RESPONDING TO BULLIES: PRIMARY INFLUENCES IN DECISIONS OF

SCHOOL DISCIPLINARIANS

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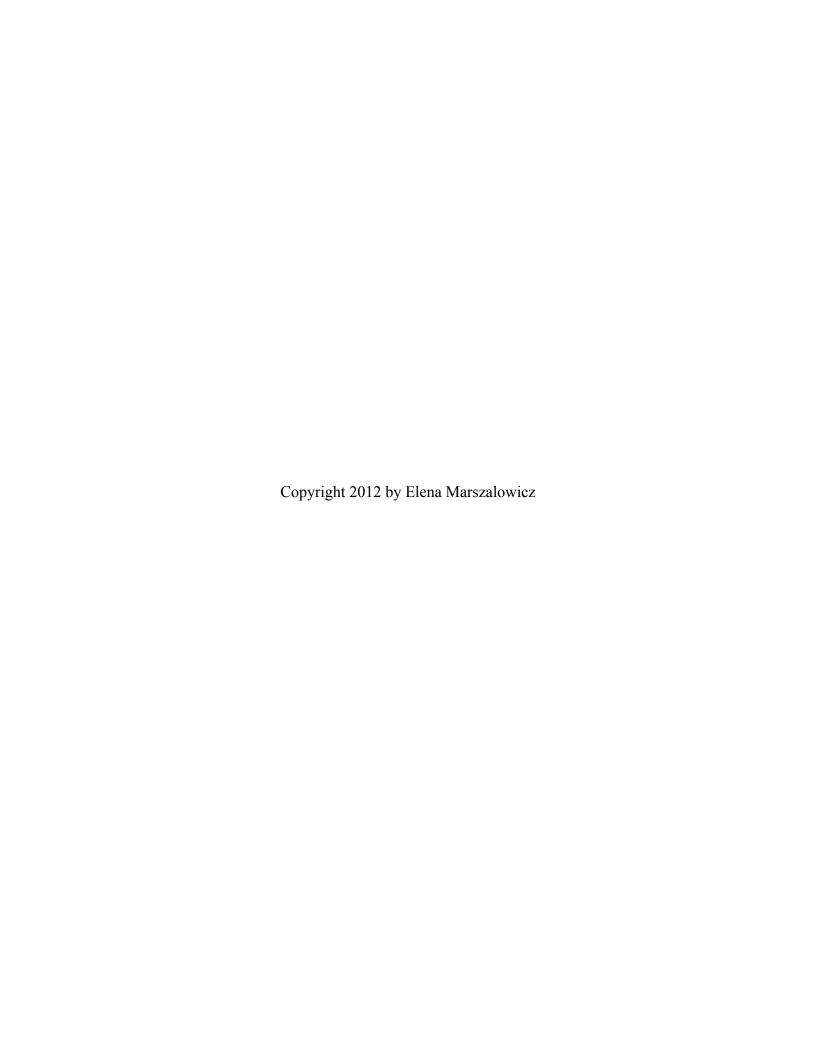THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

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ABSTRACT

School administrators are responsible for identifying and enforcing consequences for

students involved in bullying situations. Many principals and other school administrators

provide input in policies delineating consequences in schools' codes of conduct. Given

these roles, it is important to understand how these decisions are made. This paper

delineates the factors that have the greatest influence on administrator's preferred

methods of responding to bullying incidents. Subjects were recruited through New Jersey

professional associations comprised of principals, vice principals, supervisors, directors,

assistant superintendents, superintendents, and chief school administrators. An electronic

survey link was distributed to approximately 9,000 administrators. A total of 165

completed surveys were submitted. To analyze the quantitative survey data, a priori

frequency counts, t-tests, and logistic regressions were performed. A posteriori tests were

also performed including a one-way ANOVA, independent samples t-tests, and review of

the qualitative data. Findings indicated that counseling was the most popular

consequence selected in response to bullying incidents (41%). Next most popular was

detention (30%), followed closely by suspension (27%). Logistic regression results reveal

that participants who were presented with a physical bullying vignette were significantly

more likely to respond punitively than those presented with a verbal or social bullying

vignette. Findings also indicate that participants who were socially ostracized as children

were significantly less likely to respond punitively. Frequency of these types of events

was also a significant predictor. Based upon these findings, the investigator made training

and practice recommendations for New Jersey school administrators. Training

recommendations included training in response to relational aggression and effective use

of non-punitive consequences. Practice implications included administrators making their decisions based on best practice and in consideration of prevention of future events rather than avoiding conflict or minimally following the code of conduct. Implications for future research in this area included looking at the decision making process of those who are in responsible for developing district-wide codes of conduct and investigating how personality characteristics influence disciplinary decision making.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background and Rationale

When public education in America began, the founding fathers argued that

responsible citizenship was a primary goal. It was believed that concern for the common

good and citizen participation in public life were essential to the health of a democratic

system. Schools were to imbue students with a moral sense by developing reasoning

linked to just and caring behavior.

Americans' belief that the schools should play a primary role in teaching self-

discipline has not waned. As shown in a 1996 Gallup poll (Elam, 1996), 98% of the

public believed that a primary purpose of public schools should be to "prepare students to

be responsible citizens." Moreover, the poll revealed that the public was not pleased with

the way schools handle discipline problems: 70% graded the schools a "C" or lower in

this area.

The task of addressing behavioral difficulties is becoming increasingly

challenging. Schools are responsible for responding to the behavior of students that in the

past, they have been able to ignore. Compulsory education has eliminated dropping out in

the early grades and the reauthorization of IDEA (2004) has clarified that expulsion

without continued services is no longer an option for addressing the behavior problems of

students with disabilities. Additionally, the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act

(NCLB; 2001) has ushered in an era of accountability in which schools are expected to

meet federally mandated achievement criteria. Therefore, not only do administrators need

to keep students who exhibit challenging behavior in schools, they also need to keep them performing academically.

With continued public demand and escalating legal obligations, schools are increasingly in need of effective disciplinary strategies. There is an especially pressing need for strategies to address bullying. In the past two decades, awareness of school bullying has increased in the United States due to media coverage of homicide or suicide cases where bullying was a precipitating factor. Since the school shooting in Columbine, Colorado in 1999, the public's awareness of bullying and violence in the schools has been ever increasing. In 2010, more than four high-profile cases of "bullycide" (a media-coined term for suicide precipitated by bullying) held the nation's attention. In January of 2011, Governor Chris Christie signed the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights into law, spotlighting New Jersey as having what some consider the strictest bullying law on record. The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights outlined detailed procedures and timelines for investigation of and response to reported incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying. As a result of the increased media attention and legal mandates, a growing number of parents and concerned citizens are asking, "What are our schools doing to address the problem of bullying?"

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Bullying

Prevalence

Research suggests prevalence rates range from 5-75% of students being victims of

bullying (Griffin and Gross, 2004). However, most estimates fall around 30% of students

being in involved in bullying - approximately 15% as perpetrators, 10% as victims, and

5% as both (Nansel, 2001; Batsche, 1997; Due, 2005).

Defining Bullying

Much of the reason for the disparate reports of bullying prevalence is due to

inconsistent operational definitions of bullying and methods for measuring such behavior.

An established and widely used definition of bullying comes from Olweus (1993), who

defines acts of bullying as differing from general aggression in that bullying is

intentional, occurs repeatedly and in bullying, there exists a real or perceived imbalance

of power. The actual or perceived imbalance of power may present in different ways. The

student who is being bullied may actually be physically weaker or may simply perceive

himself as being physically or emotionally weaker, or as having fewer social supports

than the students who are bullying, or there may be a difference in numbers, with several

students ganging up on a single student.

More recently, this definition has expanded to include *direct* and *indirect* subsets

of aggressive behavior. *Direct* aggression is comprised of physically (e.g., hitting,

kicking, pushing) or verbally (e.g. name-calling, taunting) aggressive behaviors directed

at another individual. *Indirect* aggression, also known as "social aggression" or "relational bullying" (e.g. gossiping, spreading rumors) primarily focuses on harming interpersonal, peer relationships and can affect acceptance in specific social groups (Crick et al. 1999, Galen & Underwood 1997).

Roles

Prior to addressing those involved in bullying situations, it is important to identify each of the key players in these episodes. According to Olweus (1993) There are 5 types of participants: Bullies, Followers, Victims, Bully/Victims, and Bystanders.

A Bully is a student who wants to bully, start the bullying, or play a lead role. Followers or Henchmen are students who are positive toward the bullying and take an active part, but don't usually initiate it and do not play a lead role. Bullies tend to score high on measures of externalizing behavior: hyperactivity, impulsivity, and physical and non-physical aggression (Cho, Hendrickson, & Mock, 2009; Kumpulainen et al., 1998; Nabuzoka, 2003; Solberg & Olweus, 2003); they have higher rates of problem behaviors (Haynie et al, 2001; Nansel et al., 2001) and have poorer school adjustment in terms of academic achievement and perception of school climate (Nansel et al., 2001), yet they report having greater ease in making friends and a larger peer group (Nansel et al., 2001). Research has demonstrated that at least some bullies have good theory of mind skills (Sutton, 1999) and high social intelligence (Kaukiainen, 1999) which they use to garner social support and gain control in bullying situations.

A Passive Victim is a student who is bullied, but does not provoke the bullying or bully others in return. This type of victim tends to score high on measures of internalizing behavior: withdrawal, depression, loneliness, and inattention (Cho,

Hendrickson, & Mock, 2009; Kumpulainen et al., 1998; Nansel et al., 2001; Solberg & Olweus, 2003), is more likely to be rejected by peers, have poorer relationships with peers, have fewer friends (Hodges & Perry, 1999; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1994), and is more likely to have social skill deficits (Haynie et al., 2001; Hoover, Oliver, & Thomson, 1993; Nansel et al., 2001).

A Provocative Victim or "Bully/Victim" is a student who is bullied and bullies others. Bullying tends to be less manipulative and more impulsive in nature when perpetrated by these students. Bully/Victims have the poorest psychosocial functioning out of the three groups (Cho, Hendrickson, & Mock, 2009; Haynie et al., 2001; Kumpulainen et al., 1998). They exhibit higher rates of problem behavior, externalizing and internalizing behaviors, and lower self-control and social competence; for these reasons, Bully/Victims tend to use aggression in a retaliatory manner, rather than in a calculated manner (Pelligrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999). These children exhibit poorer school functioning, and tend to be involved with more deviant peer groups. They are most severely rejected by peers (Mishna, 2003; Pellegrini, 1998; Perry, Kusel, & Perry, 1988).

A Bystander is anyone who witnesses bullying behavior. According to Olweus (2007), there are five types of bystanders. Supporters or Passive Bullies are students who actively and openly support the bullying, for example, through laughter or by calling attention to the situation but don't join in. Passive Supporters or Possible Bullies are students who like the bullying but do not show active signs of support. Disengaged Onlookers are students who do not get involved and do not take a stand, nor do they participate actively in either direction. Possible Defenders are students who dislike the

bullying and think they should help the student who is being bullied but do nothing. Defenders are students who dislike bullying and help or try to help the student who is being bullied (Olweus et al., 2007).

<div align="center">**Addressing the Problem**</div>

Prevention

Prevention of bullying behavior may well begin at the individual level. By identifying students at risk of involvement in bullying situations, be them potential victims or aggressors, and providing these students with appropriate skill training, the schools can put a stop to bullying behavior before it begins. Researchers have found that victims of bullying who developed assertiveness skills experienced reductions in bullying, and teaching empathy to bullies has been recommended as an important component of any anti-bullying effort (Hazler, 1996; Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2003).

However, to thoroughly work to prevent bullying, schools must also look beyond the at-risk individual. Whitted (2005) suggests that the goal of the bullying prevention programs be to go beyond those students involved in bullying incidents and aim to change the culture of the school at large. Universal programs are designed to modify the school climate so that bullying becomes unacceptable and is punished whereas positive behaviors are rewarded. Instead of attempting to change one child, they aim at changing the environment of the school by providing programs that focus on enhancing awareness, improving skills of students and teachers, and changing the school policies. Researchers agree that the most effective and efficient systems for reducing the incidents of disruptive and antisocial behavior in schools are school-wide systems of behavior support (Chapman & Hofweber, 2000; Colvin & Fernandez, 2000; Horner & Sugai, 2000;

Lohrman-O'Rourke et al., 2000; Nakasato, 2000; Nersesian et al., 2000; Sadler, 2000; Taylor-Greene et al., 1997; Taylor-Greene & Kartub, 2000; Walker et al., 1996).

Intervention

With even the most comprehensive universal prevention program in place, there still exists a need for intervention strategies to respond to those incidents of bullying that continue to occur. Rigby, Smith, & Pepler (2004) argue that there are two general types of anti-bullying responses, differentiated by whether they adopt a "rules-sanctions" or a "problem-solving" approach.

The "rules-sanctions" approach focuses on setting clear rules against bullying behavior, with consequences for students who break the rules. These kinds of policies typically adopt a punitive approach and set sanctions such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or suspension from school. Those that follow the "problem-solving" approach tend to respond in a non-punitive manner. Here, a school policy is more likely to utilize approaches to bullying such as counseling, with the emphasis on empathy-building and rehabilitation of the bully rather than on blaming and punishing the bully.

The first of these two approaches, the rules-sanctions (hereafter: punitive) approach, has traditionally been the most common. Typically, rules against bullying are developed along with punitive consequences that range from nonphysical sanctions, for example, withdrawal of selected student privileges, to school suspension and expulsion. An extreme form of this, best known as "Zero Tolerance," is an approach that was made popular in the 1990's (Skiba, 1999). This style of discipline has been intended primarily as a method of sending a message that certain behaviors will not be tolerated by punishing all offenses severely (through detention, suspension, or expulsion), no matter

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how minor. In 1972, approximately 4.2% of the student population had been suspended from school at least once; (Children's Defense Fund, 1975); in 2006, that number had risen to 7% of the student population (Planty, 2009), and in 2010, that number climbed again to 11.2% (Losen, & Skiba, 2010).

As the use of exclusionary discipline rises, it is important to verify whether this approach is the right one. There are some problems with punitive approaches. First, they are inconsistent in nature with approaches to learning; when pupils make errors in their work, teachers show them where they might have gone wrong and re-teach the skills using different methods or materials. Secondly, aggressive forms of punishment can reinforce a bully's already-held views that the best way to be powerful is through aggressive methods: Administrators that use their power to punish students may be viewed as playing out a parallel process of "might makes right." Furthermore, punishment is unlikely to convert a negative relationship into a positive one and therefore has the potential to make the situation worse for victims (Duncan, 1996) and cultivate resentment in the bullies. Lastly, research has demonstrated that school suspension and expulsion appear to be effective only in removing troublesome students from school (Skiba, 2000). In fact, the most well-documented long-term outcomes of these discipline methods appear to be further suspension and eventually school dropout (Ekstrom, 1986).

Conversely, problem-solving (hereafter: non-punitive) approaches, though less popular, seem to offer more promising results. Non-punitive approaches to addressing bullying include environmental modifications, peer support models, support group approaches, and functional behavioral assessments.

Environmental Modifications work by structuring the environment in a way that limits contact between the bully and victim or establishing the presence of a bystander (a teacher or peer) who serves to deter the bully by removing his or her power. Some examples include changing the student's (target's or bully's) seat, putting the student (target or bully) in a different cooperative learning group, enlisting the support of one or two students in the class who will sit near the targeted student during class (or other activity), positioning staff in the vicinity of the bullying (hall, cafeteria, playground, etc.) so that an adult authority presence is established, enlisting another adult in the vicinity to collaborate on modifying the environment so that the problem dynamics among students can be altered, giving a perpetrator a task or responsibility that removes him or her from the vicinity of the target, and giving a perpetrator a role to play in which he or she can productively use his or her power positively, hence shifting the focus of the perpetrator's attention (Allen, 2010).

Peer support models focus primarily on improving student relationships and include such approaches as befriending and participant role approaches (Menesini et al., 2003). This type of intervention is typically comprised of teaching peer helper skills such as active listening, empathy, problem solving, and support (Smith, 2005). Such interventions involve the active participation of many students with the aim of fostering communication rather than blame among students involved in bullying; these interventions involve creation of roles and structures that enable students to act responsibly and empathically.

Befriending entails teaching peer helpers the basic skills of active listening, empathy, problem solving, and providing support to vulnerable (victimized) peers. One

of the first controlled experiments in this direction was put into practice from 1998 to 1999 in a middle school in Tuscany, Italy (Menesini et al., 2003). Three to four peer helpers were selected from each class in the experimental group to participate in eight hours of training. The foci of the training were increasing social skills and assertiveness, increasing trust and communication, and relationship building. The trained peer helpers then intervened in the class while a teacher acted as a supervisor. The program demonstrated that it was able to contain bullying behaviors and to affect the sense of indifference and apathy that often characterizes bystanders.

Support Group approaches (e.g. The No-Blame Approach, Shared Concern Method) include all participants and witnesses in a bullying event. They are brought together to build citizenship education, understanding of human rights and development of emotional literacy through increased empathy for others. These methods constitute a forward-looking approach to offending and challenging behavior, which places repairing harm done to relationships above the need for assigning blame and punishment (Bray, 2007). The Pikas Method of Shared Concern (Pikas, 2002) and The No Blame Approach (Maines & Robinson, 1998) are two examples of the support group approach.

The No Blame Approach has the following components: 1. Interview the victim, 2. Convene a meeting with the people involved, 3. Explain the problem (e.g. "Johnny has been feeling very sad at school."), 4. Share responsibility, 5. Ask the group for their ideas, 6. Leave it up to them, and 7. Meet with the group again. In a 1994 study, Smith and Sharp identified that 45 out of 47 interventions utilizing the No Blame Approach in the secondary level and 7 out of 7 in primary schools have demonstrated success.

A more behaviorally focused approach that is sometimes used is a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA, Larson et al. 2002). An FBA is a systematic process of identifying problem behaviors and the events that (a) reliably predict occurrences and non-occurrence of those behaviors and (b) maintain the behaviors across time. The purpose of gathering this information is to improve the effectiveness, relevance, and efficiency of behavior support plans and interventions (Sugai et al., 2000). If we can identify the conditions under which problem behavior is likely to occur (triggering antecedents and maintaining consequences), we can arrange environments in ways that occurrences of problem behavior can be reduced and teach and encourage behaviors that can replace problem behavior. FBAs are useful in identifying reinforcers and antecedents associated with problem behaviors such as bullying.

Decisions and School Personnel

Perceptions

In light of the fact that non-punitive, problem-solving approaches have been well demonstrated to be more effective in responding to and preventing incidents of bullying, it is unclear why more school personnel do not utilize these methods. To begin to understand this curiosity, we begin by analyzing staff members' perceptions of bullying events.

First, we must consider the factors that may influence the way staff members think about bullying. It is logical that the type of bullying (i.e. verbal, physical, relational) may make a difference in how seriously acts of bullying are perceived. Ellis and Shute (2007) found that physical bullying (spitting on someone) was rated as significantly more serious than verbal bullying (name calling), which was in-turn rated as significantly more

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serious than social bullying (dirty looks). Mynard, Joseph, & Alexander (2000) found that teacher ratings of seriousness are not consistent with objective measures of impact of bullying on students. There is increasing evidence that incidents that teachers rate least serious, social bullying, actually have the greatest negative impact on students' psychological health. However, this is not unalterable. In fact, Jacobsen and Bauman (2007) found that counselors with anti-bullying training rated indirect, or relational bullying, as more serious than those without training. So, it is not only the type of bullying that influences perception, but also whether the school staff has received training on this topic.

Staff members are also influenced by their own experiences with bullying. Bradshaw, Sawyer, and O'Brennan (2007) found that staff members' own experiences with bullying were predictive of their attitudes toward bullying. Staff members who reported being bullied as a child were more likely to think bullying was a "moderate" or "serious" problem at their school than were staff that were not bullied as children.

Staff perceptions of bullying are also associated with the grade levels of the students that attend the schools at which they work. Bradshaw et al. (2007) found that staff (teachers, school psychologists, guidance counselors) at the elementary level grossly underestimated the prevalence of victimization, while those at the middle school and high school levels were more accurate in their estimates of prevalence and impact.

Deciding Whether to Respond

Juvonen, Graham, and Schuster (Juvonen, 2003) found that although teachers understood the social context of bullying, they did not understand the best way to intervene. Many times, they considered the conflict to be the personal problem of the individuals involved rather than a problem requiring a cooperative response. Unnever and Cornell's (2003) study of bullying in the middle school reported that 20% of the 1,472 students surveyed indicated that teachers "almost never" tried to intervene in acts of bullying.

What influences whether staff will actually respond? Perceived seriousness is again the lead predictor (Yoon, 2004).

A second variable that influences whether teachers respond is their personal characteristics, including level of empathic abilities and greater perceived self-efficacy. Bradshaw et al. (2007) found that staff with greater efficacy for handling bullying situations were more likely to intervene and less likely to make the bullying situation worse. Dedousis-Wallace and Shute (2009) found that a teacher's empathic ability was correlated with likelihood of responding to an incident of indirect bullying, but empathic ability was not correlated with likelihood of responding to an incident of direct bullying.

Again, training and knowledge of bullying and its impact plays a role. Dedousis et al. (2009) found that increased knowledge about the nature and potential detrimental impact of indirect bullying did not impact likelihood of intervening in indirect bullying but did increase the likelihood of intervening in verbal and physical bullying. Jacobsen and Bauman (2007) found that counselors with anti-bullying training rated relational

bullying as more serious and were more likely to intervene in relational bullying incidents than were those without training.

Victim-Blaming, or considering the victimized child as responsible, influences whether staff intervene. Mishna et al. (2005) note that some teachers are less likely to intervene when they believe the victim has done something to cause the victimization.

The school climate or nature of the school environment also influences whether they intervene. Teachers are less likely to intervene if they do not have the time or support of the administration, and if the school environment is "rougher" in general, bullying doesn't stand out (Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, & Wiener, 2005).

Deciding How to Respond

It is logical to conclude that staff members' perceptions of incidents of bullying also influence their preferred methods of responding. Past research has established that perceived seriousness of individual incidents of bullying significantly influences response methods. Rigby (2002) found that schools tend to respond more punitively when the bullying acts are perceived as being more serious. Ellis & Shute (2007) also found that these perceptions of seriousness impacted whether and how they would intervene; teachers assign more punitive consequences to events that are interpreted as being more serious, and tend to prefer non-punitive responses to events they consider to be less serious.

Age may also influence preferred responses. Harris and Conley (Harris & Conley, 2006) reported that most principals believed that to decrease bullying on their campuses, some form of punishment should be applied immediately and automatically to the bully and this appeared to be more so for older principals than for younger principals.

Aims of this Study

Having an understanding of how teachers respond to and think about bullying incidents is important. However, in practice it seems that school administrators are responsible for identifying and enforcing consequences for students involved in such situations. Hope (2002) states, "Principals are key in virtually every aspect of school life." The perceptions beliefs and attitudes of a principal determine whether new policies, practices, and other initiatives will be successfully implemented within a school. As principals and other school administrators tend to provide input in policies delineating consequences in schools' codes of conduct, and principals and other administrators by and large enforce the disciplinary policies, it becomes of interest what influences these individuals as they make decisions about disciplinary policy and practice. Unfortunately, there seems to be limited, if any, research available that investigates what influences disciplinary decisions made by school principals and administrators. It is the aim of this paper to delineate what factors have the greatest influence on administrator's preferred methods of responding to bullying incidents.

Research Questions

Q1: What are the most common practices in responding to incidents of bullying?

We predict that the most common practices will be punitive in nature, including detention, and suspension.

Q2: What are the primary influences in administrators' decision-making when selecting preferred responses to incidents of bullying?

We predict that the factor most strongly associated with selection of consequences for students who have engaged in bullying is the type of bullying: physical, verbal, or relational. Participants will be more likely to utilize punitive consequences for physical and verbal events than for relational events. It is also hypothesized that perceived seriousness will be predictive of response type. That is, the more serious participants perceive the event to be, the more likely they are to assign a punitive consequence. It is also hypothesized that age of the participant will be predictive of response type, with older participants being more likely to respond punitively than younger participants.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

Subjects were school administrators. They were recruited through the New Jersey Association of School Administrators or the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, which are professional associations comprised of principals, vice principals, supervisors, directors, assistant superintendents, superintendents and chief school administrators. An advertisement was distributed through email to members of these professional organizations. All subjects were required to agree to participate in the study after reading an information sheet. A participant was excluded if he/she was under age 18, did not agree to the terms of the study, or was not a school administrator. The electronic survey link was distributed to approximately 9,000 administrators. A total of 165 completed surveys were submitted.

Materials

Measure of Response

The measure of response to bullying situations was specifically designed for this study. Participants were first presented with a randomly assigned vignette describing either a physical, verbal, or relational bullying incident involving two youths. They were then asked to answer a series of questions regarding perceptions of and hypothetical responses to the bullying vignette described. These included: 1) level of perceived seriousness, 2) perceived responsibility of victim, 3) perceived efficacy in responding to the event 4) level of comfort responding to the event 5) frequency of the event in the

responder's school. Each of the preceding constructs was presented with an associated Likert scale (e.g. "Strongly Disagree," "Strongly Agree").

Next, respondents were asked to select only one method of responding, given a selection of possible responses including non-punitive (or reparative) consequences (e.g. "modify the student's environment," "refer the student to a group focused on empathy-building activities") and punitive consequences (e.g. "assign the student a detention," "suspend the student"). Participants were asked to explain their reasoning for selecting their responses.

Next, in order to gain information about responses that are actually used in schools, respondents were asked to select among the same list of response types those which they have used to respond to similar events in the past. Here, they were permitted to select more than one response type. Participants were asked to explain their reasoning for selecting their responses.

Measure of Empathy

The participants were then presented with the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI, Davis, 1980). The IRI is a 28-item questionnaire designed to measure dispositional empathy. The instrument contains four seven-item subscales, each tapping a separate facet of empathy. The perspective taking (PT) scale measures the reported tendency to spontaneously adopt the psychological point of view of others in everyday life (e.g. "I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective"). The empathic concern (EC) scale assesses the tendency to experience feelings of sympathy and compassion for unfortunate others (e.g. "I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me"). The personal distress (PD) scale

taps the tendency to experience distress and discomfort in response to extreme distress in others (e.g."Being in a tense emotional situation scares me"). The fantasy (FS) scale measures the tendency to imaginatively transpose oneself into fictional situations (e.g."When I am reading an interesting story or novel, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me"). We obtained a total global empathy score by averaging three of the subscales (Empathic Concern, Perspective Taking and Fantasy), as recommended by Davis (1980). All subscales have satisfactory internal and test-retest reliabilities (Davis, 1980). The current total score internal reliability was good (Cronbach's alpha = 0.81).

Demographics

Participants completed a brief questionnaire to provide non-identifying information about the participant's age, ethnicity, training and professional background, and setting of current practice, including state of practice, size of school, age of students serviced, and socio-economic status of students serviced. Participants were also asked to identify whether they had personally experienced incidents like those described in the study vignettes, as a victim of name-calling, physical bullying, or social ostracism.

<div align="center">

Data Analyses

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The study used a within-participants design. Dependent variables were (a) hypothetical response to bullying situations and (b) past response to bullying situations. The predictor variables were (a) type of bullying vignette presented (b) perceived seriousness (c) perceived victim responsibility (d) comfort disciplining the bully (e) perceived efficacy (f) frequency of event (g) experience as victim of bullying (h) age of responder (i) previous training (j) global empathy scores (k) size of school.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

To analyze the quantitative survey data, a priori frequency counts, t-tests, and logistic regressions were performed. Frequency data provides information about past use of disciplinary practices. T-tests were used to compare means between groups. A series of logistic regressions were used to identify those factors that had the most influence over the outcome variable.

Upon looking at the results of the analyses, we decided that it would be of interest to conduct exploratory analyses. These included a one-way ANOVA, independent samples t-tests, and review of the qualitative data. Alpha levels were set at .05.

Data Screening

Dependent variable responses (hypothetical response to vignette and past responses to similar scenarios) were coded as "punitive" if they focused on only punishment (e.g. detention, suspension, expulsion) and "non-punitive" if they offered an outcome that consists of remedial benefits, including repair of relationships, skill-building, or environmental changes (e.g. counseling, group referral, functional behavior assessment). Responses that offered neither (e.g. "no response", n=4) were not included in the analysis.

Participants

A total of 165 completed surveys were submitted. Of those that responded, 50.9% described themselves as "principals," 24.8% as "supervisors," 19.4% as "assistant principals," 2.4% as "superintendents," and 1.8% as "assistant superintendents." Of these, 81.2% responded that selecting consequences for students who bully is one of their job responsibilities. Ninety-eight percent report that they practice primarily in New Jersey. Fifty-four percent were female; forty-six percent were male. The most represented age range was age 56-60, with 20% of respondents in this category. The second-most represented age range was 41-45, with 16%. Eighty-two percent reported having had previous training on this topic. Ninety-one percent of respondents identified as White/Non-Hispanic, 4.2% as African American or Black, 1.8% as Latino or Hispanic American, and 1.8% as Other.

Forty-seven percent report working with elementary aged children, 58% with middle school aged children, and 48%, high school. Ninety-five percent reported working in a public school system. Fifty-four percent reported working in a middle-class district, 20% in a high SES district, and 23% in a low SES district. Number of students in the respondent's charge ranged from 41 to 10,500, with a mean size of 1,538.

Of the 165 participants, 40% received Vignette 1, "physical bullying," 29% were assigned Vignette 2, "verbal bullying," and 31% received Vignette 3, "relational bullying."

Sixty percent of respondents indicated that they were bullied as children. 55.8% were verbally bullied, 15.8% were physically bullied, and 18.8% were socially bullied.

Past Response Types

In order to find the most common responses to bullying events, frequency counts were taken for responses to past events similar to those presented in the vignettes. These results are provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Frequency counts and percentages of responses to past bullying events

Past Response\Vignette	Physical	%	Verbal	%	Social	%	Sum	
No response	2	3%	0	0%	2	4%	4	2.4%
Modify [bully's] environment (e.g. move her seat, change schedule to reduce encounters with [victim])	14	20%	9	18%	9	17%	32	19.4%
Refer [bully and victim] to Peer Mediation	22	31%	12	24%	8	15%	42	25.5%
Refer [bully] for individual counseling	30	43%	19	38%	19	35%	68	41.2%
Refer [bully] to a group focused on empathy-building activities	11	16%	5	10%	7	13%	23	13.9%
Refer [bully] for Social Skills Training to enhance problem-solving skills	7	10%	7	14%	4	7%	18	10.9%
Conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment to identify the function of [bully's] behavior	3	4%	1	2%	3	6%	7	4.2%
Assign [bully] a Detention	20	29%	18	36%	12	22%	50	30.3%
Suspend [bully]	24	34%	10	20%	12	22%	46	27.9%
Expel [bully]	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	1	0.6%
Other	9	13%	14	28%	17	31%	40	24.2%
I have not encountered a similar incident in the past.	12	17%	8	16%	9	17%	29	17.6%

Hypothetical Response Types

Table 2 provides the results of an independent samples t-test in order to compare means of the independent variables, grouped by whether the respondents selected punitive hypothetical consequences or non-punitive consequences for the vignettes presented.

Table 2
Independent samples t-test mean comparisons of independent variables, sorted by
dependent variable, hypothetical response

	Non-Punitive	Punitive	Total	T-Test		
	M	M	M	t	df	Sig.
Physical Bullying Vignette	**0.3363**	**0.5897**	**0.40**	**-2.84**	**150**	**0.005**
Verbal Bullying Vignette	**0.354**	**0.1795**	**0.31**	**2.27**	**80.96**	**0.026**
Relational Bullying Vignette*	0.3097	0.2308	0.29	0.97	71.36	0.334
Serious Problem*	4.49	4.21	4.41	1.30	49.70	0.199
Victim Responsibility*	1.57	1.72	1.61	-0.94	54.37	0.351
Comfort Disciplining	4.35	4.54	4.39	-1.21	150	0.229
Efficacy	3.88	4.00	3.91	-0.8	150	0.425
Freq. of Event*	**2.64**	**2.90**	**2.70**	**-2.23**	**97.65**	**0.028**
Verbally Bullied	0.58	0.49	0.56	1.04	150	0.296
Physically Bullied*	0.14	0.23	0.16	-1.17	56.67	0.245
Socially Bullied*	**0.23**	**0.05**	**0.18**	**3.34**	**125.10**	**0.001**
Age	6.24	6.03	6.19	0.59	148	0.559
Elementary	0.56	0.44	0.53	1.36	149	0.175
Middle	0.40	0.44	0.41	-0.37	149	0.711
High	0.47	0.56	0.50	-0.97	149	0.331
Previous Training	0.82	0.85	0.83	-0.35	149	0.727
Number of Students	1518.43	1382.92	1482.72	0.36	146	0.717
Years as Admin	2.51	2.69	2.56	-0.77	149	0.442
SES	1.97	2.00	1.98	-0.22	147	0.826
IRI - FS	12.7	12.31	12.60	0.47	150	0.638
IRI - PT	20.26	19.36	20.03	1.44	150	0.151
IRI - EC	21.11	20.72	21.01	0.59	150	0.556
IRI - PD	5.77	5.49	5.70	0.45	150	0.651
IRI-Global	18.02	17.46	17.87	1.03	150	0.305

*Levene's test of equal variances was significant. Equal variances were not assumed.

Means differed significantly between groups of punitive and non-punitive respondents for several variables. Respondents that answered punitively were more likely to have received a physical or verbal vignette than those that responded non-punitively.

Those that selected punitive responses were also significantly more likely to have rated the event as happening more frequently in their school or school district. Finally, those that selected punitive responses were significantly less likely to have indicated that they were socially bullied as children.

Measure of Influence

Because the criterion variable is dichotomous (punitive or non-punitive), a simultaneous logistic regression was used to model the participant's decision to respond punitively or non-punitively. The predictor variables in the first step of the analysis are (a) physical vignette (coded 1=physical 0=non-physical) (b) perceived seriousness of the event (1= Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree) (c) age of the respondent. Results of the logistic analysis indicate that the 3 predictor model provides a statistically significant improvement over the constant-only model, χ^2 (3, N=150) = 11.49, p<.01. The Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 indicated that the model accounted for 10.8% of the total variance. Prediction success for the cases used in the development of the model was relatively high, with an overall prediction success of 73.3% and correct prediction rates for 98.2% of those responding non-punitively and 2.6% of those responding punitively. Table 3 presents the regression coefficients (B), the Wald statistics, significance level, odds ratio [Exp(B)], and the 95% confidence intervals (CI) for odds ratios (OR) for each predictor. The Wald tests reports that only the event type being physical is a statistically significant predictor of response type.

The influence of this event type is strong; respondents presented with a physical vignette were 3.19 times (CI=1.47, 6.928) more likely to respond punitively than those that were not, adjusting for perceived seriousness and age.

Table 3

Logistic regression results for predicting whether responses to bullying events are punitive or non-punitive using event type, perceived seriousness, and age as independent variables

Variable Entered	B	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% CI for Exp(B)	
					Lower	Upper
Physical Bullying Vignette	1.160	8.604	.003	3.191	1.470	6.928
Serious Problem	-.324	2.992	.084	.723	.501	1.044
Age	-.093	.881	.348	.911	.750	1.107
Constant	.404	.152	.696	1.498		

Because the Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 statistic indicates that the model only accounts for 10.8% of the total variance, we added more variables to the model in order to increase our predictive power. Other variables that are theoretically supported to have influence over decision making are: (a) the vignette being verbal (coded 1=physical 0=non-physical), (b) perceived victim responsibility (1= Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree), (c) comfort disciplining (1= Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree), (d) perceived efficacy in responding to the event (1= Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree), (e) frequency of the event (1=never, 5=always), (f) participant verbally bullied as a child (coded 1=bullied, 0=not bullied) (g) participant physically bullied as a child (coded 1=bullied, 0=not bullied) (h) participant socially bullied as a child (coded 1=bullied, 0=not bullied) (i) years as an administrator (j) grade level of students taught (k) previous training (coded 1=trained, 0= not trained) (l) number of students in the respondent's charge (m) empathy score, with higher scores meaning the participant is more empathic.

Results of the second logistic analysis indicate that the 18 predictor model provides a statistically significant improvement over the constant-only model, χ^2 (18, N=150) = 35.791, p<.01. The Nagelkerke pseudo R^2 indicated that the model accounted

27

for 31.4% of the total variance. Prediction success for the cases used in the development of the model was relatively high, with an overall prediction success of 79.1% and correct prediction rates for 91.7% of those responding non-punitively and 43.6% of those responding punitively. This is a significant improvement over the 3-predictor model. Table 4 presents the regression coefficients (B), the Wald statistics, significance level, odds ratio [Exp(B)], and the 95% confidence intervals (CI) for odds ratios (OR) for each predictor. The Wald tests reports that the respondent having been socially bullied as a child is the only predictor of response type found to uniquely contribute to the model's predictive success.

In this model, the influence of having been socially ostracized is strong; respondents that reported having been socially bullied were 9.24 times (Exp(B)=.106, CI=.017, .654) more likely to respond non-punitively than those that were not, adjusting for other included variables.

Table 4
Logistic regression results for predicting whether responses to bullying events are punitive or non-punitive using event type, perceived seriousness, comfort, efficacy, frequency, experience being bullied, age, years as administrator, grades taught, previous training, number of students, and empathy score as independent variables

Variable Entered	B	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)	
					Lower	Upper
Physical Bullying Vignette	1.108	3.700	.054	3.028	.979	9.362
Verbal Bullying Vignette	-.661	1.016	.313	.516	.143	1.866
Serious Problem	-.392	2.819	.093	.676	.428	1.068
Victim Responsibility	.178	.330	.566	1.194	.651	2.191
Comfort Disciplining	.160	.290	.590	1.174	.656	2.100
Efficacy	.174	.336	.562	1.190	.661	2.143
Freq. of Event	.714	3.747	.053	2.042	.991	4.206
Verbally Bullied	-.071	.022	.881	.931	.367	2.362
Physically Bullied	1.104	2.896	.089	3.018	.846	10.767
Socially Bullied	-2.246	5.841	.016	.106	.017	.654
Age	-.268	2.792	.095	.765	.558	1.048
Years as Admin.	.209	.779	.377	1.233	.775	1.961
Elementary	-.187	.130	.718	.829	.300	2.292
Middle	-.246	.207	.649	.782	.271	2.253
High	.303	.248	.619	1.353	.411	4.458
Previous Training	1.116	2.869	.090	3.054	.839	11.112
Number of Students	.000	.424	.515	1.000	1.000	1.000
IRI Global	-.010	.018	.894	.990	.855	1.146
Constant	-2.696	.985	.321	.067	-	-

Importantly, it may be that other variables in the model actually have significant and unique contributions that could not be discovered due to the low sample size. Pedhazur (1997) suggests using at least 30 times as many cases as parameters being estimated in order to avoid making this Type II Error.

Exploratory Analyses

As seriousness was the predictor with the most theoretical support, it was of interest to analyze why it was not statistically significant among any of the aforementioned analyses. Table 5 shows the average Likert scale ratings for perceived seriousness, efficacy, victim responsibility, comfort level disciplining, and frequency of the event in the respondent's school, categorized by the vignette are presented.

Table 5
Average Likert responses by vignette

	M Physical Vignette (n=66)	M Verbal Vignette (n=48)	M Relational Vignette (n=51)
1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree			
This is a serious problem for Christine.	4.42	4.42	4.35
Christine is responsible for what has happened to her.	1.65	1.60	1.47
I feel comfortable disciplining Lisa.	4.62*	4.31*	4.18*
I believe that if I can be effective in preventing Lisa from behaving like this in the future.	3.98	4.0	3.78
1=Never, 5=Always			
Events like this _____ take place in my school.	2.64	2.83	2.73

ANOVA *p<.05

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of vignette on the above dependent variables. There was a significant effect of vignette on level of comfort disciplining at the p<.05 level [$F(2, 162) = 4.315$, p = .015]. However, there was no significant effect of vignette on perceived seriousness, victim responsibility, efficacy, or frequency.

To explore this further, independent samples t-tests were conducted. Here, we discovered that participants that received the physical bullying vignette felt significantly more comfortable disciplining than those that did not receive this vignette, $t(163) = -2.829$, $p < .01$, and participants who received the social bullying vignette felt significantly less comfortable disciplining than those that did not receive this vignette, $t(163) = 2.197$, $p < .05$.

To gather more information about quantitative results, non-structured qualitative analyses were completed. First, the explanations of hypothetical response provided for those who indicated that they had been socially ostracized as children and selected non-punitive responses were analyzed. Four themes emerged: "I do not see this as serious," "I want to prevent future incidents," "I do not want to create conflict," and "I am following protocol." The qualitative responses can be seen in Table 6.

Next, the explanations of hypothetical response type provided for those who were assigned Vignette 1: Physical Bullying and also selected punitive consequences. In this response set, two clear themes emerged: "Conflict involving physical contact warrants/mandates a punitive response," and "[The bully] must be disciplined." These responses are seen in Table 7.

Table 6
Responses of those that indicated they had been socially ostracized as children

"I do not see this as serious"
1. There is no imbalance of power. It appears that the girls are fooling around. No feelings are hurt.
2. In your scenario, you didn't mention if one of the boys was Lisa's friend, or if this is a first for Lisa
3. I don't have enough information to place full blame on Lisa. There may be extenuating circumstances that would make changes to the environment or counseling options.

"I want to prevent future incidents."
1. As a Guidance Supervisor, I feel that Christine has some underlying self esteem issues that are causing this behavior.
2. I feel the only way to solve these issues it is to get to the root of where the student's anger is and try to help them make better decisions or control their emotions in the future.
3. Lisa needs to be educated about the damage she is doing and how this could easily happen to her.
4. Lisa needs to know that what she's doing is wrong. Detention won't do it, but professional staff members addressing it will let her know it's wrong.
5. The reflection is conducted by a staff member who leads the student through certain questions about their behavior; and asks the student to reflect on their behavior, what was wrong with it, and what to do instead. The Social Skills would be conducted by the guidance counselor to provide directions for the student to be able solve a similar problem appropriately.
6. Lisa needs to develop empathy and understand the implications of her actions, if she is not a repeat offender, this would be my 1st choice
7. I believe that this incident is probably the result of jealousy that a new student has quickly become so popular. Learning to empathize with others and to see her actions from their perspective might help to avoid similar incidents in the future. I do not this merits the level of intervention of individual counseling.
8. Immediate result, quick reduction of interaction would be first, then mediation and empathy groups.

"I do not want to create conflict."
1. This leaves more serious options if this does not work.
2. A discussion and first response should not involve what many perceive as over-reacting.
3. Begin with establishing a relationship with Lisa to see if there are some issues that can be addressed quickly with a little intervention or if there are more significant issues and behaviors that need to be addressed through an FBA.
4. Students need to take responsibility for their actions and work out the reasons they behave as such. If this is a first time activity I would not be comfortable escalating this initial behavior to disciplinary action.
5. would be ongoing to help prevent future incidents
6. First time act then give her the benefit of the doubt she does not realize the seriousness of her comments.

Table 6 – continued

"I am following protocol."
1. The first administrative action is usually peer mediation. However in a bullying situation, this may change.

Table 7

Explanations of hypothetical response type provided for those who were assigned
Vignette 1: Physical Bullying and also selected punitive consequences

"Conflict involving physical contact warrants/mandates a punitive response."

1. This is our policy for physical violence
2. Lisa had "illegal use of her hands" in pushing Christine into a locker......had it been verbal threats alone, then peer mediation would have been the course of action
3. Our school's code of conduct includes not touching another student. It would be helpful to conduct the FBA to see if there are other issues, but this is bullying behavior.
4. She is in violation of our district anti bullying policy and aloes got physical with another student which are grounds for suspension . I would also follow up with some of the other choices and hold conferences with the parents and students.
5. This is a violation of the discipline code. After my intervention with both students Lisa needs a consequence. In our code the first offense for this type of action is detention.

"[The bully] must be disciplined."

1. Lisa needs to be disciplined for pushing another student, therefore a detention. But she also need to understand that her behavior is inappropriate, hence the counseling choices.
2. While there is a need for follow up to potentially change Lisa's thinking and therefore modify future behaviors, it is critical that she be disciplined for this first.
3. At no time are pupils allowed to use their hands on each other. This must receive a consequence.
4. A disciplinary action is strongly needed to teach the student that this type of behavior is not appropriate or tolerated. Ideally, it would be an in school suspension.
5. The offense is serious enough that there needs to be a message sent that it is not tolerated. The lesser reactions kind of do that. I would also follow up with a restorative conference after the suspension
6. You cannot allow physical violence to occur in the school at any cost. Both girls would have had a consequence.
7. Lisa must not be permitted to bully Christine and it should be dealt with immediately.
8. Suspension = discipline - 1st Message that needs to be given is: this behavior is unacceptable & will not be tolerated.
9. While I believe I would assign a detention, the most important thing is remediation. Counseling will provide an avenue for the student to discuss the behavior

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of the Findings

Research Question 1: What are the most common practices in responding to

incidents of bullying?

We predicted that the most common practices will be punitive in nature, including

detention, and suspension. Table 1 displays frequency counts and percentages for

responses to past events similar to those presented in the vignettes. In this study, the most

popular response to similar past events was to refer the student who bullied for individual

counseling (41%). Next most popular was to assign the student a detention (30%),

followed closely by suspension (27%). Contrary to hypotheses, non-punitive responses

were more popular than punitive responses. However, in a more detailed analysis of the

results, it is apparent that many respondents selected both punitive and non-punitive

responses to be assigned in conjunction with one-another. Only 6 respondents (3.6%) that

selected detention and suspension did so without adding a non-punitive response. This

may indicate that although detention, suspension, and expulsion rates are up (Losen, &

Skiba, 2010), so are the use of non-punitive, more reparative approaches such as

counseling.

Of note, 25% of respondents selected peer mediation as a response type. Peer

mediation involves teaching students a nonviolent method through which to resolve

conflicts. Students trained in mediation act as neutral third parties in resolving

nonphysical disputes among students. The aim is to reduce conflict by enabling students

to resolve disagreements and misunderstandings before these escalate into full-blown conflicts. Research demonstrates that peer mediation is unsuitable for bullying due in large part to the power differential between the child who bullies and the child who is victimized. Educators and researchers must appreciate this distinction and the significant difference between relatively equal power conflicts and the power differential that exists in bullying behaviors (Mishna, 2008).

Research Question 2: What are the primary influences in administrators' decision-making when selecting preferred responses to incidents of bullying?

We predicted that the factor most strongly associated with selection of consequences for students who have engaged in bullying is the type of bullying: physical, verbal, or relational. Participants will be more likely to utilize punitive consequences for physical and verbal events than for relational events. It was also hypothesized that perceived seriousness would be predictive of response type. That is, the more serious participants perceive the event to be, the more likely they are to assign a punitive consequence. Lastly, we hypothesized that age of the disciplinarian would be predictive of response type, with older participants being more likely to respond punitively than younger participants.

Logistic regression results reveal that, without controlling for other predictor variables, the event type being physical contributes significantly to the model. This confirms our hypotheses. Secondary regression analyses, however, demonstrate that the contribution made by vignette type does not contribute uniquely to the model, when controlling for other predictors, indicating that the perceived seriousness, efficacy, comfort disciplining, and frequency of the event may explain the influence of the event

type. The only variable to uniquely contribute to the model in the second step of the logistic regression is that which tells us whether the participant was socially bullied as a child. This finding was of particular interest, as past experience with social bullying has not been specifically looked at in past research. In order to find more information about this anomaly, we looked at qualitative responses of those participants that indicated that they had been socially ostracized as children.

Personality Characteristics

Administrators who were socially ostracized as children were significantly less likely to respond punitively. In order to further investigate this finding, a qualitative analysis was performed, looking specifically at the explanations provided by those respondents who indicated they had been socially bullied as children and who had selected a non-punitive method of responding. Looking at the qualitative responses in Table 6, it appears that administrators who were social outcasts as children are looking to avoid conflict, repeating the relational patterns of their childhood. One respondent wrote: "A discussion and first response should not involve what many perceive as over-reacting." and another, "Begin with establishing a relationship with [the bully] to see if there are some issues that can be addressed quickly with a little intervention." Therefore, it is not that administrators who were socially ostracized as children necessarily want to provide counseling, it's that they do not want to create conflict by punishing the student who bullied.

Zapf (1999) found that individuals with deficient social skills, who actively avoid conflict, and who have pre-existing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and negative affect, are more likely to be ostracized. Others note that "easy targets" for ostracism include

employees who are shy, submissive, unassertive, introverted, and who have low levels of self-esteem (Aquino & Byron, 2002). Therefore, the same conflict-avoidant personality that made these individuals likely to be socially ostracized as children could also influence decisions made regarding disciplinary practices on a regular basis.

Influence of Codes of Conduct

Literature suggests that the strongest and best predictor of staff response is perceived seriousness of the event. Contrary to the hypothesis, ANOVA results indicate that ratings of seriousness do not predict significant differences in hypothetical response types.

Additionally, there was no significant effect of vignette on perceived seriousness, victim responsibility, efficacy, or frequency. Participants responded similarly to all three event types in the questions of perception. Although the seriousness ratings do not differ across vignette types, responses do. Respondents were significantly more likely to select a punitive response type if the vignette involved physical aggression or direct verbal aggression as opposed to social aggression. Looking at qualitative responses, it appears that district codes of conduct indicate that once an event becomes physical, certain responses are required to occur. This may be one reason why, if the respondents do not view physical bullying as more serious than other types, they respond significantly differently. One respondent wrote, "Our school's code of conduct includes not touching another student," and another, "She is in violation of our district anti bullying policy and also got physical with another students which are grounds for suspension."

Also of interest, administrators did differ significantly in their levels of comfort disciplining. They were most comfortable disciplining physical events, likely because the

consequences are clearly delineated in the codes of conduct (e.g. physical altercation = suspension). The way the respondents wrote about their responses was as if they had no choice in the matter. Responses seemed automatic and based on practice, without thought or reasoning.

Frequency

The frequency of the event in the respondent's school(s) was a significant predictor of response type. We believe that the more frequent these types of events, the more difficult it is to assign and follow through with more complex disciplinary practices such as counseling. The use of punitive measures is less draining on school resources.

Limitations of this Study

Because the participants in this study were not recruited through a random sampling method, the results are vulnerable to the self-selection bias. It may be that respondents in this survey find bullying to be more important or more interesting and therefore may know more about the subject.

Another concern in this study is the small sample size, as there were only enough participants to run a logistic model with 5 predictors without being dangerously susceptible to committing Type II Error. Therefore, it may be that there are predictors that are uniquely influential to the decision making process of selecting responses to bullying events, but we were unable to discover these due to low statistical power.

Implications for Practice

Based on the results of this study, administrators should be aware of their own conflict-avoidant tendencies when selecting responses to incidents of bullying. They should make their decisions based on best practice and in consideration of prevention of

future events rather than avoiding conflict or minimally following the code of conduct. It

is important for those who implement district Codes of Conduct to realize that the

dynamics of a bullying situation are similar, regardless of the presence of a physical or

verbal threat, and they should therefore be dealt with in a similar manner. Lastly, it is

important that schools and school districts have the time and staffing resources to address

incidents of bullying thoroughly, especially in those environments in which bullying is a

frequent occurrence.

Implications for Training

Administrators must be trained in the appropriate use of peer mediation. 25% of

participants indicated that they have used peer mediation in the past to deal with real life

events like those presented in the vignettes. This is concerning as it may lead to greater

negative outcomes for the victims of bullying.

Administrators should also be encouraged to utilize non-punitive, or reparative,

responses in conjunction with punitive responses. New Jersey's bullying law requires

responses to bullying incidents to include remedial actions, thereby changing the focus of

the response from one of punishment to one of reparation and prevention of future events.

As 99% of the respondents in this sample are practicing in NJ, it is disappointing that all

of the respondents have not selected remedial actions, or non-punitive responses, in

conjunction with punitive consequences in their responses to past events, and this must be

changed.

Importantly, administrators should be trained in responding to incidents of

relational aggression so that they will feel more comfortable intervening and do so

appropriately. Administrators' responses indicated that they did not feel comfortable

responding to an incident of relational aggression. Past research has demonstrated that this is the most harmful type of bullying, and it therefore must be addressed appropriately. Trainers would do well to ensure that administrators have a good understanding of the dynamics involved in an incident of relational aggression and the most useful intervention and prevention strategies to limit the number of events taking place in their schools.

Implications for Future Research

We are unaware of any research that has been done to specifically link personality characteristics, aside from empathy, with disciplinary decision making in schools. It is of interest that those who were socially ostracized as children respond differently to incidents as adults, and further research in this area may lead to useful information regarding decision making and training of school personnel.

It would also be of interest to take this type of research one step up in the chain of command in school districts, looking at the decision making process of those who are in charge of developing district-wide codes of conduct. Past research has looked at decision making in teachers, and this study focused specifically on school administrators. It seems that even at this level, individuals feel as though they often do not have a choice in responding due to what is written in their codes of conduct. Future research may allow us to look into influential factors in the process of designing codes of conduct that result in administrators responding in effective, reparative, preventative ways.

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APPENDIX A: STUDY ADVERTISEMENT

Hello,

I am asking for your help in completing my dissertation research study, which seeks to provide information on decisions about responding to school conflict.

Participation involves completing a survey on-line which should take about 15 minutes. In addition, you may also elect to enter a drawing to win a $50 Visa or American Express gift card.

To participate and learn more about the purpose and procedures of the study, please cut and paste the following link into your web browser:

[link]

Thanks!

APPENDIX B: INFORMATION SHEET

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
INFORMATION SHEET

<u>Survey on Responses to School Conflict</u>

You are invited to participate in a dissertation study being conducted by researchers at Rutgers University. The purpose of this research is to understand school administrators' attitudes regarding interventions and consequences to address school conflict.

Approximately 200-300 school administrators will participate in the study. You will be asked to read 1 brief vignette and answer some questions about your views on the people described. You will also be asked to answer some questions about your interactions with others followed by a few brief demographic questions.

If you choose, you may be entered into a drawing to win one (1) **$50 Visa gift card**. If you do not complete the survey, you will not be able to enter the drawing. **It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete the entire study.**

Your answers will be **anonymous** and will not be linked to you in any way. There are no foreseeable risks to participation in this study. The study may produce valuable information about disciplinary practices to address bullying in schools.

Your participation in this study is **voluntary**. You may choose not to participate in this study and if you do choose to participate, you may change your mind and stop working on the survey at any time without any penalty to you. In addition, you may skip any questions you choose.

If you have any questions about the study procedures, you may contact Elena Marszalowicz, Ed.M. at lenamari@eden.rutgers.edu or Lew Gantwerk, Psy.D. at gantwerk@rci.rutgers.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at:

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
Tel: 732-932-0150 ext 2104
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

You may print a copy of this consent form for your records.

Click "I agree" below if you agree to participate in this research study.
o I agree to participate in this research study.
o I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.
o I certify that I am a school administrator and I have not already participated in this study.

APPENDIX C: SURVEY

Instructions: Please read the vignette below. Then answer the following questions.

[Scenario 1]
A new girl, Christine, has just transferred to your school. Within a week, she has become rather popular among some of the older boys. One day, while getting ready for gym class, Christine says that she is surprised that several boys have already asked her out. Lisa, one of her classmates, feels jealous. Lisa pushes Christine into a locker and tells her leave the boys alone or she's "going to get it." The other girls laugh. Lisa, bolstered by the response, takes to pushing Christine into a wall or locker every time they pass in the hallway. Other students watch and laugh.

    1.   This is a serious problem for Christine.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree Nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

    2.   Christine is responsible for what has happened to her.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree Nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

    3.   I feel comfortable disciplining Lisa.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree Nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

    4.   I believe that if I can be effective in preventing Lisa from behaving like this in the future.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree Nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

    5.   Events like this _____ take place in my school.

Never   Almost Never   Sometimes   Almost Always   Always

Instructions: For question 6, you may want to select more than one answer choice. While this is understandable, please do your best to select only the answer choice that describes what you believe to be the best way of responding.

    6.   A teacher sees Lisa behaving this way and sends her to your office. You investigate and find that the above information is true. Select <u>one</u> way of responding to Lisa that you think is <u>best</u>:
        • No response
        • Modify Lisa's environment (e.g. move her seat, change schedule to reduce encounters with Christine)
        • Refer Lisa and Christine to Peer Mediation
        • Refer Lisa for individual counseling
        • Refer Lisa to a group focused on empathy-building activities
        • Refer Lisa for Social Skills Training to enhance problem-solving skills

- Conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment to identify the function of Lisa's behavior
- Assign Lisa a Detention
- Suspend Lisa
- Expel Lisa
- Other _____

- Explanation _____

7. If you have responded to a similar incident in the past, how have you responded (you may select more than one option)?
    - I have not encountered a similar incident in the past.

    - No response
    - Modified the student's environment (e.g. move her seat, change schedule to reduce encounters with Christine)
    - Referred the student and peer to Peer Mediation
    - Referred the student for individual counseling
    - Referred the student to a group focused on empathy-building activities
    - Referred the student for Social Skills Training to enhance problem-solving skills
    - Conducted a Functional Behavior Assessment to identify the function of Lisa's behavior
    - Assigned the student a Detention
    - Suspended the student
    - Expelled the student
    - Other _____

    - Explanation _____

8. If your answers for questions 6 and 7 are different and you'd like to provide further explanation, you may do so here:
   _____

[Scenario 2]
A new girl, Christine, has just transferred to your school. Within a week, she has become rather popular among some of the older boys. One day, while getting ready for gym class, Christine says that she is surprised that several boys have already asked her out. Lisa, one of her classmates, calls her a "slut," and the other girls laugh. Lisa, bolstered by the response, takes to calling Christine similar derogatory names every time she sees her. Other students watch and laugh.

1. This is a serious problem for Christine.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree Nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

2. Christine is responsible for what has happened to her.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree Nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

3.   I feel comfortable disciplining Lisa.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree Nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

4.   I believe that if I can be effective in preventing Lisa from behaving like this in the future.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree Nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

5.   Events like this _____ take place in my school.

Never   Almost Never   Sometimes   Almost Always   Always

Instructions: For question 6, you may want to select more than one answer choice. While this is understandable, please do your best to select only the answer choice that describes what you believe to be the best way of responding.

6.   A teacher sees Lisa behaving this way and sends her to your office. You investigate and find that the above information is true. Select <u>one</u> way of responding to Lisa that you think is <u>best</u>:
   • No response
   • Modify Lisa's environment (e.g. move her seat, change schedule to reduce encounters with Christine)
   • Refer Lisa and Christine to Peer Mediation
   • Refer Lisa for individual counseling
   • Refer Lisa to a group focused on empathy-building activities
   • Refer Lisa for Social Skills Training to enhance problem-solving skills
   • Conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment to identify the function of Lisa's behavior
   • Assign Lisa a Detention
   • Suspend Lisa
   • Expel Lisa
   • Other _____

   • Explanation _____

7.   If you have responded to a similar incident in the past, how have you responded (you may select more than one option)?
   • I have not encountered a similar incident in the past.

   • No response
   • Modified the student's environment (e.g. move her seat, change schedule to reduce encounters with Christine)
   • Referred the student and peer to Peer Mediation
   • Referred the student for individual counseling
   • Referred the student to a group focused on empathy-building activities

- Referred the student for Social Skills Training to enhance problem-solving skills
- Conducted a Functional Behavior Assessment to identify the function of Lisa's behavior
- Assigned the student a Detention
- Suspended the student
- Expelled the student
- Other _____

- Explanation _____

8. If your answers for questions 6 and 7 are different and you'd like to provide further explanation, you may do so here:
_____

[Scenario 3]

A new girl, Christine, has just transferred to your school. Within a week, she has become rather popular among some of the older boys. One day, while getting ready for gym class, Christine says that she is surprised that several boys have already asked her out. Lisa, one of her classmates, feels jealous and starts rumor that Christine has been sexually involved with several boys from her old school. Lisa and her friends regularly call Christine a "slut" in front of their schoolmates and give Christine dirty looks as they pass her in the hallway. As a result, Christine sits alone at lunch and has found it very difficult to make friends.

1. This is a serious problem for Christine.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree Nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

2. Christine is responsible for what has happened to her.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree Nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

3. I feel comfortable disciplining Lisa.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree Nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

4. I believe that if I can be effective in preventing Lisa from behaving like this in the future.

Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Neither Agree Nor Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

5. Events like this _____ take place in my school.

Never   Almost Never   Sometimes   Almost Always   Always

Instructions: For question 6, you may want to select more than one answer choice. While this is understandable, please do your best to select only the answer choice that describes what you believe to be the best way of responding.

6. A teacher sees Lisa behaving this way and sends her to your office. You investigate and find that the above information is true. Select <u>one</u> way of responding to Lisa that you think is <u>best:</u>
   - No response
   - Modify Lisa's environment (e.g. move her seat, change schedule to reduce encounters with Christine)
   - Refer Lisa and Christine to Peer Mediation
   - Refer Lisa for individual counseling
   - Refer Lisa to a group focused on empathy-building activities
   - Refer Lisa for Social Skills Training to enhance problem-solving skills
   - Conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment to identify the function of Lisa's behavior
   - Assign Lisa a Detention
   - Suspend Lisa
   - Expel Lisa
   - Other _____

   - Explanation _____

7. If you have responded to a similar incident in the past, how have you responded (you may select more than one option)?
   - I have not encountered a similar incident in the past.

   - No response
   - Modified the student's environment (e.g. move her seat, change schedule to reduce encounters with Christine)
   - Referred the student and peer to Peer Mediation
   - Referred the student for individual counseling
   - Referred the student to a group focused on empathy-building activities
   - Referred the student for Social Skills Training to enhance problem-solving skills
   - Conducted a Functional Behavior Assessment to identify the function of Lisa's behavior
   - Assigned the student a Detention
   - Suspended the student
   - Expelled the student
   - Other _____

   - Explanation _____

8. If your answers for questions 6 and 7 are different and you'd like to provide further explanation, you may do so here:
   _____

[INTERPERSONAL REACTIVITY INDEX (IRI)]

The following statements ask about your thoughts and feelings in a variety of situations. For each item, show how well it describes you by choosing the appropriate number on the scale at the top of the page: 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. When you have decided on your answer, fill in the letter in the blank next to the item. **READ EACH ITEM CAREFULLY BEFORE RESPONDING.** Answer as honestly and as accurately as you can. Thank you. (*Italics are reverse scored items*)

ANSWER SCALE: **1**   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

DOES NOT	DESCRIBES ME
DESCRIBE ME WELL	VERY WELL

__ 1. I daydream and fantasize, with some regularity, about things that might happen to me.

__ 2. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.

__ 3. *I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other guy's" point of view*.

__ 4. *Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems*.

__ 5. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel.

__ 6. In emergency situations, I feel apprehensive and ill-at-ease.

__ 7. *I am usually objective when I watch a movie or play, and I don't often get completely caught up in it.*

__ 8. I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision.

__ 9. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.

__ 10. I sometimes feel helpless when I am in the middle of a very emotional situation.

__ 11. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.

__ 12. *Becoming extremely involved in a good book or movie is somewhat rare for me.*

__ 13. *When I see someone get hurt, I tend to remain calm.*

__ 14. *Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.*

__ 15. *If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments.*

__ 16. After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters.

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__ 17. Being in a tense emotional situation scares me.

__ 18. *When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them.*

__ 19. *I am usually pretty effective in dealing with emergencies.*

__ 20. I am often quite touched by things I see happen.

__ 21. I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.

__ 22. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.

__ 23. When I watch a good movie, I can very easily put myself in the place of a leading character.

__ 24. I tend to lose control during emergencies.

__ 25. When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his shoes" for a while.

__ 26. When I'm reading an interesting story or novel, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me.

__ 27. When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I go to pieces.

__ 28. Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.

29. Were you bullied as a child? If so, select all that apply.
- I was not bullied as a child.
- I was called names.
- I was physically bullied.
- I was socially ostracized.

Please provide some information about yourself.

1. What is your title at your school?
   - Superintendent
   - Assistant Superintendent
   - Principal
   - Assistant Principal
   - Other _____

2. Selecting consequences for students who bully is one of my job responsibilities. True / False

3. Gender: Male   Female

4. Age: 21-25   26-30   31-35   36-40   41-45   46-50

                              51-55   56-60   61-65   66-70   71+

5. Your ethnic group (please check all that apply):

   a) White, non-Hispanic   _____

   b) African American or Black   _____

   c) Asian or Asian American   _____

   d) Latino or Hispanic American   _____

   e) Other ethnic group   _____   Which one?   _____

6. State of Practice: _____

7. Highest degree obtained: Associate's   Bachelor's   Master's   Doctorate

8. Number of years employed as a school administrator: 1-5   6-10   11-15   16-20   21+
   _____

9. Grade levels where services provided(select all that apply):

   Pre-K   Kindergarten   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

10. Have you received previous training in responding to incidents of bullying?   Yes   No

   If yes, what is the nature of the training you received (select all that apply)?

   a)
   Workshop   _____

   b)
   Coursework   _____

   c)
   Supervised
   practice   _____

   d) Other   _____   What
                                                kind?   _____

11. Is your school   Other: __
    (circle):   Private   Parochial/Religiously
    Public   Affiliated

12. Please
    estimate the
    total number
    of students
    enrolled in
    your school or
    schools.   _____

13. Which best fits
    your
    perception of
    your school's
    socio-   Low   Middle   High
    economic
    status (SES)?

Thank you for participating in our study! To enter a drawing for a $50 Visa Gift Card, please
send your contact information to rutgersbullyingstudy@gmail.com.