanding that all people are image bearers of God" (Hugen et al. pg. 414, 2009). Religion can clearly influence an individual's worldview and perspective of individuals.

Religion drives people to altruism. Many Americans are driven to help others and provide for the needs of the poor based on their belief structure (Fitzgerald & Wickwire, 2012). The manner in which people address their religion affects the decisions they make; people's behavior is altered by their shared beliefs. There are people that go to extremes

with their religious beliefs even to the point of not seeking needed medical attention (Pretorius, 2009). If religion has the possibility of influencing the way in which people spend their money and time, and even seek medical attention, it is reasonable to assume that religion has the capacity to change the way people treat others.

Across the world, individuals rely on their religion for a variety of needs. For many, religion has the power to heal wounds and cure disease (Pretorius, 2009). For others, it has the power to provide a moral compass and a sense of security in an ever-changing world. The majority of Americans claim some form of theism, with only 4% claiming to be atheists (Baylor University, 2007). Religion has been shown to have a profound effect on a variety of social issues. Issues such as drug abuse, dropping out of school, high-risk behaviors, welfare programs, charitable acts, civic involvement, and marriage have all been shown to be influenced by religious beliefs (Baylor University, 2007). If religion can have a relationship with these social constructs and bullying itself is a social construct, then it stands to reason that religiousness may also have a relationship with bullying.

This study was designed to determine what relationship, if any, exists between religiousness and bullying. The variables of both social constructs were compared and analyzed to determine that relationship, if one exists. Many of the values held by people of a religious nature are not exclusive to those people holding those principles (Vieno, Nation, Perkins, & Santinello, 2007). While concepts regarding social justice, civic participation, moral behavior, and acts of charity are the root of most major religions, these actions are not exclusive to religious people (Fitzgerald & Wickwire, 2012). This study aimed to find the correlating relationships between religious principles that score

high with bullying perspectives in the hopes that once those connections are made, a deeper understanding may be found. The principles found to correlate positively with bullying can then be adapted into a program of prevention and mediation that will serve the needs of all students, not just those of a religious belief system.

Background

There have been very few studies that have sought to create a link between religiousness and bullying. A qualitative study conducted by Dr. Cram sought to create a connection between religiousness and bullying; it involved interviews with individuals who had reported bullying as a child (Cram, 2001). Through the case studies of seven volunteers, Cram (2001) was able to determine that many of them felt abandoned by God and suffered deep-seated hate and fear (Cram, 2001). Many of the people reported a loss of innocence and lashed out at God. Some still suffered in their religious journeys because of the bullying they suffered as children. In some of the cases of bullying, the interviewees were able to point to their religion as a means of surviving the experience and being able to compartmentalize the hurt and pain in a way that allowed them to function as adults. In essence, Cram (2001) was able to show an anecdotal relationship between an individual's religious feelings and how they reacted to bullying as a child.

For many students, the manner in which they view the world is the core of the decision making process for how they treat others. Most of the world's mainstream religions have a common belief in an afterlife of some kind (Tongeren, Raad, McIntosh, & Pae, 2013). For each of these religions, the manner in which people treat their fellow man is a direct determiner for their soul's eternal placement. There are many students who believe that people get what they give, with some force that repays good with good

and bad with bad. For these students, the act of bullying would seem especially abhorrent (Fox et al., 2010). The pain of bullying is apparent and religion has some power in the lives of individuals who possess a sense of religiousness.

The purpose of this research study was to determine the relationship, if any, between aspects of religiousness and the behavior of bullying and bullying perspectives. The students were given two separate surveys to measure their religiousness and their perspectives on bullying, respectively. The researcher then analyzed the results and determined whether there were any relationships between core concepts.

Problem Statement

One of the problems plaguing the educational system is the rampant bullying and peer abuses perpetrated between students. Bullying results in fear, anger, and general dissatisfaction with the educational experience (Caravita, Gini, & Pozzoli, 2012). With between 45% and 77% of all seventh through 12th graders reporting abuse of some kind, it is clear the problem is severe (Packman & Leprowski, 2009). There are innumerable studies detailing with the aftermath of bullying and the programs created to curb the activity. There is little research in the area of social constructs and relationships these constructs may have with bullying. Religiousness is a social construct that has a profound impact on many Americans (Johnson & Siegel, 2008). Religiousness has been shown to have a positive impact on many deviant social behaviors (Johnson & Siegel, 2008). Drug abuse, high school dropout rates, violence, and teenage pregnancy have all been shown to have a positive relationship to religiousness (Johnson & Siegel, 2008). If religiousness is related to these socially deviant behaviors, then perhaps it will relate to the deviant behavior of bullying in adolescents.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this correlational study is to determine what relationship, if any, exists between a student's level of religiousness and their views on bullying perspectives and activities within the religious-based school studied in the Southeast. The variables of religiousness (Intrinsic, Extrinsic(p), Extrinsic(s), and Extrinsic(m)) will be used to determine a relationship between bullies and victims of bullies. The population of students was broken down by gender due to the disparate nature in which the genders bully and the nature in which they perceive bullying. The researcher hoped to determine if there were any characteristics religious people hold in common that might shed light on their views of bullying. Ideally, the information gathered from this study can be used as part of a foundation to help create a religious-centered anti-bullying curriculum. Giving a student tools that can help them in their educational lives is crucial and "a number of programs have been developed to help children deal with verbal bullying or teasing" (Fox & Boulton, pg. 22, 2003). The core principles of the social construct religiousness, once related to bullying, may have a profound effect on the manner in which bullying is viewed as a social construct.

There are many theories that can help explain or conceptualize bullying. One of the theories that serve as a backdrop to bullying is the theory of mind (Shakoor, Jaffee, Bowes, Oullet-Morin, Andreou, Happe, Moffitt, & Arseneault, 2012). This theory refers to an individual's ability to understand and predict how another person will act based on their age or the emotional situation they are in (Shakoor et al., 2012). Some studies show that students with poor theory of mind might be more likely to be bullied by their peers, as they may lack the ability to pick up nonverbal social cues that can notify them of

whether their interaction is being reciprocated (Shakoor et al., 2012). The theory of social competence dovetails with the theory of mind concepts. Due to the increasing technological relationships between students, their face-to-face social skills have eroded (Schoffstall & Cohen, 2011). Students who lack the ability to pick up on social cues and have lower levels of social competency are often the victims of abuses. These theories indicate that those students who have underdeveloped social attenuation skills will be more likely to be involved in bullying. Both bullies and victims evidence an inability to react to normal social cues; in the case of bullies, they revert to a base need to push others down to excel socially, whereas victims will be vulnerable to bullying due to their inability to navigate those social situations. Religious activity is most often a community activity, especially with students. The researcher would expect that students who are exposed to a religious community setting and taught how to interact socially while respecting others will bully students less often.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it examined a psychosocial component to bullying and peer abuses. Much of the literature that exists with bullying is either anecdotal in nature, describing the events of a few cases of bullying, or focusing on the pragmatic exploration of tools that can help alleviate the problem. This study looked at some of the root causes of why bullying exists. There have been loose connections between psychosocial concerns and the action of those who bully and those who are bullied (Baetz & Toews, 2009). Many studies have shown connections between bullying and self-esteem. "Karstadt and Woods reported a correlation between psychological damage and bullying, with children frequently suffering lowered self-concept and

depressive symptoms" (Patterson, pg. 28, 2005). The literature shows how bullying is related to an entire contingent of negative sociological and psychological problems. The levels of depression, suicidal thoughts, self-flagellation, and negative feelings is significantly higher in those who are bullied versus those who are not bullied (Hixon, 2009). The long-term effects of bullying have been connected to higher suicide rates and depression in adults (Klomer, Kleinman, Altschuler, Marrocco, Amakawa, & Gould, 2011).

In addition to the various psychological problems that are associated with bullying, a large amount of literature deals with the theories behind why a student would abuse another or why one would be a candidate for abuse. There are theories that suggest the bullying phenomenon is an area for humanistic researchers to deal with because of the duality of human nature. Since man has the capacity to do both good and evil, the choices they make must be an area to be examined (Hixon, 2009). Even though the study of bullying is a relatively new prospect, since the early 1980s, there have already been longitudinal studies that can show the long-term devastation of bullying (Hemphill, Tollit, & Kotevski, 2012). The literature leaves little doubt that bullying carries a negative connotation that hinders academic progress and satisfaction and has the potential to leave long-lasting scars on students. Physical and emotional victimization have shown a positive correlation to bullying (Papafratzeskakou, Kim, Longo, & Riser, 2011).

Religiousness has been shown to have a relationship with social concerns. In the University of Baylor's landmark study detailing the relationship between religiousness and social constructs, the data showed a profound effect (Johnson & Siegel, 2008). In the study, the authors defined religiousness as the extent to which an individual's attitudes

and behaviors reflect the commitment to the religion that he or she professes (Johnson & Siegel, 2008). The study determined that students who were committed to a religion were more likely to ascribe to the beliefs espoused by that religion, and therefore avoid deviant behavior. Thus, religion served as a protective barrier between students and deviant behavior. Religious institutions, by their very natures, instill a set of boundaries for proper behavior and expect their participants to adhere to them. The authors found that students who were involved in religious activities were often less likely to commit crimes (Johnson & Siegal, 2008). Religiousness was shown statistically to have an inverse relationship with the deviant behavior of criminal acts and drug use.

This is not the only social construct shown to be related to religiousness. Religiousness has also been determined to have a relationship with risk behavior prevention (O'Brien, Denny, Clark, Fleming, Teevale, & Robinson, 2013). Research was able to show that as the maternal religiousness increases, the adolescent risk behaviors decreases. Many current studies have shown the influence that religiousness has on deviant behaviors of all kinds (O'Brien et al., 2013). If religiousness has a relationship with these social constructs, then it stands to reason that it may have a relationship with other social constructs. Bullying is a social construct. The study of both social constructs, bullying and religiousness, could provide a base of knowledge that can take steps towards eradicating bullying of all kinds in our schools.

Building upon previous research, and assuming the need for change, this study sought to determine whether there is a relationship between an individual's religiousness and their perspectives on bullying. Does an individual who considers themselves faithful to a religious idea have a greater likelihood of defending a student being bullied? Does a

student with a lower sense of religiousness have any higher likelihood to bully another? These questions have never been addressed in a manner that can lead to definitive conclusions. Due to the fundamental difficulty of defining religiousness and the additional struggle of finding a school system that would allow for a study regarding religion to occur in their district, these questions still pose some difficulties.

There is a significant connection between civic activity, volunteerism, and community service and how they can affect bullying.

Studies have linked adolescents' choice of after-school activity to peer relationships and school achievement, fewer school dropouts, decreased depression, greater life satisfaction, improved psychological health, decreased teenage pregnancy, reduced antisocial behavior, less substance use, and less criminal offending. (Vieno et al., 2007)

It is reasonable to assume that if the action of doing something for others can help to decrease instances of negative activities, including physical abuse, then a religion that is centered on doing things for others may have a similar affect. This study was designed to determine whether any tenets about an individual's religiousness would, in any way, correlate to their views and perspectives on bullying.

Research Questions

This research was designed to determine whether a relationship exists between religiousness and bullying. A variety of components relate to both constructs.

RQ1. What is the relationship between adolescent females' type of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and the initiation of an act of bullying?

There are profound differences between genders. The manner in which males and females respond to bullying vary inasmuch as the manner in which they bully. To have a complete understanding of the phenomenon of bullying, it is vitally important to understand the differences between genders. Although both genders bully from a position of power, the development of bullying tactics varies depending on gender (Ardolino, 2013). Males and females often experience victimization at a different rate. Depending on the situation, males and females can have a profoundly different view of bullying (Ardolino, 2013). Males and females differ in their physiology, which can influence the manner in which they respond to, or engage in, bullying practices. These differences when coupled with the environmental and social differences between genders can shape male and female perspectives of bullying.

RQ2. What is the relationship between adolescent females' type of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and being the victim of bullying?

From an early age, adolescents struggle to find their place in their social groups. The societal norm compels them to adhere to a strict gender code of expectations. Although some adolescents are able to form their own social identity, most choose to allow the societal gender norms to formulate their place in society (Wolfe, Crooks, Chiodo, & Jaffe, 2009). These gender roles help adolescents to form their peer groups and determine appropriate behavior within those peer groups. Consequently, the manner in which bullying occurs differs by gender. The gender roles differ greatly in general, in that men must be masculine and women feminine. Even in this relatively broad view of gender roles, it is obvious that aggression and victimization will be different. Those youth that adhere most strictly to the gender roles of their society often escape abuse (Wolfe et

al., 2009). Boys, based on their need to be masculine, often engage in more physical types of abuse, whereas girls, seeking femininity, will engage in more ephemeral and opaque forms of abuse. Peer groups, more than adults, set the societal norms for gender role adherence (Lamb, Bigler, &Liben, 2009).

RQ3. What is the relationship between adolescent males' type of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and the initiation of an act of bullying?

One of the gaps in the research centers on the gender-blindness of the research conducted to date. Most of the research has centered on males and how they bully/ respond to bullying. With the growing prevalence of cyberbullying and the growing rate of reported instances, the research is beginning to look at both genders as they relate to bullying perspectives. When examining bullying from a theoretical standpoint, without gender-blindness, it is important to understand that social and cultural gender roles and gender performances have been accepted for so long that the concept of "normal" behavior for boys and girls has now become the rule for social interactions (Ringrose & Renold, 2010). Thus, the common colloquialisms we use to categorize gender has now become binding in our society due to society's adherence to these gender performances. As romantic as the concept of complete individualism is, society does not have a place for that yet. It is perfectly acceptable to be different, as long as the behaviors and performances still fall within accepted gender roles. This relates to bullying in a rather profound way. Those adolescents who choose to go against societal norms (girls who dress as boys and behave in a masculine fashion, or boys who behave in an overly feminine manner) often find themselves the subject of victimization (Ringrose & Renold,

2010). Sadly, those students who receive the most overt forms of bullying are those who choose to violate the accepted gender roles (Higdon, 2011).

RQ4. What is the relationship between adolescent males' type of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and being the victim of bullying?

Boys have a tendency to bully other boys who are smaller than themselves in an attempt to cover up for their own perceived inadequacies, whereas girls have a tendency to create a situation of competitiveness while focusing on perceived differences in an attempt to gain or maintain power (Safran, 2007). Boys who bully may gain social standing and even find themselves to be more attractive to the opposite sex, and girls who bully can eliminate the competitors for their social position. Females self-report as more relational victims, where males self-report as more overt victims (Dempsey, Fireman, & Wang, 2006). Males are significantly more likely to engage in overt bullying practices (physical abuse) than females. Females often score higher on gender specific victimization scales, reporting the occurrences of abuse at a higher rate than males, suggesting that females bully other females more frequently than males bully other males (Smith & Gross, 2006). In a recent study examining cyberbullying across gender lines, 44% of boys reported rumors spread online, whereas 69% of girls reported the same activity. Additionally, 61% of girls reported being the victims of lies, harassment, and derogatory behaviors online, where only 46% of boys reported the same abuse (Snell & Englander, 2010). While this study is not definitive, it does express the possible differences gender may play in bullying.

Hypotheses

H$_a$1: There will be a statistically significant relationship between the female types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H$_0$1: There will be no statistically significant relationship between the female types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H$_a$2: There is a statistically significant relationship between female intrinsic religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H$_0$2: There is no statistically significant relationship between female intrinsic religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H$_a$3: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (social) religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H$_0$3: There is no statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (social) religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H$_a$4: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (personal) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H$_0$4: There is no statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (personal) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H$_a$5: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the initiation of an act of bullying.

H$_0$5: There is no statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the initiation of an act of bullying.

H$_a$6: There will be a statistically significant relationship between the female types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and being the victim of bullying.

H₀6: There will be no statistically significant relationship between the female types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ7: There is a statistically significant relationship between female intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀7: There is no statistically significant relationship between female intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ8: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (social) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀8: There is no statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (social) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ9: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (personal) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀9: There is no statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (personal) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ10: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀10: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ11: There will be a statistically significant relationship between the male types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀11: There will be no statistically significant relationship between the male types of religiousness (intrinsic, external) and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H_a12: There is a statistically significant relationship between male intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀12: There is no statistically significant relationship between male intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H_a13: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (social) religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀13: There is no statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (social) religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H_a14: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (personal) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀14: There is no statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (personal) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀15: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (morality) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H_a15: There is no statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (morality) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H_a16: There will be a statistically significant relationship between the male types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and being the victim of bullying.

H₀16: There will be no statistically significant relationship between the male types of religiousness (intrinsic, external) and being the victim of bullying.

H_a17: There is a statistically significant relationship between male intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀17: There is no statistically significant relationship between male intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ18: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (social) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀18: There is no statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (social) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ19: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (personal) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀19: There is no statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (personal) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ20: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀20: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Identification of Variables

Bullying has been defined by a multitude of sources, but the most telling definition was given by school children when they defined bullying as "when someone is mean to someone else on purpose" (DipProf, 2005, p.27). In other research, bullying is defined as the use of power by a stronger student to dominate or humiliate a weaker student (Hixon, 2009). Bullying always requires two people, namely a victimizer and victim. Further research shows that no clearly defined characteristics distinguish those who bully from those who are bullied (Sawyer, Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener, 2011). Both groups come from all strata of life and there is little predictability about whether someone

will be a bully or be bullied (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2009). For the purposes

of this research, bullying was defined as the use of power to embarrass, humiliate, or

exert force upon another student. This can be seen in verbal, emotional, physical, and

cyber bullying situations.

The most efficient way to measure bullying is the use of self-reported Likert-style

surveys like the Olweus survey and the I/E(r) study (Lee& Cornell, 2009). The particular

survey used in this study is the Olweus survey, which has broad scope areas of

measurement, such as bullying feelings and attitudes about bullying, in addition to

asking pointed questions about an individual's willingness to commit bullying activities

(Olweus, 2007). The students were asked to respond to a series of questions and those

answers were correlated to other responses to measure a student's overall attitude about

bullying, while continuing to be specific enough to address the more pointed research

questions. The Olweus (2007) survey divides the construct of bullying into two distinct

subscales; those who bully and those who are bullied (Lee & Cornell, 2009). Questions 5-

24 refer to actions of a bullying nature perpetrated on a student answering the survey,

whereas questions 25-40 refer to actions of a bullying nature the student answering the

survey perpetrates on another.

The two subscales are, essentially, delineation between a bully and a victim. The

subscale of bully is characterized by actions committed, frequency of actions committed,

and severity of these actions. Solberg, Olweus, and Endresen (2007) characterized a

bullying incident as characterized by the fact that one or more individuals repeatedly

direct negative and hurtful actions towards an individual who has difficulty defending

himself or herself. The basic components to a definition of bullying are negative actions

and consistency of activity. Bullying is to be distinctly defined as something different from teasing. Teasing is, most often, related to a singular incident, whereas bullying is systemic and occurs over time. The two subscales of the Olweus (2007) design apply this same definition to both sides: if a student perpetrates an act defined this way they are a bully, if a student receives this act, they are the victim.

Religiousness is more ephemeral and difficult to define. However, a working operational definition allows research to show quantifiable relationships between disparate variables. Many definitions of religiousness focus on the attendance to defined religious activities (Regnerus, 2008). Another noteworthy definition was noted by Hugen, Wolfer, and Renkema (2006) when they defined religious activity as, "religion should not only lead to service, but in turn, service should challenge and deepen faith" (p.410). An effective operational definition of religiousness should reflect both an internal religious will and external activity reflecting that internal will. Towards that end and for the purposes of this study, religiousness was defined as active involvement in religious activities and rituals and evidence of application of religious principles in life choices (i.e., religious ritual participations, social application of religious behavior, and avoidance of deviant behavior).

Although an individual's belief structure and religious will would be extremely difficult to quantify in any meaningful way, a number of surveys do an exceptional job of quantifying an individual's religious tendencies. The Intrinsic/Extrinsic Revised (I/E-R) is an effective means of measuring the religious activities and attitudes of individuals (Gorsuch, & McPherson, 1989). The survey is a mixture of categorical questions, where individuals are asked to categorize themselves, and Likert-type scales where the

respondent is invited to measure themselves on a scale for certain questions. The categorical questions allow the correlation of variables, while the Likert-type scale allows for the correlation of general practices and concepts (Bader, Mencken, & Froese, 2007).

The I/E-R was originally written in 1983; a revision was made to the current form of assessment in 1989. After years of study, Gorsuch and McPherson (1989) found that religiousness cannot be defined by a simple statement of intrinsic versus extrinsic tendencies. The validity studies showed that the concept of extrinsic religiousness needs to be broken into two separate and distinct parts: extrinsic (socially orientated), extrinsic (morally motivated), and extrinsic (personally orientated). By using these new subscales, the means and standard deviations for I (intrinsic) became 37.2 +or – 5.8, while the standard deviations and means for E (extrinsic) became 25.6 + or – 5.7, which made this scale no more restrictive than most others are (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). This research determined relationships between each religious variable (intrinsic, extrinsic(s), extrinsic(m), and extrinsic(p)) and the two bullying subscales (initiator of bullying and victim of bullying).

Definitions

Bullying has been defined by a multitude of sources, but the most telling definition was given by school children when they defined bullying as "when someone is mean to someone else on purpose" (DipProf, 2005, p.27). In other research, bullying was defined as the use of power by a stronger student to dominate or humiliate a weaker student (Hixon, 2009). Bullying always requires two people, namely a victimizer and victim. Further research showed that no clearly defined characteristics distinguish those who bully from those who are bullied (Sawyer et al., 2011). Both groups come from all

strata of life and there is little predictability about whether someone will be a bully or be bullied (Bradshaw et al., 2009). For the purposes of this research, bullying was defined as the use of power to embarrass, humiliate, or exert force upon another student. This can be seen in verbal, emotional, physical, and cyber bullying situations.

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Research Summary

The research design for this project was a correlation design with data analyzed through correlational analysis. The correlational design seeks to determine relationships between given variables or groups of variables within an already set group. The individuals being tested were given two surveys: The Olweus Bullying Questionnaire for bullying assessment and the I/E-R scale (Internal/External- Revised) for religiousness assessment. The participants were asked to self-report on a variety of religious and bullying questions. They were asked to rate themselves on religious attendance, depth of belief, frequency of worship, and religious attitudes. The regressions of the four models

were statistically analyzed, creating an in-depth assessment of the relationship between each subscale with the overarching question being: How much of an effect on bullying perspectives does religiousness have? This comparison was accomplished by using a Stepwise multiple-regression to determine the relationship between various subsets of variables. The Olweus (2007) assessment uses multiple-choice questions to assess an individual's perceptions about bullying. The I/E-R scale uses a Likert-style assessment to determine an individual's religiousness (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). As this study is the first step in the social construct of religion/bullying perspectives and tendencies relationship, causality would be premature.

There are a number of reasons why the correlation approach is a viable means of data gathering. The correlational design is a non-experimental form of research and does not involve the manipulation of variables (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). A study that does not manipulate variables can lead to a greater sense of anonymity and safety for minors. Although this style of research has drawbacks, one of the methods that a researcher can employ to help strengthen validity of research is to use only subjects within homogenous groups. Although non-experimental research can suffer from self-reporting errors, type I errors, and test fatigue, it was decided that these drawbacks could be minimized and the research would maintain validity. Each student that provided information from this study came from the same religious school and, therefore, part of the same homogenous group, at least within the confines of the variables being studied (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010).

There are a number of effective means of analyzing correlational research. Given the somewhat complex nature of correlational research, it was imperative that an

effective means be used to analyze the data gathered. A stepwise regression is an effective means of data analysis for this research. The stepwise regression allows for a set of variables to be compared to a separate variable, determining relationship (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Multiple regressions have the ability to determine relationships between variables, without having to look at separate relationships thus decreasing the likelihood of a type II error (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Canonical variable assessment (CVA) can further reduce variables into canonical vectors and compare the relationships between those vectors (Butt, Shahzadi, Sharif, & Nasir, 2007). By breaking the research down into four distinct models based on self-reported populations: males who self-report as bullies, males who self-report as victims, females who self-report as bullies, and females who self-report as victims, the researcher was able to correlate the four contributing variables of the religiousness measurement to determine if any relationships exist between the variables. Although the determination of relationships between variables is the primary focus of this research, the stepwise regression also allows for predictability, which can provide some invaluable insight to this research. The stepwise regression model is dependent on the computer to determine the order of variables and to determine if predictors can be subtracted or added to the analysis (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). This method seemed most advantageous due to the lack of previous research and with a desire to eliminate bias in mind. This method of analysis can provide a foundation for other empirical research to be performed in the future (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions. There were a number of assumptions made about this research.

- Each of the students tested was part of the religious school system and

received extensive religious training.

- The research being non-experimental by nature would have no manipulated variables.

- All students answered the surveys honestly to the best of their abilities.

- The data have been gathered in good faith and not corrupted in any way before being presented to the researcher for study.

- There is homoscedasticity and linearity between variable subsets. A linear regression model will be used and scatter plots visually inspected to determine if there is variance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

- There is no evidence of multicollinearity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

- Residuals will be distributed normally. A casewise diagnostic, a Cooks' distance, and P-P and Q-Q plots will be used to determine normality and residual distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Limitations. There were some definitive limitations in this study. One of the concerns regarding validity was the use of a Likert-type scale. It is important that the instrument being used to measure variables actually measures the variables it claims to measure (Ary et al., 2010). In this research, the use of a Likert-type scale was necessary due to the subjective nature of the questions. By limiting the size of the assessment and using scales that have been quantifiably shown to be statistically relevant, this threat was limited as much as possible. The reliability analysis for the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire produced a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of .78 for the first sub-scale (bully) and .94 for the second sub-scale (victim) (Özdemir & Akar, 2011).The I/E (r) overall reliabilities for intrinsic, extrinsic(p), extrinsic(s), and extrinsic(m) are reported as

a Cronbachs Alpha coefficient of .83, .71, .67,.73., respectively, which aside from

extrinsic(s) satisfies the $\alpha > .67$ needed for reliability (Gorsuch& McPherson, 1989).

Likert-style measurements rely on an individual's feelings and perspectives about a given

topic. The individual's perception of reality is not necessarily reality. Although

perception can be of great help when looking at social topics such as bullying it is not the

most accurate quantitative measurement device. For this research, the survey scales used

determine attitudes about the topics with quantifiable results. There are three main threats

to the validity of a regression analysis: error-in-bias, omitted variables, and simultaneous

causality. Omitted variables are variables that are omitted from the study in a manner that

can affect the relationship between the dependent variable and the explanatory variable

(Leightner, J. E., & Inoue, T. 2012). One of the strengths of this research is that it

accounts for each possible sub-set of variables. By using multiple models, each variable

is accounted for thus limiting this threat as much as possible. Error-in-bias is the action

where information reported in an instrument is either deliberately or accidently in error.

Simultaneous causality is when, after initial research, the variable (x) is determined to

cause variable (y), but upon further research variable (y) also causes (x) (Howell, 2008).

This research does not rely primarily on a focus of causality. Rather, causality is clearly

stated as not a definitive possibility for this research type. Relationships are the primary

focus of this research and any information leading to predictability is ancillary.

<div align="center">**Validity**</div>

Internal validity. One of the limitations to validity is the use of a Likert-type

scale. It is important that the instrument being used to measure variables actually

measures those variables (Ary et al., 2010). The challenge when using a Likert-type scale

is determining the extent to which the survey measures what it is designed to measure. For this research, the survey scales used have been used to determine attitudes about the topics by other researchers with quantifiable results. This threat is eliminated by using a fully vetted, validated survey. If an invalid Likert-type scale device is used, there is a high likelihood that the study would become biased and suffer from both a type I and type II error (Ary et al., 2010).

Correlational data analysis does not manipulate any variables, nor does it have pre/posttest concerns (Gall et al., 2007). For this reason, the internal threats of selection bias, experimental mortality, statistical regression, and selection-maturation interaction are guarded against. Internal validity issues of history, maturation, instrumentation, diffusion, and testing effect are all accounted for by conducting a single test design (Ary et al., 2010). The threat that was most difficult to guard against was the subject effect. The survey administered dealt with religious concepts in a religious environment. It may have been the tendency of the subjects to respond in a much more "religious" way then if they were tested in a different setting. The researcher provided each proctor with a script that asked the subjects to be honest and forthright while assuring them of their anonymity.

External validity. The nature of the research design makes the study more susceptible to external validity threats than internal validity threats. The research was undertaken on a singular group of students in a very specialized group. It would be erroneous to assume that answers given in a religious school would be the same as those given in a secular school. However, the nature of the design is one that does not measure an individual's level of belief, but the level of religiousness. This should make the study

more repeatable and easier to generalize. The selection-treatment interaction threat to external validity addresses these concerns. Correlational research looks at relationships, not the manipulation of variables. Consequently, the generalizability of the research should be more reliable (Ary et al., 2010). If this threat is not addressed, at least in the limitations section, it has the potential to make the experiment invalid.

The research was a single-test design given in an environment in which the students were already comfortable, thus eliminating the setting-treatment interaction and the pretest-treatment interaction threats to external validity (Ary et al., 2010). The subject effects threat to external validity was a valid concern. The students participating in the study understood what they were participating in and there was the potential for students to respond in a given way, especially with regard to religion. The proctors of the assessment were given detailed instructions to read to the students, assuring them of anonymity while asking for complete honesty (Gall et al., 2007). This threat was noted in the limitations section of the results chapter. Much like internal validity and concerns about experimenter effects, the external threat was nullified by the proctors administering the assessment and not the experimenter.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The abuses that occur in the education system degrade the efficacy of that system. These actions derive from students and teachers. Bullying is just one of the many negative influences that can change the way students view their education. With the negativity involved in some educational systems, it is no wonder that students are not learning at an acceptable rate. Peer abuses begin in elementary school and peak during the middle school years, with a slight decrease over time in high school. The students who are the recipients of this abuse can lose their joy of learning, and their future can be shaped by these negative actions to the point where permanent damage can occur. Studies have shown that the presence of bullying and other peer abuses appear in the lives of 72% of boys and 65% of girls (Hemphill, Tollit, & Kotevski, 2012).

This chapter is divided into sections that progressively take the reader through the problem of peer abuses. These divisions are: (a) working definitions of what bullying and peer abuses are, (b) the possible reasons for the abuses that occur, (c) the frequency of the abuses, (d) the effects of the abuse on those students, and (e) some possible recommendations to remedy the problem. With the negative effect that abuses can have on the mindset of students and the possible long-term difficulties that arise, it is imperative that this problem be brought out and addressed. The common belief that bullying and peer abuses are a "rite of passage" and something that everyone has to go through is flawed and destructive to those students who are experiencing this abuse on a daily basis.

Conceptual or Theoretical Framework

The best environment for students to learn is one of positivity and safety. If students do not feel safe at school, it is likely that their learning will diminish (Allen, 2010). As educators, it is imperative that the environment where we teach includes a high level of safety for the students. This sense of safety does not come merely from locked doors and secured windows, but from the belief that what is said and done will perhaps not be accepted, but will be heard and validated by the educators and other students. Without this sense, it is difficult for students to open up and ask questions. As will be discussed in later sections, the presence of abuses can cause students to drop out of school and terminate their learning process.

There are many theories that can help explain or conceptualize bullying. One of the theories that serve as a backdrop to bullying is the theory of mind. This theory refers to an individual's ability to understand and predict how another person will act based on their age or the emotional situation in which they are in (Shakoor et al., 2012). Some studies show that students with poor theory of mind might be more likely to be bullied by their peers, as they may lack the ability to pick up nonverbal social cues that can notify them of whether their interaction is being reciprocated (Shakoor et al., 2012). Theories of social competence dovetail with the theory of mind concepts. Due to the increasing technological relationships between students, their face-to-face social skills have become eroded (Schoffstall & Cohen, 2011). Students who are weak in areas of picking up social cues and have lower levels of social competency are often the victims of abuse.

In Gagne's (1992) theory of conditional learning, he stated that there are five separate levels of instruction involved in the educational process. He then argued that

each of these five levels (verbal learning, intellectual skills, cognitive strategies, motor skills, and attitudes) are a necessary part of any substantial education (Gagne, 1992). Each of these levels requires interaction. The key to education is the interaction between student and educator and student and student. Without this interaction, the level of education diminishes greatly. The levels of learning contain the most applicable aspects of education and retention that the school systems use today.

Verbal learning is taught through asking questions of the instructor and through the interaction of peers in the classroom. The intellectual skills are seen in the materials that are taught and in the necessary retention that shows that the material has been assimilated. Cognitive strategies are most commonly taught as problem solving endeavors and experiments. Motor skills are seen in earlier levels of education (preschool and kindergarten), but are also relevant in extracurricular activities. Lastly, attitudes are taught through the interaction with educators and peers.

It is in the realm of attitudes that this study addressed the issues at play with regard to peer abuse. The attitudes that students have about their education can directly influence their ability to learn. This is an anecdotal account of the effect that abuse can have on students:

> I was uncoordinated in sports and the kids picked on me and called me dummy because I didn't pick up on things quickly. I always had to cover-up, fake it, lie, and make excuses when I didn't understand. Teachers and friends told me I'd never amount to anything, and the worst humiliation I faced was knowing I'd never be better than mediocre or average.

If I knew then what I know now, I would have killed myself and not gone

through with it. It was so bad to not be like everyone else and to

sometimes not get something, ever. I learned that people generally suck

and that everything is a great pain. I'd tell my best teacher "Thank you for

taking the time to get me where I am. I wouldn't be in college right now. .

." I'd tell my worst teacher to get another job… (Brobeck, 2009, p.1)

This story is repeated by many students who have suffered from bullying and

other abuse. The negative effect that this has on those students is real. The reasons why

these abuses occur vary widely; however, there is no doubt as to the effect it has on the

education of those who are the victims.

Definitions

Bullying is defined as "when a person with more power hurts, frightens, or

intimidates a weaker person on a continual and deliberate basis" (Scarpaci, 2006, p. 1).

By its very definition, it is the assertion of power over someone who is powerless.

Bullying can be seen in a variety of ways across the spectrum of abuses. In some ways,

bullying may be a means for some students to create a social hierarchy (Kert, Codding,

Tryon, & Shiyko, 2010). This type of behavior can be seen in the form of verbal,

physical, or cyber bullying. Even though each of these types of abuse is different, the

overall goal is the same: the degradation of one student to make another student feel

better about him or herself.

All forms of bullying hold certain truths in common. First, all forms of bullying

require two separate people, namely the bully and the victim. Second, all bullies like to

feel that they are stronger and more superior to the other students. The third aspect that

all bullying has in common is the fact that all bullies enjoy having power over other students. Last, bullies like to use their power to hurt others (Scarpaci, 2006). This list of traits held by bullies helps educators to determine the bullies and their victims at their schools.

Verbal bullying is more common among females than males (Jing Iannotti, Luk, & Nansel, 2010). This type of bullying is seen in the aggressive use of language. This does not necessarily mean that all verbal bullying is challenging in nature. In some ways, verbal bullying is the least damaging type of abuse. The more destructive form comes from the use of language to demean an individual. Using words to lower an individual is a bully's way of feeling superior to others. In essence, the ability to call another student stupid, poor, or ugly shows their power to the other students in that peer group. The bully is able to exert their will by speaking language that makes the others believe they are higher socially than they actually are.

Physical abuse is the second form of bullying. This brand of abuse is more common among males. This abuse is seen in fights, "picking on," and humiliating physical activities. For instance, the bully who uses physical power would knock the books out of other students' hands, push another student into the wall, push another student down, or take their belongings in an attempt to force the victim to try to retrieve them. Again, bullying is merely a power struggle. Bullies will use their bigger size and strength to enforce their will on other students. The reason for this behavior will be addressed later.

Another situation that can lead to students suffering from peer abuse is the prevalence of humiliation that occurs in schools. Not all forms of abuse come from the

students. In fact, one of the more damaging aspects of school that can lead to peer abuse is the use of remedial classes in the school system. Although this is clearly not meant to be a form of abuse or humiliation, it is nonetheless an aspect of peer abuse. Students understand that those students who attend the "special assignment" classes are not as smart as the other students. In short, the segregation of these students can lead to abuse from their peers (Frey & Fisher, 2008). Students are intelligent enough to understand that those students who leave the group for mathematics or English are lagging behind the collective and this can single them out for abuse. Another contributor to peer abuse comes from the teachers themselves. Most teachers are not malicious by nature, but the calling out of grades, the public chastening, and the use of sarcasm in the classroom gives permission to other students to behave inappropriately. After all, if the teacher is allowed to embarrass and humiliate the student, the other students will feel the freedom to do the same (2008).

The last and newest form of abuse is cyberbullying. "Cyberbullying involves sending or posting harmful or cruel text or images using the Internet or other digital communication devices such as cell phones" (Feinberg & Robey, 2009, p. 1). Students of the technological age are becoming increasingly dependent on digital communication. Most students have cell phones and other devices with which they can send and receive messages. Because many students believe that they will remain anonymous, it is becoming increasingly common for student to use these digital devices to harass and abuse other students (Vandebosch, Poels, & Deboutte, 2014). Cyberbullying has many aspects in common with verbal abuse because both forms use words. However, cyberbullying allows students to send these words to a much larger audience. Students

are using message boards such as Myspace or Facebook to spread abusive messages to hundreds of students. Even worse, pictures that are embarrassing or private are spread over huge populations of students. Whereas verbal abuse reaches only those in hearing range, cyberbullying can influence all students who are part of those message boards and all the students who are friends with them on the Internet.

Each of these definitions of bullying/abuse can shape the beliefs of those people directly related to the situation. Parents often have a different belief system than students and teachers. Some parents embrace bullying as a part of the normative system of growing up. This belief can open youth up to be bullied more often and receive little support at home (Troop-Gordon & Gerardy, 2012). It is important that parents understand the dangers of bullying and be supportive of the situation at home. Sadly, there are teachers who hold the same normative belief structure as parents do, and those teachers often have a more lax system of discipline in place than teachers who take a more proactive role in anti-bullying activities (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008). Having more clearly defined operational definitions of bullying, as well as the support of those who do not believe bullying to be a normative part of school culture, is an important step towards eliminating bullying.

Recognition of Abuse

It is important for educators and parents to be able to recognize those students who are bullies and those who are victims of bullying. If the schools and parents are more proactive and aware of the situation, perhaps the level of abuse would decrease. "Awareness is the first step in preventing bullying" (Scarpaci, 2006, p.2). There are some signs to look for when assessing whether someone is a bully or a victim of bullying. A

victim of bullying may experience a drop in grades. Those who are experiencing this abuse may also show a diminished desire to attend school or a lower the usual level of happiness with school in general. Victims may fake illnesses or find circuitous routes to and from school. In addition, they may begin to steal or be unable to explain the loss of money, books, or other possessions. Last, the student may have unexplained bruises or marks upon their body. The levels of abuse from bully to victim "can damage a child as much as child abuse" (Scarpaci, 2006, p. 2).

The bullies, on the other hand, also have a list of indicators that should help parents and teachers identify them. Bullies, traditionally, are more difficult to spot than those who are the victims. Even though the myth is that the bully lacks self-esteem, in reality they are often popular and make friends easily. However, a good indicator of the bully is that when they are slighted, they will choose to take out their frustrations on someone who is unable to fight back (Scarpaci, 2006). Bullies also tend to be more violent and aggressive than their peers and may suffer from depression, alcoholism, and have suicidal tendencies. Many bullies tend to come from homes where they, themselves, are bullied and, they may perform poorly at school. By age 24, 60% of former bullies are convicted of a crime (Scarpaci, 2006).

Reasons for Abuse

There are competing theories for the underlying reasons behind peer abuses among students. One of the more pervasive theories is that the parents are to blame. There are those who believe that the bully comes from some sort of dysfunctional home. This line of thinking lends itself to two distinct theories of parental cause of peer abuse. In some cases, the bully is bullied at home: One or both of the parents use terror as a

means of forcing a student to behave a certain way. This abuse at home teaches the bully how to behave with others. An ancillary causal effect may be that this type of behavior at home causes the bully to feel powerless and they act out aggressively to take power form their peers. However, an opposing theory states that the bully is actually under-supervised at home. Because his home life is not supervised, he learns skills of bullying and is not taught any better. This is particularly prevalent in the realm of cyberbullying. Parents and students view technology in a different way and this difference in perspective leads to a lack of supervision, which can lead to abuse (Beale & Hall, 2007). For students, the use of technology is a means to communicate with peers and is a necessary part of life. For most adults, technology is something that is used for work or to improve communication, but is not a necessity as it is for students.

Another popular theory for the casual effects of bullying is that it is a pathological problem. It is widely believed that a flaw exists in the mind of those students who develop bullying tendencies (Phillips, 2007). This flaw is what leads them to behave in the manner in which they behave. This theory has fallen into disfavor, as more longitudinal studies have been conducted (Bansel, Davies, Cath, & Sheridan, 2008). Even though this theory does not have the academic influence that it used to have, it should still be looked at as a possible causal reason for bullying and peer abuse activities.

Yet another popular casual reasoning is that the school is actually at fault for the rise in bullying behavior and creating a culture of abuse in its environments. Schools are overworked and understaffed and this leads to lapses in security and control. In the case of cyberbullying especially, the schools do not always secure their Internet sources and the abuse can actually take place within the school walls and during instruction times

(Beale & Hall, 2007). When schools fail to monitor their Internet network and provide boundaries for cell phone usage during school hours, abuses can occur. Although schools cannot control all aspects of communication within the school, it is clear that they could do more to eliminate bullying while the students are under their care.

The last and most controversial causal reasoning behind bullying is that it serves a social purpose. This theory is far more prevalent in male-to-male bullying, however, it still applies over a broad spectrum. This argument states that there is an ideal image of masculinity. Those who meet this image are exempt from abuse but those who do not are subjects of abuse (Sandstrom, Makover, & Bartini, 2013). Essentially, the group or society provides pressure to force people to conform to a norm. In this case, adolescent males are taught that there is a standard for what it is to be male. This standard is one of power, popularity, strength, intelligence, and charisma. Those students who are perceived as weak, nerdy, slow, or "puny" in some way are marked for abuse as a means of forcing them to conform to society. In addition to this, the action of bullying provides the students with the means of "distributing power and status… develop rules and norms…define punishments and rewards" (Hamarus & Kaikkonen, pg. 336, 2008). The society determines what is appropriate based off those who conform to the norm of "masculinity," and all those who do not meet it are abused until they meet that norm or leave the society.

One of the possible reasons for bullying is simply that an individual student does not fit into the cultural or societal norms that exist within a given culture. Those students who fit within the bell curve are most likely to be accepted while those who fall outside of the bell curve of a cultures definition of normalcy run the risk of being bullied. Even

within our culture of American work ethic and steadfastness, those who excel and

flounder badly often run the same risk. Those students with a flaw or minor disability can

be most adversely effected (Blood, Blood, Tramontana, Sylvia, Boyle, & Motzko, 2011).

Students that have a lisp or a speech impediment that make it difficult to communicate

have a higher likelihood of being singled out for bullying. However, those students with a

greater handicap that impairs the body or the mind run less of a risk of being bullied.

These students who stuttered reported a lower sense of life happiness and a general

feeling of depression and loneliness.

<div align="center">**Frequency of Abuse**</div>

Bullying has occurred for years in schools. A number of myths exist about the

effects of bullying and the amount of times it actually occurs. Some educators overlook

the level of abuse in schools for a variety of reasons. One of these reasons is they believe

certain myths that have corrupted the truth about the dangers of bullying. One such myth

suggests that bullying is "just teasing" or "just kidding around." Hearing this excuse

alleviates the burden that educators may have with regard to prevention. Another

common misconception is that some people actually deserve to be bullied. As previously

discussed, there are those who believe that bullying actually serves a necessary role in

regulating society.

Even though many bullies are male, it is untrue that all bullies are boys.

Especially in the realm of verbal abuse and cyberbullying, studies have shown that there

are just as many female bullies as there are male bullies (Aslund, Bengt, Leppert,&

Nilsson, 2009). This study showed that the commonly held belief that only males are

prone to bullying behavior is flawed. Other commonly held myths are that bullies will go

away if you ignore them and that being bullied is simply a part of growing up. Creating a mindset like this can lead students to feel disenfranchised and feel like there is no help for them. One of the worst things an educator can do for a student being bullied is to make them feel that they are blowing it out of proportion or belittling their feelings about their experiences.

Another common myth is that all bullies have low self-esteem. As established earlier, most bullies are actually likeable and popular. Bullies rely on their power to create fear in their victims. One of the ways in which they create this is by telling their victims that it is "tattling" to tell on them for what they have done. Sadly, many educators also hold this myth to be true and reinforce this idea in the minds of the victims. Lastly, it is a common myth that if the victim stands up to the bully and fights them, they will go away. Since it is usually the physically weak who are bullied, this myth can become quite dangerous.

These myths and common misconceptions can cloud the truth about the amount of abuse that occurs in our schools. If the level of abuse is to be curtailed and a preventative plan put into place, the myths must be dispersed and the truth needs to come to the forefront of the discussion. In a study developed at the University of California, Nishina and Juvonen (2005) showed the frequency at which bullying actually occurs. Over a period of four days, the study showed that 46% of all students experienced abuse at least once a day. Additionally, 42% reported that they had witnessed a form of abuse at least once a day (Nishina & Juvonen, 2005). The study showed that there was no significant difference between gender and socio-economic situations. The study also reported that 52% experienced verbal abuse during the day, whereas 27% reported witnessing one such

event during the day. Additionally, 23% reported being the victim of physical abuse, whereas 29% reported witnessing such an event. Finally, 4% reported being the victims of indirect abuse, where only 2% reported witnessing an indirect event during the day. These numbers are significant as they show that a large number of the students are either victims of some form of abuse or witnessing some form of abuse each day that they go to school. This kind of activity can only lead to negative feelings and responses.

One of the areas of focus in much of the literature is that of detection. Part of the purpose of this research is rooted in the concept that the identification of certain social markers may enable school administrators to detect those students who are more likely to bully others or be bullied themselves. The difficulty in any type of early detection, however, is that it relies heavily on the reporting of other students. As most instances of bullying do not occur under the eye of a teacher, it is imperative that students report instances of abuse. This type of reporting is not likely to happen. A study from 2011 reported that more than 54% of all high school students responded they would not report an instance of bullying (Carr-Gregg & Manocha, 2011). This same study showed that although students were not likely to report instances of bullying to their school administrators, they were likely to report them to their general physicians. It was posited that a sharing of information on an anonymous basis may give the schools the information they need to detect when and in what manner bullying exists within the institution. It was held that a general physician may be better able to determine the existence of bullying and each physician should be given training and access to testing devices to determine whether a student shows signs of being bullied or being a bully to

others. It is hoped that, with a team atmosphere, the schools, families, and victims would be better cared for (2011).

Effects of Peer Abuse

All forms of abuse can illicit negative reactions within the victims. One of those negative reactions is aggression. Studies have shown victims who are recipients of abuses in schools have a much higher rate of aggression (Aslund et al., 2009). Regardless of social status and gender, the level of aggression rises in accordance with the level of abuse. This aggression is seen in verbal attacks, indirect assaults, and physical violence. The more shaming or abusive an event may be, the greater the likelihood of an aggressive response (Aslund et al., 2009).

Another negative consequence of peer abuse is the shame involved in such an experience. Because many of the students involved are powerless to affect their situation, they internalize feelings of shame and humiliation (Ahmed, & Braithwaite, 2012). Those students who were victims of abuse reported that their feelings of shame more than tripled over time (Nishina & Juvonen, 2005). They also reported that their level of anger increased by 600%. Interestingly, for those students who merely witnessed the abuse, the level of shame decreased but the level of anger increased significantly (Nishina & Juvonen, 2005). This seems to indicate that although the student is relieved that the event did not occur to them, they are nonetheless disturbed by watching the event at their schools. Students who internalize feelings of shame and anger can cause themselves difficulties as they age and assimilate these untruths about themselves.

Some of the effects of peer abuse are more tangible than the more internalized consequences of shame and aggression. An increase in the level of dropouts and poor

attendance can be attributed to peer abuse. In addition, the zeal for school and the grades of students who are victims have been shown to decrease as the level of abuse increases (Frey & Fisher, 2008). Additionally, the level of teenage pregnancy amongst victims is increased, as is the use of drugs and alcohol. Finally, the level of suicide increases dramatically for those students who are victims of peer abuse (Frey & Fisher, 2008). The most serious of all consequences, however, is the school shootings and episodes of violence that can be linked directly to bullying and peer abuse (Egan & Todorov, 2009).

Although the consequences of bullying and victimization of students are difficult to quantify over the lifespan an individual, there are some noted long-lasting effects. The action of being bullied has a deep psychiatric and psychosomatic effect on an individual. Some studies have shown that students who were bullied while in their formative years are more likely to suffer from health concerns as they grow older (Wolke, Copeland, Angold, & Costello, 2013). This study showed that those who suffer from bullying evidence an increase in health concerns and risk behaviors; however, those who bully also show elevated levels of health issues and risk behaviors. In addition to involuntary health problems (high blood pressure, stroke, and stress), there were a number of voluntary health problems (alcohol abuse, smoking, and risk-taking behaviors) that were also linked to the effects of long-term bullying. What was unexpected was the evidence that supported similar behavior in bullies that was found in the lives of the victims of bullying.

There are two distinct types of bulling: indirect (involving verbal abuse, relational aggression, and cyberbullying) and direct (physical abuse, stealing, pushing, or threatening with a weapon). Both styles of abuse can illicit different effects in the victims

of the bullying activity. Again, there is evidence that both the victims and perpetrators suffer long-term effects (Vanderbilt & Augustyn, 2010). The victims of indirect bullying were found to have a higher instance of psychological distress, emotional discomfort, and social awkwardness. The victims of direct bullying were found to have a higher instance of depression, a greater involvement in abusive relationships, and poor heath indicators (2010). The bullies who engaged in both direct and indirect styles of bullying were found to have a four times higher chance of being involved in felonies, drug use, peer avoidance, and were less likely to complete school. Although the consequences for the victim were considerable, there is a large pool of evidence that shows that, over the long-term, both bullies and their victims suffer from bullying activities.

Adolescence is a vulnerable time for people. This is the stage in life where people have a tendency to determine their self-worth and base their self-esteem on that valuation. This is also the period in life where students develop socially and learn social cues to interact with individuals within the society as a whole. Bullying activities can disrupt this normal pattern of development for adolescents (Tariq & Tayyab, 2011). Those students who experience bullying may find it more difficult to adapt to social situations. They may find themselves more socially isolated and have a harder time recognizing social cues. This can lead to feelings of depression and hopelessness (Tariq & Tayyab, 2011). When bullying activities lower an individual's sense of self-worth, it can have an adverse effect on that individual's self-confidence. This lack of self-confidence can lead to an even greater feeling of social isolation and loss in individuals, especially within the confines of social interactions.

Bullying is an activity that affects the mind as much as it can affect the body. Studies show that the very action of bullying can lead to a psychosomatic response from an individual. In essence, the mind convinces the body that it is sick. Research has shown that there is a link between bullying and psychosomatic responses, such as feeling low, stomachaches, headaches, a resurgence of bedwetting, or feelings of general malaise (Natvig, Albrektsen, & Qvarnstrøm, 2001). Those students who were victimized in schools were more likely to find excuses to not return to classes and many of those excuses were found to be rooted in a psychosomatic response. The most common psychosomatic stimulus was that a student was feeling "low." These students also reported higher levels of sleeplessness, backaches, feeling dizzy, feeling irritable, and feeling nervous (Natvig et al., 2001). These responses to bullying lead to a general feeling of depression and a lack of enthusiasm for activities.

Gender and Abuse

There are differences between genders with regard to bullying. The manner in which males and females respond to bullying vary as much as the manner in which they bully. To have a complete understanding of the phenomenon of bullying, it is vitally important to understand the differences between genders. Although both genders bully from a position of power, the development of bullying tactics varies depending on gender (Ardolino, 2013). Males and females often experience victimization at a different rate. Depending on the situation, males and females can have a profoundly different view of bullying (Ardolino, 2013). Males and females differ in their physiology, which can influence the manner in which they respond to, or engage in, bullying practices. These

differences when coupled with the environmental and social differences between genders can shape male and female perspectives of bullying.

There is a gap in the research, as most research has been based on males and the aggression they show to other males. In some cases, research has examined the effect of dating relationships and the bullying dynamic that exists between the sexes, however, relatively little research has been undertaken regarding females who bully or who are bullied (Felix & McMahon, 2007). To bridge this gap, many researchers are attempting to apply social, cognitive, and information processing theories in an attempt to have a better understanding of gender-based bullying. The social information processing theory theorizes that youth, of both genders, receive social cues and respond based on their interpretation of those social cues (Felix & McMahon, 2007). Males and females receive social cues in different ways, so their responses should follow a different path. As males and females fulfill separate social roles, their responses to aggression and victimization should also be different (Felix & McMahon, 2007).

Unfortunately, the use of bullying to gain social status has become increasingly prevalent. Both males and females will often use victimization and bullying to gather additional social status and form interpersonal relationships (Caravita, Gini, & Pozzoli, 2012). There are two separate layers of social status, namely perceived popularity and social preference. Bullying can be used to raise the level of perceived popularity for both males and females. In essence, if bullying an individual can be seen as a social good, then those who engage in that activity can change their perceived popularity and social status (Caravita, Gini, & Pozzoli, 2012). Additionally, the socioeconomic class students find themselves in can be a determiner of aggressiveness or victimization.

Students will often inflate their status within their own socioeconomic class by bullying those in a different socioeconomic grouping. Students often define themselves by the close personal interactions they develop. What the group dynamic deems to be appropriate (who to bully) becomes the generally accepted norm; moreover, the students are more likely to behave accordingly if it garners them more social acclaim or the recognition of those opinion holders they value in their peer groups. Social preference is the simple desire students have to be a part of a group. Bullying can often serve as an entrance to groups they prefer socially.

From an early age, adolescents struggle to find their place in their social groups. Societal norms compel them to adhere to a strict gender code of expectations. Although some adolescents are able to form their own social identity, most choose to allow the societal gender norms to formulate their place in society (Wolfe, Crooks, Chiodo, & Jaffe, 2009). These gender roles help adolescents to form their peer groups and determine appropriate behavior within those peer groups. Consequently, the manner in which bullying occurs differs by gender. The gender roles differ greatly in general, in that men must be masculine and women feminine. Even within this relatively broad view of gender roles, it is obvious that aggression and victimization will be different. Those youth that adhere most strictly to the gender roles of their society often escape abuse (Wolfe et al., 2009). Boys, based on their need to be masculine, often engage in more physical types of abuse, whereas girls, seeking femininity, will engage in more ephemeral and opaque forms of abuse. Peer groups, more than adults, set the societal norms for gender role adherence (Lamb, Bigler, & Liben, 2009).

One of the gaps in the research relates to the gender-blindness of the research conducted to date. Most of the research has centered on males and how they bully/ respond to bullying. With the growing prevalence of cyberbullying and increasing rate of reported instances, the research has begun to look at both genders as they relate to bullying perspectives. When examining bullying from a theoretical standpoint, without gender-blindness, it is important to understand that the social and cultural gender roles and gender performances have been accepted for so long that the concept of "normal" things for boys and girls to do have now become the rule for social interactions (Ringrose & Renold, 2010). Thus, the common colloquialisms we use to categorize gender has now become binding in our society due to society's adherence to these gender performances. As romantic as the concept of complete individualism is, society does not have a place for that yet. It is perfectly acceptable to be different, as long as the behaviors and performances still fall within accepted gender roles. This relates to bullying in a rather profound way. Those adolescents who choose to go against societal norms (girls who dress as boys and behave in a masculine fashion, or boys who behave in an overly feminine manner) often find themselves the subject of victimization (Ringrose & Renold, 2010). Sadly, those students who receive the most overt forms of bullying are those who choose to violate the accepted gender roles (Higdon, 2011).

Ang and Goh (2010) examined the relationship between empathy and bullying. The authors examined two complementary forms of empathy (affective empathy and cognitive empathy) in an attempt to find a relationship with cyberbullying (Ang & Goh, 2010). Affective empathy is the ability to share in the emotions of others, whereas cognitive empathy is the ability to understand the emotions of others (Ang & Goh, 2010).

This study is important because, traditionally, it was believed that girls were more likely to use cyberbullying as their vehicle for bullying, thus fueling the idea that gender plays a significant role in the manner in which students bully. However, what the researchers were able to determine was that there is no clearly delineated marker showing girls to be more frequent participants in cyberbullying. The research on this topic is muddled at best; some studies show boys are frequent engagers in cyberbullying, others show both genders are equal participants, while yet others show girls to be more frequent participants (Ang & Goh, 2010). The most definitive outcome of the research was its ability to show that both genders would benefit from empathy training in an attempt to lower instances of cyberbullying; however, more research is needed on the issue of gender.

Although cyberbullying is difficult to measure in relationship to bullying, research has been able to provide data that offers a clearer picture of gender roles in regards to bullying. Boys have a tendency to bully other boys who are smaller than themselves in an attempt to cover up for their own perceived inadequacies, whereas girls have a tendency to create a situation of competitiveness while focusing on perceived differences in an attempt to gain or maintain power (Safran, 2007). Boys who bully may gain social standing and even find themselves to be more attractive to the opposite sex, and girls who bully can eliminate the competitors for their social position. Females self-report as more relational victims, where males self-report as more overt victims (Dempsey, Fireman, & Wang, 2006). Males are significantly more likely to engage in overt bullying practices (physical abuse) than females. Females often score higher on gender specific victimization scales, reporting the occurrences of abuse at a higher rate

than males, suggesting that females bully other females more frequently than males bully other males (Smith & Gross, 2006). In a recent study examining cyberbullying across gender lines, 44% of boys reported rumors spread online, whereas 69% of girls reported the same activity. Additionally, 61% of girls reported being the victims of lies, harassment, and derogatory behaviors online, where only 46% of boys report the same abuse (Snell & Englander, 2010). This study is not definitive, but does express the possible differences gender may play in bullying.

Regardless of gender, the long-term effects of bullying can be profound. Both males and females reported bullying as a problem in their environment with negative consequences (O'Brien, 2011). High school girls, who are often the victims of abuse, were more likely to avoid social situations and suffer from social anxiety and loneliness (Caravita, Gini, & Pozzoli, 2012). Girls experienced a higher rate of depression, generalized anxiety, and agoraphobia when correlated with relational victimization. Conversely, boys experienced a higher rate of generalized anxiety and agoraphobia when correlated with physical victimization (Vuijk, van Lier, Crijnen, & Huizink, 2007). Both males and females reported lower self-esteem and higher anxiety in their school climate (Guerra, Williams, & Sadek, 2011). Although gender identity plays a role in the manner in which males and females bully, the consequences of long-term bullying are uniformly negative.

Religiousness as a Social Construct

Religion is a social construct that can govern the perceptions of others. If bullying exists as a social construct that governs behavior, then it stands to reason that correlating bullying with other social constructs that govern behavior can yield interesting results.

Many people attribute their behaviors to the religious principles they hold to be true. There have been studies linking academic performance to religiousness principles. Some recent studies showed a link between academic performance and conservative Protestants (Regnerus, 2008). These same studies have shown a strong positive influence of church attendance on math and reading skills. Interestingly, this positive influence did not vary across poverty lines, intimating that religious values are a set of beliefs that can transcend the socio-economic status of a family structure (Regnerus, 2008). Many aspects of religious beliefs are held in common across many religions. Concepts of community values, social consciousness, morality, and individual transformation are just a few of the concepts generally held by the world's major religions (Regnerus, 2008).

Because of programs like the Lilly Endowment, studies pertaining to religion and its effects on perspectives and behaviors have increased, however, there is still much to be learned about the relationship between religion and many other social constructs (Bader et al., 2005). However, there is literature that supports a hypothesis that religious beliefs will correlate to bullying. Many religions hold civic participation and social justice to be core tenets of their religious structure. The literature supports a link between civic participation and behavioral change. Vieno et al. (2007) showed a relationship amongst a set of behavioral trends and civic participation. One of the behavioral problems correlated was bullying. The study showed that as the amount of civic participation increases the incidences of bullying decreases. Given that most of the world's main religions hold civic participation to be a virtue, it is a logical conclusion that religion, as a social construct, can also effect bullying. In essence, if bullying is

linked to civic participation and civic participation is linked to religion, it is worth concluding that there may be a relationship between bullying and religion.

Civic participation is not the only aspect of an individual's religion. Religiousness is an amalgamation of beliefs and practices. Having one without the other often negates both. Individual improvement is often a component that is measured when religiosity is assessed (Abar, Carter, & Winsler, 2009). One of common attributes measured is an individual's involvement in risk behaviors, which is defined by drinking, drugs, and delinquent behavior. Bullying would most assuredly qualify as a risk behavior as it can destroy egos and ruin lives. Many studies have been able to draw correlations that show religiosity has an effect on limiting risk behaviors (Abar et al., 2009). The greater an individual's reporting of religiousness, the lower the rate of risk behavior engagement. Although bullying was not specifically listed as a risk behavior, it is not outlandish to place bullying under the auspices of delinquent behavior. If religiosity has been shown to affect the incidences of risk behaviors, then determining if religion has a direct relationship to bullying is worth studying.

Religiousness is an outward expression of an inward belief. Much of what the world views as "religion" is seen in the actions of those professing to adhere to the tenants of a given religion's social constructs. One of the guiding principles in American religious constructs is to be outwardly focused on the needy and to the giving of alms, and support for those who are in situations where they need help. Religion can be defined as "an activity of recognizing and accepting God's grace in our lives" (Hugen et al., pg. 411, 2006). The key word in this definition is activity. It is what individuals do that "proves' their adherence to their religion. One of these activities is participation in

community ministries/activities. Research shows that as adherence to religious activities increases, the rate of community participation increases. Participation in community improvement activities is an action based on the values of an individual's religion (Hugen & Venema, 2009). The manner in which one individual treats another is also an action born of an internal set of beliefs, therefore, the study of religious constructs and their relationship to bullying may provide similar results.

In some ways, faith is merely a commitment to a given set of ideals and tenets. Individuals commit to many social constructs. Concepts like friendship, marriage, reciprocity, and family are just a few of the social constructs to which people commit themselves. Faith is also a social construct to which individuals commit themselves (Mikulić, 2014). Like all commitments, the measure of depth of commitment can be a window into the effect that commitment has on an individual's behavior and perspectives. Religious commitment is often measured by collating data in four distinct areas, namely attending services, giving a portion of income, prayer, and scripture reading (Mockabee, Monson, & Grant, 2001). These concepts, and others, represent a concept of faith that involves action. Given that bullying is also an action, the correlation of the two is a logical step to make. By having an accurate level of an individual's commitment to these actions, a relationship can be inferred with other actions.

Religiousness has been a denominator of behavioral growth for centuries. From the crusades to modern missions, man has believed that a strong concept of piety, however that may be defined, can change lives. Meininger (2008) examined the inclusive practices of religious communities when faced with individuals with learning and intellectual disabilities. He posited that those individuals with disabilities often disturb

the familiar activities of religious practices (Meininger, 2008). He continued that, in some cases, these individuals can create such a disturbance that the religious activities were disrupted (Meininger, 2008). However, the Christian principle of "remembering the stranger" and the religious concepts of hospitality and grace, drove religious organizations to be more accepting than organizations that did not hold those tenants (Meininger, 2008). The commonly held beliefs of the religious communities correlated with communities acceptance of people who disrupted their normal religious practices in a way that was, anecdotally, greater. In essence, the tenets of this group, held in common, were a factor in the inclusivity of the group as a whole.

Much of the literature related to faith and religiosity focuses on a set of beliefs and measures commitment. The goal of such studies is to show causality or correlation between the variable of faith as a social construct and some other behavior. Many individuals view faith as more explanative than modern science (Pretorius, 2009). The post-modern view of faith has become more distinct in some ways. Many persons of faith believe more strongly than in previous generations, while those who express apathy towards faith feel this apathy at an increased rate as well (Pretorius, 2009). An example that expresses the depth to which individuals can commit to faith concepts is the idea of divine healing. People with extreme faith will deny the usages of modern medicines, even to their children, because of their strongly held beliefs that only the "divine" can heal. Although illness is different from bullying, it still shows the depth to which an individual's behavior and perspectives can be altered by strongly held beliefs.

There is only a single study correlating bullying and religion (in this case, Christianity). This study was longitudinal and qualitative, and yielded some interesting

insights. The study is the examination of a series of individuals and their bullying experiences as it relates to their religion (Cram, 2001). One of the conclusions the researcher was able to draw was the long-lasting effects of bullying in adults who experience the abuse as children. The study correlated religion through the lens of bullying by asking questions about how the subjects' religion was impacted by bullying (Cram, 2001). The subjects reported their understanding of religion as an adult was, in part, shaped by their experiences with bullies. Reports of feelings of powerlessness, abandonment, and hopelessness, all shaped how they perceived their view of religion. This study attempted to provide a wider picture without insinuating causality, and is a good foundation from which more research can be built. If any connection exists, no matter how fleeting or ephemeral in this study, then perhaps a quantitative connection exists as well. There is very little research quantitatively measuring religion as a social construct, however, the literature certainly highlights that further research is necessary.

Summary

Even though this situation seems bleak, there is still hope. There are many existing studies that offer recommendations to educators that can help them prevent and cope with peer abuse in their schools. One of the first things that schools need to do is to assess their situation. The school should take an honest look at their policies for peer abuse and determine whether those policies meet the needs of the students (Borgwald & Theixos, 2013). Second, the school should analyze the behavior of its educators and determine whether they are the cause of any of the abuse; if so, there needs to be a policy shift that curtails the abuse. Additionally, an environment of openness and honesty should be in place where students can raise their concerns and feel safe and comfortable doing so

(Egan & Todorov, 2009). Lastly, the school should endeavor to put in place an anti-bullying curriculum which seeks to educate both victims and bullies.

Cyberbullying is a unique form of abuse, as it can affect a large number of students and can occur largely without adults knowing what is happening. The key to preventing this form of abuse is for schools to educate parents so they may identify this abuse. In addition, schools should limit their Internet network and limit the use of cell phones in schools. The students should also be told to keep a hardcopy of the messages they are receiving and to provide those to both parents and school officials (Feinberg & Robey, 2009). These practices, when implemented, can dramatically decrease the level of abuse in schools.

Peer abuse degrades the students and the learning environment as a whole. The abuse that students perpetuate against other students is unacceptable and makes for a hostile and uninviting learning environment. That schools and educators are often complicit is an unacceptable fact for some students. For years, the idea of peer abuse and bullying has been shrouded in myth. It is time for this to be undone; the truth of the situation needs to be brought to life.

There are many factors influencing an individual's behavior and perspectives. Gender is a component of bullying that provides an interesting insight into abuse throughout all age levels. Studying the differences between genders and the manner in which they address abuses can be instrumental in constructing programming uniquely tailored to students. Studies have shown that boys are more likely to engage in physical aggression than girls (Russell, Kraus, & Ceccherini, 2010). This is an important denotation when creating anti-bullying curriculum or seeking to have a better

understanding of the bullying phenomenon. Additional studies have shown that girls are more likely not to accept other girls than boys are not to accept other boys (Veenstra, Lindenberg, Munniksma, & Dijkstra, 2010). Even in the face of these studies, there is still a need for more information. For every study showing difference in overall gender bullying preferences, there are studies that show no difference. Clearly, more research in this area is warranted.

The correlating variable in this study was religiosity. Not only is this term difficult to define, but it is difficult to study quantitatively. With the lack of literature conducted examining religion as a social construct and its relationship with individual behaviors and perspectives, the gap in the literature is considerable. However, religion is a clearly denoted set of ideals and these ideals have been studied. Concepts like civic participation, social justice, and risk behavior avoidance have all corresponded positively with bullying. Given that these principles make up the various components of religiosity and relate to bullying, then the overarching concept of religion as a social construct should also relate to bullying. Many of the concepts held to be true in religions are also held to be true as social norms and contracts that all people abide by, not just those people professing a set of religious principles (Perkins et al., 2011). Some schools have found that by adopting and espousing certain social norms (kindness, generosity, and forbearance), they have been able to reduce instances of bullying (Perkins et al., 2011). These principles are the foundation of most of the world's major religions, so the correlation of these principles, in a religious package with bullying, should bear fruit.

These kinds of activities have many negative effects, and in some cases, can cost the ultimate price of some students: their lives. Pregnancy, suicide, depression, and an

unnatural dislike for school are all consequences of peer abuse. With change, this problem can be curtailed, and in some cases, eliminated. This literature review concludes that although many students endure peer abuse on a daily basis, it has no place in our society. Bullying may be the remnant of a by-gone system of social control, however, society has changed.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Bullying and peer abuse are an unnecessary part of the education process. Some students prey on other students, and this can influence the lives of those students who are being victimized. It is difficult to know how many students experience abuse in schools, however, recent studies have shown that over 47% of all students report some form of abuse in their daily education experience (Nishina & Juvonen, 2005). This kind of behavior can erode a student's desire to learn and can lead to long-term effects that can shape a student's sense of self-worth and social skills. Bullying has been shown to effect individuals far beyond their school days (Meltzer, Vostanis, Ford, Bebbington, & Dennis, 2010).With the negative effect that abuses can have on the mindset of students and the possible long-term difficulties that can arise, it is imperative that this problem is addressed.

The common belief that bullying and peer abuse are a "rite of passage" and "something that everyone has to go through" is flawed and destructive to those students who are experiencing this abuse on a daily basis. If students do not feel safe in their schools, the likelihood of their learning will diminish greatly (Frey & Fisher, 2008). One of the most important things that an educator can accomplish is to create a safe environment for students. Many of the myths that have pervaded the bullying culture are being proven untrue. The concept that bullies and victims exist upon clearly delineated lines of race, socio-economic status, and social skills has been consistently demonstrated to be untrue (Solberg et al., 2007). More research is clearly needed.

As previously discussed, bullying is a social construct. This particular construct is devoted to the deviant behavior of individuals or groups of individuals perpetrated on other individuals. Religiousness is also a social construct that proves to be very important in the lives of many Americans (Mockabee et al., 2001). Religion is defined by three characteristics that can influence individuals, namely beliefs, belonging, and behavior. These three distinct characteristics blend together to create a social construct that governs the lives of persons of a religious nature. Religiousness is not merely the conglomeration of these three concepts, however, but a lifestyle based on choices made to honor an individual's God. This social construct has been shown to change the manner in which individuals interact with the world around them and the lens through which they see the world (Barry, 2009).

Much of the research focused on bullying has been centered on creating anti-bullying programs or showing causality with regard to the aftereffects. Although these topics are extremely important to understanding the long-term consequences of bullying and the potential long-term negative effects, it is also important to understand bullying as it relates to other social constructs. There is research that shows that the social constructs that govern students in academic environments is controlled by a rigidly defined set of norms (Perkins et al., 2011). The few articles that address the relationship of social construct research and bullying focuses on programs or systemic change, as in implementing SST in bullied children (Fox & Boulton, 2003).

Religion has lagged far behind other special topics in the social sciences primarily because of an almost total lack of research funds. While such topics poverty, race relations, education, and politics have received large-scale research support from

foundations and government, research by independent scholars on the role of religion in society has gone virtually unfunded. (Bader, Mencken, & Proese, 2007)

The majority of existing research examines bullying from two separate, distinct angles, namely(a) the potential negative aspects of bullying and (b) the possible ways that bullying can be mitigated in the educational experience (Farrow& Fox, 2011; Nishina, 2012; Vaughn et al., 2011; Moon, Hwang, & McClusky, 2011; Law, Shapka, Hymel, Olson, & Waterhouse, 2012) . Both of these research concepts operationally define both variables and determine a level of causality for which this research did not strive. This research did not seek to mitigate psychological damage or to reinforce the already agreed upon negative results of bullying. This research sought to determine a relationship between bullying/peer abuse and bullying in the belief that this knowledge can lead to a creation of anti-bullying curriculum that is religious in nature. It is important that a relationship be found between religious beliefs and bullying before any other research in the area can be performed.

The purpose of this study was to find a relationship between the social construct of bullying and the social construct of religion. There is only one study which has found a link between bullying and religiousness showing the long-term effects of bullying on individuals twenty years removed from the abuse (Cram, 2001). With so little research connecting these two social constructs, it is clear that more research is required. Furthermore, this research can add to the knowledge base in a new manner. If a relationship exists between the two variables, then further research could be conducted to determine why those particular variables correlate. That knowledge can then be used to

create an anti-bullying program that is based on religious principles. Chapter three will consist of a participants section, setting section, instrumentation section, procedures section, research design section, and data analysis section.

Design

This study used a correlational design. Correlational research determines relationships which exist between variables among a single group of participants. The social constructs of religion and bullying are tested to determine any relationship between a set of variables and a single disparate variable. Therefore, a correlational design makes the most sense (Gall et al., 2007). This research determines relationships instead of predictability because the nature of both variables is such that predictability becomes unlikely. Causality is not a function of correlation research. Each individual will respond differently to each assessment so a relationship has more statistical value than an effort to show causality. Cause and effect research, in this case, would be foolhardy due to the impossible nature of assigning causality to one variable over another (Gall et al., 2007). Because directionality is not an aspect of this style of research, determining the causality of correlation is not possible. Correlational research allows for prediction, consistency, and relationship assessment. These three components help satisfy the research questions while providing data for a knowledge base that can add to the community (Ary et al., 2010). Unlike many research plans, this particular design has little in the way of preconceived ideas. The literature is sparse and the concept of correlation between social constructs and bullying is so new that having a broader, though less comprehensive, view of the results will provide a stronger foundation for analysis and future research. The correlational design provides a fuller picture of the data gathered.

Correlational research is not a research design that depends heavily on the values of the sets of disparate variables. Although each variable is operationally defined, it is difficult to assess a definitive value to each variable. The design is based on variables selected that are generally based on a theory, previous research, or the researcher's observations (Ary et al., 2010). Correlational research is predicated on the concept of relationships between disparate variables. The purpose of this research is to use correlational statistical analysis to determine if a relationship exists between two concepts (Gall et al., 2007). For the purposes of this research, the variables of interest will be religiousness and bullying perspectives and attitudes. These variables will be compared in their subsets and correlated to determine the strength of the relationship between each subset of variables.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This research was designed to determine whether a relationship exists between religiousness and bullying. A variety of components relate to both constructs.

RQ1. What is the relationship between adolescent females' type of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and the initiation of an act of bullying?

H_a1: There will be a statistically significant relationship between the female types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H_01: There will be no statistically significant relationship between the female types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H_a2: There is a statistically significant relationship between female intrinsic religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀2: There is no statistically significant relationship between female intrinsic religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

Hₐ3: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (social) religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀3: There is no statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (social) religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

Hₐ4: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (personal) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀4: There is no statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (personal) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

Hₐ5: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀5: There is no statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the initiation of an act of bullying.

RQ2. What is the relationship between adolescent females' type of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and being the victim of bullying?

Hₐ6: There will be a statistically significant relationship between the female types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and being the victim of bullying.

H₀6: There will be no statistically significant relationship between the female types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ7: There is a statistically significant relationship between female intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀7: There is no statistically significant relationship between female intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ8: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (social) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀8: There is no statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (social) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ9: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (personal) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀9: There is no statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (personal) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ10: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀10: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

RQ3. What is the relationship between adolescent males' type of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and the initiation of an act of bullying?

Hₐ11: There will be a statistically significant relationship between the male types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀11: There will be no statistically significant relationship between the male types of religiousness (intrinsic, external) and the initiation of an act of bullying.

Hₐ12: There is a statistically significant relationship between male intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀12: There is no statistically significant relationship between male intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ13: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (social) religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀13: There is no statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (social) religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

Hₐ14: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (personal) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀14: There is no statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (personal) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀15: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (morality) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

Hₐ15: There is no statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (morality) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

RQ4. What is the relationship between adolescent males' type of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and being the victim of bullying?

Hₐ16: There will be a statistically significant relationship between the male types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and being the victim of bullying.

H₀16: There will be no statistically significant relationship between the male types of religiousness (intrinsic, external) and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ17: There is a statistically significant relationship between male intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀17: There is no statistically significant relationship between male intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ18: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (social) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀18: There is no statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (social) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ19: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (personal) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀19: There is no statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (personal) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ20: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀20: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

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Participants

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The participants were students enrolled in a religious-based school campus in South Carolina and the data gathered was archival based on these students. The school resides in a suburb with a population of approximately 70,000. The total population of the school is 219, ranging from sixth grade to 12th grade. The gender breakdown of the school is 109 females, 110 males. All students are between the ages of 11 and 18. The school represents a variety of religious perspectives, with 10% reporting no religion at all. This population was chosen based on convenience sampling. In order to avoid a type II error, an *n* of 109 for females and an *n* of 110 for males is greater than the threshold

determined by the formula of $n > 104 + m$ (Howell, 2008). This more than satisfies the level of power necessary for validity (Stevens, 2009).This research did not assign participants to various groupings because it is not an experimental design in which variables are manipulated and measured. The researcher, through his chair, contacted the headmaster of the school and received permission to conduct the study on the premises.

Setting

The research took place on the tri-campus of a middle/high school. The school has an enrollment of 428 students from kindergarten to twelfth grade on three separate campuses. The school is accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). The research took place in the homerooms of each grade (6th-12th) based on the convenience of the setting and the administration. To maintain the anonymity of the students being tested, the actual school and school district will not be named. The school operates under the auspices of a local church and is subject to the hierarchy of the church for leadership and support. The school espouses a set of beliefs that make it ideal for this study: community, dignity, integrity, scholarship, giftedness, leadership, stewardship, and service. The school has given permission for the researcher to use the data they have gathered under these guidelines. Each homeroom instructor was given the number of assessments necessary for study. The instructors were given a script to read to each student then proctored the test. Upon completion, each student placed their completed assessments in an envelope and the instructors sealed the envelopes and took them to the office at the end of the day. This archival data was used by the researcher in this study. The school, being religious in nature, sought to determine the efficacy of their religious education program and administered the I/E®

Instrumentation

Both the theory of the mind (Shakoor et al., 2012) and theory of conditioned learning (Gagne, 1992) discuss the various aspects of how the mind creates permission for bullying and the rationale behind the social need of bullying in adolescents. The mind creates a reality, often supported by an individual's society, which allows for the bullying of students. These theories reinforce the connection between bullying and external stimuli. This research examines whether the criterion variable of bullying/victim has a relationship with the predictor variable of religiousness. The Olweus Bullying Scale was used to measure the participants' feelings and attitudes about bullying. The instrument is broken down into 5 sections: general information, bullying problems, feelings and attitudes about bullying, how others react, and general (dis)satisfaction with school. The instrument was created by Olweus and is used across the nation and around the world as a means of determining student's individual perspectives and beliefs about bullying (Lee & Cornell, 2009). The survey itself is broken into two subscales; those individuals who perpetrate bullying against others and those individuals who are the victims of bullying activities. The Olweus assessment instrument is the most widely used instrument to measure bullying in the world; it has been used in 15 countries across the globe. Being the globally accepted measurement device and the core of the world's most popular anti-bullying curriculum, it is ideal for gathering data regarding bullying. The study is a Scantron style assessment that is uniformly distributed in hard copy. The instrument asks a series of questions that serve to gather specific information and create a complete view of one of the five categories. The Harlaxton Institute at Clemson University provides a

program for scoring the entered data and was gracious enough to provide the instrument for this research.

The data are entered and given an indicator number that is then collated into one of the two subscales (bully or bullying victim) (Olweus, 2005; Kyriakides, Kaloyirou, & Lindsay, 2006). Construct validity has been established at .60-.70 range between when classes are aggregated bullies and victims (Lee & Cornell, 2009). The effect size *d*-value was measured at 1.05 for social disintegration and .62 for global negative self-evaluations (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). This shows a high effect size for the social constructs on social disintegration and negative self-evaluations. Generally an effect size greater than .8 indicates a strong correlation between variables. Effect size measures the strength of relationships between variables (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorenson, 2010). Overall reliability was measured at a Cronbach's alpha of .85, which is slightly lower than the desired .90 for an excellent scale but within the tolerance for reliability (Kyriakides et al., 2006). The questionnaire has been designed this way to "avoid as much as possible subjective terms and phrases" (Olweus, 2007, p.4). A study in 2009 by Lee & Cornel did show support for constructive validity but does mention the inherent weaknesses in self-reporting assessment instruments (Lee & Cornel, 2009). Additionally, the reliability analysis produced a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of .78 for the first sub-scale (bully) and .94 for the second sub-scale (victim) (Özdemir & Akar, 2011).

The core of the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire is the instrument itself. It provides a clear operational definition of bullying on the inside cover and asks the participants to use that definition as they answer questions. The study records demographic data (gender, school, grade, ethnic background, and homeroom). There are a number of individualized

questions that provide a Likert-type scale for measuring (e.g., "How many close friends do you have"). All of the questions relating to being a victim of bullying or a perpetrator of bullying have the options of: It has never happened, only once or twice, two or three times a month, about once a week, and several times a week. Participants are asked to fill in the bubble that best describes their answer.

The second instrument employed for this experiment is the I/E-R. This survey was developed by Dr. Richard Gorsuch. He was attempting to quantify religiousness in a manner that could be studied scientifically (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). This survey has been used in numerous research articles and is one of the most popular means of determining an individual's religious will (Regnerus, 2008). The survey asks a variety of questions dealing with religious choice, frequency of attendance to religious functions, and general religious attitudes. While some of the questions demanded a specific categorical choosing, many of the questions were measured on a Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

The I/E-R instrument employed to gather data about religiousness is designed to test both internal and external expressions of religion. The instrument tests religious attitudes, religious involvement, spirituality, and beliefs about God (Worthington et al., 2003). Conflict theory seeks to understand the various struggles between communication, social interactions, and moral authority. The aspect of moral authority and how religiousness can cause conflict between individuals (i.e., bullying) helps shed light on this variable (Farris, 2013). This theory helps to understand the difficulties religious people face when deciding the relative morality of bullying activities. The original I/E assessment divided religiousness into intrinsic and extrinsic variables. In 1989, Dr.

Gorsuch discovered that religiousness cannot be quantified in two simple, separate categories and developed the I/E-R scale. This scale acknowledges the relatively ephemeral nature of religion and divided the extrinsic scale into social relationships and personal benefits (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). Therefore, the I/E-R survey is broken down into four separate subscales: intrinsic, extrinsic (social relationships), extrinsic (morality), and extrinsic (personal benefit). As these four aspects of religiousness are the ones most likely to span across religious fundamentals, the instrument was ideal for this study. Dr. Gorsuch has spent years making his scale adaptable to students of all ages, and most specifically to students in middle and high schools. The instrument is scored by applying a number to each Likert-type level (1 for "strongly disagree," 2 for "disagree," 3 for "undecided," 4 for "agree," and 5 for "strongly agree") for extrinsic subscales while intrinsic subscales are reverse ordered (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). The overall reliability of the instrument is -.95 when corrected for attenuation. The overall reliabilities for intrinsic, extrinsic(p), extrinsic(s), and extrinsic(m) are reported as a Cronbachs Alpha coefficient of .83, .71, .67,.73., respectively, which aside from extrinsic(s), satisfies the $\alpha > .07$ needed for reliability (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989).

The I/E-R scale is predominantly used as a hard copy assessment instrument and then hand coded and analyzed. As the students at the target school were already given a paper copy of the Olweus assessments, using the I/E-R in the same manner made the most sense. Dr. Gorsuch was kind enough to evidence interest in this research and provided full access to his assessment instrument.

Procedures

The researcher secured permission from the school to conduct research on the data that had been previously collected in the fall of 2013. The researcher used this existing data to analyze and determine if any relationship exists between the variables of religiousness and bullying. To protect the participants in the study, all materials will be returned to the school after analysis and completion of the dissertation process. The researcher petitioned the school for use of the data. Through email, the researcher requested and was granted permission to use the data gathered previously. The school granted permission for the use of the data and the researcher supplied this and the IRB (Internal Review Board) application to the IRB board for approval. Upon approval from the IRB, the researcher asked the school for the data and the archival data was sent to the researcher for use.

Data Analysis

For this research, the same data analysis device was applied to test each of the null hypotheses. Because each research question used multiple variables in assessment, the most effective method of analysis was regression. The canonical correlation is a "generalization of multiple regressions that adds more than one dependent variable (criterion) to the prediction equation" (Ary et al., pg. 364, 2010). Multiple regression decreases the likelihood of a type I error by allowing for the correlation of multiple sets of variables, while determining the relationship between a single variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The goal of this research was to describe relationships between variables and not test hypothesis of interaction, therefore, this data analysis technique is ideal. By assessing the relationship between a set of variables and a single disparate variable, the

step wise regression is able to show a singularity of relationship while still maintaining the integrity of reliability (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

Although this research has a multitude of hypotheses, they only serve to illustrate the four models that are analyzed. Multivaraite analysis is the appropriate method of analyzing the relationships between multiple variables (Thompson, 1991). In this research, the four models: males who self-report as bullies, males who self-report as victims, females who self-report as bullies, and females who self-report as victims are all independently correlated with the set of religious variables to determine if any contribute to a relationship. This research is still new and although theory is driving the design there is certainly no theory that directly speaks to this particular combination of attributes. Stepwise regression is an effective means of analysis for a study that has little previous foundation of empirical evidence (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Although correlational research does not lend itself to causality there are a myriad of data analysis tools that can be used to determine statistically significant results. For the purposes of this research a stepwise regression will be used to analyze data. The stepwise regression allows for predictability (Gall et Al., 2007). The nature of the instruments and the design of the study seek to determine what relationship exists between the two sets of variables. As each value of religiousness (Intrinsic, E(personal), E(morality), E(social)) is examined when correlated to bullying activities of being the victim of bullying or being a perpetrator of bullying, adding new variables or taking variables away from the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computation model can help determine predictability (Gall et al., 2007). The stepwise regression model allows for flexibility within data analysis. At any point in time during the data analysis process, variables can

be added or deleted from the computation to examine the different combinations of data possibilities (Tabachnick et al., 2007). This research is predicated on the idea that an individual's religious values can affect, and hopefully predict, that individual's likelihood to bully or to be open to being bullied.

The two most common forms of data analysis with correlational research are the stepwise regression and the hierarchical multiple regression (HMR). Both methods of regression offer a plethora of data to analyze correlational research. Hierarchical regression measures the effect of change seen in the r^2 as additional variables are added to the models created in SPSS (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The HMR can show the predictability of results based on variables being added and subtracted to various models to obtain a broader view of the results. The hierarchical model allows for the concept of nesting which is a situation in which a variable being studied can be found at several levels of organization (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010). The variable group being tested can be nested based on the setting of the study or groupings that the researcher wishes to study, and can be manipulated as the researcher sees fit to determine correlational significance. Regression, especially hierarchical, helps researchers determine the best pairing of variables to yield a maximum correlation (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). Perhaps most importantly, hierarchical regression analysis is based on what the researcher has learned through past research or through the theories present within the study (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The researcher controls the hierarchy and importance of variable imputation and therefore can reach a broader conclusion of results.

In addition to the HMR, the stepwise model of research performs a similar role for the researcher in data analysis. Both the HMR and the stepwise model analyze

relationships between disparate sets of variables (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The stepwise

model bases the order of variable entries solely on their statistical significance. Where the

HMR relies on the researcher to input the order of variables (hierarchy), the stepwise

calls for the computer, independent of the researcher, to determine the order of variables

and their impact on one another (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Although stepwise

regression is more controversial and considered to be less effective in determining the

causality of the r^2 increasing or decreasing, it is still considered to be a statically valid

data analysis tool and plays an important role in research (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Stepwise regression is most often used at the exploratory phase of research (Menard,

1995).

Research that has a solid foundation of past research results, and a strong theory

behind the formation of research questions and hypotheses should use the HMR

(Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). However, research that has little past research and little

theory that directly supports the variable sets in correlational research might benefit from

a stepwise regression where the researchers biases and belief systems will not color the

imputation of hierarchical variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). For the purposes of this

research, the stepwise made the most sense. Almost exclusively, the research delves into

the long-term and short-term effects as well as preventative measures. Very little research

has been undertaken to determine the relationships between bullying characteristics and

social constructs. Without the benefit of past empirical research and proven sound theory

supporting already existing conclusions, the use of an HMR would have unnecessarily

forced the researcher to manipulate results. Further research, using past results, should

use the hierarchical regression to determine a deeper understanding of the relationship; however, that would have been inappropriate for the purposes of this study.

The need for power validity was considered approximately ten cases per independent variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Approximately 200 students from the school were chosen for this research. With a reasonable expectation of participation, the power component to effect size was met. For the desired sample size, the equation of n> 104 + m lent a power level more than sufficient for this study (Howell, 2008). Analysis is enhanced if all variables and linear combinations are distributed normally. (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). An SPSS program can be used to determine normality (SAS Interactive Data Analysis), linearity (CANCORR), and homoscedasticity (CANCORR).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine what relationship, if any, existed between the variables of religiousness and bullying. The I/E(r) measures participants in four areas, namely intrinsic, extrinsic(p), extrinsic(m), and extrinsic(s). The Olweus Bullying Questionnaire assesses participants in the area of bullying activity, specifically victim or bully participant. To maintain the validity of both instruments, a regression on all variables and gender was completed to determine whether any relationship existed. Data was gathered at the site of the study and granted to the researcher to be used as a correlational study. The results of all hypotheses are contained within this chapter. A significance level of $p < .05$ in conjunction with a $t > 1.96$ was used to determine statistical significance.

Assumption Testing

Regression models of analysis carry with them a set of assumptions that must be tested to insure validity and reliability of results. Factors effecting the independence of observations, normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity were tested through a series of analytical techniques in SPSS. The goal of assumption testing is to determine if the results are an aspect of the variables relationship to each other or a result of the testing device itself. A Durbin-Watson analysis was conducted on the variables to determine the independence of observations. An ideal Durbin-Watson score would be between one and four, with an ideal number of two (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). This research showed a Durbin-Watson score of 2.024 demonstrating that the variable results were independent of observation.

Normality is when all variables within a given set of parameters are evenly

distributed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Outliers are those results that seem to be outside

the distribution of other results and appear off the line in a linear regression or outside of

the histogram in visual analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). In the case of significant

outliers and residuals, it is important to test for normality to determine if those outliers

and residuals are evenly distributed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). A casewise diagnostic

is often performed to determine if those outliers have a plus or minus greater than three

standard deviations. In this study, only case numbers 35 and 68 showed a higher than

plus or minus three as a standard residual; consequently, they were dropped from the

study (Warner, 2013). In addition to the casewise diagnostics being run to identify

outliers, a Cook's distance analysis was also performed. The Cook's distance analysis is a

more in-depth method of determining outliers and as long as the Cook's distance

numbers remain below one, they are considered within normal levels (Tabachnick &

Fidell, 2013). The analysis showed there were no significant outliers using the Cook's

distance analysis. Lastly, P-P and Q-Q plots analyses on the studentized residuals were

performed and revealed a normally distributed histogram.

Homoscedasticity and linearity exist to help determine if there is a linear

relationship between the variables being tested and help to ensure that variance between

variables is evenly distributed. These assumption tests also help to determine if any gross

outliers exist whether they be bivariate or univariate (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Scatterplots were created between the various subsets of variables and showed a linear

relationship between variables. Due to the nature and large numbers of variables, it is

important to test for multicollinearity. This is when one or more variables are too highly

correlated to each other and can skew the end results with their high level of relationship.

When variables correlate perfectly, they are considered to be a singularity and should be

removed from the study (Warner, 2013). The Variable Inflation Factor (VIF) test and

tolerance test were performed on the data and the results were within normal parameters.

Table 1 outlines the various data analysis tests used in this research.

Table 1-
Data Analysis Tests

Analysis	Purpose
Stepwise Multiple Regression	Determined the relationship, if any between variables.
Histograms	Measured data distribution to check for normality and outliers
Scatterplot	Determined homoscedasticity, linearity, and univariate or bivariate outliers
Cook's Distance, P-P Plot, Q-Q Plot, Casewise Diagnostic	Identified multivariate outliers for elimination and determined normality
Variance-Inflation Factor (VIF)	Identified the presence or absence of multicollinearity
t-test	Determine if the variance between two sample variables is significant

Descriptive Statistics

The following tables show the number of cases that fit within each variable

component. Table 2 examines the number of students who participated in this study by

breaking down the grade levels. The number of students per grade was indicative of some

trends found to be true in many socio-economic classes. The number of seniors is

significantly higher than the number of sixth graders. This could be the result of a

downturn in the economy or a lack of marketing to push enrollment.

Table 2
Grade (n = 192)

Grade	Participants	Percent
6.0	19 (9M, 10F)	9.9 (4.8M, 5.1F)
7.0	23 (11M, 12F)	17.2 (8.3M, 8.9F)
8.0	33 (16M, 18F)	12.0 (5.8M, 6.2F)
9.0	20 (9M, 11F)	10.4 (5.0M, 5.4F)
10.0	26 (12M, 14F)	13.5 (6.5M, 7.0F)
11.0	29 (14M, 15F)	15.1 (7.2M, 7.9F)
12.0	42 (21M, 22F)	21.9 (10.5M, 11.4F)
Total:	192	100

A total of 192 instruments where returned and were able to be analyzed. The grade level

breakdown was as follows: 9.9% were in 6th grade, 17.2% were in 7th grade, 12% were in

8th grade, 10.4% were in 9th grade, 13.5% were in 10th grade, 15.1% were in the 11th

grade, and 21.9% were in the 12th grade. There were a total of 209 assessments returned,

however, some of the assessments were not able to be analyzed. In seven cases, the

students had refused to fill out the assessments while in ten cases the assessments became

separated from each other and could not be collated together. Table 3 breaks down the

participants by gender; due to the assessments that were not able to be used, the

percentage of female and male participants was adjusted.

Table 3
Gender (n = 192)

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	92	48.0

Female	100	52.0
Total:	192	100.0

Table 4 reviews the self-reported frequencies of being a victim of bullying and being a

perpetrator of bullying. Table 4 offers a macro view of the problem, or lack thereof, with

regard to bullying in the target school.

Table 4

Bullying Reports (n = 192)

Grade	Frequency	Percent
Bully, 0	131	68.2
Bully, 1-2	53	27.6
Bully, 2-3	7	2.0
Victim, 0	112	58.3
Victim, 1-2	57	29.7
Victim, 2-3	11	6.0
Victim, once a week	7	3.6
Victim, several times a week	4	2.0

Each assessment of bully and bully victim was given a number to indicate the

number of times abuse occurred. If bullying occurred zero times, it was given the number

one to five. As Table 4 indicates, 131 or 68.2% of students indicated they had not bullied

another student. Results show that 53 or 27.6% or students indicated they had bullied

someone once or twice. Only 7 or 2% of students indicated they had bullied another

student two to three times a month. The final two categories, bullying once a week and bullying several times a week, both showed a score of zero.

The same numbering system was given to victims of bullying. Victims that reported no abuse were given a score of one. Victims that reported abuse happening several times a week were given a score of five. As the table indicates 112 or 58.3% or students indicate they have not been a victim of bullying. Of all students tested, 57 or 29.7% of students indicated they have been a victim of bullying once or twice. Of the 192 students, 11 or 6% indicated they were victims of bullying two to three times a month; seven or 3.6% of students indicated they are victims of bullying once a week; four or 2% of students indicate they are victims of bullying several times a week. Table 5 reflects the reliability statistics found with the set of religious variables (Intrinsic, Extrinsic [morality], Extrinsic [social], and Extrinsic [personal]) and the standard deviations, means, and variances of those variables within the population.

Table 5
Reliability Statistics (n = 192)

Scale	*I*	*Em*	*Es*	*Ep*
Standard Deviation	.66165	.66354	.65347	.73645
Mean	3.4819	2.6886	1.8575	2.6514
Variance	.438	.440	.427	.542

The measurable for religiousness variables were, for I an *M=3.4819* and *STD=.66165* and$\sigma^2 = .438$ on a four point scale, for Em an *M=2.6886* and *STD=.66345* and $\sigma^2 = .440$

on a four point scale, for Es an $M=1.8575$ and $STD=.65347$ and $\sigma^2=.427$ on a four point

scale, and for Ep an $M=2.6514$ and $STD=.73645$ and $\sigma^2=.542$ on a four point scale.

Results

The following research questions were asked:

RQ1. What is the relationship between adolescent females' type of religiousness

(intrinsic, extrinsic) and the initiation of an act of bullying?

This question is best answered by analysis of the less generalized hypotheses. If

any of the null hypotheses fail to be confirmed, then the answer to this question will be

yes. Only one such variable was found to have a statistically significant correlational

relationship within the confines of this study. The degree of correlation will be found

within that correlation (E(personal)-Bully) in the subset gender: female.

H$_a$1: There will be a statically significant relationship between the female types of

religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H$_0$1: There will be no statically significant relationship between the female types

of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H$_a$2: There is a statistically significant relationship between female intrinsic

religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H$_0$2: There is no statistically significant relationship between female intrinsic

religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H$_a$3: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic

(social) religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H$_0$3: There is no statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic

(social) religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H_a4: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (personal) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀4: There is no statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (personal) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H_a5: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀5: There is no statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the initiation of an act of bullying.

RQ2. What is the relationship between adolescent females' type of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and being the victim of bullying?

There were no statistically significant relationships found between bullying and religiousness within this population of females.

H_a6: There will be a statically significant relationship between the female types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and being the victim of bullying.

H₀6: There will be no statically significant relationship between the female types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and being the victim of bullying.

H_a7: There is a statistically significant relationship between female intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀7: There is no statistically significant relationship between female intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H_a8: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (social) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀8: There is no statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (social) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ9: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (personal) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀9: There is no statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (personal) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ10: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀10: There is a statistically significant relationship between female extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

RQ3. What is the relationship between adolescent males' type of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and the initiation of an act of bullying?

There were no statistically significant relationships found between bullying and religiousness within this population of males.

Hₐ11: There will be a statically significant relationship between the male types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀11: There will be no statically significant relationship between the male types of religiousness (intrinsic, external) and the initiation of an act of bullying.

Hₐ12: There is a statistically significant relationship between male intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀12: There is no statistically significant relationship between male intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H_a13: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (social) religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀13: There is no statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (social) religious tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H_a14: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (personal) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀14: There is no statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (personal) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H₀15: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (morality) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

H_a15: There is no statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (morality) tendencies and the initiation of an act of bullying.

RQ4. What is the relationship between adolescent males' type of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and being the victim of bullying?

There were no statistically significant relationships found between bullying and religiousness within this population of males.

H_a16: There will be a statically significant relationship between the male types of religiousness (intrinsic, extrinsic) and being the victim of bullying.

H₀16: There will be no statically significant relationship between the male types of religiousness (intrinsic, external) and being the victim of bullying.

H_a17: There is a statistically significant relationship between male intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀17: There is no statistically significant relationship between male intrinsic religious tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ18: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (social) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀18: There is no statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (social) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ19: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (personal) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀19: There is no statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (personal) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Hₐ20: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

H₀20: There is a statistically significant relationship between male extrinsic (morality) tendencies and being the victim of bullying.

Each hypothesis is part of a greater research question. In essence, the research is seeking to find a relationship between a set of variables (religiousness) and a singular variable (bully or victim). Each hypothesis represents a facet of this analysis. By analyzing each component of the set of religious variables, the overall research question can be answered. Towards that end, each component was individually broken down and analyzed. Table 6 reflects the contribution of the variable set of females who self-report as being bullies and religiousness variables.

Table 6

Bully, Female B	S	E	t	p
I	.003	.11	.02	.98
E(m)	-.08	.08	-.97	.33
E(s)	-.003	.09	-.03	.97
E(p)	-.18	.08	-2.24	.03

The analysis showing the contribution of the variable female *I* values with being a bullying show a *p* = *.981* and a *t* = *.023* with a *SE=. 47.* Both *p* and *t* levels exceed the significance threshold for this study. Therefore the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. The regression analysis showing the contribution of the variable female *Em* values with being a bully show a *p* = *.33* and a *t* = *-.97* with a *SE=.08.* Although the *p* level falls below the *.05* threshold for significance, the *t* level falls short of the significance threshold for this study. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. The regression showing the contribution of the variable female *Es* values with being a bullying the victim of bullying show a *p* = *.97* and a *t* =-*.03* with a *SE=.09.* The *p* level exceeds the *.05* significance level and the *t* level falls short of the *1.96* significance threshold for this study. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. The regression showing the contribution of the variable female *Ep* values with being a bullying show a *p* =-*.18* and a *t* =- *2.24* with a *STD=.08.* The *p* level falls within the *.05* significance level and the *t* level falls under the *1.96* significance threshold for this study. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected showing a moderate statistically significant result. Although most of the null hypotheses were rejected, the acceptance of one

hypothesis asserts there is a relationship between females who self-report as bullies and their views on religiousness. Table 7 reflects the contribution of the variable of females who self-report as victims of bullying and the set of religiousness variables.

Table 7

Bully Victim, Female	*B*	*SE*	*t*	*p*
I	-.26	.93	-1.19	.24
E(m)	-.007	.17	-.04	.97
E(s)	.09	.94	.46	.64
E(p)	-.11	.17	-.62	.54

The analysis showing the contributing variable female *I* values with being a victim of bullying show a *p* = *.24* and a *t* = *-1.19* with a *SE=. 93.* Although the *p* level is below the significance threshold of *.05,* the *t* level falls short of the significance threshold for this study. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. The regression showing the contributing variable female *Em* values with being a victim of bullying show a *p* = *.97* and a *t* =- *.04* with a *SE=.94.* The *p* level exceeds the *.05* significance level and the *t* level falls short of the *1.96* significance threshold for this study. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. The regression showing the contributing variable female *Es* values with being a bullying show a *p* = *.64* and a *t* = *.46* with a *SE=.94.* The *p* level exceeds the *.05* significance level and the *t* level falls short of the *1.96* significance threshold for this study. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. The regression showing the contributing variable female *Ep* values with being the victim of bullying show a *p* = *.54* and a *t* = *-.62* with a *SE=.17.* The *p* level exceeds the *.05* significance level and the *t* level falls short of the *1.96* significance threshold for this

study. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. All of the null hypotheses for

this model failed to be rejected. Therefore, the conclusion that females who self-report as

being victims of bullying have no relationship to their measurements on religiousness

was drawn. Table 8 examines the regressions for the model of males who self-report as

bullies and their measurements on the religiousness assessment.

Table 8

Bully, Male	B	SE	t	p
I	.15	.09	1.69	.09
E(m)	-.03	.09	-.36	.72
E(s)	-.05	.09	-.58	.57
E(p)	-.05	.08	-.59	.56

The analysis showing the contributing variable male *I* values with being a bully

show a *p* = *.99* and a *t* = *1.69* with a *SE=.09.* The *p* level exceeds the *.05* significance

level and the *t* level falls short of the *1.96* significance threshold for this study. Therefore,

the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. The regression showing the contributing variable

male *Em* values with being a bully show a *p* =. *72* and a *t* =-.*36* with a *SE=.09.* The *p*

level exceeds the *.05* significance level and the *t* level falls short of the *1.96* significance

threshold for this study. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. The

regression showing the contributing variable male *Es* values with being a bully show a *p*

=. *57* and a *t* =-.*58* with a *SE=.09.* The *p* level exceeds the *.05* significance level and the

t level falls short of the *1.96* significance threshold for this study. Therefore, the null

hypothesis failed to be rejected. The regression showing the contributing variable male

Ep values with being a bully show a *p* =. *56* and a *t* =-.*59* with a *SE=.08*. The *p* level

exceeds the .*05* significance level and the *t* level falls short of the *1.96* significance

threshold for this study. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. All

hypotheses for the model of males who self-report as bullies failed to have their null

hypotheses rejected. Therefore, the conclusion that there is no relationship between males

who self-report as bullies and their religiousness measurements was drawn. Table 9

examines the regression statistics for males who self-report as victims of bullying and

their religiousness measurements.

Table 9

Victim, Male	*B*	*SE*	*t*	*p*
I	.002	.13	.11	.99
E(m)	-.04	.13	-.32	.75
E(s)	-.11	.13	-.09	.93
E(p)	-.01	.12	-.11	.91

The analysis showing the contributing variable male *I* values with being a victim

of bullying show a *p* =. *99* and a *t* = .*11* with a *SE=.13*. The *p* level exceeds the .*05*

significance level and the *t* level falls short of the *1.96* significance threshold for this

study. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. The regression showing the

contributing variable male *Em* values with being a victim of bullying show a *p* =-.*75* and

a *t* =-.*32* with a *SE=.13*. The *p* level exceeds the .*05* significance level and the *t* level

falls short of the *1.96* significance threshold for this study. Therefore, the null hypothesis

failed to be rejected. The regression showing the contributing variable male *Es* values

with being a victim of bully show a *p =. 93* and a *t =-.09* with a *SE=.13.* The *p* level

exceeds the *.05* significance level and the *t* level falls short of the significance threshold

for this study. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. The regression showing

the contributing variable male *Ep* values with being a victim of bullying show a *p =. 91*

and a *t =-.11* with a *SE=.12.* The *p* level exceeds the *.05* significance level and the *t* level

falls short of the *1.96* significance threshold for this study. Therefore, the null hypothesis

failed to be rejected. All null hypotheses for the model of males who self-report as

victims failed to be rejected. Therefore, the conclusion that there is no relationship

between males who self-report as victims and their religiousness measurements was

drawn.

Summary

There were four models for measurement represented by the hypotheses. Each of

those models with the exception of females who self-report as bullies failed to show any

significant relationship. Out of the 20 hypotheses and their corresponding nulls, there was

a single relationship found to be statistically significant. This combination of variables

was the relationship between bully initiation and extrinsic (personal) religiousness within

the female population. The relationship was shown to be a negative relationship with a *p*-

value of *.03*, a *t*-value of *-2.24*, a moderate correlation, with a standard error of .08. This

statistical measurement indicated a relationship between the model of female bullies and

religiousness.

This statistic indicates that for females who initiate bullying, the religiousness

component of extrinsic (personal) has a relationship. As a female increasingly benefits

from the external expression of her faith, the instances of her initiating an act of bullying

will decrease. This seems to correspond anecdotally with research. If it is true that adolescent females are concerned with the way they are viewed by their peers then "acting out" an aspect of religiousness will certainly have a negative impact on actively bullying other students. The following chapter contains an in-depth discussion of the research results, the limitations of the research, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine what relationship, if any, existed between the variables of religiousness and bullying. Additionally, the researcher sought to determine whether the gender of the participants of the study showed any differences in their p-values and correlation coefficients. There were four models of study based on the self-reported population: males who self-report as bullies, males who self-report as victims, females who self-report as bullies, and females who self-report as victims. Each of these populations was correlated to the set of religiousness contributing variables to determine if any relationship existed. Although there were 20 hypotheses and corresponding nulls focusing on the various possible relationships, only the relationship between bully perpetrators and extrinsic (personal) religiousness measurement within the subset population of females showed any correlative relationship. All male variable comparisons and the remaining female correlations showed no statistically significant relationship. Inasmuch as no male relationship between variables was discovered, it is impossible to determine whether gender had any effect on the outcome of this study.

Discussion

Given that the study of social constructs as it relates to bullying is a new field, it is difficult to know what conclusions to draw from this study. Although, intuitively, the manner in which an individual internalizes their religion should have some influence on the manner in which they treat others and allow themselves to be treated, this was not found in this study. The research showed that people who reported a level of religiousness had less instances of risk taking behavior, less instances of immoral

behavior, and a greater level of civic responsibility (Vieno et al., 2007). Religion as a social construct is centered on the concepts of behavior modification. It was assumed that the behavior modification of adherence to religious principles would be the variable that most related to bullying (Hugen & Venema, 2009).

For centuries religion has served a purpose for people of all cultures. It is often maligned in the twenty-first century as a set of antiquated beliefs; however, there is still a large proponent of the population that believes in an organized religion of some sort. That belief is predicated on a set of beliefs that are designed to change an individual's behavior and their perspective on the world around them. It was reasonable to assume that a well-developed set of religious ideals would translate into a greater depth of understanding about the impact of bullying and effect that it can have on an individual's psyche. In this case, the research shows that there was little relationship between the variable of religiousness and being a bully or being the victim of bullying.

This research was divided into four distinct models of study. In each of the models of study, with the exception of females who self-report as bullies, there was shown to be no relationship between any of the contributing variables. However, in the model involving females who self-report as bullies, the contributing variable of Extrinsic(personal) as a religious measurement was shown to have a relationship. Although the relationship was only one contributing variable out of four, it is still conclusive enough to say that there is a relationship between bullying and religiousness, at least within the confines of this model.

When comparing the results of the study with the literature as it relates to the theories involved, the lack of results presents a problem in developing a deeper

understanding of why the study failed to determine more clear results. The theory of the mind, a social theory determining an individual's ability to notice and relate to social cues, should have been a clear illustration of results, had there been any (Shakoor et al., 2012). In short, the lack of results in this respect does not necessarily debunk the hypothesis that the two variable sets are related; it more clearly illuminated the limitations of the study as it was performed.

If the above literature is to be believed and the engagement in religious practices does change the manner in which an individual views and engages in bullying activities, then perhaps this study showed the existence of a relationship by not showing results. Out of 192 students, less than 1% reported consistent, long-term, bullying abuse. The fact that this setting was religious-based shows that the possibility of religion being a determinate in the lack of bullying must be explored. Literature shows that over 77% of students report bullying at some point in time during their school years, however, the school studied shows a significantly lower number. Although correlational research does not determine causality, it is certainly reasonable to assume that the school's religious-based curriculum, in fact, had some effect on bullying.

Therein lies the quandary with the results of this research study. While it is impossible to determine causality with this research, we must assume that there is something about this research setting that sets it apart from its peers. It is not a complete stretch to determine that something about the setting made them experience less bullying than other schools of similar size and make up. Perhaps it is the very values that make the school religious that helped to effectively eliminate higher levels of bullying. The school in question is an effective testament to the power of religion when it is applied to the task

of eliminating bullying and creating a deeper understanding of what it means to treat others with respect.

The theory of mind is a theory refers to an individual's ability to understand and predict how another person will act based on their age or the emotional situation they are in (Shakoor et al., 2012). Some studies show that students with poor theory of mind might be more likely to be bullied by their peers, as they may lack the ability to pick up nonverbal social cues that can notify them of whether their interaction is being reciprocated (Shakoor et al., 2012). Although there was no evidence of bullying in this environment, the students may evidence a greater depth of understanding with regard to their peers. Much of the theory of the mind is based on an individual's ability to predict another's behavior based on non-verbal cues of past experience. In many religious/parochial schools, the students have been together for many years. Additionally, in this research setting, the classes where small and the ability to get to know and understand one's peers is greater when there is little change in students and a small number of people to predict. Additionally, the theory of social competence may also play a factor in the results. Again, it is difficult to draw parallels because there was no evidence of bullying, however, the social competence of these students in a smaller atmosphere based on the principles of religious community and understanding could have lowered the instances of bullying (Schoffstall & Cohen, 2011). It is entirely possible that the research setting created an environment based on religious principles, which stressed community and togetherness and this gave the students the necessary level of social competence to understand the impact of bullying and therefore avoid it.

Religiousness is an outward expression of an inward belief. Much of what the world views as "religion" is seen in the actions of those professing to adhere to the tenants of a given religion's social construct. One of the guiding principles in American religious constructs is to be outwardly focused on the needy and to the giving of alms, and support for those who are in situations where they need help. Research shows that as adherence to religious activities increases, the rate of community participation increases. Participation in community improvement activities is an action based in the values of an individual's religion (Hugen & Venema, 2009). The manner in which one individual treats another is also an action born of an internal set of beliefs so the study of religious constructs and their relationship to bullying may provide similar results. The only statistically significant result was the model showing a relationship between females who initiate bullying and extrinsic (personal) religiousness. The extrinsic (p) variable is the action by which adherence to a ritual can be shown externally. In essence, it is how behaving religiously can affect the way an individual is viewed by their peers. The act of religiousness would be contrary to bullying if the principles of an individual's religion stressed togetherness and community. A person's reputation could suffer from being labeled a bully if they are also trying to be viewed as religious. Having spent a significant amount of time working with teenagers in a religious setting, the researcher expected to see a relationship between intrinsic (internally focused) religiousness and bullying activity. The researcher was surprised to note that it was only an external religiousness variable that was found to have correlation. Having a larger set of variables and a deeper instance of bullying may yield a different result.

There is an abundant oral tradition with regard to bullying. In many communities there is an aspect of hazing or bullying. At one point in time the action of bullying served a specific purpose. Society was adept at policing itself and when behavior fell outside of the realm of acceptable behavior, society would attempt to right the behavior. For example, when a person became pregnant, they were often sent away to have the child and when they returned, they were social pariahs and would not always be accepted back into the society. Although that kind of ostracism was tragic for the individual who was the victim, it did serve a vital role in curbing behavior that was dangerous or indecent.

In the present day, young people struggle to find a sense of self in a world with no boundaries. Adolescents struggle with their emotions and their own instabilities and often bullying can provide a hierarchy that can lend a level of comfort that teenagers need (Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1972). Bullying can help distract from perceived flaws and can help inflate perceived strengths. Teenagers seek definition and when society does not provide that definition and when their sense of self is threatened, they can react in negative and abusive ways.

Anecdotally, today's culture is one that is far more permissive and accepting than previous generations. Activities like premarital sex, drinking, drug abuse, and risk taking behavior have become far more acceptable. Those behaviors that would have been "punished" by a given society are now to be accepted and tolerated. Although this is an attempt by society to evolve, it becomes difficult in the face of basic human characteristics. Humans like others that are similar to themselves. Bullying served a function for society in generations past, therefore bullying is now mean-spirited and undirected. It is no longer used to police certain behaviors; rather it is now used to

demean and abuse others. While bullying has remained constant throughout the generations, it is seen in a different light now, not because of the extent of bullying, but because of society's view of bullying. This is not to say that bullying is good or right but it could also be that this one component of society, now missing, is leading to behaviors that society as a whole would wish were not a part of it. Bullying, in its current form of abuse and demeaning of others, is unconscionable, however, a society that has lost its ability to police itself and create boundaries of proper behavior may be even more so.

Limitations

The Olweus Bullying Questionnaire measures a variety of facets within the realm of bullying. However, its focus is to help schools determine whether they have a bullying problem, and if so, what the problem is and how frequently the problem occurs. The main limitation of this research study stems directly from secondary information gathered from this assessment tool. The school in question simply did not have a bullying problem. In fact, there was zero evidence of any higher order (in either frequency or severity) bullying at all. The bullying assessment bulks answers into frequency categories in the manner of a Likert-type scale. Answers to the questions regarding bully perpetration and bully victimization ranged from never, once or twice, two or three times a month, about once a week, and several times a week. With regard to bully perpetration, zero students indicated anything higher than "once or twice." In the category of bully victimization, less than 10 students indicated anything higher than "once a week."

Correlation data analysis demands a minimum number to be present in each subset of variables to determine if any statistically significant relationship exists between

variables. With the lack of higher level reporting of bullying, either as victims or perpetrators, it is unlikely that a relationship can be found within the context of this study. This is not the only limit to the study. Any study that relies on self-reporting faces an inherent limitation. This limitation is especially evident when individuals are asked to report a socially unacceptable behavior such as bullying. In addition to this already evident limitation, it becomes more pronounced when the subjects report this information in an environment where the activity violates the morals of the established social construct. The students in question all attend a religious school, where the activity of bullying is discouraged, and they all share a belief system that discourages this behavior as well. Add to this concept the fact that many students know the "right" answer to put down, and the study can encounter limitations. Although all students have their anonymity assured, there is still the possibility of deceit in reporting. Both the instruments used for testing were limited in the number of questions; therefore, test fatigue should not have been a concern.

In a culture where students are expected to behave a certain way, they will often mimic that behavior outwardly in order to fit into the culture they are a part of. It is not rare to see students who attend a religious affiliated program to espouse beliefs they may not hold dear in order to continue to be a part of that culture or to make their teaches/leaders like them. For students who have grown up in a religious environment, they will quickly learn the correct answers to questions and may parrot them when asked direct questions. This setting may be an example of that. The participants understood that bullying was "wrong" and as a religious person they are supposed to be against anything

"wrong"; therefore, they may have answered in a way that gave the impression they were either more religious than they are or less likely to bully than they are.

Research has shown that the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire works. This questionnaire is adept at ferreting out bullying problems if they exist. Statistically speaking the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire shows a high enough level of validity and reliability to determine an effective method of determining bullying. Regardless of the level of religiousness that is self-reported, I find it unlikely that a bullying problem could have been hidden in the face of this assessment. It is more likely that the students answered truthfully and there truly is not a bullying problem in this setting. Although not shocking in and of itself, the values of the setting should be considered when seeking to determine a causal relationship. This research cannot definitively say that the religious values taught to the students played a role in nullifying any bullying but neither can the research say that those same values did not have an impact. It should at least be considered that, although no relationship was found in this research, the setting itself is evidence of relationship.

The development of religiousness will be different depending on the age of the individual in question. For this research, the students varied widely in ages. There is a tremendous gap in the level of religiousness between seniors in high school and sixth graders in middle school. Although this particular variable was not measured, it was not necessary to do so. It is assumed that the students in sixth grade would have a differing viewpoint on their faith than an individual who has been exposed to it longer; however, since the assessment was self-reporting it was the student's perspective and not their

depth of knowledge that was in question. Additionally, trying to find the requisite number of students in each group to find a statistically significant number would be impossible.

Implications

Although most of the null hypotheses failed to be rejected, there was one relationship shown between variables. The variables of Extrinsic(p) and bullying in the female population did evidence a .02 correlation coefficient, which shows that there is a relationship between the variables of religiousness and bullying. While this result was a moderate result, it showed that there is at least that the possibility that a social construct can have an effect on bullying. The goal of the study was to determine whether any relationship between the variables existed and the study was a success. Most literature written has been from a psychological perspective, a preventative perspective, or a long-term effects perspective. This study sought to link groups of people in a sociological setting instead of an individual setting. If a more pronounced relationship can be found through deeper research, educators may be able to pinpoint the groups of students most likely to be in danger of being bullied or of bullying others.

Although the relationship was only found through one of the four models used for this research, it nevertheless indicates a relationship. It is worth noting that no relationship had been previously noted between these two variables prior to this study and this can certainly lay the groundwork for more study. The evidenced shows a relationship between an extrinsic variable relating to a personal agenda. This is interesting in that it was not the variable relating to a deep intrinsic need to be religious that related to bullying; rather, it was the variable having to do with the actions of religion that related to bullying. This evidence indicates that the actions of religion may

have more value in the prevention of bullying than the tenets of any given faith. Since many of the world's religions have similar practices of religion (generosity, kindness, giving, and fair treatment of others) it may be possible that it is these actions and not the rituals guiding the actions that make the difference.

The concept of religiousness, as defined by this study and the instrument used to measure it, examined both internal and external expressions of religiousness. Many of the world's major religions hold certain expressions of religiousness in common; not from a ritual perspective, but from an ideological perspective. Interestingly, the study showed a relationship between an extrinsic external variable and bullying. The external expression of religiousness was found to correlate with bullying and not the internal variables. This external focal aspect of religiousness is held in common across many religions, indicating that it is the expression of an individual's religion and not necessarily the internalized doxology and orthodoxy that drives a change in bullying behavior. This inherently would ask the question of whether morality or religiousness helps to shape the decisions of young people (Kohlberg & Power, 1981). Although religiousness may help to determine an individual's choices, their moral compass may also, and should also, play a role in their choices.

Future Research

This study in its current form left many questions unanswered. Due to a lack of sample size in each category, it is erroneous to conclude that no relationship exists between religiousness and bullying. The fact that a relationship was found makes the furtherance of this study necessary. To accurately test the hypotheses involved, a much larger sample size must be found. To find statistical significance, a minimum of 30

students must be found at each level of bully perpetration and bully victim. This number is not easy to come by if each student assessed belongs to a single homogenous group. Research shows that groups of homogenous people are less likely to report bullying. However, with the advent of the voucher system, there are now large groups of disparate people cohabitating within the same academic confines, especially in religious based schools. A sample size taken from multiple schools with a high level of voucher students, and therefore a more heterogeneous population, may yield a larger pool of students reporting bullying at the higher levels. It may take the participation of thousands of students to reach the minimum numbers, however, with adequate participation, this is certainly possible.

There is, to date, no national average for bullying within religious-based institutions. This research showed there was definitely a relationship, however, polling thousands of students to find the requisite "30" in each category may be more accurate but also more time consuming. Having a national average for religious-based bullying can answer the overarching question (whether religion effects bullying) of this study without answering the various hypotheses inherent in this study. Time and funds should be dedicated to forming a large enough response to the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire from religious-based schools to determine a national average. This average can then be compared to the national average of secular schools to make an anecdotal observation of difference. This information would also help those religious-based schools who wish to know where they rank with regard to other religious-based schools and determine the tolerance they should expect with bullying in their schools.

It would be interesting to learn if an individual's depth of religiousness would impact their perspective of bullying. Finding a large enough number of students that could participate with a similar background in terms of the level of their religiousness by grade level, would shed light on the situation. Perhaps a correlation of curriculum with grade level might prove profitable as well. Is it simply the material they are learning or is it the time spent in relationship with their faith that makes all the difference? Studies that could measure the depth of faith, which the I/E(r) does not measure, could prove interesting when looking at faith perspectives.

Given that an external variable of religiousness was the only variable found to have a relationship with bullying, a better understanding of the components of this variable bears further research. Breaking down this variable into disparate parts to find the aspect that most closely caused the relationship would prove informative. Determining this variable will also lead to a better understanding of the scope of impact for the variable. If this variable is found to be related simply to a Christian, monotheistic religion, then its scope is limited. If, however, this aspect proves to be found in many major religions, then the basis for the first religious-based bullying campaign has been laid. Over time, with enough research, it is hoped that a bullying campaign based on character development that crosses all boundaries can be created to help students that struggle daily with bullying.

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Appendix A: Olweus Bullying Survey

From: Dan Olweus
Sent: Wednesday, October 05, 2011
To: Willis, Matthew
Cc: Dan Olweus
Subject: FW: Q-materials free 2011XX

Hello-
Please find attached the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ)
materials and some publications you may find useful. Use of
OBQ should be referenced as Olweus, D. (1996). *The Revised
Olweus Bullying Questionnaire.* Mimeo. Bergen, Norway: Research Center for
Health Promotion (HEMIL), University of Bergen, N-5020 Bergen, Norway.
Good luck with your work!

(Please note that, due to copyright regulations, you are not
allowed to include a copy of the Questionnaire in a thesis/
dissertation or any other unpublished or (to be) published
materials. However, selected text portions from the Questionnaire that have
already been published, for example, in the attached Solberg & Olweus 2003 paper
can be included/published without restrictions.

For possible further inquiries, you may contact Sue Thomas
- srthomas@hazelden.org).

Kind regards

Dan Olweus

Research Professor of Psychology

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Appendix B: I-E(r) Questionnaire

I-E(R) Intrinsic Extrinsic(Revised) Religious Motivation Questionnaire

Please rate each of the items below. Tell us how much they describe what you believe. There are no right or wrong answers. Answering is voluntary and you need not answer any item you do not want to, but please answer them all if you can.

Use the following rating key:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

Please note: for the following questionnaire, "religion" refers to your personal faith and beliefs (for example Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, etc.) "Place of worship" can include church, mosque, temple, synagogue, etc.

Grade:____   Gender: M   F

1. The best thing about my place of worship is that I can meet my friends. ____

2. It is important to me to spend time in private thought and prayer. ____

3. The best time to pray is when you are really in need. ___

4. The main thing my religion gives me is help making moral decisions. ___

5. The main reason I go to my place of worship is because it helps me make new friends.___

6. It doesn't matter what I believe so long as I am good. ___

7. The main time I remember God's love is when I am in trouble. ___

8. Religions primary benefit is that it allows me to feel safe in this dangerous world. ___

9. If it weren't for meeting new people there, I would seldom attend my place of worship. ___

10. I have often had a strong sense of God's presence. ___

11. The only reason I pray is for protection against bad things happening to me. ___

12. Religion is only useful as a means of determining absolute right and wrong for me. ___

13. The main reason I attend my place of worship is to meet people my own age. ___

14. I try to live all my life according to my religious beliefs. ___

15. The main reason I pray is so that I will be protected in times of trouble. ___

16. Religion is primarily needed for a basis of good laws. ___

17. After I make new friends at my place of worship, I seldom attend the worship services. ___

18. Without religion I would struggle to find a purpose for my life. ___

19. What prayer offers me most is relief and comfort in times of trouble. ___

20. Religion mainly helps me learn more about myself. ___

21. The primary reason I go to my place of worship is to meet new people. ___

22. My religious faith in important because it answers my questions about the meaning of life. ___

23. I mainly go to my faith when I feel threatened. ___

24. What religion offers me most is comfort when sorrows and misfortunes strike.

___

25. My primary goal regarding my religious faith is to develop a strong sense of purpose in my life. ___

26. I go to my place of worship mainly to socialize with other people who belong to the same religion. ___

27. My whole approach to life is based on my religious faith. ___

28. The main reason I pray is to ask for and receive protection. ___

29. I believe in the teachings of my religion primarily so I will live a good life. ___

30. The primary reason I attend my place of worship is to meet a potential spouse.

___

31. Although I am religious, I don't let it affect my daily life. ___

32. The primary purpose of prayer is to gain relief and protection.___

33. Society should encourage religion solely because it helps keep people moral. ___

34. If I could meet equally good people someplace else, there would be no reason for me to attend my place of worship. ___

35. My religious commitment does not provide the purpose for my life. ___

36. My religion's main goal is to help me overcome challenges. ___

37. I only look to my religion for my moral standards. ___

38. I am religious solely because my faith helps me chart a path for my life. ___

39. Although I am a religious person, I refuse to allow religious considerations to influence my everyday affairs. ___

40. The primary strength of my religion is its moral standards. ___

41. Although I believe in my religion, many other things are more important in my

life. ___

42. The most important part of my religion is that it tells me how to behave

righteously. ___