

**Teachers' Perceptions on the Identification of Cyberbullying and
Intervention Methods in Nevada Middle Schools: A Qualitative Study**

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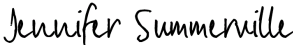
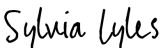
Approval Page

Teachers’ Perceptions on the Identification of Cyberbullying and Intervention Methods in Nevada Middle Schools: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Cyberbullying remains a significant issue in school environments, impacting students of diverse backgrounds. The problem addressed by this study was that despite the proven effectiveness of traditional bullying interventions within the school environment, the ability of teachers to identify incidents of cyberbullying and apply intervention methods is deficient. The purpose was to enhance teachers' awareness of cyberbullying and improve their efficacy by exploring perceptions of training adequacy. This study employed a qualitative exploratory case study approach guided by Bandura's social learning theory, which delved into how teachers acquire knowledge and behaviors related to cyberbullying and emphasized the social context of learning. Interviews were conducted via Zoom, with eight, sixth through eighth-grade teachers providing answers to semi-structured qualitative interview questions. Data were analyzed using NVivo, resulting in nine key themes, including the prevalence of cyberbullying, effectiveness of current training, and best practices and successful interventions. Three research questions guided the study: RQ1: What are teachers' perceptions of the extent of cyberbullying in their school? RQ2: What are teachers' perceptions about the current anti-bullying training's efficacy within their school district? RQ3: What is needed to improve the effectiveness of existing cyberbullying training? The findings unanimously acknowledged the prevalence of cyberbullying among middle school students, emphasizing its pervasive nature. Furthermore, 87.5% of participants underscored the importance of training delivery, highlighting its critical role in addressing cyberbullying effectively. Additionally, teachers' recommendations, emphasizing the integration of restorative justice practices and the promotion of student-led initiatives, were revealed. These align with prior research, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive training and support systems for teachers and accentuating the significance of nurturing positive relationships and

fostering accountability among students. Recommendations for future research include developing innovative training modules, personalized learning approaches with mental health professionals, and comprehensive long-term evaluations of engaging delivery methods and collaborative resource networks for educators. This study highlights the pivotal role of educators in fostering a safe environment and recommends the development of comprehensive training programs and collaborative initiatives to address cyberbullying effectively. The results contribute valuable insights for future research to refine training methods and foster collaborative networks in schools.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Bullying in the community and schools has become more prevalent, resulting in an increased incidence of suicide and suicidal attempts. With more national and international news channels covering such events, public attention and growing worry within academia have grown (Hymel & Swearer, 2015; Wang et al., 2020). One out of every three school-aged children between the ages of 12 and 18 is bullied throughout the school year (Patchin, 2015; Wang et al., 2020). Bullying incidents tend to peak during the middle school years, with a reported victimization rate of 26.7% (Wang et al., 2020).

Any purposeful electronic, written, or spoken communication and/or transmission and any bodily gesture or threat that causes property damage, physical/emotional harm, fear of property damage, or physical/emotional harm are considered bullying behavior (Whisman, 2017). Bullying behaviors can occur both within and outside of school in the surrounding communities, including a power imbalance. Bullying episodes of a social type are more commonly connected with female perpetrators, whereas physical attacks are more commonly associated with male perpetrators. Many of the physical assaults include physical harm and property destruction, theft, and verbal assaults (Katapally et al., 2018).

As technological advancements increase, new dynamics emerge regarding methods utilized in bullying incidents. These methods, including online interactions, create a challenge for schools and increase the strain of ensuring that the school environment is safe for all children (Green et al., 2017; Kallman et al., 2021). Cyberbullying is just as harmful to victims' mental and emotional well-being as physical or traditional bullying (Fischer et al., 2021). On the other hand, teachers are more inclined to address physical bullying occurrences than social or cyberbullying incidents (Burger et al., 2015, Fischer et al., 2021). Cyberbullying can be difficult to manage

because it can happen anywhere, including online gaming, social networking platforms, online classes, and text messaging or short message services.

As a result of shared characteristics and principles, including the intent to harm, imbalance of power, and repetitive incidents, cyberbullying intervention is often approached in traditional bullying (Smith, 2019). However, despite these similarities, there is recognizable difficulty in applying typical traditional bullying interventions compared to cyberbullying since the publicity factor of cyberbullying can be unrestrictive and long-term due to the qualities that are unique to cyberbullying (Macaulay et al., 2020). These qualities include anonymity, the unpredictability of occurrence, and wide publicity reach (Berger, 2013; Kallman et al., 2021). Lowered self-esteem, deterioration in student academic achievement, suicidal tendencies, and a negative impact on a school's environment and community have all been associated with cyberbullying (Brewer & Kerslake, 2015; Lohbeck & Petermann, 2018; Patchin & Hinduja, 2019) and the detrimental impacts of bullying engagement on social and educational results have been found to remain even into young adulthood (Wolke et al., 2013; Kallman et al., 2021).

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed by this study was that despite the proven effectiveness of traditional bullying interventions within the school environment, the ability of teachers to identify incidents of cyberbullying and apply intervention methods is deficient (Gaffney et al., 2019). Since most bullying incidents occur within a school environment, school-based programs aimed at prevention and intervention are critical for reducing bullying among students (Wang et al., 2020). To effectively handle the issue of cyberbullying, it is necessary to comprehend teachers' viewpoints on the adoption of strategies for preventing and intervening in incidents that affect children (Li & Pustaka, 2017; De Luca et al., 2019). Teachers' perspectives and motivation

in implementing prescribed measures may be the key to maintaining a safer school climate and providing solace to bullying victims. It is imperative to understand teachers' perceptions regarding training received and the motivation regarding their willingness or ability to intervene in cyberbullying incidents. It is also important that teachers understand and utilize effective strategies regarding intervention and implementation of anti-cyberbullying situations within the classroom environment and be equipped with the necessary tools (De Luca et al., 2019).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to promote teachers' awareness of cyberbullying and improve their efficacy in implementing intervention methods by investigating their perceptions of the adequacy of the training provided for preventing and addressing cyberbullying incidents in their classrooms. The research occurred within an urban school district in Nevada. The research design utilized was a qualitative methodology. Utilizing this approach allowed me to obtain data from several sources, draw conclusions based on the data, and offer better insight into a phenomenon via observation of its representations (participating individual and/or group subjects and/or various sources such as events and programs). The qualitative methodology approach was utilized to gain a better understanding of the perspectives of current middle school teachers regarding the adequacy of cyberbullying training received within their school district. The qualitative data for this study were collected via the participants' responses to semi-structured interview questions, which were open-ended, to obtain information regarding experiences and various points of view (Alpi & Evans, 2019).

The target population consisted of sixth through eighth-grade teachers from one local county middle school. The principal was contacted via telephone to request a list of emails for the teachers at the school. Once the email list was obtained, an email invitation was sent to the

teachers on the email list. In this single case study, eight sixth through eighth -grade teachers were chosen to be interviewed confidentially regarding perceptions of training and confidence levels and the execution of intervention methods, as interviews are important tools for collecting data within qualitative research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In qualitative research, data saturation is often attained with 5 to 25 participants, according to Creswell and Creswell (2018). As such, eight participants were adequate for this study. The participants were interviewed via the Zoom videoconferencing platform, and the interviews were recorded (with their agreement), transcribed, and evaluated. Along with reviewing literature regarding training and intervention methods for bullying/cyberbullying within the Nevada school system, the participant's responses were examined to determine if any patterns or themes emerge that led to specific conclusions that answered the research questions (Yazan, 2015). In addition to being encrypted and digitally stored, all data is electronically safeguarded with a password.

According to Rakic et al. (2021), while other forms of bullying are easier to address, cyberbullying can be problematic as it occurs on various social media and online platforms and can ultimately occur in any location. This research aimed to ascertain whether Nevada teachers need additional professional development regarding the identification of cyberbullying situations and the implementation of anti-cyberbullying strategies.

Introduction to Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used for this study was the social learning theory. The social learning theory created by Bandura in 1977 included the following components: self-efficacy, observation, imitation, and modeling (Bandura et al., 1977). The application of the social learning theory was useful in obtaining a better understanding of teacher perceptions regarding their ability to identify and address cyberbullying incidents. According to the theory, learning

happens due to a common relationship between an individual and their distinctive behavior, the individual himself, and observations made in the environment and surrounding events (Bandura et al., 1977; Smith, 2021). Exploring whether information learned during anti-bullying training, observations, and/or direct experience with cyberbullying incidents within the school environment is sufficient to implement intervention methods effectively is imperative to preventing and/or lessening occurrences within their classrooms.

Self-efficacy, as defined by Bandura (1993), is a person's confidence in their ability to behave in the manner needed to achieve defined goals. Perceived efficacy has been identified as a common process through which psychosocial factors produce their effects, according to Bandura (1977). Individuals with a high degree of self-efficacy also can control the amount of effort required to achieve goals and overcome challenges or threats. While self-efficacy affects mental health, moods, and individual choices, an individual's personal beliefs regarding their level of self-efficacy in stressful conditions are linked to both the ability to cope and manage stressful thought processes (Bandura 1988). Self-efficacy judgments play a role in selecting how to act in various situations. People will take on challenges they believe they can handle while avoiding ones they fear they would fail at (Ferreira et al., 2019). Self-efficacy has an impact on every aspect of human life. Therefore, teachers' behaviors in situations where cyberbullying is observed are impacted by the individual's beliefs and attitudes regarding the specific motivation to take the necessary action required to obtain the desired outcome. The additional components, which include observation, imitation, and modeling are components of the learning process whereby development is exhibited by behaviors associated with modeling (Bandura, 1993; Schultz & Schultz, 2017). Observations by teachers who either witness or experience positive actions taken by other teachers to combat cyberbullying may help ensure that similar corrective

actions are imitated. As a result, modeling is achieved. According to Bandura (1993), with positive feedback, self-efficacy is expected to improve, leading to increased successful interventions and the motivation to duplicate responses that will achieve goals via effective intervention. According to the theory, the perspectives and opinions of individuals are often shaped by what is observed or experienced. Therefore, as teachers are at the forefront of identifying bullying incidents within the school environment, their perspective regarding the implementation and enforcement of anti-bullying policies is vital to improving policies and recommendations that are better suited to counter bullying behavior (Burk et al., 2019). Additionally, Shadmanfaat et al. (2020) posit that students who witness positive intervention or change by observing teachers taking direct action are more likely to react positively to intervention methods. This theoretical framework aimed to provide information and assistance based on teachers' assessments of cyberbullying experiences to determine if current school regulations are insufficient or generally not implemented.

Introduction to Research Methodology and Design

Researchers can obtain data from individuals through qualitative studies using interviews and documentation (Unicomb et al., 2015). Teachers' perspectives of their competence or readiness to intervene in cyberbullying situations were investigated using a qualitative exploratory case study research design. According to Chalmers and Cowdell (2021), the purpose of qualitative research is to gain a better understanding of people's experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.

Yin (2018) describes a case study as involving the scope and characteristics of the study, as well as the logic of design, data collection methods, and the application of an efficient and effective means of data analysis. It is a form of qualitative descriptive research that looks at

societal phenomena and phenomena occurring within individuals and groups of individuals.

When the controls between the phenomena and actual conditions are not apparent, a case study is an experimental inquiry that can be used to analyze an established phenomenon occurring during real-world scenarios (Yin, 2018). Case studies can explain events or behaviors that may or may not be relevant to the question but occur throughout time and cannot be disregarded (Yin, 2018). In addition, case study research examines only a portion of the phenomenon rather than the full phenomenon. Researchers can use the exploratory research design method to obtain additional insights based on the collected data, test theories in comparable situations, and familiarize themselves with new emerging concerns (Baron & McNeal, 2019). The case study research approach was appropriate for understanding teachers' perspectives regarding the implementation of cyberbullying interventions. As a result, the exploratory case design was ideal for this research.

In this study, I conducted interviews containing semi-structured and open-ended questions. Conducting in-depth interviews with people with direct, firsthand experience with a phenomenon is a very effective data collection strategy (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The participants' replies to the interview questions were used to obtain detailed information regarding their experiences, and varied points of view and first-person accounts were examined (Alpi & Evans, 2019).

Research Questions

RQ1.

What are teachers' perceptions of the extent of cyberbullying in their school?

RQ2.

What are teachers' perceptions about the current anti-bullying training's efficacy within their school district?

RQ3.

What is needed to improve the effectiveness of existing cyberbullying training?

Significance of the Study

Within the school environment, teachers, administrators, and staff may have a greater influence on the way students in middle school deal with incidents of cyberbullying, both during and after school (Bandura, 1993), and interviewing teachers regarding their perspectives on cyberbullying will assist with determining the reasons that enable cyberbullying incidents to persist. Cyberbullying victimization among students in the United States attending middle school ranges from 22.6% to 36.1% for females and 12.1% to 20.5% for males, according to the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System's 2019 report (Leemis et al., 2019). To ensure that policies and programs are designed to prevent bullying incidents within schools effectively, teachers need to understand the factors associated with increased cyberbullying incidents among students (Brochado et al., 2021).

The significance of this study is the potential to assist teachers with recognizing incidents of cyberbullying within the school environment and intervening, when necessary, by implementing anti-bullying intervention methods aimed at deterring further incidents. Teachers are influential in the lives of students. It is important to understand the perceptions of teachers regarding his/her motivation to react or not react to apparent incidents of cyberbullying and how prior training influenced his/her decision (Burk et al., 2019). This study is a positive addition to the body of cyberbullying research, as it explores the perceptions of teachers regarding the

adequacy of the training received on interventions used to prevent cyberbullying as well as whether additional professional development is needed to strengthen their ability to identify cyberbullying and effectively implement intervention methods that will reduce cyberbullying within their classrooms, potentially leading to reduced student behavioral problems.

Utilizing the qualitative research methodology with an exploratory method provided insight into factors, such as individual experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that were, in addition to training, also influential in how teachers respond to cyberbullying incidents (Chalmers & Cowdell, 2021). The aim of this study was also to assist with creating and maintaining a safer school environment by identifying any gaps between training and practice, ensuring that teachers maintain continual awareness of the nature and consequences of cyberbullying, and ensuring that teachers are equipped with the necessary tools to implement intervention methods that may decrease cyberbullying in the school (Ng et al., 2022). Additionally, this study is expected to give stakeholders insight into prospective improvements that could help to prevent cyberbullying.

Definitions of Key Terms

Bullying

Bullying is hostile, repetitive, intentional behavior involving a power imbalance targeted toward a person or group of people who cannot protect themselves. Such behavior may include physical contact or written or verbal communication (Espelage, 2019).

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is hostile, repetitive, intentional behavior involving a power imbalance targeted towards a person or group of people via online platforms used to disseminate electronic, written, or verbal communication via the use of e-mail, social media, images, digital messages,

online gaming, etc., which is directed toward individuals or groups who cannot protect themselves (Espelage, 2019).

Perception

Perception is the process of organizing, identifying, and interpreting sensory information or information received via the senses such as hearing, vision, taste, smell, and touch. People use perception to make sense of the things they see, feel, hear, touch, and experience in the world(Keenan, 2020).

Social Media

Social media refers to internet-based applications and websites that encourage large-scale sharing, communication, and engagement of user-generated content (Cooper, 2022).

Summary

The problem addressed by this study was that despite the proven effectiveness of traditional bullying interventions within the school environment, the ability of teachers to identify incidents of cyberbullying and apply intervention methods is deficient (Gaffney et al., 2019). Global bullying incidents have risen over the years, especially with the availability of online methods used to disseminate information (Hinduja & Patchin, 2022a). The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to promote teachers' awareness of cyberbullying and improve their efficacy in implementing intervention methods by investigating their perceptions of the adequacy of the training provided for preventing and addressing cyberbullying incidents in their classrooms. Determining if there are gaps between training and the implementation of the intervention methods will assist in creating a safer school environment and identify if the anti-bullying training received is effective (Ware, 2021).

To better understand whether cyberbullying training received is adequate, it was important to explore teacher perceptions regarding the training and their abilities to identify cyberbullying behaviors and intervene and implement anti-bullying methods (Burk et al., 2019). Understanding teachers' perspectives regarding the resolution of conflict caused by incidents of cyberbullying is important to the success of students within the classroom environment. A teacher's motivation to act or not to act on cyberbullying behavior may depend on the confidence level of the teacher based on the training received and his/her understanding of cyberbullying. The exploratory case study design and qualitative methods were utilized in this study to collect data from sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade teachers in a Nevada school district. The data collected from the interviews were utilized to obtain a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding cyberbullying training and determine if additional training is needed for the identification and intervention of cyberbullying incidents.

The results of this study are a significant and positive addition to the body of cyberbullying research. It explored teachers' perceptions regarding the adequacy of the training received on interventions to prevent cyberbullying. Additionally, the results of this study have the potential to assist teachers with recognizing incidents of cyberbullying within the school environment and intervening, when necessary, by implementing anti-bullying intervention methods aimed at deterring further incidents.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem addressed by this study was that despite the proven effectiveness of traditional bullying interventions within the school environment, teachers' ability to identify cyberbullying incidents and apply intervention methods is deficient (Gaffney et al., 2019). Research shows no school environment is immune to bullying based on physical characteristics, gender, color, age, religion, or poverty (Moosa, 2020). An increase in disturbing conflicts within the school environment, including tragedies resulting in school shootings, has continued to raise concerns about the safety of students and the prevention of cyberbullying (Das et al., 2019). Therefore, teachers must successfully convey anti-bullying attitudes to students and combat such incidents within the school environment (Wachs et al., 2019).

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to promote teachers' awareness of cyberbullying and improve their efficacy in implementing intervention methods by investigating their perceptions of the adequacy of the training provided for preventing and addressing cyberbullying incidents in their classrooms. Both traditional and cyberbullying have been studied for more than two decades to better understand their roots and develop programs and strategies to minimize and prevent bullying incidents (Hamuddin et al., 2019). With the increase of online access via social media platforms, students are increasingly exposed to incidents of societal discontent expressed through aggression, which often enters the school environment. Therefore, school districts are faced with unique challenges that teachers must address within their individual classrooms (Moosa, 2020).

The literature review includes a synthesis of scholarly research on the following topics: the prevalence of cyberbullying in schools, the response of teachers to cyberbullying incidents within the classroom environment, the perception of teachers regarding anti-bullying training

received, the perception of teachers regarding the implementation of cyberbullying intervention methods, and intervention and prevention of bullying behaviors in schools. Peer-reviewed scholarly articles published over the last three to five years have been identified, accessed, and/or acquired using EBSCOhost. Other resources include books utilizing qualitative research methodologies about bullying and cyberbullying. The books were acquired from American libraries or were purchased online. Additional instructional materials were obtained through Internet searches and sources not found in the NCU library or other university libraries. Google Scholar searches on the internet also produced peer-reviewed papers that provided additional knowledge and insight for this study.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used for this study is the social learning theory. The social learning theory created by Bandura in 1977 included the following components: self-efficacy, observation, imitation, and modeling (Bandura et al., 1977). Applying the social learning theory helps to better understand teacher perceptions regarding their ability to identify and address cyberbullying incidents. According to the theory, learning happens due to a typical relationship between an individual and their distinctive behavior, the individual himself, and observations made in the environment and surrounding events (Bandura et al., 1977; Smith, 2021). Exploring whether information learned during anti-bullying training, observations, and/or direct experience with cyberbullying incidents within the school environment is sufficient to implement intervention methods effectively is imperative to preventing and/or lessening occurrences within their classrooms.

In Bandura (1993), self-efficacy is a person's confidence in their ability to behave in the manner needed to achieve defined goals. Perceived efficacy has been identified as a typical

process through which psychosocial factors produce their effects, according to Bandura (1977). Individuals with a high degree of self-efficacy can also control the effort required to achieve goals and overcome challenges or threats. While self-efficacy affects mental health, moods, and individual choices, an individual's beliefs regarding self-efficacy in stressful conditions are linked to the ability to cope and manage stressful thought processes (Bandura 1993).

Self-efficacy judgments play a role in selecting how to act in various situations. People will take on challenges they believe they can handle while avoiding ones they fear failing (Ferreira et al., 2019). Self-efficacy has an impact on every aspect of human life. Therefore, teachers' behaviors in situations where cyberbullying is observed are impacted by the individual's beliefs and attitudes regarding the specific motivation to take the necessary action required to obtain the desired outcome. The additional components include observation, imitation, and modeling, which form part of the learning process, where development is exhibited by behaviors associated with modeling (Bandura, 1993; Schultz & Schultz, 2017).

According to Bandura (1993), an individual may form self-efficacy beliefs based on understanding their abilities from the following sources: mastery and vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and both physiological and affective states. Failures and successes are revealed through mastery experiences. Consequently, self-efficacy is influenced by either successful or unsuccessful experiences. An individual's success affects his/her self-efficacy-one may have increased self-efficacy beliefs when successful and decreased self-efficacy beliefs if unsuccessful. Information acquired through model learning provides a basis for social comparison besides providing knowledge about the modeled accomplishments of others, which can influence a person's views on their self-efficacy as a result of vicarious experiences. Verbal persuasion can be utilized to influence the behavior of others if a credible source can persuade

others of their skills and abilities (Bandura & Adams, 1993). Self-efficacy beliefs may be impacted negatively if physiological and affective arousal is understood as a dysfunction, depending on the domain and the demonstrated capabilities (Bandura, 1993).

Observations by teachers who either witness or experience positive actions taken by other teachers to combat cyberbullying may help ensure that similar corrective actions are imitated. As a result, modeling is achieved. According to Bandura (1993), with positive feedback, self-efficacy is expected to improve, leading to increased successful interventions and the motivation to duplicate responses that will achieve goals via effective intervention. According to the theory, the perspectives and opinions of individuals are often shaped by what is observed or experienced.

Therefore, as teachers are at the forefront of identifying bullying incidents within the school environment, their perspective regarding implementing and enforcing anti-bullying policies is vital to improving policies and recommendations that are better suited to counter bullying behavior (Burk et al., 2019). Additionally, Shadmanfaat et al. (2020) posit that students who witness positive intervention or change by observing teachers taking direct action are more likely to react positively to intervention methods.

Authors of several recent empirical studies on the social learning theory have focused on the role of teachers identified by students as models rather than peers and have found that the behavior of students can be influenced by individuals who are viewed as role models and also that teachers who exhibit positive behavior in the presence of students were found to have a significant impact on the behavior of the students (Liang et al., 2022). This finding is in line with the social learning theory's modeling component. Additionally, teachers must be conscious of

their influence as role models within the school environment and assist students with not engaging in negative behaviors.

According to the literature, social influences on cyberbullying behaviors amongst middle and high school students indicate that individuals who committed acts of cyberbullying were more prone to resist further engagement when presented with the possibility of being punished by adults in authoritative roles (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013), which is also in line with the social learning theory. The social learning theoretical framework aims to give information and assistance based on teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying experiences to determine the adequacy of the training on interventions used to prevent cyberbullying.

The moral conflict development theory was also reviewed in terms of teacher reactions and perspectives regarding the student's behavior within the school setting. According to Majdani and Robles-Piña (2013), the moral conflict development theory evolved from the child development research of Piaget (1965). The goal of this theory was to contribute to how teachers perform their duties by increasing teacher awareness regarding their impact on the moral development of children, in addition to revealing feelings based on moral emotions, including the utilization of particular social practices that result in children exhibiting feelings of guilt and shame (Majdani & Robles-Piña, 2013). Revealing how a teacher engages with students in intervening in incidents involving behavior considered morally inappropriate or behaviorally disruptive is essential to the understanding and successful application of both a theoretical and practical framework that teachers may utilize within the school environment (Majdani & Robles-Piña, 2013).

While the moral conflict development theory focuses on how adults influence children's emotional and moral development (Majdani & Robles-Piña, 2013), this theory does not apply to

the perspective of teachers regarding their feelings toward moral conflict, including cyberbullying. Instead, it provides a framework for teachers to be trained on implementing guidelines to invoke feelings of shame and guilt to encourage positive behavior among students (Majdalani & Robles-Piña, 2013). Therefore, the social learning theory is more suitable for this study, as it explores the relationship between individuals and observations in the environments where specific actions are taken and replicated (Wilding, 2017). These actions include positive reinforcements witnessed by teachers who observe other teachers implementing and enforcing anti-bullying policies.

Additionally, behaviors that are deviant or considered non-standard are not innate biological behaviors but learned behaviors (Kessel-Schneider et al., 2015). The social learning theory, as it relates to the relationship between teachers and students, posits that specific behaviors are imitated when students interact with teachers, relatives, and peers (Wilding, 2017), which is a requirement of the social learning theory in learning specific behaviors. An individual's tendency to imitate his or her supervisor's management style is an additional requirement (Cowie, 2013). Socialization is another requirement that helps determine the motivating factors an individual relies on through environmental interactions. This is important when teachers respond to incidences of cyberbullying since certain behaviors are developed through previous experiences (Chung & Yoo, 2015).

Applying the social learning theory allows for an understanding of how a person perceives and reacts to their social environment (Burk et al., 2019), which also reveals the level of self-efficacy that a teacher possesses to be able to intervene (Midgett et al., 2022). Research supports the engagement of teachers in incidents involving bullying. However, there is inadequate recognition of the potential contribution that teachers might make in efforts to prevent and intervene in

such incidents (Eldridge & Jenkins, 2020). Teachers who are adequately trained in cyberbullying intervention, including real-life discussions surrounding such experiences, may have a higher level of self-efficacy and an increase in an active intervention (Fischer & Bilz, 2019). Therefore, the deficiency in teachers' inability to identify cyberbullying incidents and apply intervention methods (Gaffney et al., 2019) guided the development of the problem statement, purpose statement, and research questions.

Overview of Traditional Bullying and Cyberbullying

Traditional bullying is forceful, deliberate, and consistently used against another person, whereas the victims cannot protect themselves due to a power imbalance (Gretch & Laurie, 2022; Smith, 2019). Traditional bullying behaviors include any deliberate electronic, written, or verbal transmission, bodily gesture, or threat that results in physical harm, emotional harm, or the danger of physical violence (Mischel & Kitsantas, 2020). A single definition of cyberbullying currently accepted worldwide does not exist, and not all researchers agree with the definition proposed by Smith et al. (2006). Researchers frequently use words from the definition of bullying and add a section describing the electronic component of cyber when defining cyberbullying. According to Langos (2012), cyber and bullying are frequently used independently rather than interchangeably. Two explanations were presented by Kowalski et al. (2014) as to why a consensus definition has not been obtained. The fact that cyberbullying can take many forms makes it similar to traditional bullying in that it can be challenging to detect and quantify.

The internet has become a crucial aspect of our lives because of the recent advancements in digital technology. The potential benefits of these Internet-based technologies have been noted. However, the benefits can be overshadowed by the downsides, which include cyberbullying (Kaluarachchi et al., 2020). Cyberbullying occurs when electronic

communication tools such as cell phones, email, social networks, blogs, web pages, and web-based social platforms are utilized to conduct bullying behavior (Campbell et al., 2019).

Cyberbullying differs from traditional bullying in that victims are frequently powerless to stop or escape the situation, the aggressor can stay anonymous, and the information can spread rapidly via social media and other internet-based platforms. Cyberbullies typically engage in such actions to hurt the victim for reasons that may include retaliation, envy, and/or entertainment (Gretch & Laurie, 2022). The cyberbullying phenomenon extends globally with a range of effects from developed mental health disorders to suicide (Coyne et al., 2021).

Examples of cyberbullying include name-calling, cyber-harassment, cyberstalking, online impersonation, unwanted interaction, sending coercive text messages, spreading online rumors and gossip, inserting offensive remarks and comments, disclosing, or sharing one's passwords without permission, and many other online behaviors. Further, researchers found that methods of cyberbullying used by perpetrators varied according to gender, with females utilizing more covert methods, including creating personal blogs, posting on social networking sites and in chat rooms, and sending instant messages. Males were more likely to utilize covert methods, including sharing offensive images, videos, and remarks on social media platforms (Kanwal & Jami, 2019; Tanrikulu & Erdur-Baker, 2019). Several of the more popular social media and gaming platforms where behavior considered risky is spread quickly include Discord, Facebook, Instagram, Minecraft, Roblox, Snapchat, Twitter, and YouTube (Patchin, 2020; Abaido, 2020; Yockey et al., 2019).

These bullying actions may occur both inside and outside of schools in the local communities (Islam et al., 2022). In addition, Li (2007) identified seven primary categories of cyberbullying:

- Flaming: Bullies send messages using insulting, aggressive, or obscene language.
- Messaging: Constant messaging is considered online harassment.
- Cyberstalking: Bullies harass and threaten their victims online.
- Denigration: Bullies disparage others by spreading untrue or unfavorable information about them to others or a group.
- Posing as someone else: Bullies pose as someone else to destroy a person's life.
- Outing: Bullies propagate untruths or talk about personal matters between themselves and other people.
- Exclusion: Bullies purposefully exclude someone from a group on the internet.

Cyberbullies can also adopt many identities, such as the desire to impose power and control, acting as vigilantes, or unintentionally turning into cyberbullies by reacting to an online stimulus without considering the repercussions of their actions (Arrigo, 2014).

Prevalence of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is an issue that exists worldwide, as one out of six caretakers has reported a cyberbullying incident involving a child (Yar & Steinmetz, 2019). Within the United States, every 7 minutes, a child is bullied, with an overall 56% of victims reporting a personal bullying encounter (NVEEE, 2019). Approximately 15% of public schools in 2017–18 reported that at least once per week, either at school or off campus, cyberbullying had taken place among students. It was also reported that 9% of the public schools reported that cyberbullying had an impact on the learning environment, and staff resources were used in 8% of the schools to deal with incidents of cyberbullying (Zhang et al., 2019). Additionally, higher rates of cyberbullying were reported in middle schools than in high schools, combined schools, and elementary schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).

Researchers indicated that 17.4% to 28.3% (22.6% to 36.1%) of females and 12.1% to 20.5% of males in middle schools across 14 out of 50 states experienced cyberbullying (Basile et al., 2020). In addition, 15.7 percent of high school students in all 50 states (20.4 percent of female youth and 10.9 percent of male youth) reported experiencing cyberbullying in the previous year, rising from 14.9 percent in 2017 (Basile et al., 2020). In terms of bullying behavior, 11% of middle and high school students in the US have cyberbullied others (Patchin & Hinduja, 2019). Importantly, people who suffer intellectually, emotionally, mentally, and behaviorally are more likely to have experienced cyberbullying or engage in it themselves (Patchin & Hinduja, 2019; Kwan et al., 2020).

According to Patchin (2020), 42% of youth between the ages of 13 and 17 reported being victimized by cyberbullies. Additionally, 21% of youth between the ages of 9 and 12 reported either being victims or witnessing cyberbullying incidents via social media (Patchin, 2020), with Facebook being one of the most widely used platforms (Kanwal & Jami, 2019). Abaido (2020) asserts that cyberbullying and harassment have gotten out of control on social media platforms. Every age group, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and socio-economic position is susceptible to bullying and cyberbullying (Kanwal & Jami, 2019; LaRoe & Corrales, 2019). According to the Pew Research Center (2019), 42% of teenagers reported encountering cyberbullying via either a digital platform or electronic device in the form of name-calling. While name-calling was most prevalent, 32% reported rumors spread, 21% reported being harassed by cyberstalkers, and 16% reported threats of physical harm. In a 2018 Center for Disease Control report, 59% of youth in the US were found to have experienced cyberbullying in various forms. However, many victims and bystanders fail to report cyberbullying incidents due to shame, increased bullying, or being targeted (LaRoe & Corrales, 2019).

Effects of Cyberbullying

The effects of cyberbullying are no different from physical bullying (Bartlett et al., 2019), as the effects on victims can include a negative self-image, increased levels of despair, suicidal thoughts, anxiety, low self-esteem (Lucas-Molina et al., 2022) and poor or inconsistent academic performance (Bartlett et al., 2019). In addition, both the victim and the aggressor may experience long-lasting effects (Islam et al., 2022) and anxiety and sadness, which may or may not lead to suicidal thoughts or attempts, which may be caused by the presence of inadequate self-perception and a reduction in social engagement (Samara et al., 2021).

Grech and Lauri (2022) posit that the use of social networking platforms contributes to an increase in cyberbullying incidents for both victims and offenders, as well as the rapid reversal of roles between cyber-victim and cyber-perpetrator based on a retaliatory response, which may either be fueled by anger, impulsivity, or lack of self-control. Further, researchers found that sadness, depression, humiliation, and low self-esteem were amongst the top four feelings experienced by victims of cyberbullying (Grech & Lauri, 2022).

Shao and Wang (2019) found a connection between exposure to violent video games and adolescent aggression. The authors utilized the General Aggression Model (GAM) to determine that exposure to violent video games contributed to aggressive behavior. Further, individuals engaging in violent gameplay with a good family environment experienced only a direct effect of aggression, while those with a low-income family environment experienced both indirect and direct effects which were mediated by normative beliefs regarding aggression (Shao & Wang, 2019; Zhu et al., 2020).

Several limitations were identified in the study, such as (1) Only a small number of Chinese students were assessed, and the study did not include other factors that affect adolescent

aggression, such as violent media, daily life events, wars, and other social events (Shao & Wang, 2019). In addition, the questionnaires were self-reported and may be influenced by common method bias (Shao & Wang, 2019). In this study, a source of aggression in adolescents and insight into the issues contributing to bullying behavior among middle school students were identified. The issues included not only exposure to violent video games but also negative family interaction and family violence. Additionally, this information identifies ways to reverse bullying behavior (Grech & Lauri, 2022).

Similarly, researchers confirmed the link between offline hazardous conduct and exposure to risky behavior in internet material amongst young people (Barlett et al., 2019). Victims of cyberbullying have also confirmed that in addition to engaging in self-harming behavior, they suffer from suicidal thoughts, feelings of distress, depression, no longer wanting to attend the school that they were enrolled in, and an increase in marijuana and alcohol usage (Copp et al., 2021; Grech & Lauri, 2022). Additionally, victims reported experiencing high levels of anxiety, sadness, eating disorders, and drug addiction (Abaido, 2019). Researchers also found that witnesses to bullying behaviors similarly reported experiencing feelings of anxiety, depression, fear, and guilt for failure to intervene (Evans et al., 2019).

According to Abaido (2019), suicide, as an effect of bullying, is also referred to as bullycide and has become a common occurrence in many societies. Bullycide refers to the phenomena, not only in the US but also in Canada and the United Kingdom, wherein substantial psychological damage from cyberbullying has occurred, and the effects have resulted in victims committing suicide. One of the primary reasons reported regarding bullycide is the powerlessness felt by the victim because of feelings that the online presence is continuous and cannot be avoided (Abaido, 2019). The cyberbullying environment is ever-changing within the

online environment. While creating a good family atmosphere and reducing or eliminating exposure to violence could prevent and/or reduce aggressive behavior, the need to counter cyberbullying should be addressed within the entire community, including parents, teachers, and administrators (Shao & Wang, 2019).

Teachers' Attitudes Toward Cyberbullying

Attitude comprises an individual's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors toward a particular item, person, issue, or incident, which the individual's beliefs, experiences, and perceptions can also shape. Perception is how an individual identifies and processes the information received within their environment. It can significantly impact how an individual reacts to an incident (Samara et al., 2020; Seddig, 2020). The ability of teachers to identify cyberbullying incidents is vital to reducing such incidents in a school environment. However, the ability of teachers to intervene in and manage cyberbullying incidents differs according to their perception of the severity of cyberbullying (Campbell et al., 2019).

How teachers perceive cyberbullying is based on whether the teacher possesses a full understanding of the nature of cyberbullying, as well as prevention and intervention methods that are most helpful per individually, reported incidents (Yot-Domínguez et al., 2019). Further, even with a complete understanding of what cyberbullying entails, teachers' attitudes towards intervening may also depend on whether the teacher believes that intervention would result in positive changes (Sardesai-Nadkarni et al., 2021). Researchers found that teachers often attribute the actions of cyberbullies as occurring in response to the provocation from the victims. Therefore, an intervention is not necessary since it was the victim that provoked the perpetrator (Khanolainen et al., 2021).

Researchers also found that teachers believed that cyberbullying was not as serious as traditional bullying, which may be attributed to the teachers' unfamiliarity with the prevalence of cyberbullying incidents occurring outside of the school environment (Campbell et al., 2019). In a recent study on the awareness of cyberbullying incidents, Campbell et al. (2019) found that over a quarter of the participants, which included teachers, were unable to recognize when traditional bullying and cyberbullying scenarios were bullying instances, and 60% to 80% incorrectly characterized an event as being a bullying occurrence when it was not. For all conventional bullying scenarios, there was a difference in the perception of male and female participants concerning the seriousness of cyberbullying. While females had more instances of cyberbullying misidentification, male participants were more likely to consider traditional bullying scenarios as much less serious than female adults.

Macaulay et al. (2019) also found that overall, teachers believed that cyberbullying is more serious than traditional bullying, given the anonymity aspect as well as the difficulty in identifying all possible platforms of publication. Additionally, the degree to which seriousness levels were viewed depended on the publicity level of the cyberbullying incident, as teachers believed that students were impacted more negatively if the cyberbullying incident had heightened levels of publicity (Macaulay et al., 2019). Participants also determined the seriousness of a cyberbullying incident according to whether a victim was visibly upset. The more upset a student appeared, the more serious the teacher believed the incident was (Macaulay et al., 2019). For effective partnerships between schools and families to reduce cyberbullying, there must be a shared understanding of what constitutes a genuine episode of bullying (Campbell et al., 2019).

Teachers are less likely to view cyberbullying as normal behavior depending on their knowledge of the characteristics of cyberbullying. If characteristics of cyberbullying are easily identified, the teachers are also more likely to apply intervention methods. Additionally, teachers who witnessed cyberbullying scenarios are more likely to understand the seriousness of such incidents and have not normalized the behavior. On the other hand, teachers inexperienced with cyberbullying incidents and those unable to successfully identify specific characteristics of cyberbullying are more likely to normalize cyberbullying behaviors and less likely to engage in intervention methods (Samara et al., 2020).

Cyberbullying Intervention Methods in Schools

Over the years, many anti-bullying initiatives have been created and assessed globally (Gaffney et al., 2019). These initiatives include a combination of preventive and targeted reactive interventions, including student instruction, close monitoring, intervention procedures, discussion with all involved, and bystander approaches to intervention and prevention (Johander et al., 2021). However, the use of both proactive and reactive methods has been investigated, and for a program to be successful, all stakeholders, including school administrators, staff, parents, and teachers, should be involved (Kittelman et al., 2019; Rigby, 2020). Additionally, specific to cyberbullying prevention, there have been programs developed that enhance both student and teacher awareness and knowledge of cyberbullying and encourage empathetic responses, in addition to lowering cyberbullying victimization by about 14–15% and perpetration by about 9–15% (Gaffney et al., 2019). Another method widely used in various school districts is Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support.

Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support. Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support is used to create a positive social climate (Elrod et al., 2022) which may also create a

pathway to reverse cyberbullying experienced by students in the educational environment (Rholetter, 2022). Using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support to accomplish these aims is imperative to creating a secure and encouraging environment where kids can engage in prosocial activities (Bradshaw et al., 2021). Level I is comprised of universal services with an emphasis on problem behavior avoidance. The crucial elements of level I include creating procedures that deter inappropriate behavior, setting school-wide expectations that are taught and reinforced, and using data to assess performance. For children at risk of being chronically disruptive, level II is meant to stop the emergence and escalation of problem behaviors (Rholetter, 2022; Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities, 2022).

In addition to the level I service that children receive; it comprises specific group interventions. Targeted and specific skill instruction, controlled behavior prompts, chances for new skill practice in realistic settings, and frequent, continuous performance feedback to the learner are the main components of level II interventions (Rholetter, 2022; Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities, 2022). By offering tailored behavior supports, level III is intended to lessen the severity, prevalence, and/or complexities of troublesome behaviors. Students who show the greatest need and who do not respond to level I and level II services are given level III interventions. These strategies are evidential and specific to the individual with applied behavioral assessment interventions (Rholetter, 2022; Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities, 2022).

Interventions can include teaching an alternate skill to replace inappropriate behavior, changing the environment to discourage problematic behaviors, and promoting acceptable behaviors (Rholetter, 2022). Boden et al. (2020) posit that PBIS emphasizes opportunities for consistent instruction across all situations, setting up systems for tracking and

assessing the success of the intervention and, if appropriate, implementing emergency safety measures (Rholetter, 2022; Nevada Center for Excellence in Disabilities, 2022), which promotes teachers to instruct pupils in appropriate behaviors (Boden, 2020).

For Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports to work effectively, teachers must ensure that the strategy is utilized as intended (Corbin et al., 2022). Researchers also found that it is the perception of some teachers that PBIS is aligned with the implementation climate of the school in which they are employed. If the implementation climate is positive, the teachers believe that implementing Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support is feasible and more effective (Corbin et al., 2022). Similarly, previous researchers found that integrating the program school-wide would be driven by staff buy-in (Goodman et al., 2019). In addition, effective leadership and cooperative staff are critical to the success of PBIS implementation (Eraldi et al., 2019). Additionally, to execute the PBIS framework successfully and with the highest levels of consistency feasible, the leadership must gain and keep the support of educational stakeholders (Boden et al., 2020).

Relazioni per crescere (RPC) Method. The Relazioni per crescere—Relationships to Grow intervention method, also referred to as RPC, is another intervention method that is currently utilized in Italian secondary schools. The RPC method is implemented in the classroom by qualified instructors to raise student knowledge of cyberbullying. RPC is a brief program that successfully familiarizes students with the various roles of cyberbullying. The program's focus includes increasing awareness of cyberbullying, identifying the implications of cyberbullying, improving communication and social skills, introducing empathetic responses, reducing passive or avoidant strategies, and improving cognitive and social coping strategies.

In a recent study by Guarini et al. (2019), the researchers assessed 898 students. They found RPC effective in developing methods specific to coping with cyberbullying behavior. The researchers also found that students could identify roles as the cyberbully, cyber victim, assistant, defender, and bystander and gave serious thought to the roles and repercussions of cyberbullying after teacher intervention. Additionally, while there was no significant decrease in cyberbullying incidents with the RPC method, the improvement of mental and social coping techniques was noted and showed enhancements with teacher intervention (Guarini et al., 2019).

KiVa Program. KiVa, a research and evidence-based program, was first utilized in Finland to combat cyberbullying within the school environment. The focus of KiVa, as a whole-school strategy, is to prevent and eliminate bullying by changing the behavior of other students who observe bullying, otherwise referred to as bystanders. Additionally, bystander students are taught how to spot bullying and what to do if they witness it (Axford et al., 2019). In a study on the effects of KiVa, researchers found that males specified frequent cyberbullying victimization decreased. Additionally, the researchers found that there was also a significant improvement in the atmosphere of safety at school (Tiiri et al., 2019). KiVa has been studied numerous times with many investigations, and controlled trials conducted, resulting in findings that the KiVa program is potentially effective. As a result, KiVa is widely used worldwide (Axford et al., 2019).

Parental Involvement Intervention Method. According to a recent study, cyberbullies are more likely to have less parental oversight of their online activities than non-cyberbullies (Baldry et al., 2019), and only 50% of youth admitted that their parents had access to their internet activity, which limits parental knowledge of potentially harmful conduct (Baldry et al., 2019). To reduce cyberbullying events both off-campus and in the school setting, parental cooperation is helpful because it is challenging for teachers to continuously monitor students'

online activities (Colpin et al., 2021; Strohmeier & Gradinger, 2022). It has been shown that parents may affect whether aggressive or bullying behaviors emerge in their children as well as how their children emotionally handle and respond to such incidents (Lindstrom et al., 2019). Additionally, more parental involvement reduces bullying incidents and increases the desire to stand up for a victim (Stives et al., 2019). Several coping techniques, such as avoidance, proactive, aggression, encouragement reduction methods, and self-defense techniques, have been linked to parental coaching and/or modeling. Further, modeling allows parents to set a good example of the appropriate use of technology while monitoring and maintaining active involvement in their children's online activities through open and continuous dialogue (Helfrich et al., 2020).

In addition, previous research findings emphasize the importance of including considerations for parental involvement in the prevention and intervention of cyberbullying behavior (Huang et al., 2019). Further, research findings also indicate that parental monitoring of their child's use of technology in an online environment, developing and maintaining open and meaningful communication, as well as enlisting the help of professionals were effective methods to deal with and assist their children with coping as victims of cyberbullying (Helfrich et al., 2020). However, there is a limited amount of information about parents' response to bullying incidents, parental motivation to respond, and what effect the parental response has on the victim of bullying (Lindstrom et al., 2019).

Therefore, programs that include training workshops with specific information geared toward educating parents should emphasize parental education concerning bullying and cyberbullying, encourage parents to believe in their parenting skills in online settings, and urge parents to utilize techniques backed by evidence, which will foster favorable outcomes for their

children (Helfrich et al., 2020). Current research findings also show that parents with a greater understanding of cyberbullying with increased competence levels, as well as incident analysis and acknowledged parental responsibility, reflect effective parental involvement in reducing cyberbullying behaviors (Martin-Criado et al., 2021).

Bystander Intervention Method. According to LaRoe, and Corrales (2019), bystanders are frequently reluctant to report cyberbullying for fear that if they do, they might end up the victim of cyberbullying or cyberharassment. The Bystander Intervention Method encourages witnesses to bullying incidents to take specific actions to prevent or lessen cyberbullying. There are five steps in the bystander intervention approach that witnesses to incidents might follow to intervene. The five steps include noticing events or suspected events related to bullying, recognizing when the event calls for action, accepting responsibility related to intervening, and having a good understanding of what actions to take (Frederick et al., 2020). The bystander is an essential cooperative role that is useful for eliminating bullying behaviors by supporting victims and stopping and reporting cyberbullying incidents (Beavon et al., 2022).

Researchers found a favorable relationship between self-efficacy for protecting and intervening in bullying and cyberbullying incidents (Sjögren et al., 2020; Bussey et al., 2015), as students with high levels of defensive self-efficacy exhibit guarding conduct more frequently among bystanders (Sjögren et al., 2020). However, researchers have found that females are more likely to intervene due to the socialization of females to be more nurturing, compassionate, and helpful in peer situations than male students (Ma et al., 2019). Further, Chu (2020) studied the behavioral responses of cyber bystanders and determined that there are both positive and negative responses that either influence or combat cyberbullying behavior. Positive responses

include defending victims by identifying, denouncing, and stopping the perpetrator's behavior, as well as supporting cyberbullying victims with comforting words and notifying the authorities.

Negative responses include reinforcing the perpetrator's behavior by encouraging further actions, forwarding information online, and assisting perpetrators by participating in the same behavior. Lastly, remaining silent is also considered to be a negative response, as it may be interpreted as unspoken support of the perpetrator (Chu, 2020). Additionally, Macaulay et al. (2019) assessed 868 11 to 13-year-old students and found that incidents were judged by the severity of the victimization by the cyber bystanders, which triggered specific responses. The bystander students determined their response based on the severity and frequency of the victimization and the extent of the victim's distress. If it was judged to be more severe, the student bystanders reported that intervention was necessary to stop the bullying and offer emotional support to the victim (Macaulay et al., 2019).

STAC Teacher Intervention Module. The STAC Teacher Intervention Module was developed as a bystander training program geared toward teaching student bystanders how to intervene with the support of teachers. The components of this 90-minute training include both teaching and observation. The teaching component defines bullying, the consequences of bullying, and the role of the bystander. There are four strategies utilized in the STAC methodology. These strategies include (1) Stealing the show - utilizing humor or another type of behavior to interrupt and draw attention away from the target, (2) Turning it Over – telling an adult about the bullying and requesting assistance, (3) Accompanying Others – making friends with or supporting the victimized student, and (4) Coaching Compassion – deepening empathy for the victimized student by approaching the perpetrator in a manner that is calm and not aggressive. In the observation stage of the training, students participate in role-playing activities

involving hypothetical bullying and cyberbullying situations. Two booster sessions lasting 15 minutes each are held after the training to help reinforce what was learned and improve skill development.

Researchers have found that students' reluctance to report bullying incidents to teachers is due to the belief that teachers are more likely to minimize bullying and be uncaring toward bullying incidents (Midgett et al., 2020). According to researchers, implementing a STAC Teacher Intervention Module is vital to ensure that student bystanders receive the necessary training and support to be able to intervene in bullying incidents safely and confidently and for teachers to assist with increasing the bystander reporting of such incidents (Midgett et al., 2022).

In a recent study, a focus group was held with 15 participants to determine if the STAC intervention module is effective within a middle school setting to combat traditional bullying and cyberbullying. The researchers found the program useful, relevant, and feasible for middle schools, especially those without specific training geared toward eliminating bullying. However, the researchers also found that additional information regarding cyberbullying would be beneficial, as according to the participants, the information provided during the training needs to be expanded to provide additional guidance specific to confronting individuals engaged in acts of cyberbullying and exploring additional support options for victims of cyberbullying (Midgett, et al., 2022).

In another recent study, Midgett et al., (2022) examined the effectiveness of the STAC teacher module. The researchers surveyed 17 middle school teachers. The results of the study indicated that the teachers' knowledge, confidence, and self-efficacy in how to help bullies, ability to handle bullying, and deal with bullying all increased. Further, the participating teachers all indicated a definite likelihood to support intervening student bystanders with STAC strategies

(Midgett et al., 2022). Additionally, like the Midgett et al. (2022) study, the study participants found the STAC training to be simple to use, beneficial, pertinent, and suitable. However, participants also offered suggestions on how to improve the STAC training, including updating the role-plays and advice on analyzing student behavior (Midgett et al., 2022).

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) was developed in Norway in the mid-1980s. The program was developed in an effort to lessen traditional bullying and cyberbullying incidents among students in elementary, middle, and junior high schools. Olweus' foundational work highlights the importance of relationships with instructors, peers, and a sense of belonging in the prevention of bullying. The objectives of the program include not just lessening traditional bullying and cyberbullying but also preventing any incidents in the future and fostering better connections among students (Olweus et al., 2019). Interventions within the program are implemented at the school, classroom, individual, and community levels and consist of four guiding principles that act as a framework for the intervention's components: adults, both at school and at home, should be friendly and attentive to students; limit inappropriate behavior; continually reinforce good behavior with rewards; and use consistent, non-hostile sanctions when rules are broken (Gaffney et al., 2019).

Researchers have found that the OBPP is a successful intervention program overall in terms of not only the perpetration of bullying incidents but also victimization (Gaffney et al., 2019). Ossa et al. (2020) conducted a study of students in grades 5 through 9, at 16 different schools over an 18-month period. The researchers found that bullying and cyberbullying perpetration and victimization rates significantly decreased and were maintained even after 2 years. Similarly, in another recent study, Sullivan et al. (2021) evaluated the impact of the OBPP in middle schools. The researchers surveyed 2755 students and 242 teachers over an 8-year

period regarding bullying and cyberbullying aggression and victimization. The researchers found that in the first or second year of the OBPP implementation, declines in victimization and perpetration were observed. Overall, once intervention effects became apparent, the effects persisted in successive intervention years. The researchers concluded that the OBPP led to significant reductions in aggression and victimization reported by both students and teachers. However, the general aspects of the school atmosphere, such as teacher efficacy, pleasant peer relationships, and school safety, were not significantly impacted by this program (Ossa et al, 2021). Further, compared to other comparable anti-bullying programs, evaluations of the OBPP were found to be the most successful, especially in Norway and the United States (Gaffney et al., 2019).

Teachers' Perceptions of Cyberbullying Intervention Methods

School administrators are becoming more and more concerned and engaged in the intervention and prevention of cyberbullying, and over the years, administrators have recognized how important it is to have proactive solutions that emphasize the use of proactive and/or preventative measures to counter bullying behaviors within the school environment. These measures include teaching students to engage in healthy social and emotional interactions by developing healthy and positive attitudes and skills (Rigby, 2020). Also included are the enactment of policies and procedures geared toward promoting a decline in cyberbullying cases. In the school environment, particularly in the classrooms, teachers are most likely the first to witness or become aware of cyberbullying, as reported by students or overheard in conversation amongst students. Therefore, it is also essential to understand teachers' perceptions regarding cyberbullying intervention methods (Kowalski et al., 2019).

Teachers' perception regarding intervention programs within their school or school district may greatly depend on the school's climate (Wang et al., 2020), as the school atmosphere can make teacher connections and school connections stronger or weaker (Panayiotou et al., 2019). Researchers have found that teachers are more likely to respond when teachers perceive a climate within the school that is supportive of implementing intervention methods (Wang et al., 2020). Schools with cyberbullying guidelines for teachers to follow, as well as training, contribute to the school climate and have been found to determine teachers' responses to cyberbullying incidents (Strohmeier & Grading, 2021).

Additionally, a positive classroom climate is influential to teacher job satisfaction and is crucial for reducing bullying in the classroom environment. Teacher job satisfaction encompasses a variety of factors, including the tone of the classroom, appreciation for the work completed, and the caliber of relationships among teachers. Feeling content with one's work can directly influence a teacher's attitude toward their students and foster a more favorable climate within the classroom, especially with teachers and students working together to foster positive interpersonal interactions.

As key adults in the classroom and agents of socialization, teachers can be instrumental in bullying prevention and intervention (Wachs et al., 2019). An important aspect that determines the level of teacher intervention is the perceived severity of the incident. Teachers who monitor the emotional impact of bullying victims and believe that a specific incident is at a high level of severity may understand the necessity for ongoing empathetic concern and the coping challenges that victims experience (Rigby, 2020). In doing so, teachers can also recognize when either coaching within the school environment, which consists of the development of interpersonal

skills, or additional assistance outside of the school environment is needed (Rigby, 2020; Strohmeier & Gradinger, 2021)).

In fact, research shows that at least 12% of student victims are referred to outside sources for professional assistance (Rigby, 2020). Further, parental collaboration is beneficial in lowering cyberbullying incidents that occur both offsite and within the school environment, as teachers may have difficulty with continuously monitoring students' online behaviors (Colpin Bauman & Menesini, 2021; Strohmeier & Gradinger, 2022). How teachers respond to cyberbullying incidents varies according to the teacher's perception of the incident, level of job satisfaction, and self-efficacy (Samara et al., 2020; Fischer & Bilz, 2019).

The perception of individual teachers regarding the severity of an incident may depend on the bias that exists based on their beliefs regarding behavioral norms. Often, teachers' bias toward cyberbullying incidents may stem from their belief that the incidents are not always negative and are considered normal behavior for children. Additionally, researchers discovered that some educators believe that the advantage of children being victims is that the children become stronger (Mishna et al., 2020).

Teachers who choose to intervene tend to respond to bullying incidents in one of three ways. The first response is with strategies involving threats of punishment, reprimands, expulsions, or other disciplinary action for the perpetrator. The second is emotional support and assistance offered to both the victim and the perpetrator, with counseling provided to both, which also increases empathy toward victims (Wachs et al., 2019). Researchers have found that the level of empathy that teachers possess is most likely in alignment with their willingness to intervene, and the higher the level, the more willing the teacher is likely to intervene (Wachs et al., 2019). Additionally, when teachers helped the perpetrators feel empathy for the students who

were victims and denounced the perpetrators' conduct, the desire to quit their behavior was at its maximum (Wachs et al., 2019). The third strategy is to cooperate and intervene with the students in the class and with their parents (Rigby, 2020; Wachs et al., 2019).

Self-efficacy also affects how teachers view their abilities to intervene (De Luca et al., 2019). Researchers found that teachers who have a better understanding of the phenomena are more likely to intervene and intervene more often, using tactics that lessen incidents of cyberbullying within their classrooms (De Luca et al., 2019). Teachers who believe themselves to be more knowledgeable about the various types of bullying are more likely to step in and address bullying incidents with both the victim and the perpetrator. However, various tactics are utilized, as needed, in response to incidents, depending on their perception of the severity of the incident.

Williford et al. (2021) investigated the self-efficacy beliefs of educators and their likelihood of intervening in both verbal and relational cyberbullying and traditional bullying incidents. The researchers interviewed 110 licensed teachers and 45 support staff personnel. In line with previous research, the authors found that both teachers and unlicensed staff perceived traditional bullying, which involved physical interactions, as being more severe and had the highest level of self-efficacy regarding willingness to intervene. Further, an increase in self-efficacy increased interventions. Several of the limitations identified in this study include limitations on the availability to test the temporal order of associations since the investigation is point-in-time and the researchers were limited to using vignettes in hypothetical situations (Williford et al., 2021).

Teachers who have completed anti-bullying training generally have higher levels of self-efficacy, as training that is specific to explaining the bullying phenomenon, in addition to

highlighting the effects and providing information regarding intervention strategies, can boost competence levels (De Luca et al., 2019). Teachers who understand the importance of relaying information concerning bullying behavior were more likely to notify co-workers of incidents. Additionally, they were also more likely to work with parents of offenders and utilize techniques geared toward victim rehabilitation which they learned from participating in anti-bullying training (Strohmeir & Gradinger, 2021; De Luca et al., 2019).

Summary

As internet access through social media platforms grows, pupils are more exposed to examples of societal discontent shown through aggression, which frequently permeates the classroom environment. Consequently, educational systems face difficulties unique to each teacher's classroom (Moosa, 2020). This study aimed to synthesize academic research on the prevalence of cyberbullying and its effects, teachers' attitudes toward cyberbullying, identification, intervention, and prevention of cyberbullying behavior in schools, and teachers' perspectives on cyberbullying intervention methods.

There is currently no universally accepted definition of cyberbullying, and not all academics agree with the definition proposed by Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, and Tippett (2006). When describing cyberbullying, scholars generally include a description of the electronic aspect of cyber. According to Langos (2012), the phrases cyber and bullying are typically used independently and not interchangeably. Cyberbullying occurs when mobile phones, email, social networks, blogs, websites, and web-based social platforms are used to participate in bullying behavior (Campbell, Whiteford, & Hooijer, 2019).

Bandura's social learning theory included self-efficacy, observation, imitation, and modeling (Bandura et al., 1977). This study uses the social learning theory as its theoretical

foundation. The social learning theory is relevant to the research because it suggests that teachers' perceptions and behaviors toward cyberbullying can significantly impact students' attitudes and actions (Smith, 2021). The social learning theory is crucial for acquiring a deeper understanding of teachers' evaluations of their ability to notice and respond to cyberbullying incidents. According to the social learning theory, learning happens due to a shared relationship between an individual and his/her specific behavior, the individual himself, and observations made of the environment and events surrounding them. This process is facilitated by factors such as reinforcement, correction, and self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura et al., 1977; Smith, 2021). Bandura (1977) also suggests that increasing teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in dealing with cyberbullying incidents can help them feel more confident in their abilities to identify and address such situations effectively. Therefore, understanding how teachers perceive and respond to cyberbullying incidents is crucial for developing effective intervention strategies and improving overall school culture.

The lack of teacher perspectives on cyberbullying prevention strategies is a gap in the existing body of knowledge. By investigating teachers' perceptions on the identification of cyberbullying and intervention methods, this study aims to shed light on the gaps in current training programs and develop recommendations for improving teacher training and intervention strategies. Additionally, it is the primary focus of studies aiming to discover new ways to reach out to students to support cyberbullying victims and prevent further victims. The authors cited in this literature review use their studies based on theoretical frameworks and earlier studies to analyze the causes of cyberbullying and solutions to avoid it in the United States and internationally. However, due to the constraints of many of the studies, there are still gaps in the body of knowledge although the research was the most current publication. Some of the most

pervasive limitations in the research identified in this review included geographically separated study sites, age restrictions of children and adolescents, the absence of commonalities across age, gender, and ethnicity of the victims, and the breadth of the studies, which makes it difficult to understand what cyberbullying entails when adults are excluded from the research. The results from this study may help to address the gap in the literature on teachers' perspectives on cyberbullying identification and prevention methods, as well as improve the efficacy of interventions for cyberbullying prevention in middle schools. The absence of adult experience in previous research studies is a deficiency of the research employed in this literature review and requires additional examination.

Several studies advocated for the inclusion of teacher viewpoints, an identified gap in the literature, and the investigation of a broader spectrum of teachers and students. The diversity of the participants might include a more comprehensive range of ages, schools, and other features. In addition to changing these traits, more current research may provide cyberbullying researchers with new material upon which to build. To genuinely obtain a deeper grasp of cyberbullying, further study must be undertaken on its facets. Despite the efficacy of school-based interventions concerning traditional bullying, teachers lack the skills to recognize cyberbullying situations and implement intervention strategies. Experts can give more effective support to persons who fail to notice and intervene in situations of cyberbullying if further research is conducted. Not only is this crucial, but if teachers' perceptions were studied in greater depth, researchers might build new and more effective systems that allow teachers to respond more effectively to cyberbullying incidents.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The problem addressed by this study was that despite the proven effectiveness of traditional bullying interventions within the school environment, teachers' ability to identify cyberbullying incidents and apply intervention methods is deficient (Gaffney et al., 2019). Research shows no school environment is immune to bullying based on physical characteristics, gender, color, age, religion, or poverty (Moosa, 2020). An increase in disturbing conflicts within the school environment, including tragedies resulting in school shootings, has continued to raise concerns about the safety of students and the prevention of cyberbullying (Das et al., 2019). Therefore, teachers must successfully convey anti-bullying attitudes to students and combat such incidents within the school environment (Wachs et al., 2019).

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to promote teachers' awareness of cyberbullying and improve their efficacy in implementing intervention methods by investigating their perceptions of the adequacy of the training provided for preventing and addressing cyberbullying incidents in their classrooms. Both traditional and cyberbullying have been studied for more than two decades to better understand their roots and develop programs and strategies to minimize and prevent bullying incidents (Hamuddin et al., 2019). With the increase of online access via social media platforms, students are increasingly exposed to incidents of societal discontent expressed through aggression, which often enters the school environment. Therefore, school districts are faced with unique challenges that teachers must address within their individual classrooms (Moosa, 2020).

The following research questions will guide this research study:

RQ1.

What are teachers' perceptions of the extent of cyberbullying in their school?

RQ2.

What are teachers' perceptions about the current anti-bullying training's efficacy within their school district?

RQ3.

What is needed to improve the effectiveness of existing cyberbullying training?

The research method and design, population, sample, and materials/instructions are all included in this chapter. Information regarding assumptions, limitations, delimitations, processing analysis, data collection, and ethical assurances is also included in this chapter.

Research Methodology and Design

The qualitative research method was utilized for this study. Researchers can obtain data from individuals through qualitative studies using interviews and documentation (Unicomb et al., 2015). Other research methods and designs were considered, such as the ethnographic and grounded theory methods. However, I did not choose the ethnographic research method, as it involves studying a group or culture in its natural setting, through observation and participation (Ellis, 2015). It is less appropriate than the chosen qualitative exploratory case study method because the research questions are focused on understanding the specific perceptions and experiences of middle school teachers in relation to cyberbullying identification and intervention methods in a shorter period. Further, ethnographic research would not provide the level of detail needed to answer the research questions since it involves a broader approach, looking at a culture or group, rather than focusing specifically on the particular topic of this research.

Also, ethnographic research is an observation of life as it happens, and in considering the time frame, as Ellis (2015) explains, one of the disadvantages of the ethnographical perspective is that the time frame for data collection can be lengthy. Additionally, since real-time

participation is necessary, researchers may become physically and emotionally overwhelmed. Other disadvantages of ethnographic research include ethical concerns surrounding the in-depth participation and close relationships developed between the researcher and subjects, and the ability of the researcher as both a participant and/or observer to maintain objectivity (Reeves, Kuper et al., 2008).

I did not choose the grounded theory method, as it involves the development of a theory through the analysis of data. The grounded theory method takes a more general approach as well, developing a theory based on the data collected, rather than focusing specifically on the teachers' perceptions and experiences related to the identification of cyberbullying and methods of intervention related to cyberbullying. Like ethnographic research, grounded theory can also be time-consuming, and it can produce an abundance of data that is difficult to manage. It requires extensive fieldwork and observation, which may not be feasible or appropriate for studying middle school teachers' perceptions on the identification of cyberbullying and intervention methods.

The research design for this study is a qualitative exploratory case study (Yin, 2018). Teachers' perspectives of their competence or readiness to intervene in cyberbullying situations was investigated using the qualitative exploratory case study research design. According to Chalmers and Cowdell (2021), the purpose of qualitative research is to gain a better understanding of people's experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Yin (2018) describes a case study as involving the scope and characteristics of the study, as well as the logic of design, data collection methods, and the application of an efficient and effective means of data analysis. It is a form of qualitative descriptive research that looks at societal phenomena and phenomena occurring within individuals and groups of individuals. When the controls between the

phenomena and actual conditions are not apparent, a case study is an experimental inquiry that can be used to analyze an established phenomenon occurring during real-world scenarios (Yin, 2018).

Case studies can explain events or behaviors that may or may not be relevant to the question but occur throughout time and cannot be disregarded (Yin, 2018). In addition, case study research examines only a portion of the phenomenon rather than the full phenomenon. Researchers can use the exploratory research design method to obtain additional insights based on the collected data, test theories in comparable situations, and familiarize themselves with new emerging concerns (Baron & McNeal, 2019).

I decided against using a quantitative approach because it merely provides numerical data and does not consider individual and group perceptions and experiences (The Sage Handbook, 2022). I did not choose to use surveys and focus groups, as they have limitations for this type of research and may not provide the in-depth, nuanced understanding of the topic that a qualitative exploratory case study using open-ended interview questions can offer. Open-ended interview questions allow for more flexibility and allow the participants to provide detailed, personal accounts of their experiences and perspectives. The case study research approach is appropriate for understanding teachers' perspectives regarding the implementation of cyberbullying interventions. Additionally, case studies allow for the examination of a specific context or phenomenon in-depth and can provide rich, detailed data (The Sage Handbook, 2022). As a result, the exploratory case design is ideal for this research.

Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of 80 sixth to eighth-grade teachers from one middle school in Nevada. There were 1,216 students in grades six to eight in attendance at the

target middle school. Through a school-based program provided by the school district, the pupils at the target middle school received instruction on bullying and cyberbullying prevention strategies. To decrease bullying at the middle school level, the school system provided the instructors with anti-bullying strategies through professional development. The student body at this middle school is diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender, and students and teachers have dealt with bullying issues.

The population of 80 teachers was appropriate for this study as it was large enough to represent the population of middle school teachers who dealt with bullying issues, finished the district's professional development bullying program, and worked for the district for at least two years. These criteria were important for inclusion in the study as it ensured that the teachers had relevant experience and knowledge to provide meaningful insight into the problem of inadequate cyberbullying identification and intervention methods. Eight teachers were chosen at random to determine their awareness of cyberbullying and their perceptions about its detection and response strategies.

Random sampling is a technique for choosing a sample from a statistical population in which each potential sample has a preset probability of being chosen (The Sage Handbook, 2022). A number between 1 and 10 was assigned to each teacher and every tenth teacher was requested to participate in the research study. Assigning the numbers in this manner guaranteed that the study's sample was indeed random. Random sampling was an appropriate method for this study as it ensured that the sample of 8 teachers selected was representative of the larger population of 80 teachers. Additionally, random sampling was important as it helped to minimize

and guard against study-wide sampling bias and increased the generalizability of the findings to the larger population.

A smaller sample size allowed me to conduct in-depth interviews with each participant and allowed me to collect data from participants who are knowledgeable about the topic and provided rich, meaningful, and detailed information about their perspectives and experiences, which provided enough data to address each of the research questions in this study (Subedi, 2021). Additionally, the principle of data saturation suggests that a smaller sample size can be sufficient in qualitative research when data collection reaches a point where no new information is being gathered (Hennik & Kaiser, 2022). After conducting 8 interviews, the point of saturation was reached. Further, I had the necessary time to transcribe, analyze, code the data, and report the findings. It is important to note that the sample size of 8 participants was intended for this exploratory study and a more exhaustive study with a larger sample size may be necessary for future research on this topic.

Instrumentation

A semi-structured qualitative interview questionnaire was utilized as the primary data collection method in this study (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was created by me, guided by the relevant literature, and established best practices for qualitative research, and field tested by a panel of three experts. Utilizing interview questions allowed me to efficiently collect data needed for analysis, from the participants. The participants' replies to the interview questions were used to obtain responses for examination purposes, based on their first-person accounts and varied points of view (Alpi & Evans, 2019). The questionnaire included three demographic questions and nine open-ended questions, specifically designed to elicit detailed information on participants' experiences and perspectives related to the identification of cyberbullying and

intervention methods. Conducting in-depth interviews with people with direct, firsthand experience with a phenomenon is a very effective data collection strategy (Aspers & Corte, 2019).

The expert panel of three individuals who participated in the field test had expert knowledge about the population and the research topic. The field test was utilized to verify the appropriateness and clarity of the questionnaire. The findings of the field test prompted me to revise the questions to avoid ambiguity and bias, reduce question repetition, and change the wording of the questions to establish authenticity. It is important to note that the experts that participated in the field test did not provide data as they did not answer the interview questions. To aid in the organization, analysis, and interpretation of the data collected, NVivo, a qualitative data software tool, was used.

Study Procedures

Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Northcentral University, the study location, and the county school district. To start the participant selection process, I obtained the telephone number for the school, called the main office, and requested to speak with the principal of the school. I explained to the principal the purpose of the study and requested the principal's assistance with obtaining a list of email addresses for the teachers. After receiving the list of email addresses from the school principal, I then composed an email explaining the purpose of the study, the time commitment required, and the benefits of participating.

The email included a link to an online consent form for the teachers to complete. Teachers who expressed interest in participating were sent a follow-up email with more detailed information about the study and a reminder to complete the consent form. The teachers who met

the requirements to participate in the study were chosen via random sampling. The random sampling procedure ensured that as the researcher any prejudice cannot affect the choice (Yin, 2009). Based on the availability of the participants to meet, Zoom interviews took place.

Data Collection

Semi-structured, open-ended interviews were the data-gathering method for this study, as When conducting semi-structured interviews, the interview questions can be more flexible. Each participant was questioned once via Zoom for 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the participants' answers. I used a pre-designed interview protocol that was previously reviewed and approved by an expert panel to ensure that the research questions were answered. The interview protocol included directions concerning the interview process, questions that were asked, and space for notetaking (Creswell, 2013). The goal of the interviews was to obtain information from teachers via questions that were open-ended regarding their perception of their ability to identify cyberbullying incidents and implement intervention strategies within the classroom, as outlined by the school district's laws, policies, and procedures. Prior to beginning each interview, participants were reminded that participation was voluntary, the session would be recorded with his/her consent, all answers obtained would be maintained as confidential information, and that his/her initial and continued participation would be at their discretion. Additionally, pseudonyms were assigned to each participant to ensure anonymity.

In addition to the use of the Zoom platform recording and a digital recorder, note-taking was utilized to record the participant interviews. Note-taking during the process allowed me to note important reactions to participant answers and to ensure that the interviews were paced (Merriam, 2009). The participants' replies were analyzed to see if any patterns or themes emerged that lead to specific conclusions that addressed the study questions (Yazan, 2015).

Data Analysis

My role as the researcher in the study is critical. Having designed the research questions, I recruited participants, collected data, analyzed the data, interpreted the findings, and ensured that the data was processed and analyzed in a way that helped answer the research questions and address the identified problem. I utilized a narrative research approach to address the problem and purpose of the study. Narrative research is a technique that is designed for the researcher to collect personal reactions to occurrences (Creswell, 2005). In the narrative design, I encouraged participants to relay their stories. Participants' responses were evaluated to have a deeper understanding of each one and to determine if recurring patterns or themes existed in the teachers' responses to the interview questions. In addition, the narrative technique aims to deconstruct text before presenting the results of the research. The objective was to give voice to the study participants and to record the lives of a limited number of individuals.

Narrative research was an ideal technique to use for this study as it encompassed the lived and told tales of persons who recounted a sequence of events (Creswell, 2007). The narrative data acquired during the interviews were translated into important findings and statements using data analysis (Patton, 2002). The data were uploaded into NVivo for thematic analysis based on connected data after the accuracy of the material was confirmed via the participant's review of their transcript. The data were also organized, stored, and retrieved utilizing NVivo. Once the data was compiled, imported, and organized via NVivo, the data were coded based on recurring themes. The data were coded using a combination of deductive and inductive coding techniques. Deductive coding was used to identify themes related to the research questions and the theoretical framework. Inductive coding was used to identify any additional themes that emerged from the data.

The themes that were coded for research question 1 included the prevalence of cyberbullying, and factors contributing to cyberbullying. Participants' responses identifying the prevalence of cyberbullying in the school, factors that contributed to the level of cyberbullying, and any specific steps that had been taken to address the issue were coded. the effectiveness of school efforts to address cyberbullying. Additionally, responses that evaluated the effectiveness of the school's efforts in reducing incidents of cyberbullying were coded. The themes that were coded for research question 2 included the effectiveness of current anti-bullying training, and the inclusion of emotional impact and involvement of parents. Participant responses that described the training received by teachers, including any suggestions for improvement were coded, as well as responses that evaluated the impact of the training on teachers' ability to identify and intervene in cases of cyberbullying. Additionally, responses that identified any areas related to cyberbullying that were not adequately covered in the current training, as well as responses that evaluated the effectiveness of the school's efforts in reducing incidents of cyberbullying were coded.

The themes that were coded for research question 3 included continuous evaluation and updates, collaborative platforms and resources, training effectiveness, ongoing support and resources, and best practices and successful interventions. Participant responses that indicated the need for continuous evaluation, updates, and collaborative platforms were coded. Participant responses that evaluated the effectiveness of the current training in addressing cyberbullying among middle school students were also coded. Additionally, participant responses that identified ongoing support or resources that would be helpful in dealing with cyberbullying in the school, as well as responses that identified any examples of best practices or successful interventions that should be incorporated into the training were coded.

Using NVivo allowed me to work more effectively, save time, and thoroughly confirm the findings to establish the trustworthiness of the data, and for triangulation purposes, I compared the data to the existing literature on cyberbullying and intervention methods in middle schools. In numerous research studies, researchers have entered qualitative data into the NVivo computer application and queried the data with more complex questions to discover the recurrent themes in research. The results showed that utilizing the search function in NVivo reduced error. Since utilizing NVivo lessens human mistakes and permits manual and automatic operations, Bauman and several other researchers who used this application in their qualitative and mixed study studies greatly endorsed it.

Assumptions

The study suggested four assumptions. First, because they are teachers, the research participants would provide acceptable and relevant data given their expertise and position. Second, the participants would honestly respond to the interview questions based on their thoughts and experiences. Third, the participants fairly represented the study's target population. Finally, the study's findings on the subject of cyberbullying may help middle school teachers, administrators, and students.

Limitations

The subjective aspect of qualitative research is one of its key methodological limitations. Qualitative research is susceptible to researcher bias, presumptions, and assumptions because it includes the interpretation of data (Willig, 2022). This may result in the researcher's personal beliefs and values influencing the findings, decreasing the study's objectivity (Florczak, 2022). In order to reduce the impact of their biases on the study, researchers must be conscious of their biases and take appropriate measures. As such, I maintained objectivity throughout the research

process, acknowledged any personal biases that may have arisen, and took steps to address them, ensuring the reliability and validity of the research findings.

Another limitation of qualitative research is the study's smaller sample size (Hennink, 2022). Only middle school teachers from one county school in a southwestern city were included in this study. In qualitative research, smaller sample sizes are permissible, but results will not generalize beyond the population being investigated (Creswell, 2013). This restricts the scope of generalizations about the population and can make it difficult to reproduce the study's findings. The generalizability of the conclusions depends on the researchers being transparent about the sample size and sampling methodology (Creswell, 2013).

The possibility of violating participant confidentiality is a further limitation of qualitative research (Willig, 2022). Participants may disclose sensitive information that must be kept confidential because qualitative research is often conducted on individuals. To preserve participant confidentiality, researchers must take precautions including gaining informed consent, employing pseudonyms, and securely storing data. Nevertheless, despite best efforts, there is always a chance that confidentiality will be violated, which could have serious ethical ramifications (Sperling, 2022). Participants in this study were asked to refrain from talking about the study with other teachers until four weeks had passed since they completed their interviews with me in order to lessen this limitation.

Delimitations

A study's delimitations can be managed by the researcher and kept within the study's objectives and scope (Creswell, 2013). To accommodate the participants, I chose a convenient time and location for the interviews. The middle school teachers had to have dealt with bullying

issues, finished the district's professional development bullying program, and worked for the district for at least two years to qualify for inclusion.

Ethical Assurances

I abided by the ethical standards established by the Institutional Review Board of Northcentral University (IRB). Before conducting the study and interviewing each participant, I obtained clearance, including approval of the study site from the NCU IRB. The safety of the participants was paramount. Before any interviews were conducted, a signed informed consent form was submitted. Prior to the interview, each participant had the chance to ask questions and had the option of not responding to any of my inquiries. The interviews took place through the Zoom platform in a private, closed setting. By conducting the interviews in this manner, the participants felt secure and at ease when responding to the interview questions.

All collected data was stored securely and confidentially in a password-protected, encrypted cloud location before being transferred to a locked, physical location for three years. I maintained a neutral stance throughout the research process, without any personal bias influencing the study. Any inclination that inhibits an issue from being considered objectively is known as bias (Florczak, 2022). When systematic inaccuracy is incorporated into sampling or testing in research, bias emerges because one outcome or response is chosen or encouraged over another (Florczak, 2022). As the researcher in this proposed study, I approached the research topic objectively, with the intention of gaining a thorough understanding of the subject matter. Further, my role as the researcher in this study was to collect and analyze data to gain insights into the research problem. I recognized the potential for personal biases and experiences to influence the study's findings. However, I had no prior experience with cyberbullying or cyberbullying intervention methods in middle schools and maintained objectivity throughout the

research process. I also acknowledged any personal biases that may have arisen during data analysis and interpretation and took steps to address them.

Summary

The problem addressed by this study was that despite the proven effectiveness of traditional bullying interventions within the school environment, the ability of teachers to identify incidents of cyberbullying and apply intervention methods is deficient (Gaffney et al., 2019). The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to promote teachers' awareness of cyberbullying and improve their efficacy in implementing intervention methods by investigating their perceptions of the adequacy of the training provided for preventing and addressing cyberbullying incidents in their classrooms. The intent of this qualitative study was to investigate how teachers perceive the effectiveness of the training provided on interventions used to stop cyberbullying in their classrooms.

A sample consisted of eight 6th-8th grade teachers. To learn more about the participants' opinions and experiences, I conducted an exploratory case study. Utilizing the qualitative research methodology with an exploratory method provided insight into factors, such as individual experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that were, in addition to training, also influential in how a teacher responds to cyberbullying incidents (Chalmers & Cowdell, 2021). Semi-structured, open-ended interviews were used to gather the data until saturation of the data was completed. The participants were interviewed confidentially regarding perceptions of training and confidence levels and the execution of intervention methods, as interviews are important tools for collecting data within qualitative research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

In this chapter, the participant selection process and how the interviews were conducted, recorded, and evaluated, is explained. The data was uploaded into NVivo for thematic analysis.

All collected data has been stored securely and confidentially in a password-protected, encrypted cloud location before being transferred to a locked, physical location for three years.

Assumptions for this study included the participant's ability to provide acceptable and relevant data, by answering the interview questions with honesty and based on their thoughts and experiences. Additionally, the participants fairly represented the study's target population, and the study findings are expected to help middle school teachers, administrators, and students.

Limitations of this study included the study's smaller sample size, as participants were from one county school in a southwestern city. Additionally, there was a potential for participant confidentiality to be violated if teachers shared the information with other teachers who might have participated in the study. However, confidentiality for a period of four weeks after the participant's interview was requested. I adhered to the basic ethical principles for human subjects for research as established in the NCU IRB. Pseudonyms were assigned in the findings, and participants had the option to stop or withdraw from the study at any given time, with no harm or consequence. Thematic data analysis was conducted, and the study's findings from the participant interviews are included in Chapter 4, along with an analysis of the data.

Chapter 4: Findings

The problem addressed by this study was that despite the proven effectiveness of traditional bullying interventions within the school environment, teachers' ability to identify cyberbullying incidents and apply intervention methods is deficient (Gaffney et al., 2019). Bullying, regardless of its nature, remains a pervasive issue in school environments, affecting students of diverse backgrounds (Moosa, 2020). The increase in disturbing conflicts within schools, including tragic incidents like school shootings, has further emphasized the need to address cyberbullying and ensure student safety (Das et al., 2019). To combat cyberbullying effectively, teachers must be equipped with the necessary knowledge and intervention strategies (Wachs et al., 2019).

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to promote teachers' awareness of cyberbullying and improve their efficacy in implementing intervention methods by investigating their perceptions of the adequacy of the training provided for preventing and addressing cyberbullying incidents in their classrooms. As both traditional and cyberbullying have been subjects of study for over two decades, efforts to understand their roots and develop preventive measures continue (Hamuddin et al., 2019). The increasing online presence of social media platforms exposes students to aggression and societal discontent, leading to cyberbullying incidents that spill over into the school environment. Consequently, school districts face unique challenges that teachers must address within their individual classrooms (Moosa, 2020).

The research participants consisted of eight schoolteachers from one middle school in southern Nevada. A qualitative case study method was used to review and analyze the data. This study consists of in-depth, semi-structured interviews of the schoolteachers. The interview questions consisted of three demographic questions and nine open-ended questions. As the

researcher in this study, I used NVivo software for coding purposes, as well as to establish common themes and patterns within the data. This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected from teachers regarding their perceptions of cyberbullying and the effectiveness of anti-bullying training in their school district. The chapter begins with a restatement of the problem and purpose of the study, followed by an overview of the organization of the chapter. The section will be organized in the following order: (a) trustworthiness of the data, (b) demographic characteristics of the participants, (b) results, (c) evaluation of data findings, and (d) summary.

Trustworthiness of the Data

In this research study, the trustworthiness of the data was carefully established to ensure the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the findings. The study included semi-structured interviews conducted via Zoom with eight middle school teachers in Southern Nevada. The interview questions were guided by the relevant literature and established best practices for qualitative research, and field tested by a panel of three experts. To enhance credibility, the researcher conducted face-to-face online interviews via Zoom with each participant, ensuring a direct and personal connection. These interviews were audio recorded to accurately capture the participants' responses, and detailed interview notes were taken to provide further context and support during data analysis.

To further enhance credibility, member checks were conducted, where participants reviewed their interview transcripts for accuracy, validating the data and strengthening its trustworthiness. No changes were requested or made by the participants, indicating a high level of credibility in the data. Demographic data, including years of teaching experience in the county, current grade level teaching, and participation in anti-bullying/cyberbullying training

were collected to provide a comprehensive overview of the participants and their teaching background. This information was crucial in evaluating the extent of exposure to relevant training and its potential impact on their perceptions and practices related to cyberbullying intervention. This information contributes to the understanding of the study's sample and context, increasing the transferability of the findings to similar settings.

The transferability of the findings is supported by the inclusion of eight middle school teachers from the same school in Southern Nevada. While the sample size was limited to one middle school, the diverse range of perspectives and experiences among the participants still provided valuable insights into teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying within this specific educational setting. To ensure dependability, the research procedures were carefully documented and transparently presented. Additionally, a clear trail of evidence detailing the data collection process, coding procedures, and thematic analysis was maintained. By providing a comprehensive and coherent reconstruction of the information obtained from all participants, the study allows for its potential replication, enhancing the dependability of the results.

Confirmability, or the steps taken to ensure that the data and findings are not influenced by participant or researcher bias, was achieved through rigorous research practices. Confidentiality measures were implemented, and participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses during the Zoom interviews, promoting a sense of security and trust in the research process. Data security was also maintained by storing all information securely. Overall, the establishment of trustworthiness through various means ensures the reliability and validity of the data, providing a solid foundation for drawing meaningful conclusions from the study's findings.

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

The study involved eight middle school teachers who constituted the sample population. All participants were currently teaching at one middle school in a Southern Nevada school district. The criteria for selecting the participants included their role as middle school teachers within the specific school district for a period of two years or more, their completion of the district's professional development bullying training program, and their willingness to participate in the study. The participants represented a diverse range of perspectives and experiences, which offered valuable insights into teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying in the region, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographics of the Participants (Teachers)

Participant	Antibullying/cyberbullying training w/in the last 5 years	Grade currently teaching	Years of teaching experience
Teacher 1	Yes	Grade 7	3 years
Teacher 2	Yes	Grade 8	7.5 years
Teacher 3	Yes	Grade 6	12 years
Teacher 4	Yes	Grades 6/7/8	2.3 years
Teacher 5	Yes	Grades 7/8	8 years
Teacher 6	Yes	Grade 6	14 years
Teacher 7	Yes	Grade 8	4.2 years
Teacher 8	Yes	Grades 7/8	9.7 years

Results

The data collected from the transcripts of the middle school teachers are presented in this section. An examination for the purposes of data analysis methods was employed using the qualitative software NVivo. The coding in NVivo combined both the terms and information from both the survey and the interview results. The codes were paired which led to the creation of themes. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the codes. After conducting the review, the codes were carefully examined to identify comparable implications of meaning. To establish relevant themes for the study, I categorized and organized the themes based on the responses received. This process of grouping themes allowed me to create thematic labels for the research. Finally, any descriptions that were ambiguous or lacked clarity were thoroughly summarized and explicitly stated to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the findings.

Nine thematic labels relevant to middle school teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying and the effectiveness of anti-bullying training within the school district were extracted during the data analysis process, which played a crucial role in understanding the data and its underlying patterns. The identified themes encompassed various aspects of the research questions and included: (a) Prevalence of Cyberbullying, (b) Factors Contributing to Cyberbullying, (c) Effectiveness of Current Anti-Bullying Training, (d) Inclusion of Emotional Impact and Involvement of Parents, (e) Continuous Evaluation and Updates, (f) Collaborative Platforms and Resources, (g) Training Effectiveness, (h) Ongoing Support and Resources, and (i) Best Practices and Successful Interventions. Each of these themes offered valuable insights into the teachers' perspectives on cyberbullying and provided guidance for the development of comprehensive anti-cyberbullying strategies in middle schools.

Research Question 1: What are teachers' perceptions of the extent of cyberbullying in their school?

Theme 1: Prevalence of Cyberbullying. The first theme addressed the first research question on teachers' perceptions of the extent of cyberbullying in their school. A total of two sub-themes were found to be consistent with the participants' interviews. These include widespread occurrence and impact on well-being and academics. The sub-theme, widespread occurrence indicated that the teachers universally acknowledged cyberbullying as a prevalent issue among their students. Of the participants, 100% indicated that cyberbullying incidents are common at their school. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 indicated that cyberbullying incidents are common at their school.

Teacher 1 stated, "In my school, I have heard of cyberbullying incidents occurring quite frequently. I've even heard some of the students in my class talking about things that have been posted online about people that they know, which amounts to what I believe is cyberbullying." Teacher 2 shared, "From my perspective, cyberbullying is relatively prevalent among middle school students in our school." Teacher 3 mentioned, "In my opinion, cyberbullying is a significant problem in middle schools in this school. I see it happening on a regular basis, and it can have a devastating impact on students."

Teachers 4 and 5 indicated that cyberbullying is common at their school but not on a daily basis. Teacher 4 stated, "I think cyberbullying is pretty common among middle school students in our school. It might not happen every single day, but it does happen quite often, and it really affects the students who go through it." Teacher 5 remarked, "I believe that cyberbullying affects middle school students at my school regularly. While they might not occur

every day, incidents do occur.” Teacher 6 commented, "Cyberbullying incidents are common here; it's happening almost every week."

The sub-theme, impact on well-being and academics revealed concerns about the negative effects of cyberbullying on students' emotional well-being and academic performance. Of the participants, 100% acknowledged that cyberbullying could affect a student's mental health and classwork.

Teacher 2 expressed, "Cyberbullying takes a toll on the student's mental health, affecting their focus and participation in class."

Teacher 3 stated, “I know that cyberbullying can lead to depression, anxiety, and even suicide. Also, some victims have been known to miss days at school and also have trouble completing schoolwork because of missed days.”

Teacher 7 said, “Victims of cyberbullying may sometimes hurt themselves because of what was done to them online. I know that sometimes certain students will not come to school because of embarrassment, and this affects their grades.”

Theme 2: Factors Contributing to Cyberbullying. The second theme is related to the first research question. A total of three sub-themes were found to be consistent with the participants' interviews. The sub-themes include easy access to technology, peer influence, and lack of digital citizenship education. The sub-theme, easy access to technology highlighted the role of smartphones and social media platforms in facilitating cyberbullying incidents. Of the participants, 100% acknowledged that students have more open access to technology. Teacher 1 indicated, “Students have so much access to technology and different social media sites. I can see how it's difficult to stay updated on them all because new platforms pop up so often. This makes it easier for cyberbullying to occur.”

Teacher 2 stated, "The ease of access to technology makes it easier for students to engage in cyberbullying anonymously." The sub-theme, peer influence emphasized the impact of social norms on students' cyberbullying behavior. Of the participants, 87.5% mentioned peer influence. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 mentioned that peers are more likely to engage in cyberbullying to gain acceptance from their peers.

Teacher 3 explained, "Students sometimes engage in cyberbullying to fit in with their peers." The sub-theme, lack of digital citizenship education indicated that the absence of guidance on responsible online behavior contributes to cyberbullying incidents. Of the participants, 50% mentioned the lack of digital citizenship education. Teachers 3, 5, 6, and 8 mentioned that students need to be educated on proper online interaction.

Teacher 8 stated, "We need more digital citizenship education to teach students how to be responsible online users."

Research Question 2: What are teachers' perceptions about the current anti-bullying training's efficacy within their school district?

Theme 3: Effectiveness of Current Anti-Bullying Training. The third theme, addressing the second research question about teachers' perceptions of the current anti-bullying training's efficacy, emerged from the participants' responses from the interviews. It comprised two sub-themes: perceived effectiveness and need for engaging delivery methods. The sub-theme, perceived effectiveness indicated that teachers generally considered the current anti-bullying training to be effective in raising awareness about cyberbullying and equipping them with intervention strategies. Of the participants, 100% acknowledged that the training is effective, as it has made them all become more aware of cyberbullying incidents and more observant of the frequency of cyberbullying incidents. Teacher 4 stated, "I think the current anti-

bullying training is a good start. It's effective, but it could be more effective. In my opinion, the training is too focused on the legal aspects of bullying and not enough on the emotional impact of bullying on students."

The sub-theme, need for engaging delivery methods revealed that teachers expressed a desire for more interactive and engaging training sessions. Of the participants, 87.5% emphasized the importance of the training delivery method and mentioned that the training should be more interactive and engaging to enhance comprehension. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 mentioned that the training would be better if it were more interactive and engaging. Teacher 1 stated, "The training is effective. It has increased my awareness in recognizing instances of cyberbullying, but it could be more effective if they use interactive sessions, real-life scenarios, and more frequent updates because of how fast technology changes."

Teacher 2 stated, "Important information is covered in the anti-bullying- cyberbullying course. However, it might be better understood with a combination of live training sessions, online components, and ongoing discussions to reinforce the learning and to increase its effectiveness." Teacher 3 commented, "The process for handling such incidents, in my opinion, has been provided by the training, overall, when dealing with bullying incidents in general. While the many kinds of bullying have been defined, I have a teenage daughter and am quite familiar with many of the platforms. However, I believe that the training on cyberbullying should go a bit further with explanations and what to look for if I didn't already know some of the platforms. I think if the training includes examples of the platforms and different examples of what cyberbullying actually is, or not, I think that would be better for a lot of the teachers."

Teacher 5 suggested, "The training is effective, but it could be more effective if it includes scenarios and role-playing activities." Teacher 6 expressed, "Overall, the training is

effective. So, the anti-bullying training in terms of physical bullying is well-defined. However, I believe that the cyberbullying aspect could be better explained along with more detailed information about the various platforms and maybe some scenarios. I also feel like the parents should be required to take the same bullying training.”

Further, Teacher 7 shared, “The training is effective. We just watch the instruction videos provided, then we consider what we learned and discuss it sometimes in our staff meetings. Role-playing, in my opinion, would be preferable to watching videos and I think I would grasp the information better. Additionally, it would be helpful if we could be provided with some charts or posters suitable for classroom use. These visual aids would serve as reminders for both teachers and students about the definition of cyberbullying and the reasons why we should refrain from engaging in it.”

Theme 4: Inclusion of Emotional Impact and Involvement of Parents. The fourth theme related to the second research question, focused on the importance of addressing the emotional impact of cyberbullying and involving parents in intervention efforts. The two sub-themes were emotional impact and involvement of parents. The sub-theme, emotional impact underscored the significance of understanding the psychological effects of cyberbullying on both victims and bullies. Of the participants, 75% discussed the emotional impact of cyberbullying. Teachers 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 acknowledged that bullying in general, including cyberbullying can have a negative impact on students mentally and emotionally.

Teacher 6 shared, "Emotional well-being is at the core of dealing with cyberbullying effectively." The sub-theme, involvement of parents emphasized the role of parents in addressing cyberbullying both at home and in collaboration with the school. Of the participants, 100% mentioned the importance of parental involvement. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 suggested

that parental involvement is important in preventing cyberbullying incidents at school. Teacher 8 commented, "Parents play a crucial role in supporting their children and reinforcing the anti-bullying message at home."

Research Question 3: What is needed to improve the effectiveness of existing cyberbullying training?

Theme 5: Continuous Evaluation and Updates. The fifth theme, addressing the third research question on improving the effectiveness of existing cyberbullying training, consisted of two sub-themes: ongoing evaluation and frequent Updates. The sub-theme, ongoing evaluation stressed the importance of continuously assessing the impact of the training to identify areas for improvement. Of the participants, 87.5% were in favor of ongoing evaluation. Teachers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 mentioned the need for ongoing training evaluations.

Teacher 7 suggested, "The district needs regular feedback from teachers and students to gauge the effectiveness of the training." The sub-theme, frequent updates highlighted the need to keep the training relevant by incorporating the latest insights and developments in cyberbullying prevention. Of the participants, 100% were in favor of the training being frequently updated with the most current technology information. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 indicated that there should be frequent updates to the training to keep up with the technological changes. Teacher 4 stated, "With the ever-changing landscape of technology, the training needs to stay updated to remain effective."

Theme 6: Collaborative Platforms and Resources. The sixth theme, related to the third research question, focused on the importance of collaborative platforms and resources for addressing cyberbullying effectively. The three sub-themes were professional development workshops, access to mental health professionals, and sharing best practices and resources. The

sub-theme, professional development workshops emphasized the value of ongoing support through workshops focused on cyberbullying prevention and intervention. Of the participants, 100% were in favor of attending professional development workshops on the topic of cyberbullying. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 indicated that teachers could benefit from additional professional development workshops specific to cyberbullying. Teacher 4 expressed, "We need more opportunities to learn and develop our skills in handling cyberbullying incidents."

The sub-theme, access to mental health professionals highlighted the importance of providing students affected by cyberbullying with access to mental health support and emphasized the significance of supporting teachers with strategies for managing difficult situations and providing resources for supporting both the victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying. Of the participants, 50% suggested that mental health experts be readily available to assist with cyberbullying incidents.

Teachers 2, 3, 5, and 8 suggested that mental health experts should be readily available or on-call for teachers to request assistance when helping victims of cyberbullying if needed. Teacher 3 mentioned, "Having mental health professionals on hand can help students cope with the emotional impact of cyberbullying."

Teacher 8 indicated, "Teachers need access to mental health professionals to help student victims cope with the emotional toll experienced by cyberbullying incidents by providing strategies that we can use to help the student victims and find out why the bullies are bullying."

The sub-theme, sharing best practices and resources underscored the need for a collaborative platform where educators can exchange successful intervention strategies and resources. Of the participants, 87.5% were in favor of engaging with other teachers via a

collaborative platform. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 indicated that having an online forum space would be beneficial for the teachers to be able to share experiences and ask advice from other teachers or administrators. Teacher 7 suggested, "Having a platform where we can share our experiences and learn from others would be valuable."

Theme 7: Training Effectiveness. The seventh theme, related to the third research question, focused on the overall effectiveness of the current cyberbullying training. The two sub-themes were discussion on the overall effectiveness of the current training and the need for continuous evaluation and updates. The sub-theme, discussion on the overall effectiveness of the current training involved participants sharing their opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the current training. Of the participants, 100% engaged in discussion pertaining to the effectiveness of the school district's provided cyberbullying training.

Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 suggested that having discussions on the effectiveness of the provided training should be had on a regular basis, to ensure that the training received is effective. Teacher 6 stated, "The training covers the basics, but it could be more comprehensive in addressing different types of cyberbullying. If we could talk regularly about this training with administrators and the people who designed the training, it would be better for our school and the district." The sub-theme, need for continuous evaluation and updates reiterated the importance of regularly evaluating and updating the training to ensure its relevance and efficacy. Of the participants, 87.5% mentioned the need for continued evaluation and updates for cyberbullying training. Teachers 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 indicated that continuous cyberbullying training evaluation and updates is important and much needed. Teacher 8 noted, "We should continuously gather feedback and data to enhance the training's impact."

Theme 8: Ongoing Support and Resources. The eighth theme addressing the third research question, focused on the importance of ongoing support and resources for teachers providing support and guidance for victims of cyberbullying incidents. The sub-theme is the need for ongoing support in dealing with victims of cyberbullying incidents. Of the participants, 100% were in favor of an ongoing system of support, including relevant resources necessary to intervene in cyberbullying incidents.

Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 indicated that support from other knowledgeable teachers, staff, and administrators is beneficial to ensuring that teachers are intervening when they should and handling the incidents appropriately. Teacher 1 expressed, "Having a support network of colleagues and teachers who understand the complexities of cyberbullying would be helpful. Furthermore, it might be helpful to engage in conversations with colleagues who have first-hand experience managing similar instances for teachers who might not be completely comfortable with cyberbullying intervention procedures."

Theme 9: Best Practices and Successful Interventions. The ninth theme, related to the third research question, focused on identifying best practices and successful interventions that could be incorporated into the cyberbullying training. The two sub-themes were successful interventions that should be incorporated into the training and the importance of creating a positive school climate. The sub-theme, successful interventions that should be incorporated into the training involved participants sharing examples of successful intervention strategies that could enhance the training's effectiveness. Of the participants, 100% indicated that the cyberbullying training should include intervention strategies that have been proven to be effective. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 indicated that the training should include information regarding all interventions that have had positive results within the current school district and in

other school districts. Teacher 5 mentioned, "Restorative justice practices and student-led initiatives have shown positive results and should be part of the training." The sub-theme, importance of creating a positive school climate emphasized the role of promoting a positive and inclusive school environment in preventing cyberbullying.

Of the participants, 100% suggested that a positive and inclusive school environment would be beneficial to the fight against cyberbullying. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 indicated that the school environment is important in preventing negative interactions between students and also between teachers and students. Teacher 1 stated, "A positive school climate sets the foundation for respectful behavior and reduces the likelihood of cyberbullying incidents." Teacher 3 stated, "Creating a supportive school environment that encourages open communication and a culture of respect, both online and offline is helpful in preventing negative behaviors."

Evaluation of the Findings

This qualitative case study aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying in their school and their perspectives on the effectiveness of the current anti-bullying training within the school district. The study addressed three research questions, each contributing to a comprehensive understanding of teachers' experiences and insights regarding cyberbullying intervention and prevention. The findings from this qualitative case study shed light on teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying in their school and their perspectives on the effectiveness of current anti-bullying training. The study identified nine primary themes and several sub-themes that provide valuable insights into the complexities of cyberbullying and the challenges educators face in addressing it.

The study's findings are in line with Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which contends that people learn new things by observing, imitating, and modeling the actions of others. According to Bandura's theory, learning takes place in a social setting, and behavior is determined by the interaction of one's surroundings, environment, and cognitive processes. The theoretical framework provided a lens through which to evaluate the findings as they related to the study's research of teachers' perspectives on cyberbullying and the efficacy of anti-cyberbullying training.

Research Question 1 sought to uncover teachers' perceptions of the extent of cyberbullying in their school. The findings revealed that cyberbullying is a prevalent issue among middle school students, with teachers universally acknowledging its widespread occurrence and specifically mentioned that there are incidents that occur regularly, though not daily. This finding aligns with existing research on cyberbullying, correlating with the need for schools to address this concerning behavior and its detrimental impact on students' well-being and academic performance (Patchin & Hinduja, 2019). The findings also align with the social learning theory, as Bandura places a strong emphasis on the value of behavior observation and imitation (Bandura, 1977).

The results, which showed that 100% of participants acknowledged the pervasiveness of student cyberbullying, represent how teachers perceive the behavior by observing its prevalence. This is in line with Bandura's concept of modeling, as teachers' perceptions are influenced by what they see happening in their schools in terms of cyberbullying incidents. The study's results contribute valuable insights into the prevalence of cyberbullying, which can inform school administrators and policymakers in devising targeted prevention strategies.

Research Question 2 aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of the current anti-bullying training's efficacy within the school district. The findings indicated that 87.5% of the participants believed that training delivery is important and highlighted the importance of training in addressing cyberbullying; however, teachers emphasized the need for engaging delivery methods to enhance its effectiveness. This finding aligns with previous research and emphasizes the significance of continuous evaluation and improvement of anti-bullying programs to ensure they remain relevant and impactful (Gaffney et al., 2019).

This finding also aligns with Bandura's social learning theory, as it posits that learning is improved when people are urged to model successful or rewarding behaviors (Bandura, 1977). The finding that 100% of participants believed the present anti-bullying training was helpful indicates that they had firsthand experience with teaching or learning beneficial interventions or tactics. This alignment emphasizes the impact of observational learning on instructors' assessments of the efficiency of their training. Also reflecting the importance of motivation in learning is the fact that 87.5% of participants indicated the need for more engaging delivery methods.

According to Bandura's theory, people are more inclined to mimic activities that are rewarded or produce favorable results, which corresponds to the participants' need for engaging methods of training (Bandura, 1977). Providing teachers with comprehensive training and support is essential for building their capacity to effectively address cyberbullying incidents (De Luca et al., 2019). Thus, the study's results offer valuable guidance for school administrators and educators in designing impactful training programs that equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to handle cyberbullying effectively.

Research Question 3 explored the successful interventions and practices that teachers believed should be incorporated into the training. Teachers highlighted the value of restorative justice practices and student-led initiatives, emphasizing their positive impact on addressing cyberbullying incidents. Restorative justice practices align with the findings in previous studies emphasizing the importance of repairing harm and building positive relationships. These studies have shown promise in promoting a sense of accountability and empathy among students (Wachs et al., 2019). Similarly, student-led initiatives empower students to take an active role in creating a safe and respectful school environment, fostering a culture of respect and kindness (Macaulay et al., 2019). By incorporating these successful interventions into the training, educators can enhance their ability to create a positive and inclusive school climate.

Teachers also highlighted the importance of continuous evaluation and updates regarding the efficacy of the training, as well as collaborative platforms and resources. According to Bandura's social learning theory, the environment has a significant impact on how people behave (Bandura, 1977). The emphasis on environmental aspects in the theory is shown in the themes of continuous evaluation and updates and collaborative platforms and resources. The participants' suggestion regarding implementing ongoing training evaluation and updates is consistent with Bandura's theory that actions are impacted by feedback and reinforcement. Similarly emphasizing the social context of learning, where teachers gain from shared experiences and resources, is the emphasis on collaborative platforms and resources. This is consistent with Bandura's contention that individuals acquire knowledge from those around them (Bandura, 1977).

Summary

This chapter presented the result of research data on the perceptions of teachers on the Identification of Cyberbullying and Intervention Methods in Nevada Middle Schools. The research participants consisted of eight middle school teachers from one middle school in Nevada. Nine thematic labels relevant to middle school teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying and the effectiveness of anti-bullying training within the school district were extracted during the data analysis process, which played a crucial role in understanding the data and its underlying patterns. These identified themes encompassed various aspects of the research questions and included: (a) Prevalence of Cyberbullying, (b) Factors Contributing to Cyberbullying, (c) Effectiveness of Current Anti-Bullying Training, (d) Inclusion of Emotional Impact and Involvement of Parents, (e) Continuous Evaluation and Updates, (f) Collaborative Platforms and Resources, (g) Training Effectiveness, (h) Ongoing Support and Resources, and (i) Best Practices and Successful Interventions.

Each of these themes offered valuable insights into the teachers' perspectives on cyberbullying and provided guidance for the development of comprehensive anti-cyberbullying strategies in middle schools. In an effort to ensure the relevance of the study, the themes were carefully categorized, and the responses were ordered. These themes emerged as a result of the detailed analysis of the participant's responses. It is also significant to point out that the social learning theory, which states that people learn through observing the behaviors and experiences of others in a social environment, served as the framework for this study. The opinions and suggestions made by the teachers in this study are, in part, impacted by the cyberbullying situations they have observed or been made aware of, and also the training they have received. This alignment with the social learning theory emphasizes the significance of developing and

maintaining a supportive and educational environment for preventing cyberbullying behaviors and stresses the role that modeling and mentoring play in influencing students' behavior. Chapter 5 will provide a discussion of the implications, recommendations, and conclusions drawn from this research study.

Chapter 5: Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

The problem addressed in this study is the deficiency in teachers' ability to identify and apply intervention methods for cyberbullying incidents, despite the proven effectiveness of traditional bullying interventions in the school environment (Gaffney et al., 2019). Bullying, regardless of its nature, remains a pervasive issue in school environments, affecting students of diverse backgrounds (Moosa, 2020). The increase in disturbing conflicts within schools, including tragic incidents like school shootings, has further emphasized the need to address cyberbullying and ensure student safety (Das et al., 2019). To combat cyberbullying effectively, teachers must be equipped with the necessary knowledge and intervention strategies (Wachs et al., 2019).

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to enhance teachers' awareness of cyberbullying and improve their efficacy in implementing intervention methods by exploring their perceptions of the adequacy of the training provided for preventing and addressing cyberbullying incidents in their classrooms. This study utilized a qualitative exploratory case study approach (Yin, 2018). Interviews were conducted to allow the participants to provide detailed information on their experiences and perceptions related to the identification of cyberbullying and intervention methods. The exploratory case study approach also provided an understanding of teacher perceptions regarding the adequacy of the training provided for preventing and addressing cyberbullying incidents in their classrooms. The target population was sixth through eighth-grade teachers from one local county middle school.

The coding in NVivo combined both the terms and information from both the survey and the interview results. Nine key themes were derived which identified various aspects of cyberbullying and provided important insights into effective intervention strategies and training

enhancements. The identified themes encompassed various aspects of the research questions and included: (a) Prevalence of Cyberbullying, (b) Factors Contributing to Cyberbullying, (c) Effectiveness of Current Anti-Bullying Training, (d) Inclusion of Emotional Impact and Involvement of Parents, (e) Continuous Evaluation and Updates, (f) Collaborative Platforms and Resources, (g) Training Effectiveness, (h) Ongoing Support and Resources, and (i) Best Practices and Successful Interventions. Each of these themes offered valuable insights into the teachers' perspectives on cyberbullying and provided guidance for the development of comprehensive anti-cyberbullying strategies in middle schools. Two themes emerged from the first research question, two themes emerged from the second research question, and five themes emerged from the third research question.

The findings from this qualitative case study shed light on teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying in their school and their perspectives on the effectiveness of current anti-bullying training. The findings underscore the importance of comprehensive and engaging training programs to equip educators with the necessary tools to tackle cyberbullying effectively. Additionally, the study emphasizes the need for interactive platforms and ongoing support systems to facilitate a collaborative approach in addressing cyberbullying within the school community. These suggestions are vital in promoting a positive and inclusive school environment conducive to preventing and managing cyberbullying incidents.

The study had several limitations. Firstly, the participants who volunteered from the target population may have shared perspectives similar to those of other participants, potentially affecting the diversity of viewpoints in the study. Another limitation was the relatively smaller sample size, involving middle school teachers from a single county school in a southwestern city. Although smaller sample sizes are common in qualitative research, it is important to recognize

that the findings might not generalize beyond this particular population, limiting their scope and limiting their ability to be replicated. Lastly, there was the potential risk of breaching participant confidentiality due to the nature of the information shared in qualitative research. Despite precautions, confidentiality breaches pose ethical concerns. Each participant received a copy of the informed consent form and was requested not to discuss the study with other teachers until four weeks after completing their interviews, to mitigate this limitation. This chapter includes implications, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for future research.

Implications

The implications of the study were derived from the comprehensive analysis of the responses received from the experiences and perspectives of middle school teachers which resulted in the identification of the thematic labels and provided insights on the complexities of cyberbullying and the efficacy of current anti-bullying training within the school district. This case study examined teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying in their school and their perspectives on the effectiveness of the current anti-bullying training within the school district. The data was analyzed using a combination of digital and hand coding. The data was organized and analyzed with the usage of NVivo qualitative data analysis software.

The strong capability of NVivo to assist the researcher in finding themes through data tagging, sorting, and linking led to the identification of the themes. Reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) was used in the study to interpret the raw data. RTA is a type of qualitative data analysis that allows the researcher to identify themes or patterns in the data set, like other forms of thematic analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). RTA differs from other types of TA in that no structured codebooks were used, and themes were not simply a summary of what participants said about a subject (Byrne, 2022). Instead, RTA acknowledges the researcher's active role in

constructing themes through interaction with the participants, the underlying theoretical assumptions of the study, and the researcher's skillset (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

The data analysis process was modeled after Braun and Clarke's (2020) six phases. To gain a general understanding of the data, the initial step consisted of reading through each article. Semantic and latent codes were generated in phase two and integrated with the a priori codes for thematic analysis. As codes were added to, removed from, or combined, the third phase's themes and subthemes evolved. Reviewing themes in order to decide whether to combine, refine, separate, or discard them was the fourth phase (Bloomberg, 2019). Naming and defining the themes and subthemes was the next step in phase five (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). The researcher refines the themes and subthemes in this phase. The production of the report is the final phase in Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis model.

Research Question #1

What are teachers' perceptions of the extent of cyberbullying in their school? The first research question aimed to uncover teachers' perceptions of the extent of cyberbullying in their school. Two key themes emerged in response: the prevalence of cyberbullying and contributing factors. The findings emphasize that cyberbullying is widespread in the targeted middle school, significantly impacting students' well-being and academic performance. This aligns with established research, highlighting its negative consequences on mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being (Bartlett et al., 2019; Lucas-Molina et al., 2022; Islam et al., 2022; Samara et al., 2021; Copp et al., 2021; Abaido, 2019).

Moreover, the findings correlate with the need for comprehensive measures to address the emotional and psychological harm caused by cyberbullying, consistent with previous research (Patchin & Hinduja, 2019). The study further underscores the significance of promoting

a positive school climate to mitigate conflicts between students. These insights align not only with the theoretical framework of social learning theory, emphasizing the value of behavior observation and imitation (Bandura, 1977), but also emphasize the urgent need for comprehensive prevention and intervention strategies in middle schools.

Research Question #2

What are teachers' perceptions about the current anti-bullying training's efficacy within their school district? The second research question aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of the current anti-bullying training's efficacy within the school district. The themes that emerged to answer this question include the effectiveness of the current anti-bullying training and the inclusion of emotional impact and parental involvement. The findings in this study underscore the importance of effective partnerships between schools and families in combating cyberbullying, as emphasized in prior literature (Campbell et al., 2019). Additionally, the study findings delve into the significance of teachers' perceptions of the severity of cyberbullying incidents and their attitudes toward intervention methods.

Existing research highlights the need for comprehensive teacher training programs that foster empathy and proactive intervention strategies (Rigby, 2020; Wachs et al., 2019). Regarding the effectiveness of the current anti-bullying training, the findings indicate that 87.5% of participants believe that training delivery is crucial. However, teachers stress the need for engaging delivery methods to improve comprehension and intervention strategies. This finding aligns with previous research, underlining the importance of continuous evaluation and improvement of anti-bullying programs to ensure their relevance and impact (Gaffney et al., 2019).

Research Question #3

What is needed to improve the effectiveness of existing cyberbullying training? The study's findings align with broader scholarly discourse on the importance of implementing comprehensive anti-bullying initiatives involving all stakeholders, including school administrators, staff, parents, and teachers (Johander et al., 2021; Kittelman et al., 2019). Moreover, the integration of restorative justice practices and student-led initiatives, as suggested in this study, resonates with the growing emphasis on creating a positive social climate through programs like Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS) and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) (Elrod et al., 2022; Rholetter, 2022; Ossa et al., 2020; Sullivan et al., 2021).

The findings underscore the importance of incorporating these successful interventions into the existing cyberbullying training program, as recommended by teachers. Restorative justice practices, supported by previous studies emphasizing the repair of harm and building positive relationships, have shown promise in fostering accountability and empathy among students (Das et al., 2019; Wachs et al., 2019). Similarly, student-led initiatives empower students to actively contribute to a safe and respectful school environment, fostering a culture of respect and kindness (Macaulay et al., 2019). By integrating these practices into the training, educators can enhance their ability to create a positive and inclusive school climate.

Continuous evaluation and updates regarding the efficacy of the training were also highlighted by teachers, emphasizing the sharing of best practices and successful interventions among educators. The emphasis on environmental aspects in Bandura's social learning theory aligns with the themes of continuous evaluation and updates and collaborative platforms and resources. Bandura's theory supports the participants' suggestion of ongoing training evaluation

and updates, emphasizing that actions are impacted by feedback and reinforcement. Similarly, the emphasis on collaborative platforms and resources aligns with Bandura's contention that individuals acquire knowledge from those around them, emphasizing the social context of learning (Bandura, 1977).

Recommendations for Practice

To address the identified prevalence of cyberbullying (RQ1) and to align with the broader emphasis on emotional support, the first recommendation for practice is to implement regular awareness programs to educate students about cyberbullying consequences and responsible online behavior. Building on the need for effective partnerships (RQ2), the second recommendation for practice is to foster open communication channels among students, teachers, and parents, and establish protocols for timely investigation and intervention in cyberbullying incidents. Linked to the importance of effective partnerships and diverse delivery methods (RQ2), the third recommendation for practice is to diversify the delivery methods of the training, incorporating live sessions, online components, and ongoing discussions. This comprehensive approach may ensure a more holistic understanding of cyberbullying and its implications.

Aligning with the need for policies supporting teachers (RQ2), the fourth recommendation for practice is to ensure that school policies, specifically addressing cyberbullying, are aligned with the identified implications and recommendations. Policies should reflect a commitment to supporting teachers in their efforts to prevent cyberbullying and foster a positive and safe learning environment. Building on the theme related to the inclusion of emotional impact and involvement of parents. (RQ2), the fifth recommendation for practice is to incorporate a comprehensive understanding of the emotional impact of cyberbullying into the

training sessions through the introduction of modules that focus on the psychological well-being of both victims and bullies.

In response to the identified need for emotional well-being support and timely intervention (RQ3), the sixth recommendation for practice is to establish protocols for the support for affected students and to prioritize the emotional well-being of students by providing necessary support and counseling services within the school environment. To further enhance teachers' comprehension and practical skills (RQ3), the seventh recommendation for practice is to redesign the anti-bullying training to include more interactive and engaging components, such as role-playing activities, real-life scenarios, visual aids, and group discussions to enhance teachers' comprehension and application of intervention strategies and gain practical skills that can be applied in real-world situations.

Aligning with the study's emphasis on a collaborative approach involving parents, and teachers (RQ3), the eighth recommendation for practice is to foster a collaborative approach that involves parents in the anti-bullying training program. Establishing a partnership between schools and parents may reinforce the anti-bullying message and encourage a united front against cyberbullying. In line with the study's emphasis on collaborative partnerships (RQ3), the ninth recommendation for practice is to encourage and support initiatives led by teachers that promote kindness, respect, and empathy among students. Teachers can play an active role in fostering a positive school climate by organizing anti-cyberbullying campaigns, awareness events, and peer support programs.

To address the need for fostering a positive school climate through teacher-led initiatives (RQ3), the tenth recommendation for practice is to establish mentoring programs where experienced teachers mentor their peers on effective cyberbullying prevention and intervention

strategies. Peer mentoring provides a supportive network for teachers to exchange experiences, seek advice, and collaborate on successful approaches. To ensure continuous evaluation and offer valuable perspectives (RQ3), the eleventh recommendation for practice is to regularly assess the long-term effects of the applied strategies on cyberbullying incidents, students' well-being, and the overall school atmosphere. Analyzing longitudinal data can offer valuable perspectives on the success and endurance of the interventions as perceived by the teachers.

Recommendations for Future Research

The first recommendation for future research is to focus on developing innovative and interactive training modules that cater to diverse learning styles and address the evolving nature of cyberbullying. Quantitative studies employing experimental designs can investigate the impact of these modules on educators' engagement, understanding, and application of intervention methods. This could involve pre- and post-assessments to measure changes in knowledge, confidence, and competence. Researchers could investigate how incorporating various interactive elements can enhance engagement and understanding among educators, thereby improving the application of intervention methods in real-world scenarios. Exploring the impact of these innovative training modules on teachers' confidence and competence in addressing cyberbullying can provide insights into the effectiveness of tailored educational approaches.

The second recommendation for future research is to study the impact of personalized learning approaches and incorporating mental health professionals into the training framework, which may significantly enhance its effectiveness. Quantitative studies, using quasi-experimental designs, can assess the effectiveness of personalized learning in enhancing educators' understanding of cyberbullying incidents and associated mental health challenges. Research in

this direction could explore the role of mental health professionals in supporting educators in identifying and addressing the psychological aspects of cyberbullying among students.

Understanding how personalized learning can foster a more comprehensive understanding of cyberbullying incidents and the associated mental health challenges can contribute to the development of more effective intervention strategies.

The third recommendation for future research is to conduct long-term studies using longitudinal designs to evaluate the sustained impact of engaging delivery methods on students' behavioral changes, as this may provide valuable insights. Future researchers could explore the longitudinal effects of implementing engaging and interactive training programs on students' attitudes, behaviors, and overall well-being. These studies could employ surveys and behavioral observations over an extended period to understand how training programs affect students' attitudes, behaviors, and overall well-being. Assessing the long-term implications of these interventions can offer a deeper understanding of the enduring impact of effective cyberbullying prevention and intervention strategies.

The fourth recommendation for future research is to conduct comprehensive studies that focus on the development of innovative approaches to integrate continuous evaluation and timely updates into existing cyberbullying training programs. Quantitative methods, such as randomized controlled trials, can assess the impact of these assessment methods on the overall effectiveness of the training, providing insights into proactive strategies for addressing cyberbullying incidents. Investigating the impact of these assessment methods on the overall effectiveness of the training may offer valuable insights into the enhancement of proactive strategies for addressing cyberbullying incidents in middle schools.

The fifth recommendation for future research is to explore the implementation of collaborative platforms and resource networks specifically tailored to educators, emphasizing the exchange of best practices and successful interventions. Examining the role of these platforms in fostering a supportive environment for educators to share experiences and resources related to cyberbullying prevention and intervention warrants both quantitative and qualitative research and may provide crucial guidance for improving the collective effectiveness of training programs.

The sixth recommendation for future research is to conduct in-depth qualitative studies aimed at assessing the effectiveness of comprehensive support systems and resources provided to educators involved in cyberbullying prevention and intervention. This may involve interviews and focus group discussions to gather rich insights into teachers' preparedness, confidence, and overall management of cyberbullying incidents. Investigating the impact of these resources on teachers' preparedness, confidence, and overall management of cyberbullying incidents may offer essential insights into the significance of ongoing support in creating a safe and supportive learning environment.

The seventh recommendation for future research is to explore the development of training programs that prioritize the integration of best practices and successful interventions identified by teachers. A mixed-methods approach can be employed, combining surveys and case studies, to understand the effectiveness of tailored training modules in addressing cyberbullying incidents. Investigating the impact of these tailored training modules on educators' ability to effectively address cyberbullying incidents in middle schools may provide valuable guidance for creating impactful and sustainable training initiatives. The eighth recommendation for future research is to involve a more diverse and extensive sample of teachers from various school

districts. This can be achieved through quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by educators in addressing cyberbullying.

The ninth recommendation for future research is to employ a mixed-methods approach integrating both qualitative and quantitative data. This approach can provide a more holistic understanding of teachers' experiences and the effectiveness of training programs, strengthening the generalizability of the findings. The tenth recommendation for future research is to investigate the most effective intervention methods and the impact of training programs in mitigating cyberbullying incidents. This may involve quantitative studies using experimental designs to compare the efficacy of different strategies, thereby providing insights into the efficacy of different strategies in addressing this issue.

Given the limitations of this study, future researchers can improve upon the study by broadening the scope of the sample size, incorporating a more diverse range of teachers from various educational backgrounds, and including students' perspectives to gain a more comprehensive understanding of cyberbullying in middle schools. Employing a mixed-methods approach that integrates both qualitative and quantitative data can contribute to a more nuanced and in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences and the effectiveness of the training programs. Researchers should uphold strict confidentiality protocols and implement measures to minimize biases to ensure the ethical integrity of the research. The next logical step in this line of research would be to conduct a longitudinal study that examines the sustained impact of the recommended training programs and resources on teachers' preparedness, students' well-being, and the overall school climate. Additionally, future researchers could investigate the long-term effectiveness of collaborative platforms and resource networks in fostering a supportive environment for

educators and students, thereby contributing to the ongoing improvement of cyberbullying prevention and intervention initiatives in middle schools.

Conclusions

This study addressed the problem of deficiency in teachers' ability to identify and apply intervention methods for cyberbullying incidents, despite the proven effectiveness of traditional bullying interventions in the school environment (Gaffney et al., 2019). The comprehensive exploration of teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying and the effectiveness of anti-bullying training in this study has provided valuable insights into the complex nature of cyberbullying intervention and prevention strategies within the school environment. This study has underscored the significance of equipping teachers with comprehensive training and resources to effectively identify, manage, and prevent cyberbullying incidents.

The findings shed light on the prevalent issue of cyberbullying and the crucial role that educators play in addressing and mitigating its harmful effects on students' well-being and academic performance, further highlighting the critical importance of continual training and support. The findings also shed light on the teachers' perceptions on the prevalence of cyberbullying, its impact on student well-being, and the influential role of factors such as easy access to technology and peer dynamics, emphasizing the critical necessity for educators to have the requisite resources and tools to effectively combat cyberbullying in educational environments. The findings in this study also underscored the significance of ongoing assessment and updates in training programs, as well as the facilitation of collaborative resource platforms and parental involvement in addressing cyberbullying incidents.

In the context of Bandura's social learning theory, the study's findings highlight the crucial role of teachers as influential figures in the social environment of schools. The emphasis

on peer dynamics, the impact of technology access, and the significance of ongoing training align with Bandura's theory, emphasizing the impact of observational learning and modeling. The study's recommendations for continual evaluation, collaborative networks, and parental engagement emphasize the pivotal role of educators in shaping students' behaviors and responses. By underlining the importance of comprehensive support and dynamic training, the study's results reinforce the idea that teachers serve as primary models for students, actively shaping their perceptions and behaviors within the school environment. This amplifies the significance of teachers' contributions to fostering positive social interactions and promoting a safe and respectful atmosphere that effectively combats cyberbullying.

The main implication for educators underscores the importance of prioritizing flexible training methods and supportive systems to effectively address the multifaceted challenges posed by cyberbullying. These findings compel educational stakeholders to develop comprehensive training programs, foster collaborative initiatives, and ensure ongoing evaluations to cultivate a positive school environment that encourages empathy, respect, and responsible online behavior among students. Additionally, this study has provided critical insights into the challenges of cyberbullying intervention and prevention within educational settings, emphasizing the pivotal role of educators in addressing this pervasive issue. The findings underscore the pressing need for comprehensive training and ongoing support systems to equip teachers with the necessary tools to effectively identify, manage, and prevent cyberbullying incidents. They emphasize the profound impact of cyberbullying on student well-being and academic performance, highlighting the influential role of factors such as technology access and peer dynamics. By drawing connections to Bandura's social learning theory, the study underscores the influential position of

teachers as primary models for students, actively shaping their behaviors and responses within the school environment.

Furthermore, the study's implications underscore the urgency of prioritizing adaptable training methods and collaborative support systems to effectively address the multifaceted challenges posed by cyberbullying. These implications emphasize the importance of educational stakeholders in developing comprehensive training programs, fostering collaborative initiatives, and ensuring ongoing evaluations to cultivate a positive school environment that encourages empathy, respect, and responsible online behavior among students. Ultimately, this research calls for a concerted effort to prioritize the well-being of students and the creation of a safe and respectful atmosphere within educational institutions, where teachers play a pivotal role in shaping a positive and inclusive school climate.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Demographic Questions:

1. How long have you been teaching in [REDACTED] County?
2. What grade are you currently teaching?
3. Have you attended anti-bullying/cyberbullying training provided by the [REDACTED] County School District within at least the past five years?

Research Question 1: What are teachers' perceptions of the extent of cyberbullying in their school?

1. In your opinion, how prevalent is cyberbullying among middle school students in your school?
2. What factors do you believe contribute to the level of cyberbullying in your school?
3. In your experience, what specific steps have you taken or seen your school take to address the issue of cyberbullying, and how effective do you believe these efforts have been in reducing the incidents of cyberbullying?

Research Question 2: What are teachers' perceptions about the current anti-bullying training's efficacy within their school district?

1. Describe the anti-bullying/cyberbullying training received in the [REDACTED] County School District, including whether the training needs to be delivered in a more effective manner.
2. How do you think the anti-bullying/cyberbullying training that you have received has impacted your ability to identify and intervene in cases of cyberbullying?
3. Are there any specific areas or topics related to cyberbullying that you feel the current training does not adequately cover? If so, why?

Research Question 3: What is needed to improve the effectiveness of existing cyberbullying training?

1. In your opinion, how effective is the current training in addressing cyberbullying among middle school students in the [REDACTED] County School District?
2. What ongoing support or resources would you find helpful in dealing with cyberbullying in your school?
3. Can you think of any examples of best practices or successful interventions that should be incorporated into the training?

Appendix B: Consent Letter

Consent Letter

Introduction

My name is Sheila Brevard, and I am a doctoral student at National University (NU).

I am conducting a research study to explore the perceptions of teachers regarding the adequacy of the training received on interventions used to prevent cyberbullying within their classrooms. The name of this research study is “Teachers Perceptions on the Identification of Cyberbullying and Intervention Methods in Nevada Middle Schools.” I am seeking your consent to participate in this study.

Please read this document to learn more about this research and determine if you would like to participate. Your participation is completely voluntary, and I will address your questions or concerns at any point before or during the research.

Eligibility

You may participate in this research if you meet all the following criteria:

1. You are currently teaching at [REDACTED] Middle School.
2. You have taught at a [REDACTED] County Middle School since at least August, 2020.
3. You have attended anti-bullying/cyberbullying training provided by the [REDACTED] County School District within the past five years.

I hope to include 8 people in this research.

Activities

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to do the following activities:

1. Answer demographic questions about your teaching experience.
2. Complete a 1:1 online interview of approximately 30-60 minutes, using Zoom.
3. Review the interview summary via email for 10-15 minutes.

During these activities, you will be asked questions about:

- Years of experience in teaching at a [REDACTED] County middle school.
- Your completion of anti-bullying/cyberbullying training or professional development provided by the [REDACTED] County School District.
- Your perception of the extent of cyberbullying in your school.

- Your perception of the effectiveness of anti-bullying/cyberbullying training offered by the [REDACTED] County School District.
- What improvements you think need to be made to existing cyberbullying training to make it more effective.

All activities and questions are optional: you may skip any part of this research that you do not wish to complete and may stop at any time.

If you need to complete the activities above in a different way than I have described, please let me know, and I will attempt to make other arrangements.

Risks

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with this research. You can still skip any question you do not wish to answer, skip any activity, or stop participation at any time.

Benefits

If you participate, there are no direct benefits to you. This research may increase the body of knowledge in the subject area of this research.

Privacy and Data Protection

I will take reasonable measures to protect the security of all your personal information, but I cannot guarantee confidentiality of your research data. In addition to me, the following people and offices will have access to your data:

- My NU dissertation committee and any appropriate NU support or leadership staff
- The NU Institutional Review Board

This data could be used for future research studies or distributed to other investigators for future research studies without additional informed consent from you or your legally authorized representative.

I will securely store your data for 3 years. Then, I will delete electronic data and destroy paper data.

How the Results Will Be Used

I will publish the results in my dissertation. I may also share the results in a presentation or publication. Participants will not be identified in the results.

Recording

I would like to record your responses with Zoom and a digital recorder during the interview.

Mandated Reporting

My professional role outside of NU requires me to report suspicion of child or elderly abuse, suspicion of possible harm to self or others, and committed crimes to the appropriate authorities.

Contact Information

If you have questions, you can contact me at: S.BrevardBlamo4410@o365.ncu.edu or 702-582-5799.

My dissertation chair's name is Dr. Jennifer Summerville. They work at National University and are supervising me on the research. You can contact them at: jsummerville@ncu.edu.

If you have questions about your rights in the research or if a problem or injury has occurred during your participation, please contact the NU Institutional Review Board at irb@nu.edu.

Voluntary Participation

If you decide not to participate, or if you stop participation after you start, there will be no penalty to you: you will not lose any benefit to which you are otherwise entitled.