TEACHER BELIEFS AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT PRESCHOOL BULLYING

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine teacher perceptions and teacher characteristics about bullying and to see how distinctions in these variables relate or affect teacher attitudes, when responding to bullying situations in preschool classrooms. The researcher was also interested in investigating how other variables such as preschool program type (i.e., community-based/center models or non-community/school-based models) and race impacted teacher perception when responding to preschool bullying scenarios. Survey data were collected from 133 preschool teachers working in a nonprofit agency serving preschool children across a 13 county area in one state. The study used the Bullying Attitudes Questionnaire-Modified-Revised (BAQ-M Revised; Davis, Burnham, & Mills, 2015). The revised measure was based on Yoon and Kerber’s (2003) questionnaire referred to as the Bullying Attitudes Questionnaire Modified (BAQ-M, 2003). The revised measure maintained the original six vignettes depicting three types of bullying: physical, social, and relational bullying. The revision to the instrument involved the creation of additional questions after each vignette to improve the content validity of scale constructs (i.e., Seriousness, Empathy, and Response). Teacher self-perceptions about classroom behavior management was measured using the Efficacy in Classroom Management subscale of the Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale Short Form (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001).

ANOVAS were used to analyze the first research question. Significant differences were found between Black and White teachers on the construct of Empathy based upon race. Specifically, Black teachers scored significantly higher on the construct of Empathy. A two-way
ANOVA tested the independent variables of race and setting on the construct of Seriousness. Results of the ANOVA indicated that there were significant differences in race.

Regression models were used to analyze the second research question. The results of a four-predictor model comprised of Seriousness, Empathy, Response, and Efficacy in Classroom Management was significant. However, the classroom management subscale of the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy) was not found to be a significant predictor in the model.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all those who have helped guide me through the trials and tribulations of creating this manuscript. I give thanks to God for blessing me with wonderful parents, friends, and colleagues. To my children, Donovan and Brennan, thank you for your hugs and patience when I missed sporting events. Thanks to my husband Emmitt for supporting me. A very special thank you to Mr. Crow for never letting me give up and for words of wisdom, love, and support. To my wonderful parents, Calvin and Brenda, thank you for sculpting me into a woman with goals, and dreams. To my father, who has gone on to be with our Lord, thank you for being with me in spirit. It is because of all of you that I have accomplished this task.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

\( a \) Cronbach’s index of internal consistency

\( df \) Degrees of Freedom: number of values free to vary after

\( F \) Fisher’s F ratio: A ration of two variances

\( M \) Mean: the sum of a set of measurements divided by the number of measurements in the set

\( p \) Probability associated with the occurrence under the null hypothesis of a value as extreme as or more extreme than the observed value

\( r \) Pearson product-moment correlation

\( t \) Computed value of a t test

\( < \) Less than

\( = \) Equal to
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background Statement of the Problem

Burgeoning literature indicates that school violence is a pervasive problem in the United States and abroad with as many as 7% - 49% of students annually self-identifying as having been victims of bullying (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O’Brennan, 2007; Dinkes, Kemp, Baum, & Snyder, 2009; Hong & Espelage, 2012). Bullying differs from aggression and is often classified as a subcategory of aggressive behavior that can be as obscure as social isolation or as pronounced as physical violence (Arseneault, Bowes, & Shakoor, 2010; Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Olweus, 1993). Despite the infusion of prevention and intervention services to reduce bullying behaviors, bullying in schools remains a ubiquitous problem associated with enormous psychological and financial costs to schools, victims, bystanders, and bullies (Ball et al., 2008; Crothers & Kolbert, 2008; Gendron, Williams, & Guerra, 2011; Hektner & Swenson, 2011; Hong & Espelage, 2012).

Most research involving the study of bullying has emphasized the manifestation and development of the problem in middle school and adolescence while few studies have investigated the impact of bullying in early childhood populations or preschool teachers perceptions about bullying (Monks, Ortega-Ruiz, & Torrado-Val, 2002; Perren & Alsaker, 2006). Nonetheless, mounting research indicates that bullying roles can form at the preschool level (Emond, Ormel, Veenstra, & Oldehinkel, 2007; Estell, 2007; Goryl, Hewitt-Neilsen, & Sweller, 2013; Salmivalli, Voeten, & Sinisammal, 2004), thus placing students at risk for a
constellation of emotional and academic difficulties at an early age and underlining the need to examine bullying patterns at younger ages.

Bullying has been associated with deleterious effects to those involved. Internal and external effects such as impairments in academic functioning (Coie & Dodge, 1998; Dinkes et al., 2009) physical violence (Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2010; Newman, Holden, & Delville, 2011); criminal offending (Nansel, 2001); mental health difficulties (Arseneault et al., 2010); and suicidality (Kim, Leventhal, Koh, & Boyce, 2009) have been noted. To add, negative correlates associated with bullying can impair both the school climate and student educational performance. Thus, educators, school counselors, and school psychologists need to be aware of the implications associated with bullying in order to design effective intervention and prevention programs.

The following longitudinal studies highlight the correlation between the enduring effects of bullying and the relationship to early childhood bullying experiences. Arseneault et al. (2010) conducted a study of preschool children across four time points from ages 3 to 6 finding that chronic victims of bullying in preschool were more at risk for continued peer victimization in primary school. In a related study, Barker and colleagues (2008) investigated the association between preschool bullying trajectories and peer victimization after entry into the school setting. The sample included 1,970 children selected from the birth registry in Quebec, Canada. Peer victimization information was assessed using rating forms from the mother, beginning at 41 months of age and again at ages 5, 6, and 7. At age 8 peer victimization in school was assessed through teacher report and child self-report ratings. Outcomes revealed three preschool trajectories of peer-victimization (low/increasing, moderate/increasing, and high/chronic). Preschool trajectories were highest for children in 1st grade who were classified along the
high/chronic and moderate/increasing continuums. Males were 61% more likely to follow the high/chronic trajectory and 57% more likely to follow moderate/increasing trajectory while females along the high/chronic trajectory experienced high levels of self-harm during adolescence. Notably, this study revealed that high-levels of early physical aggression was the best predictor of both high chronic and moderate/increasing levels of trajectories of preschool peer victimization. Further, this study revealed continuity in peer victimization in early childhood. These findings underlined implications for practice, indicating that preventive strategies for children and families in early childhood are necessary.

Additionally, several studies have shown a relationship between bullying in early childhood and difficulties in adulthood. Ttofi, Farrington, Losel, and Loeber (2011), conducted a meta-analysis of 28 studies noting strong associations between early childhood behavior problems and the probability of engaging in criminal offending behavior up to 11 years later after controlling for major childhood risk factors. Similarly, Newman et al (2011) investigated the effects of bullying and victimization patterns using a sample of 1,339 college-aged students. Newman and colleagues reported robust connections between poor academic performance in adolescence and adulthood when they examined students considered to be long-term bullies and victims during early childhood. In another study, Adams and Lawrence (2011) using a sample of 269 undergraduate students found that participants involved in bullying during early childhood were more likely to be involved in similar roles in college as either a victim or as a bully. The study also found that the effects of bullying may follow students into college if they were previously in the role as a victim or as a bully during middle or high school years. In another longitudinal study, Klomek et al. 2009, conducted research on the relationships between bullying and suicide attempts in a sample of 5,302 Finnish children beginning at age 8 using multiple
informants. Outcomes revealed that victimization in childhood predicted later suicide attempts as well as completed suicide attempts up to the age of 25 years old among females after controlling for conduct and depressive symptomology.

In a longitudinal study published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Sourander and colleagues (2011) explored the predictive association between early childhood bullying and victimization in a sample of 2540 Finnish boys when they were 8 years old using multiple informants (i.e., parents, teachers, students). The participants were sampled again using the Finnish National Army registry when the subjects were 18-23 years old. They were administered surveys about adult psychiatric conditions. Outcomes of the study found that bullying and victimization screenings at age 8 identified 28% of those with a psychiatric disorder 10 to 15 years later (Sourander et al., 2011). The implications associated with the study suggest that boys are at risk of suffering psychiatric disorders in early adulthood if they experience bullying and victimization during early childhood.

The outcomes of the aforementioned studies highlight the impact of bullying and victimization as well as the need for bullying prevention in schools. While the impetus of school-based bullying prevention programs remains clear, implementation and efficacy of these programs depends to a great extent on teachers. Since teachers attend to the academic needs of their students, and have responsibility for establishing a positive classroom climate, the responsibility for implementing anti-bullying intervention and prevention programs often falls under the purview of teachers (Byers, Caltabiano, & Caltabiano, 2011; Cowie, Hutson, Jennifer, & Myers, 2008). Thus, it is imperative that teachers are properly trained to recognize the bullying dynamic. Similarly, researchers assert that classrooms often serve as smaller contexts for bullying (Doll, Song, & Siemers, 2004; Hong & Espelage, 2012; Swearer, 2007) with
instances of bullying often occurring in front of the teacher (Olweus, 1993). Resultantly, how teachers handle reports of bullying and aggression can set the tone for classroom and student reporting.

In a related vein, some studies have indicated that prevention and intervention efforts can be hampered if teachers have difficulty recognizing and responding appropriately to bullying scenarios (Farrell, 2010; Yoon & Kerber, 2003). Further, bullying research has shown that teacher response to bullying scenarios may be impacted by individual teacher characteristics to include teacher empathy toward the victim, teacher perceptions about self-efficacy, moral orientation (Ellis & Shute, 2007), and perceived seriousness of the bullying instance (Yoon & Kerber, 2003). Researchers have also noted that views about peer victimization (Arbeau & Copeland, 2007) can affect both teacher decision-making, and response style directly and indirectly during the bullying process (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008; Yoon & Kerber 2003). To add complication to the issue, within the preschool setting, teachers are often hesitant to characterize a child as either a victim or a bully. Teachers instead prefer to classify behaviors as negative, inappropriate, or unacceptable for fear of labeling a student (Goryl et al., 2013).

With these issues in mind, the focus of this research study is to examine the relationship between teacher characteristics and perceived self-efficacy in responding to preschool bullying situations.

Statement of the Problem

Schools should be safe places to learn and socialize (No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB] 2001). However, aggression and bullying-related experiences remain a persistent reality interfering with this notion of safety. With an impetus of promoting safe school environments, the U.S. Congress enacted the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative (Derzen et al., 2012).
However, 15 years after inception, the most recent data from 2007 indicates that 32% of students report being bullied at school (Modzeleski et al., 2012).

The phenomenon of bullying gained national attention after a series of tragic school shootings prompted President Barack Obama to support recommendations by the National Bullying Task Force (2010), related to identifying, understanding, and intervening with bullying. To add, with a goal of developing school shooter profiles, the United States Secret Service (Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, & Modzeleski, 2002) conducted interviews with families, teachers, and neighbors of school shooters over the past 20 years. They found that 71% of school shooters had been targets of school bullying (Vossekuil, et al., 2002). Thus, bullying remains a pernicious problem with collateral effects to individuals, systems, and to the school climate (Ellis & Shute, 2007; Pepler, Jiang, Craig, & Connolly, 2008; Swearer, 2007).

Although bullying research has been extensive, bullying has been found to exist in early childhood populations and has rarely been studied within this population. Likewise, few studies have investigated preschool teachers’ perceptions about bullying. The limited studies that have examined teacher perceptions and bullying indicate that teachers often do not recognize bullying behaviors and are hesitant to identify children as either a victim or a bully in this population (Farrell, 2010; Goryl et al., 2013; Mishna, 2005). Given the integral role that teachers are expected to play in prevention and intervention initiatives, there are negative implications associated with non-recognition or inaccurate recognition of bullying behaviors and few intervention efforts. By examining teacher perceptions of preschool bullying, this study may be able to offer insight into altering trajectories of aggressive behaviors, if studied in early childhood populations.
Purpose

The purpose of the study was to examine teacher perceptions and teacher characteristics about bullying and to see how distinctions in these variables relate or affect teacher attitudes and perceptions when responding to bullying situations in preschool classrooms. The researcher was also interested in investigating how other variables such as preschool program type (i.e., community-based/center models or non-community/school-based models) and race impact teacher perception when responding to preschool bullying scenarios.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it facilitates a better understanding of the teacher characteristics and perceptions influencing teacher responses in preschool bullying situations. Since preschool represents a time when early identification, elimination and/or escalation of deficits in emotional and academic functioning can be initially addressed in a school setting, gaining insight into the intricacies that foster and maintain bullying behaviors in early childhood populations is important. The findings from this study have the potential to impact schools, teachers, students, parents, and helping professionals (i.e., counselors, school psychologists, mental health practitioners) who work with students with social and emotional deficits. In addition, this research may shed light on the factors that affect classroom management in order to inform policy, improve classroom processes, and promote the rights of all students for protection from bullying.
Research Questions

1. Does the likelihood of teacher response to bullying in preschool differ between school type, gender, and race as measured by the *(BAQ-M Revised; Davis, Burnham, & Mills, 2015)*; 

2. How does Empathy, Perceived Seriousness and Likelihood of Response to bullying in preschool as measured by the *(BAQ-M Revised; Davis et al., 2015)* relate to teacher self-efficacy as measured by the Personal Teaching Subscale of the *(TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy 2001)*.

Definitions

**Bullying** - Defined as repeated aggressive behavior that reflects an imbalance of power between perpetrator and the victims (Olweus, 1993).

**Bully** - Defined as an aggressor (Olweus, 1993).

**Victim** - Defined as the person being bullied (Olweus, 1993).

**Bully-Victim** - Defined as the person who was once bullied, but then was less powerful and bullied in another situation (Olweus, 1993).

**Physical Aggression** - Defined as hitting, punching, pinching, shoving and acts that hurt people (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Olweus, 1993).

**Verbal Aggression** - Defined as verbal threats, name calling, and racial insults (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Olweus, 1993).

**Relational Aggression** - Defined as rejecting, excluding, and isolating (Crick, et al., 2006; Hong & Espelage, 2012).

**Early Childhood/Preschool** - These terms are used interchangeably and are defined as children between the ages of 3-5 who have not yet entered Kindergarten for this study.
Pre-K program - A school readiness program funded by the state, which enrolls 3 and 4 year-old children, prohibits lottery enrollment and is not based on family income.

Community/Center-Based programs - A type of school readiness program with limited enrollment and includes income restrictions. A program that is located in a community based setting funded by the federal government, with a requirement to have a minimum number of students with disabilities enrolled in the program.

Non-community/School-Based program - For this study, a non-community/school-based program refers to a school readiness program situated within a public school that is not based on income and enrolls all 3 and 4 year olds with no set criteria or requirement to enroll students with disabilities.

Self-efficacy - Self-efficacy is defined as the person’s beliefs about their ability to effectively carry out a selected course of action (Bandura, 1997). However in the context of bullying, and for this study it refers to the teacher’s ability to successfully intervene and increase cooperation while reducing conflict in the classroom.

Empathy - Defined as the “ability to understand and share in another’s emotional state or context” (Cohen & Strayer, 1996, p.988).

Limitations

This study involved a sample of preschool teachers working in a nonprofit agency in one state in the southeastern region of the United States. These factors may affect the generalizability of the findings to other agencies, and other geographic areas in the U.S. Another limitation involves the revision to the \(BAQ-M\); Yoon & Kerber, 2003). The \(BAQ-M\) was modified to reflect a new instrument referred to as the \(BAQ-M\) Revised; Davis et al., 2015). The instrument contains additional questions that were added to assist with improving content validity.
Assumptions of the Study

The study included the following assumptions. The assumption was held that all participants would be honest and would follow all directions. The assumption was also held that all participants were truthful while answering the questions and correctly identified their race and teaching credentials. The assumption was also held that all participants possessed or had access to a computer. Further, it was assumed that all teachers had the requisite knowledge and skills to participate in a web-based survey.

Summary

This chapter discussed the pervasive nature of bullying, contextual factors that amplify or diminish the behavior, as well as the role of teacher response. Additionally, the purpose of this study, as well as the research questions, definitions, and limitations were identified. Chapter 2 was written to offer an in-depth review of the literature. Chapter 3 will offer the methodology of this study, the participants, instrumentation, and procedures. Chapter 4 presents the results of this study, while Chapter 5 compares the findings of this current study to the literature and offers future implications and conclusions.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bullying research has been extensive, conversely, much less is known about the phenomenon of bullying at the preschool level (Hanish, Kochenderfer-Ladd, Fabes, Martin, & Denning, 2004). An extensive body of research has documented the sequelae of bullying, prevalence rates, characteristics of bullies, victims, bystanders, intervention programs, coping mechanisms, and mental health difficulties in middle school, high school and beyond. Consequently, a limited number of studies have investigated the role of teacher perceptions and teacher characteristics in responding to bullying situations (Bradshaw, et al., 2007; Vlachou, Andreou, & Botsoglou, 2011). Even fewer studies have considered the role of teacher perceptions and teacher characteristics in responding to preschool bullying situations (Alink et al., 2006; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008; Yoon & Kerber, 2003).

This research study examined teacher perceptions and teacher characteristics about bullying and how distinctions in these variables relate or affect teacher attitudes, and perceptions when responding to bullying situations in preschool classrooms. The researcher was also interested in investigating how other variables such as preschool program type (i.e., community-based/center models or non-community/school-based models) and race impacted teacher perception when responding to preschool bullying scenarios.

Compelling reasons exist for studying bullying at the preschool level. First, the preschool period is a time in which prevention efforts as well as the identification of deficits in social-emotional and academic functioning can be addressed. From an ecological perspective,
researchers note that preschool may be the first social setting outside of the home environment in which complications with peers can be detected and examined by professionals (Swearer, 2007; Vlachou et al., 2011). Although some amount of aggression is expected in preschool as children negotiate developmental milestones, behavior is characterized as a serious concern when the frequency, duration, and intensity consistently stands out in comparison to peers of similar age and developmental level (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2006).

Secondly, attending to the developmental characteristics of preschool age children is paramount as research points to increases in the number of preschool children referred to mental health professionals for diagnosis and treatment of behavioral disturbances, aggressive behaviors, and prescribed psychotropic medications. Fontanella, Hiance, Phillips, Bridge, and Campo (2013) conducted research on the patterns of psychotropic medicines prescribed to preschool children using Medicaid claims data from a sample of 559,275 preschool children aged (2-5 years). Results indicated that the proportion of preschoolers being treated with antipsychotics, stimulants, and alpha agonists, primarily for behavioral disturbances and aggressive symptoms doubled from .2% in 2002 to .5% in 2008. To add, mounting research has noted links between preschool behavioral difficulties, adolescent conduct disorders (Emond et al., 2007) and criminal offending in adulthood (Ttofi et al., 2011).

Third, despite new educational initiatives designed to improve school readiness, preschool expulsion rates have increased. That is, expulsion or the temporary removal of a child for disciplinary reasons to another setting (U.S. Department of Civil Rights, 2014) for preschoolers are higher than expulsion rates for students in K-12 settings (Gilliam, 2005; Gilliam & Shakur, 2006; Kaiser & Sklar-Raminisky, 2012). Research conducted by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2014) indicates that African American children in
preschool were suspended out of school at a disproportionate rate. That is, while African American children make up 18% of enrollment, they make up 48% of preschool children suspended more than once. Thus, research and educational implications exists for assessing classroom management practices, and other variables affecting preschool expulsions. Because preschool is not federally mandated and is voluntary in nature, when students with emotional and behavioral deficits are expelled from preschool, this places them at risk for a host of adverse long-term effects. Resultantly, school personnel are placed in the position of intervening which runs counter to currents trends that advocate proactive, multi-tiered models of services (NASP, 2010; NCLB, 2001).

Fourth, given that bullying rarely occurs in isolation and is often a part of a group phenomenon (Salmivalli et al., 2004), research implications exists for understanding the relationship between key socialization agents (i.e., teachers and peers) and classroom management practices that can amplify or diminish bullying behaviors (Swearer, 2007).

Finally, by studying the developmental association of mental health disorders from preschool to adolescence, we can develop better prevention and intervention programs to alter bullying trajectories (Barker et al., 2008; Belden, Gaffrey, & Luby, 2012). Implications exist for implementing intervention services. Specifically, school psychologists are aware of the impact of bullying and aggression and can offer a framework for dealing with crisis response, trauma, and other mental health difficulties. School psychologists also serve as conduits for creating prevention campaigns to support the academic and psychological well being of all students (NASP, 2006; 2010).

This section discussed the limited research on bullying in preschool populations as well as the role of teacher characteristics and perceptions when responding to preschool bullying.
situations. Finally, the major points for studying bullying in preschool populations were explored, including the increase in the number of preschool children referred for treatment of aggressive behaviors, the increase in children who have been prescribed psychotropic medications, and the need for prevention strategies and consultation of school psychologists, and other allied health professionals for interventions. The next sections will delve into the prevalence of bullying in special populations, anti-bullying interventions, types of bullying, and negative correlates associated with bullying.

**Bullying: Links to Early Childhood**

**Prevalence and Developmental Trends**

The literature has been clear that healthy behavioral and emotional developmental processes are important precursors to a child’s success. Extant literature has also indicated that the cumulative risks associated with chronic exposure to stress during childhood and early adolescence may thwart the growth of healthy developmental processes (Bowes et al., 2013). The following studies buttress the importance of studying bullying in preschool populations noting the relationship among gender, type of aggression, teacher, and parental beliefs about the prevalence of bullying in early childhood.

Some early studies investigating prevalence rates and victimization in lower grades have found an association between maladjustment and victimization. For example, Kochenderfer and Ladd (1996) conducted research with a sample of 200 Kindergarten students, finding that approximately 20% of Kindergarten students reported being victimized by peers. They also found that victimization was a precursor to a child’s perceptions about loneliness and school avoidance. Similarly, Orpinas, Horne, and Staniszewski (2003) noted an increase in bullying in elementary school with 32% of students in Kindergarten through 2nd grade demonstrating at
least one aggressive behavior during the school day. More recent studies that have sampled preschool teachers about the prevalence rates have found that teachers believe bullying does exist in preschool settings. For example, Llaberia et al. (2008) surveyed teachers in a Spanish population of 1,104 preschool students from rural and urban settings to investigate links between externalizing diagnoses and aggression in community-based populations. Initial findings confirmed the existence of preschool aggression as well as gender and age differences related to aggression. Physical and verbally aggressive behavior was also found to be associated with externalizing disorders. Goryl et al. (2013) noted similar findings when they sought to understand teacher perceptions about bullying and use of anti-bullying policies to guide decision-making in a sample of 180 preschool teachers in Australia. Outcomes revealed that teachers endorsed beliefs that preschool children were capable of bullying.

Studies investigating perceptions among parents of preschool children indicated beliefs that bullying occurred in this population. Curtner-Smith and colleagues (2006) explored the predictors of bullying using multiple participants from a Headstart sample. The sample included 44 mothers, their children, and teachers. Teachers completed surveys to assess relational and direct bullying behaviors. Findings revealed that 9% of the children engaged in relational bullying “frequently” or “almost always,” while nearly 55% engaged in relational bullying only “occasionally” or “half of the time.” Outcomes also revealed that students engaged in instances of direct bullying “frequently” or “almost always” about 16% of the time. Findings also revealed a strong correlation between maternal empathy and relational bullying. These studies suggest that when looking across multiple informants (i.e., teacher, students, parents) bullying is perceived to exist in early childhood populations, manifests in forms such as physical and verbal aggression and is associated with adverse clinical mental health difficulties. The next section will
discuss the increasing prevalence rates across special populations as well as factors that affect prevalence rates.

**The Global Prevalence of Bullying**

Prevalence studies have indicated that the problem of bullying has garnered national attention due to the deleterious effects to victims, bullies, bystanders, and school climate (Marini, Dane, & Bosacki, 2006; Pepler et al., 2008; Swearer, 2007). Most notably, media attention surrounding mass school shootings across the nation have fostered intense emotional reactions as well as strengthened our awareness of the role of bullying as a factor in school climate. National surveys of aggressive behaviors across the U.S. and abroad have also indicated that bullying has been a diverse problem (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006). However, prevalence rates vary based on how the construct of bullying has been defined, measured, and sampled (i.e., bully, bystander, victim), various reporters (i.e., self-report, teacher reports, peer nominations). To add, victimization studies vary across periods of reporting, with prevalence rates varying across time periods and across studies (i.e., past year, past month, or a specific point in time). According to the most recent data from the Safe Schools /Healthy Students Initiative (Derzon et al., 2012), 32% of students reported having been bullied at school, while 8% of students in U.S. schools reported being threatened or injured with a weapon, such as a gun, knife, or club, while on school property (Robers, Zhang, Truman & Snyder, 2010).

**Prevalence Rates in Middle and High School**

A vast amount of research has documented the prevalence rates of aggression and bullying in middle and high school. Due to increased prevalence rates as well as the collateral effects associated with bullying and aggressive behavior, there has been an intensified focus on extending policies to protect students leading numerous schools across the United States to
establish social media policies and prevention campaigns (NASP, 2010). The following studies document national statistics and the most recent prevalence rates in middle and high school on violence in schools.

According to data from the CDC, approximately 13.8% of high school students reported seriously considering suicide and 7.8% of students reported attempting suicide 12 months prior to data collection (CDC, 2009). According to the CDC suicide is the third leading cause of suicides in adolescents between the ages of 15 and 24. Given that research links between bullying and suicide have been noted (i.e., involvement with bullying places these students at increased risk of suicide), ameliorating the negative correlates associated with bullying is vital (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). Data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, a national survey of students in 9th –12th grades, is conducted every two years in all fifty states. Based on this risk survey, 42% of students were involved in a physical fight on school grounds, 12 months prior to the survey. Overall, 7.1% of the students reported missing school on more than one occasion in the 30 days prior to the survey because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to and from school. To add, 20% of students had experienced some form of bullying on school property during the 12 months before the survey (CDC, 2009).

In another national survey, data from the National Institute of Health (2001) indicated that approximately 5.7 million children in 6th - 10th grades have witnessed or experienced bullying at school (Hong & Espelage, 2012). In a study of 7,182 students in 6th - 10th grades, Wang, Iannotti, and Nansel (2009), found that 81.6% of students experienced relational bullying, 73.2% experienced verbal bullying, and 25.9% experienced physical bullying. These studies co-affirmed that violence in schools remain a persistent and insidious problem requiring continuing intervention.
Prevalence Rates in Sexual Minority Populations

Schools have the responsibility to protect all students from discrimination. However, research has continually indicated that sexual minority youth are at increased risk of victimization and the extreme, suicide (Arsenault et al., 2010; CDC, 2011; Kim et al., 2009). Research has indicated that sexual minority youth when compared with non-sexual minority peers experience physical and other injuries associated with bullying at higher rates (Berlan, Corliss, Field, Goodman, & Austin, 2010). Thus attending to research in this population is important. The section discusses the prevalence rates associated with bullying in sexual minority populations noting differences in racial and health disparities.

In line with other research studies on victimization, Shields, Whitaker, Glassman, and Howard (2012) found that victimization was a significant predictor of suicide attempts. Similarly, most recent research from the Center for Disease Control (CDC, 2011) has indicated that sexual minority youth when compared to heterosexual youth experience greater health related disparities in various categories (i.e., violence, attempted suicide, tobacco use, alcohol use, other drug use, sexual behaviors, and weight management). In a longitudinal study looking at disparities in racial and sexual minorities, Burton, Marshal, Chisolm, Sucato, and Friedman (2013) conducted research using a sample of 197 adolescents ranging in age from 14 - 19 years old. Participants completed measures associated with sexual minority-specific victimization, depressive symptoms, and suicidality at two time points six months apart. Findings revealed that sexual minority youth reported higher levels of sexual minority-specific victimization, depressive symptoms, and suicidality as compared to heterosexual youth.

Berlan et al. (2010) noted an increase in bullying among persons who were gay, lesbian transsexual, and those questioning their sexual orientation (LGBTQ). Further, they asserted that
sexual minority youth were more likely to experience suicidal thinking or attempt suicide (Hong & Espelage, 2012; Hong & Garbarino, 2012; Swearer, Turner, Givens & Pollack, 2008) than their heterosexual peers. These studies underline the impact that victimization can have on the health and well being of sexual minority youth.

**Prevalence Rates in Special Needs Populations**

This section discusses the pervasive nature of bullying in the U.S. and abroad as well as prevalence rates across special populations and lower grades. Special needs children are considered at risk of bullying for numerous reasons. Extant literature has suggested that children who are chronic victims of bullying and aggression are more vulnerable than those who experience victimization during early childhood and are also at risk for adjustment difficulties (Arseneault et al., 2010; Bowes et al., 2013).

Several studies support the prevalence of bullying among students from special needs populations. For example, Swearer, Wang, Maag, Siebecker, and Frerichs (2012) investigated bullying prevalence rates among students receiving special education services and those in the general education curriculum using a sample of 816 students ranging in age from 9 - 16. Findings revealed that students in special education with discernable disabilities and behavioral disorders endorsed bullying behaviors at higher rates than students in the general education population. Research also indicated that students with disabilities and those in self-contained classrooms were victims of bullying at higher rates than those who spent at least half of their day in general education (Brophy, 2010; Lim & Ang, 2009). Contrary to existing literature indicating that students classified with specific learning disabilities (SLD) are at higher risk of victimization, Kokkinos and Antoniadou (2013) found in a sample of 346 Greek elementary students that these students were likely to act as a bully-victim and subject to more victimization
than peers. To add, SLD students have been found to share common features with those children classified as bully-victims such as reactivity, impulsive, school adjustment problems, and a high peer rejection rate Olweus (2001).

Taylor, Saylor, Twyman and Macias (2010) conducted a study of 238 youth, ages 8 - 17- years old, who were diagnosed with ADHD by their physician or a multi-disciplinary team. Taylor and colleagues investigated the relationship between self-reported victimization and bullying behavior in school-aged youth using a sample drawn from both primary care settings and pediatric specialty clinics. Parents completed behavioral screenings while students completed self-assessments. Outcomes revealed that children diagnosed with ADHD were at increased risk of being bullied by peers. High scores were also noted on measures of social competence and attention. Likewise, Schroeder, Cappadocia, Bebko, Pepler, and Weiss (2014) conducted a research study on prevalence rates and developmental disorders finding that students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are at increased risk for victimization as compared to typically developing peers because of their difficulties in social interactions. Additionally, a growing number of children are diagnosed with various medical conditions that may also place them at risk for bullying. Emerging literature has also noted that students with food allergies are experiencing social vulnerabilities that may place them at risk of bullying. For example, Shemesh et al. (2013) conducted interviews with a sample of 51 parent-child dyads of children with food allergies about the correlates of bullying. Results indicated the 45.4% of children and 36.3% of parents indicated the child had been bullied or harassed in general and 31.5 % had been bullied specifically due to their food allergy. The next section will discuss the types of bullying noted in the literature and the negative correlates associated with bullying.
Types of Bullying

Bullying literature has indicated that there are various types of bullying and bullying roles associated with the bullying dynamic. The section discusses the three forms of bullying as identified in the literature: verbal bullying, physical bullying and relational bullying. In addition, a newer form of bullying has also been recognized in the literature and is referred to as cyberbullying (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Swearer et al., 2001). It is important to note that bullying behavior is not limited to children and adolescents, and can also occur among the adults in children’s lives (NASP, 2012).

Bullying has been classified as direct (Woods & Wolke, 2004) and includes behaviors such as verbal threats, taunting, teasing, and name calling, (Byers et al., 2011; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Olweus, 1993), and are characterized as verbal bullying. Behaviors that include hitting, tripping, shoving, pinching, racial slurs, demanding property or goods or services, stabbing, or choking are characterized as physical bullying (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Byers et al., 2011). Bullying can also be indirect or covert and comprised of acts such as rejection or social exclusion. This type of bullying is referred to as relational bullying (Crick et al., 2006; Crick, Casas, Ku, & H-Ch, 1999; Hong & Espelage, 2012). The next section will discuss the negative effects associated with bullying.

Negative Effects of Bullying

The bullying literature has been clear that bullying is a serious public health concern that crosses gender, racial, grade, and age related boundaries. To add, the negative correlates are associated with individual, and group level effects that can last into adulthood and beyond. The following studies discuss the educational and clinical mental health effects associated with those involved in the bullying dynamic.
**Educational Outcomes**

When children do not feel safe in school, their academic and emotional mental health can be impacted. For example, in a meta-analysis conducted with 33 studies, Nakamoto and Schwartz (2010) concluded that bullied students were more likely than their non-bullied peers to demonstrate poor school performance and earn lower grades and lower scores on standardized achievement tests. Similarly, Juvone, Wang, and Espinoza (2011) investigated the impact of bullying experiences on academic performance. They surveyed 11 middle schools across six time points and found that high levels of bullying were related to academic disengagement and poor grades among youth in urban settings. Researchers have also noted bullying can have a negative impact on school climate and classroom level effects associated with bullying. These have included responses such as increased rates of truancy, increased staff turnover, disrespect for teachers, potential legal difficulties (Sweeting & West, 2001) systematic rejection from peer groups (Beale, 2001), and school drop out (Kokko et al., 2006).

**Mental Health Outcomes**

The National Research Council Institute of Medicine (2009) has indicated that mental health concerns are important to address given the connection to overall health. That is, mental health disorders are often chronic in nature and have been linked to medical risk factors for many chronic diseases (i.e., diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, asthma) (CDC, 2013). Addressing the mental health concerns of children are vitally important given estimates that 13% – 20% percent of children in the United States experience a mental disorder annually with approximately $247 billion dollars annually spent on childhood mental disorders (CDC, 2013). The following studies document links between bullying and clinical mental health difficulties pointing to bullying and victimization as early markers of risk of psychiatric conditions.
Researchers have noted conditions such as anxiety and depression in both victims and bullies (Arseneault et al., 2010; Nansel, 2001; Schwartz, Gorman, Nakamoto, & Toblin, 2005; Swearer et al., 2001). Sourander and colleagues (2011) conducted research in a sample of 2,540 Finnish boys at 8 and again from the Finnish Army registry during the ages of 18-23. Using parent and teacher reports of emotional, and behavioral symptoms from a behavioral screening questionnaires, researchers found that children who were characterized as frequent victims of bullying predicted anxiety disorders, and children classified as those who frequently bully predicted antisocial personality disorder, whereas those who were characterized as frequent bully-victims predicted both anxiety and antisocial personality disorder. Similarly, Ttofi, and Farrington (2008) found that bullying was a significant predictor of depression seven years later after controlling for childhood risk factors. Likewise, Kim et al. (2009) found that bullying was a clear risk factor for suicidal ideation and increased self-harm in Korean adolescents, and youth, although limitations existed in this study because the sample was comprised of a single ethnicity. Klomek et al. (2009) found similar results indicating that bullying was a predictor of completed suicides in women up through middle adulthood.

In another study, Hjern, Alfven, and Östberg (2008) investigated the relationship between psychomatic pain, psychological complaints, and school stressors using a child supplement linked to a National Survey of Swedish Living Conditions. Personal interviews were conducted with a sample of 2,588 Scandinavian students ranging in age from 10 to 18 years. Results indicated that stressors such as bullying by peers, academic performance, and unpleasant treatment by teachers were associated with psychological complaints such as: sadness, nervousness, fears about safety, and psychosomatic pains.
This section explored the types of bullying as well as the negative correlates associated with bullying. National and international studies across specific ethnic samples were explored as well as the impact of bullying on student academic performance. Negative correlates such as rejection from peer groups, and the medical and psychological difficulties that can be seen in both bullies and victims were also discussed. The next section will discuss the various types of anti-bullying approaches as well as the efficacy of these approaches.

**Bullying Intervention**

During a time when administrators, educators, school counselors, and school psychologists are proactively working to decrease drop out rates, and improve student academic proficiencies in Reading and Mathematics, the increased media attention surrounding mass school shootings, and violence in schools, have placed bullying on a national stage. To add, because bullying has moved beyond school walls and into electronic forms, prevention and intervention efforts have become vital in order to improve school safety for all students and quell the deleterious effects of bullying. According to the NASP position statement on Bullying Prevention and Intervention in Schools (2012), all students have the right to equal protection at school and thus “failure to address bullying in the school setting” (p. 1), does not foster a supportive and protective environment. This section will discuss prevention efforts associated with the types of prevention programs, efficacy of bullying prevention programs, as well as the role of teachers in prevention and intervention efforts.

Because bullying has garnered national attention, intervention efforts are expanding nationally. Likewise federal laws currently exist to protect students, and at least 45 of the 50 states have implemented laws to address bullying (NASP 2010). Similarly, 22 states have adopted cyber-bullying statutes, however conflict exists with regard to whether schools can
intervene with regard to bullying involving electronic communications (i.e., text, computer, social media). That is, less than 50% of the statutes and laws indicate whether schools may intervene in bullying involving electronic communication (Anti-Defamation League, 2009). Another complicating issue involves confusion over who is responsible for resolving these conflicts and who has jurisdiction to apply consequences. That is, there is increased difficulty with finding the specific source of the bullying in electronic bullying (Children’s Safety Network, 2011).

Because the focus of most anti-bullying programs hinges on how teachers and/or school personnel view, and respond to bullying for all students (Ball et al., 2008), teachers must possess the requisite skills, and knowledge to recognize behaviors and roles associated with the bullying dynamic to intervene effectively. Further, since most anti-bullying programs and interventions involve teachers (Coyle, 2008), teachers must understand how classroom level interventions can promote academic achievement as well as a safe school climate for all students. Overall, studies have shown that unsuccessful implementation of prevention programs may exist when teachers are not properly trained (2008). Mounting research also points to the effectiveness of anti-bullying interventions to deal with bullying. For example, Farrington and Ttofi (2009) conducted a meta-analysis and a systematic review of the efficacy of bullying prevention programs, which spanned 26 years. The study included 44 programs with measurable effect sizes for age cohorts and revealed that anti-bullying programs have been effective at reducing bullying by 23% and victimization by 20% (Hahn, Farrington, & Ttofi, 2012).

**School Climate Interventions**

School climate has been referred to as a construct that includes the amalgamation of the beliefs, values, and attitudes among teachers, students, and administrators (Grining et al., 2010;
Olweus, 1993; Orpinas et al., 2003; Unnever & Cornell, 2004). Studies of school climate have revealed that student perceptions about safety while at school, teacher student relationships, and peer relationships all play a role in fostering or maintaining aggression and bullying behaviors. That is, school climate can serve as a buffer in preventing bullying and other negative behaviors (Swearer, Espelage, Valliancourt & Hymel, 2010). Researchers have found that students are more likely to participate in bullying when they perceive that their school climate is unfair, lacking in social support (Gendron, et al., 2011), and when positive attitudes supporting aggression and bullying become the norm at school (Unnever & Cornell, 2004).

In a comprehensive study of school climate, Kasen, Berenson, Cohen, and Johnson, (2004) survey 500 students across 250 schools (ranging from 13 to 16 years old). Students and mothers completed measures about the school environment and aggression. Outcomes revealed that students in schools with high levels of conflict with teachers who were considered ineffective at maintaining order showed an increase in verbal and physical aggression even after controlling for baseline aggression whereas students who attended schools that emphasized order and had teachers who were perceived as effective showed less aggressive behaviors.

Given that researchers have found that student attitudes and behaviors serve as the second highest occupational stressor for teachers after time constraints (Kahn, Jones, & Wieland, 2012), there appears to be reciprocal influences associated with bullying (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Swearer, 2007; Wolke, Woods, Stanford, & Schulz, 2001). Likewise, researchers have also found that teachers are more likely to leave the teaching field if they are worried about their safety (Newman, Fox, Harding, Mehta, & Roth, 2004). Specific activities aimed at building quality interactions, school solidarity and social trust within classrooms among teachers and students may serve to buffer effects for bullying and other negative correlates.
Anti-bullying Programs

Due to the national attention that bullying has garnered, and deleterious effects associated with bullying, efforts to combat bullying in the form of anti-bullying intervention and prevention programs have been formulated. Anti-bullying efforts are those efforts designed to prevent bullying and promote a positive school climate. While teachers play a significant role in the intervention progress, the literature also indicates that intervention is not enough. Bullying literature has consistently indicated that prevention programs that employ a comprehensive approach, and are implemented with fidelity are most efficacious.

The need for high quality anti-bullying programs is necessary. From a cost versus benefit perspective, there are benefits associated with both comprehensive and classroom-based anti-bullying programs. Benefits such as a reduction in aggressive behaviors, a reduction in clinical mental health difficulties, and improved school climate have been found. However, developing effective intervention programs involves making sure teachers are appropriately trained to recognize and implement research-based curriculums with fidelity (Espelage & Swearer, 2003).

Comprehensive programs operate on the premise that intervention efforts should incorporate all parties such as teachers, students and parents (Olweus, 1993; Olweus & Limber, 1999; Olweus & Limber, 2010). Comprehensive programs also include components of social learning theory such as positive and negative reinforcement (Olweus, 1993). The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) is a well-known comprehensive program that was developed by Dr. Dan Olweus, one of the foremost researchers on school-aged bullying. The OBPP is a researched-based curriculum designed for students in Kindergarten to 12th grade. This program has been used to reduce existing bullying and to improve school climate by building cohesiveness among teachers and students. The OBPP operates using a four-component model
with multi-level activities that target the school, classroom, individual, and community. Overall, comprehensive whole school programs have been found to be efficacious (Swearer et al., 2010) for reducing bullying, as they reward prosocial behaviors, punish bullying and include parents and teachers in implementation. Consequently, Tofti and Farrington (2008) found that whole school approaches were effective at reducing bullying but not victimization (being bullied).

Classroom-based programs are another type of prevention program. These programs are usually delivered at the classroom level using a series of modules and are designed to enhance teacher self-efficacy for intervening in bullying. The premise for classroom-based programs is a problem-solving paradigm. One such program is *Bully Busters Teacher Manual for Helping Bullies, Victims and Bystander* (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2000), which was developed for use in Kindergarten to 5th Grade. Classroom-based programs have been found to increase specific skills associated with teacher self-efficacy and student knowledge. However proponents assert there is limited inclusion of the parent or caregiver.

Another intervention program that has been found to be efficacious in reducing violence is the Coping Power program (Lochman & Wells, 2004). The program is a Cognitive–Behavioral intervention program for children ages 9-12 that uses a school-based format. The program is delivered in a group with 5 to 6 children with 2 leaders. The researchers report that those who attend the program have lower rates of substance use, reductions in proactive aggression, improved social competence, and greater teacher-rated behavioral improvement at the end of intervention (Lochman & Wells, 2004). Conversely, some researchers argue that bringing together groups of children classified as a bully or aggressive may reinforce deviant behaviors (Dishion, 2014; Farrington, 2014)

The aforementioned studies indicate that while intervention programs may come in various
delivery formats, the efficacy of the program depends on implementation, and the support of educational personnel. While many intervention approaches can be efficacious, whether using a manualized curriculum led by the teacher or a group format led by facilitators, meta-analysis indicate that programs which utilize a comprehensive school approach are most efficacious. The next section will discuss the efficacy of early intervention programs, the characteristics of high quality learning environments and types of preschool programs.

**Early Childhood/Preschool Education Programs**

Preschool education programs have been heralded as intermediaries for improving school readiness and minimizing environmental threats that impact social and cognitive development in children. Reportedly, the United Nations intimated that preschool programs serve as vehicles to improving school readiness (Burger, 2010). Federal programs such as the Headstart program recognizes the influences of environmental and culture on areas of cognitive and social emotional development (Headstart Act, 2008). To add, stakeholders such as legislators, educators, and parents have begun to recognize the benefits of early intervention as evidenced by federal mandates. In fact, schools classified as Title I are mandated to offer pre-Kindergarten classes with class limitations set to18 students per classroom (NCLB, 2001). This section discusses the efficacy of early intervention programs, types of community based and non-community based programs, characteristics of high quality learning environments as well as a review of proactive efforts to standardize the quality of early childhood programs using Quality Ratings.

**Benefits of Early Intervention**

An investment in early childhood education assists with academic preparedness and serves as a critical foundation for social and emotional regulation in K-12, and beyond (Lasser &
Fite, 2011). Extant literature has offered support for the efficacy of intervening in preschool populations. Lasser and Fite (2011) noted that preschool serves as a site of learning for not only the student but also for parents. This section discusses the efficacy of early intervention for students as well as parents, and outcome data associated with attending these programs.

The following studies support the efficacy of early intervention. Arsenault et al. (2010) conducted a study finding that reducing the global impact of bullying behaviors at an early age may also assist with reducing mental health difficulties in adulthood. To add, researchers noted that early intervention services are efficacious for students with disabilities, and positively influences school participation and outcomes (Phillips & Meloy, 2012). Redden, Ramey, Forness, and Brezausek (2003) conducted research and noted that students who attended high quality early education programs resulted in reductions in special education placements. Robust findings point to the collaborative efforts of parents and the relationship of improved educational outcomes for students. Relationships between families and professionals provide important contributions to school readiness, academic success, and social emotional competence (Duncan & Magnuson, 2013; Magnuson et al., 2007).

Likewise research studies on brain development (Perry, 2006), as well as evaluations of preschool programs, have extolled the benefits of high quality early childhood experiences, considering these as foundational to later success (Magnuson, et al., 2007). According to statistics from the United States Department of Education Statistics (2011), 7.4 million children under age five are enrolled in childcare outside of their home. To add, 42% of 4-year-olds attend publicly funded preschool, 28% attend public preschool programs, 11% Headstart, and 3% attend special education preschool programs (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2011). These programs work with students from ages 3 to 4 and serve as
pathways to promote school readiness for at risk student populations.

Early childhood programs fall into 4 categories: Individual programs, Headstart programs, public school preschool (Pre-K) programs, and community based child-care settings (Winsler et al., 2008). Preschool programs are designed to prepare children for Kindergarten but they also assist with formulating contextual theories on development and developmental trajectories (Winsler et al., 2008). Outcome data have revealed that preschool programs are related to positive outcomes in early readiness, academics, and social-emotional skills in children (Magnuson et al., 2007).

**High Quality Learning Environments**

A child’s formative years are very important as environmental influences can have a significant effect that can impact brain development, learning, behavior, physical and mental health (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Thus, investing in the development and enhancement of quality learning programs is paramount. High Quality Learning environments refer to the quality of the school and learning environment. High quality learning environments are seen as programs that focus on key components such as teacher effectiveness, safety, and offer enhanced learning opportunities for students. Because of legislative mandates associated with NCLB (2001) requiring increased accountability and budgetary restrictions, implications exist such that policy makers who are responsible for earmarking funds for early childhood will be forced to make choices about the types of school readiness programs to fund. Thus, empirical investigations of program quality, teacher effectiveness and student performance variables are necessary (Magnuson et al., 2007; Winsler et al., 2008).

The Quality Rating and Improvement System National Learning Network was formed by a coalition of states intended to improve the availability and quality of early and school age care
in educational programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). This monitoring approach was designed to not only improve quality, and to support growth and development in early learning programs in the form of a quality ratings program, but to improve transparency and communication between parents and teachers. The Quality Rating and Improvement System assesses each program using valid and reliable tools that focus on five key components of quality early care learning environments, management practices, and staff qualifications using ratings from 1 to 5 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). The five components include: program standards, supports for program and practitioner, financial incentives, quality assurance, and monitoring and consumer education (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). Although Alabama does not have a statewide program, they currently have a pilot called the Alabama Quality STARS that began in July 2013 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009).

The literature has also shown that there is a reciprocal teacher-student relationship that can have an effect on program quality. Nonetheless, research studies on Headstart programs have had mixed results. Proponents have argued that the gains reported in research studies are short term and research studies are fraught with methodological concerns such as selection bias since all students represented in the studies are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Bullough et al., 2012). With regard to state-funded pre-Kindergarten programs, academic gains have been noted. However, researchers have documented that these programs are more closely related to academic preparedness for Kindergarten (Bullough et al., 2012).

Thus, proponents argue that students in state mandated programs have less emphasis on social development, while proponents argue that students enrolled in Headstart programs have less of a focus on academic preparedness for Kindergarten.
Preschool Community-Based/Center Models

For this study a community-based/center program is a type of school readiness program with limited enrollment and includes income restrictions. A program that is located in a community based setting may be funded by the federal government, with a requirement to have a minimum number of students with disabilities enrolled in the program such as a Headstart program. The organization and efficacy of the Headstart program will be discussed below.

Preschool education has changed since the inception of Headstart in 1964. Headstart, a federally funded program implemented by President Lyndon B. Johnson and designed to assist preschool-aged children with disadvantaged backgrounds, has arguably demonstrated positive gains in academic functioning (Headstart Act, 1964). However, proponents have argued that because Headstart is geared toward 4-year-olds and has income contingent guidelines, it only reaches approximately half of all eligible children (Winsler et al., 2008). The Headstart program curriculum is designed to deliver services for approximately 6 hours per day and includes comprehensive components designed to improve not only academic readiness but also social competence (Headstart Act, 1964).

The Headstart personnel include a center director, a lead teacher and an assistant in each classroom. With regard to teachers working in Headstart settings, Grining et al. (2012) asserted that management of classroom behaviors is an important determinant in school readiness and that teachers’ psychosocial stressors such as inadequate training and support as well as personal home stressors can negatively impact the teacher’s ability to foster a positive, nurturing school climate. According to Sakimura, Dange, Ballard, and Hansen (2008), children in Headstart often display high levels of externalizing and aggressive behaviors which place them at risk for expulsion and many other adverse effects such as internalizing, and externalizing disorders,
expulsion, and collateral effects to the family. Thus, assessing factors that affect classroom quality is important.

Reauthorization of the Improving Headstart for School Readiness Act of 2007 included substantial changes for agencies that were awarded grants. The changes were geared toward accountability and high quality services such as unannounced visits by administrators, annual audits, and initial funding for 5 years and new credentialing requirements indicating that 50% of teachers must have a bachelor’s degrees to work in center-based programs by year 2013 (Bullough, Hall-Kenyon, & MacKay, 2012).

Preschool Non-Community/ School-Based Models

For this study, a non community/school based program refers to a school readiness program situated within a public school that is not based on income and enrolls all 3 and 4 year old children. These programs also do not include a set criteria or requirement to enroll students with disabilities. State sponsored programs are referred to as Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) programs and these programs often operate within the public school systems. These programs serve 4-year-old children from all backgrounds regardless of income. The programs are primarily funded by states and have been associated with positive gains in language, math, literacy, and social skills (Magnuson et al., 2007). The structure of these programs is similar to Headstart with regard to classroom size, and teacher-student ratios. With regard to educational standards, the National Board for Professional Teacher Standards designated national guidelines for Pre-K teachers (NBPTS, 2014). The guidelines require teachers to hold at least a bachelor’s degree, although not all states have adopted these standards. The next section will discuss preschool expulsion rates as well as racial disparities, and role of teacher response in the dynamic of expulsions.
Preschool Expulsion/Suspension

Preschools operate with a mission that includes school readiness (Gilliam, 2005; NCLB, 2001). However, the collateral effects associated with aggression and behavior problems in the classroom seem divergent to this mission. That is, preschool children who demonstrate challenging behaviors are often expelled/suspended from preschool according to research studies (Gilliam, 2006; Kaiser & Sklar-Raminisky, 2012). Expulsion or suspension involves temporarily removing a student from a program or service due to disciplinary reasons according to the U.S. Department of Civil Rights. The subsequent research studies below discuss the prevalence rates associated with expulsion and removal. Prevalence rates across the U.S. have reflected high rates of preschool expulsions/suspensions (Whitted, 2011). Purportedly, preschool expulsion and suspension rates are three times higher in the preschool age population than for students in grades K-12 (Gilliam, 2005; Gilliam & Shahar, 2006; Kaiser & Sklar-Raminisky, 2012). To add, the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2014) collected data for the first time on preschool expulsions/suspensions and found that while African American children represented 18% of preschool enrollment they represented 48% of preschool children who were suspended out of school at least one time. Conversely, white students who represented 43% of enrollment represented 26% of preschool children receiving at least once suspension. To add, while boys represented 79% of the preschool students who were suspended at least once and 82% of preschool children suspended multiple times. Yet, boys represented 54% of overall preschool enrollment according to the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (2014).

In a national study, designed to investigate expulsions in preschool programs, a sample of state-level administrators completed surveys with outcomes indicating that two-thirds of states
allowed expulsion, or left the decision to local providers (Gilliam, 2008). The study also sampled 4,000 randomly selected preschool teachers from an array of preschool settings. Whitted (2011) found that African American students were twice as likely to be expelled when compared to students of White students. More disturbingly males were expelled at a rate of 91% (2011).

According to a joint policy statement on expulsions/suspensions in early childhood settings from the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. department of Health and Human Services (Lamont, et al., 2013) expulsion and suspension should be prevented or severely limited. According to Lamont et al (2013), children who are expelled or suspended are 10 times more likely to drop out of high school, experience academic failure and engage in criminal behavior. Implications were such that school/center personnel need to be able to appropriately identify children with undiagnosed disabilities or behavioral health issues prior to an expulsion or suspension, as they may be eligible for specialized educational services. That is, early childhood programs must comply with applicable federal legislation governing discipline of children and must utilize reasonable accommodations to ensure that children with disabilities are not suspended or expelled due to collateral effects associated with a disabling condition. Preschool children with disabilities aged three through five who are eligible for services under the Individual With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) are entitled to disciplinary protections that apply to all other IDEA-eligible children with disabilities, and may not be subjected to impermissible disciplinary changes of placement for misconduct that is caused by or related to their disability, and must continue to receive educational services consistent with their right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) under the (IDEA, 2004).

Most studies point to teacher self-efficacy in handling classroom behavior difficulties and working with students who present with developmental disabilities as compounding factors
(Quesenberry, Hemmeter, & Ostrosky, 2011) that precipitate reasons for expulsions in preschools. Supporting this notion, data from the 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education indicated that only 20% of preschool teachers received specific training on facilitating children’s social and emotional growth in the past year. Other studies have found that early childhood teachers report that coping with challenging behavior is their most pressing training need (Fox & Smith, 2007). Implications are such that limited continuing education in the area of child development may lead to difficulties in teachers being able to differentiate between behaviors that are inappropriate from those that are developmentally age appropriate. Similarly, Hemmeter, Ostrosky, and Fox (2006) delved into the challenging behaviors in early childhood finding that very often young children with challenging behavior problems were less likely to receive teacher feedback and to have performance deficits in Kindergarten. This section discussed the statistics, definition and negative correlates associated with preschool suspension. Student protections under the law regarding suspension and expulsion were discussed as well as long-term implications of suspensions and expulsions from preschool programs. The next section will delve into the role of teacher characteristics, as well as the process of bullying and victimization in preschool.

**Factors Affecting Teacher Response to Bullying**

Teachers play a significant role in the lives of children during the school day. They must employ various methods to manage disruptions to the classroom environment while also ensuring that students meet daily responsibilities. When disruptions or issues with student safety arise, teachers must stand ready to intervene by employing various supportive and proactive classroom management skills. A teacher’s response to handling classroom disruptions such as bullying can be affected by various factors and a lack of response or ineffective response style
can lead to negative effects on classroom climate. Moreover, because teachers have many responsibilities during the school day, they are not always aware of bullying. Since teachers are charged with protecting all students, when bullying situations arise, teachers must address them as well as protect informants from retaliation (Rigby & Barnes, 2002). However, research has shown that factors such as lack of teacher awareness, perceptions about the seriousness of an incident and teacher perceptions about their abilities to intervene effectively serve as factors that impact teacher intervention. The studies below discuss the factors associated with teacher response to bullying.

Yoon and Kerber (2003) conducted research in a sample of 98 teachers on the influence of teacher behavior in the bullying dynamic. They found that teacher behavior had an influence on the future behavior of bullies and victims and thus early identification of these difficulties were likely to assist with preventing a trajectory leading to impaired social, and emotional development (Byers et al., 2011; Pepler et al., 2008). Studies have also shown that teachers who are unable to articulate specific behaviors associated with bullying are less apt to stop the behaviors (Craig et al., 2000). Resultantly, teachers must be able to identify, intervene, and recognize behaviors/roles involved in aggression and bullying situations (Alink et al., 2006). Another area in which teacher unawareness may affect response involves proximity. Specifically, research has shown that students reported incidents of bullying during recess time, in hallways, playgrounds, cafeterias, and during other times when teachers were perceived as not being aware (Cook & Nixon, 2006). Implications associated with findings suggest that adults should always be within hearing and sight distance especially in preschool classrooms (Bredekamp & Copple 1997). Similar findings were found by Adams (2008), while investigating the correlation between the physical environment, and aggression in the preschool context.
Results revealed that certain play areas within classrooms were associated with physically aggressive behavior.

The results of these studies suggest that being able to deal with bullying and feeling equipped to handle not only bullying but classroom disruptions are paramount. There are implications associated with a lack of response to bullying from teachers. That is, because children utilize different coping strategies, it important that when they seek help from a teacher or another adult, the child must feel that their report to the teacher will not make the situation worse or lead to ineffective response strategies by the teacher and lead to retaliatory attacks on the victim (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical model for this study was based on the ecological model, which posits that the quality of interactions within the child’s proximal environment is most influential to a child’s development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). This model also holds the view that classrooms serve as microsystems. That is, the teacher and the classroom environment have reciprocal influences and impact one another. Within the context of bullying, classroom climate may promulgate social rewards that maintain bullying. To support this assertion, researchers have found that classroom behavior affected bullying attitudes of teachers and students. Implications are that individual teacher characteristics may exert an influence on teacher responses into incidents of bullying (Vervoort et al., 2010). The next sections will explore the role of teacher characteristics and teacher perceptions as factors in deciding whether teachers respond to bullying scenarios.

Teacher Characteristics

Numerous studies point to the pivotal role that teachers play in handling incidents of bullying (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Crothers & Kolbert, 2008; Troop-Gordon & Ladd, 2010
Yoon & Kerber, 2003). However, research studies have concluded that teachers are sometimes unaware or unable to identify bullying, particularly verbal and relational forms (Farrell, 2010; Goryl et al., 2013). Within preschool settings teachers have been found to not classify behaviors as bullying, instead labeling behavior as challenging or inappropriate (2013). Similarly, teachers in preschool settings were less likely to provide feedback about behaviors (Hemmeter et al., 2006).

Research has also pointed to teacher characteristics such as teacher empathy toward the victim, perceived self-efficacy, moral orientation (Ellis & Shute, 2007), perceived seriousness (Yoon & Kerber, 2003), and views about peer victimization as factors that affect teacher response to bullying at school (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008; Yoon, 2004). Other research has suggested that student characteristics may impact teacher response style within the classroom. Specifically, Dee (2005) found that factors such as race, gender, IQ, and parental status within the community impact teachers’ response level. That is, teachers tended to treat those that were dissimilar in race and gender differently than those who share their race and gender in classrooms (Hekner & Swenson, 2011).

**Teacher Empathy.** Empathy is classified as a character trait that involves cognitive components such as perspective taking or the ability to adapt the view of others or the tendency to respond and experience feelings of warmth, compassion, and concern for others undergoing a negative experience (Cohen & Strayer, 1996). Researchers have noted a relationship between teacher empathy and bullying (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Byers et al., 2011; Mishna, 2005). Teacher empathy is an important construct because teachers must be approachable and able to view situations from the perspective of others. Since children in preschool settings cope with aggression and bullying related instances by telling their teacher or an adult, teachers who lack
empathy may not listen or may miss opportunities to intervene when students are trying to make
disclosures to them about bullying and other incidences (Hunter & Borg, 2006; Kahn et al.,
2012). In relation to empathetic responses, Yoon and Kerber (2003) conducted a research study
assessing the factors that influence teacher response style with a sample of 98 teachers.
Outcomes of this study revealed that teacher perceptions guided the decision to intervene in
bullying situations. That is, teachers who reported high levels of self-efficacy and empathy for
the victim were more likely to perceive the need to intervene in the bullying scenarios. In a study
involving teacher attitudes toward bullying, Rigby (2002) found that 98% of teachers were
sympathetic to victims of bullying, however only 81% of teachers believed teacher intervention
was appropriate. Researchers also noted that school psychologists, teachers and school
counselors respond differently when they witnessed peer victimization (Newman & Muray,
2005). Thus, empathy seems to serves as a catalyst when educators decide whether to intervene
in bullying situations.

Teacher Perceptions. Teacher perceptions have been shown to impact both instructional
and classroom management techniques, as well as the individual treatment of students by
teachers. That is, the influence of teacher perceptions of children’s behavior can have a clear
impact on how teachers perceive their students (Rush & Harrison, 2008). For example, Graves
and Howes (2011) noted that reduced problematic behavior and increased pro-social competence
were found within teacher-child relationships that were perceived as positive or close (Graves &
Howes, 2011). In the case of teacher perceptions about bullying, research studies have suggested
that teacher intervention in bullying scenarios can be affected when teachers do not perceive or
feel confident in their ability to resolve or handle bullying situations (Bradshaw et al., 2007;
Byers et al., 2011). Other studies have indicated that some teachers hold the perception that
student’s should resolve their own conflicts (Newman, 2003).

Researchers have also suggested that there can be a discrepancy between teacher and student reports of teacher intervention (i.e., teacher’s overestimate their intervention in bullying incidents) Crothers and Kolbert (2008). That is, teachers often believe they are intervening more than they actually are in bullying scenarios. In this same vein, other researchers have studied teacher intervention related to bullying and found similar results. For example, in one study of middle school students, 84% of teachers reported that they either frequently or always intervened, meanwhile only 38% of students reported teachers actually intervened (Pepler, Craig, Zieglar, & Charach, 1994). To add to this issue, MacNeil and Newell (2004) also found that when students do not perceive that adults will handle bullying incidents they are less likely to report incidents. Further, Doll, Song, and Siemers (2004) also found that student perceptions of teacher intervention in bullying incidents affected student reporting. That is, students perceived teachers as “inept,” “uncaring,” or “unable to protect them,” and thus, they did not report incidents of bullying (p. 169, 2004).

**Self-Efficacy Beliefs.** Teacher self-efficacy beliefs have been linked to attitudes towards children and control in the classroom (Woolfolk-Hoy, 2000). Self-efficacy refers to a person’s beliefs about their ability to effectively carry out a selected course of action (Bandura, 1997). In order to develop effective training for teachers, it is necessary to examine the factors affecting a teacher’s choice of response to incidents of bullying. For example several studies have examined teacher self-efficacy noting positive correlations. For example, Bauman and Del Rio (2006) found that when looking at teacher beliefs about classroom management of bullying behaviors, teachers felt they should reinforce consequences for bullying behaviors, nonetheless, they were unsure of best practices for intervening (Lee, 2006). Other studies have looked at
teacher self-efficacy and the impact on personal teaching skills. For example, Woolfolk-Hoy, (2007) conducted research and noted that very often a teacher’s sense of self-efficacy was related to instructional delivery and classroom management.

**Perception of Classroom Management.** Perceptions about classroom management refer to the beliefs a teacher holds about his or her skills. According to Grining et al. (2012), teacher characteristics and teacher psychosocial stressors can affect classroom management. Classroom management is characterized as a collage of activities that refers to the teacher’s ability to oversee classroom activities such as learning, social interaction, and student behavior (Brophy, 2010). Research has shown that it is important for teachers to facilitate an atmosphere that does not foster victimization or bullying attitudes given research support indicating a correlation between classroom behaviors and bullying attitudes. To add, research has also suggested that classroom behavior management plays an important role in school readiness in early childhood populations.

Snell, Berlin, Vorhees, Stanton-Chapman, and Haddan (2011) surveyed early childhood teachers, directors, assistants, and Headstart staff to understand classroom behavioral practices. In line with other research studies, children’s’ externalizing behaviors were viewed as most problematic by all respondents. According to Snell et al. (2011) implications exist for additional training when dealing with problem behavior in the classroom.

**Perception of Seriousness.** Perceptions of seriousness refers to teacher self perceptions about an incident. With regard to bullying, the perceptions that the teacher holds about whether an incident is serious or not has been found to correlated with teacher level of involvement in bullying situations (Craig, 2002; Yoon & Kerber 2003; Yoon, 2004). For example, Kahn et. al (2012) examined teacher intervention styles and noted that interventions were based on the type
of aggression displayed and the overall perceived seriousness of the bullying incident. Troop-Gordon and Ladd (2010) conducted a study finding that teachers who held the belief that victims should be more assertive toward bullies were found to have higher levels of peer-reported overt aggression in their classrooms. They also reported that teachers who supported the notion of separating the bully and not having the victim confront the bully had lower levels of classroom aggression. Conversely, teachers who believed bullying was associated with normative development were less likely to punish aggressors and were more apt to tell victims to stay away from their attackers (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008). Further, teachers who believed victims should assert themselves supported the notion of telling victims to stand up to the bullies (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008). With regard to response style, Troop-Gordon and Ladd (2010) found a correlation between teacher response style and level of aggression in the classroom. That is, teachers who separated those involved in bullying incidents had lower levels of aggression in their classroom. In other words, it has been shown that teacher responses to handling bullying incidents can diminish or amplify bullying behaviors (Swearer, 2007).

**Process of Bullying and Victimization in Preschool**

Children in preschool programs spend the majority of their educational day in one classroom with one teacher. Given that classroom dynamics exert an enormous influence on children’s’ social and academic functioning (Doll et al., 2004), by examining the relationship between teacher characteristics and response styles in younger populations, prevention programs can be tailored to intervene more effectively. This section will discuss peer relationships, gender and the relationships to bullying involvement.

**Preschool Bullying and Peer Relationships**

Researchers have noted that peer ecologies can serve as frameworks that not only allow
children to develop consistent play patterns and establish friendships, but also allow children to gain knowledge about bullying influence and other behaviors (Doll et al., 2004; Estell, 2007; Swearer, 2001). To support the notion that preschool and Kindergarten classrooms may serve as social supportive environments for aggression, Estell (2007) surveyed preschool and Kindergarten classrooms, finding that aggressive four-year-olds developed friendships and interacted primarily with peers with similar levels of aggression. Similarly, studies have found that children in preschool engaged in various forms of bullying such as physical and verbal aggression, social exclusion, as well as teasing of peers (McComas, Johnson, & Symons, 2005; Monks et al., 2006). To investigate whether peer reactions to preschool bullying was similar to reactions as conceptualized in adolescent literature, Rose and colleagues conducted direct observations of 50 preschool teachers across a six month time span using event recording methodology finding that physical bullying occurred at high levels in the sample.

Likewise, Tapper and Boulton (2005) found social support for bullying among preschoolers of select classmates. Implications are such that there are subsets of aggressive preschoolers who hold dominant positions among peers (Hawley, 2003). In longitudinal studies of relational aggression, preschool students when compared to non-relationally aggressive preschool students were continually rejected by peers.

**Preschool Bullying and Gender**

Gender differences have been noted in preschool bullying studies. For example, physical aggression was correlated with male students, while verbally aggressive behavior was linked with externalizing disorders such as oppositional defiant disorder (Crick et al., 1999). Research conducted by the National Institute of Health (2000) on child and adolescent violence revealed that beginning at age 4, boys are involved in aggressive and nonaggressive antisocial acts at a
greater rate than girls. Congruent with previous research studies, Crick et al. (1999) asserted that each gender has a preferred type of aggression/bullying, finding that in situations of peer victimization, boys are more likely to use and experience physical aggression. Similarly, Crick, Ostrov, and Stauffacher (2006) asserted that preschool students were more likely to engage in relational bullying at this stage and that girls were more likely to demonstrate and experience relational aggression. Although the stability of relational aggression in preschool children has been found with multiple studies consistently pointing to boys as being more physically aggressive than girls, conversely some studies have indicated that boys demonstrate similar levels of relational aggression (McEvoy, Estrem, Rodriguez, & Olson, 2003). Harman (2010) found that preschool-aged boys were more likely to exhibit physical aggression than their female peers, but that boys and girls did not significantly differ in terms of relational aggression. Studies that have been done on preschool populations support the existence and need for intervention in the preschool population based on the stability of victimization problems (Belden et al., 2012; Wolke, et al., 2001). Implications are such that gender specific bullying trajectories may begin early childhood (Crick et al., 2006; Vlachou et al., 2011).

**Groups Involved in Bullying**

Research has indicated that there are three groups involved in bullying including the bully, the bully-victim, and the bystander. Monk (2000) indicated that bullying roles may be formulated at the preschool level and asserted that efforts to intervene should begin during this time. According to Salmivalli, et al (2004), in addition to traditional bullying roles, there are peripheral roles that have emerged in preschool populations and peer ecologies such as the “reinforcer, assistant, defender and outsider” (p. 11). Each will be addressed below.
**Preschool Bully.** According to Vlachou, et al. (2011), bullies tend to use violence as a means to achieve their goals. Preschool bullies are often classified as being stronger than their victims (Olweus, 1993). Despite traditional beliefs that bullies have deficits in social skills, studies have shown that some preschool bullies are central members of social ecologies with large friendship networks. Implications exist such that school counselors, school psychologists, and teachers cannot depend solely on identifying bullies by their lack of socialization skills and social status.

Similarities in school age bullies and preschool bullies have been noted when looking at membership in aggressive peer ecologies (Doll, et al., 2004; Hong & Espelage, 2012; Swearer, 2007). That is, preschool bullies tend to be affiliated with other bullies, which corresponds with studies among school-age children, showing that children associate and cluster with aggressive peers (Hong & Espelage, 2012; Swearer, 2007). However, Perren and Alsaker (2006) noted that female preschool bullies, while not socially excluded, tend to have fewer friends to play with than male bullies.

**Preschool Bully-Victim.** The literature indicates that unlike pure bullies, bully-victims use aggression in a response-oriented manner whereas “pure” bullies tend to use aggression consistently and more liberally to accomplish specific goals (Pellegrini, 1998, p. 170). Perren and Alsaker (2006) investigated peer acceptance between those characterized as bully–victims and bullies. Outcomes revealed that bully–victims were often rejected by peers and perceived as irritating, highly anxious, and physically reactive.

Orpinas et al. (2003) studied bullying roles in preschool children noting that bully–victims were described as very reactive, irritable, and hot-tempered, and frequently violated social norms in comparison to peers. However, bully-victims were unlikely to be aggressive or
inhibited, which often caused them to be targeted by aggressors and to react aggressively as well.

**Preschool Victim.** Victims of bullying have been characterized as smaller in size, less mature compared to their peers, and to look younger than their age in comparison to other children (Olweus 1993). The literature indicates that targets of bullying often appear physically different or have noticeable physical features (i.e., wear eyeglasses, stutter, underweight, or overweight) in comparison to peers. Graham and Juvonen (1998) investigated early childhood beliefs about victimizations using responses to hypothetical incidents of peer harassment. They found that victimized children endorsed more self-blame attributions than non-victims in response (1998). These views are problematic in that they may have few friends which may renders them more of a target. Also, those who were bullied and bully victims were found to have fewer reciprocal friendships than children not involved in the bullying dynamic and thus can be viewed as a social competence risk factor (Vlachou et al., 2011).

**Preschool Bullying Risk Factors**

Although a host of adverse conditions within the bullying literature have been identified, in order to design effective interventions, the role of executive functioning as well as the psychopathology associated with these conditions should be explored. This will allow enhanced delivery of intervention strategies for preschool age children with these conditions.

**Socio-Cognitive Variables**

When looking at neuropsychological correlates, researchers have identified various relationships. Emerging research points to a relationship to language abilities and aggression. Specifically, the literature has indicated that language ability is highly correlated with other cognitive abilities. Researchers such as Estreem (2007) have explored a tentative relationship between language skills and aggression in early childhood populations. The following studies
examined the association between neuropsychological functioning. For example, Monk and colleagues (2005) examined the psychological correlates (i.e., social cognitive abilities, executive functioning skills, and attachment profiles of aggressors, victims, defenders, and roles in victimization). Results indicated vast differences across bullying roles. In contrast to the literature, victims did not demonstrate poor performance on social cognitive tasks or have insecure attachment qualities as has been previously found with victims. To add, aggressors did not demonstrate high performance on social cognitive tasks whereas defenders were found to perform above average on the social cognitive tasks.

Estrem (2005) conducted research on gender, language skills, and aggression among preschool-aged children. Outcomes revealed a correlation between both physical and relational aggression. That is, as aggression levels increased language scores decreased. To further clarify the nature of the relationship between physical and relational aggression, and language ability, Estreem also studied expressive language skills, finding that expressive language skills were typically higher than those of their non-relationally aggressive or physically aggressive peers. Estrem also found that receptive language skills predicted physical aggression more than relational aggression, especially among boys. Likewise, executive functioning significantly predicted physical aggression among young children, as did gender, when controlling for all other variables. Schoemaker et al. (2012) also looked at executive functioning during a meta-analysis of a clinical sample of preschool age children diagnosed with Disruptive Behavior Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder and comorbid Attention Deficit Disorder and Disruptive behavior disorder. Results showed that preschool children with ADHD and/or DBD displayed no working memory deficits. Results also indicated that clinically diagnosed preschool children with ADHD showed inhibition deficits. To add, preschool children with ADHD
(independent of DBD) consistently showed substantial and specific inhibition deficits (i.e. on the inhibition factor and on all three inhibition tasks), also after controlling IQ. Other studies offer insight related to neurocognition and should be recognized such as Shakoor et al. (2012) looked at other neurocognitive variables such as Theory of Mind (ToM) in a nationally representative twin study that included 2,232 children and families. Theory of mind (ToM) refers to the everyday understanding and prediction of other people’s behaviors based on their mental states (e.g., beliefs). Shakoor found that adolescent victims, bullies and bully-victims had poor ToM in early childhood. To add, poor theory of mind (TM) predicted becoming a victim (effect size, $d = 0.26$), bully ($d = 0.25$) or bully-victim ($d = 0.44$) in early adolescence. These associations remained for victims and bully-victims when child-specific (e.g., IQ) and family factors (e.g., child maltreatment) were controlled for.

Recent studies have also pointed to an association between callous-unemotional traits (CU) (i.e., lack of remorse for anti social behavior, lack of empathy, guilt, and shallow emotions,) and engaging in bullying in elementary and middle school (Viding, Simmonds, Petrides & Frderickson, 2009). Studying CU traits is beneficial given that CU is being used as a modifier to diagnose conduct disorders in the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders- Fifth Edition DSM-5, American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Researchers studying CU traits in a sample of 103 Caucasian preschoolers found that CU traits predicted risk of bullying behavior and victimization (Obrien, 2012). Studies in elementary and middle school support the assertion that CU traits and neurocognitive variables moderated the risk for engaging in bullying behaviors.

Belden, Gafrey, and Luby (2012) conducted research on childrens’ roles in relational aggression using data from a study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (2009), on
preschool depressive syndromes. The sample included 146 preschool students diagnosed with pre-school onset psychiatric disorders. Teachers completed surveys on student behaviors. Outcomes revealed that preschoolers with onset psychiatric disorders were classified as aggressors, victims, and bully-victims three times more than preschool peers without a diagnosis. Preschool students diagnosed with internalizing disorders were six times more likely to become aggressive-victims in elementary school after controlling for major childhood risk factors. Implications are such that children's roles in relational aggression can be differentiated between school age and preschool children.

**Socio-Demographic**

Socio-demographic refers to demographic variables that place a student at risk. The research literature indicates that children are at elevated risk when their backgrounds reflect high levels of family stress (Vlachou et al., 2011) persistent poverty, neighborhood violence, and inadequate childcare conditions (Gilliam, 2008; Graves & Howes, 2011), all of which can increase the risk of engaging in aggressive behavior in the early years. To add, the school psychology and special education literature reflects that a high number of Latino and African American boys are classified with externalizing problems, and are often referred for pharmacological intervention or suspended or expelled from school (Gilliam, 2008).

In summary, based on national statistics, and longitudinal cohort studies, there is a dearth of research showing that bullying crosses many levels and clearly remains a pervasive problem. Research and training implications exist for school psychologists, school counselors, teachers, and school personnel such as investigating the elements that foster and maintain bullying in early childhood in order to alter bullying trajectories. The next chapter will discuss the research methods, characteristics of the sample and outcomes of the research questions.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter discusses the research design and methods employed in the study. The first section describes the research design and rationale for using a web-based survey. The following sections discuss the Sample, Instrumentation, and Procedures. The broad aims of the study were to explore preschool teachers perceptions about bullying and their perceived self-efficacy to respond to bullying scenarios. There were two research questions for this study:

1. Does the likelihood of teacher response to bullying in preschool differ between school type, gender, and race as measured by the \( BAQ-M \) Revised; Davis et al., 2015; \)
2. How does Empathy, Perceived Seriousness and Likelihood of Response to bullying in preschool as measured by the \( BAQ-M \) Revised; Davis et al., 2015) relate to teacher self-efficacy as measured by the Classroom Management Subscale of the \( Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) \)?

Survey Research Design

A web-based survey design was employed to collect data in this study for several reasons: (1) web-based surveys allow for rapid deployment of surveys for respondents who are geographically disbursed, (2) web-based surveys provide convenience, anonymity, and confidentiality thereby increasing the probability of a higher response rate (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). According to research a response rate of 70% is considered adequate (Gall et al., 2007),
(3) web-based surveys also allow for real time access to the data while allowing for a low cost method to collect data. Moreover, survey methodology is considered an efficacious method of gathering data in the social sciences because it allows participants to report background information and archival information along a single time (Creswell, 2009).

The study employed a cross-sectional research design using survey methodology to assist in data collection, analysis and interpretation. Since the researcher was interested in current perceptions about bullying, a cross-sectional study was considered appropriate. Cross-sectional designs not only yield important information about participant attitudes and past experiences (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008), these designs allow for describing the pattern and relationships between variables. It is for these aforementioned reasons that a web-based survey and a cross-sectional design approach was used in this study.

Sample

The target population in the study was 132 preschool teachers working in a nonprofit agency in one state in the southeastern U.S. The teachers and their responses were chosen as the unit of analysis because extant literature suggests that the majority of school-based bullying occurs at the classroom level in front of teachers (Olweus, 1993). The time frame for data collection occurred for approximately two weeks (i.e., July 2014 to August 2014) at the request of the agency. Preschool teachers who were currently working in the non-profit organization were invited to participate in the study. See Appendix A for agency permission to conduct research.

Participants (teachers) ranged in age from 21 to 66 with a mean age of 40.83. The sample was comprised of 99.2% ($n = 132$) females and .8% ($n = 1$) male. The sample included 82.7% ($n = 110$) teachers who identified themselves as White, 15.8% ($n = 21$) were Black and .8%
(\(n = 1\)) listed other. Eighty-one teachers (60.9\%) had teacher certification. Of the teachers sampled, 51.6\% (\(n = 65\)) held an associate’s degree, 41.3\% (\(n = 52\)) held a bachelor’s degree, and 7.1\% (\(n = 9\)) held a master’s degree.

With regard to anti-bullying beliefs, 93.2\% (\(n = 124\)) endorsed beliefs that bullying occurs in preschool, while 6.8\% (\(n = 9\)) did not endorse the beliefs that bullying occurs in preschools. With regard to anti-bullying training, 69.7\% (\(n = 92\)) of the sample indicated that they had not received professional development or attended any anti-bullying training, while 30.3\% (\(n = 40\)) indicated they had participated in formal teacher training or professional development on anti-bullying.

Setting

The nonprofit agency where the study was conducted serves students from low-income areas, military families, and children with disabilities within a 13-county area in one state of the southeastern region of the U.S. The county areas were located within the northern region of the state, with a majority of the counties located in rural areas. Across all centers, most were located in areas, which listed median annual household incomes ranging from 34,907 to 42,253 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). With regard to households below the poverty level, statistics ranged from 16\% - 26\% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Centers were also located in areas where major employment opportunities were mainly manufacturing, retail, and agricultural (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). All centers were licensed by the state and located in a community setting or within in a public school. All classrooms were generally comprised of a lead teacher and a teacher’s aide or paraprofessional.

Instrumentation

Demographics Questionnaire
A standard demographics questionnaire was administered to gather information about age, gender, educational level, and years of teaching. Additional information about continuing education specific to bullying for teachers, perceptions about preschool expulsions/suspensions and information about program polices was collected as well.

**Bullying Attitudes Questionnaire (BAQ)**

Craig, Henderson, and Murphy (2000) created the *Bullying Attitudes Questionnaire*, to measure teacher perceptions about bullying, perceived seriousness of bullying and likelihood of intervention with a sample of 116 pre-service teachers. The instrument is comprised of six types of bullying scenarios (i.e., two physical, two verbal, two relational) that distinguish between whether or not the bullying is witnessed by the teacher or reported to the teacher by a second party. The instrument contains three different scenarios to represent each type of bullying. The instrument has a total of 18 written vignettes utilizing two factors (i.e., type of bullying and witnessed versus not witnessed).

At the conclusion of each scenario in the *BAQ* (Craig et al., 2000) the teacher responds to three questions: (a) How serious is this conflict? (b) How likely are you to intervene in this situation? (c) Would you call this bullying? The first two questions are rated according to a 5-point Likert scale (1 to 5). The respondent indicates their agreement on whether the scenario reflects bullying with a “Yes” or “No” response on the final question.

Internal consistency coefficients for the question, “How serious is this conflict,” reportedly ranged from .69 to .78 (Craig et al., 2000) for labeling the scenarios as bullying. With regard to perceived seriousness, the question, “How likely are you to intervene?” yielded internal consistency coefficients from .74 to .85 (Craig et al.) for likelihood of intervention. Internal consistency for the question, “Would you call this bullying?” ranged from .73 to .82
The reported Cronbach alpha for all scales \((n = 18)\) ranged from .69 to .85 (Craig et al.).

**Bullying Attitude Questionnaire- Modified (Yoon & Kerber, 2004)**

The modification to the original scenarios involved restructuring the scenarios to make bullying less abstruse and only included bullying scenarios in which the teacher directly witnessed the bullying situation as opposed to having bullying reported to the teacher by a secondary person. The *BAQ-M* (Yoon & Kerber, 2003) assesses teacher perceptions and attitudes toward verbal, physical, and relational bullying. Past studies have found this measure to adequately measure the construct of bullying (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Yoon, 2004). Yoon and Kerber (2003) modified the *Bullying Attitudes Questionnaire (BAQ-M)* from the original *Bullying Attitude Questionnaire (BAQ)* (Craig, et al., 2000). The modification also reduced the number of bullying scenarios from \((n = 18)\) to \((n = 6)\).

The *BAQ-M* (Yoon & Kerber, 2003) uses a series of written vignettes to assess (1) teachers’ perceived seriousness of bullying; (2) empathy toward victims; and, (3) teacher likelihood of intervention. The vignettes were developed such that they reflect the generally accepted elements of bullying according to noted bullying researcher Dan Olweus (1993). Each vignette includes an imbalance of power and negative actions toward the victim. Yoon and Kerber (2004) used their modified instrument on a participant sample of 94 elementary teachers. They reported internal consistency estimates for each question across vignettes for seriousness as \((a = .65)\), empathy \((a = .78)\) and likelihood of response \((a = .62)\).

The *BAQ-M* (Yoon & Kerber 2003) measure presents the teacher with six written vignettes, which included two verbal, two physical, and two relational vignettes portraying bullying. At the conclusion of each of the vignettes, the teacher is asked to respond to three
questions involving, perceived seriousness, empathy, and likelihood of intervention. The presentations of the vignettes are counterbalanced in order to prevent presentation bias.

The BAQ-M (Yoon & Kerber 2003) measures perceived seriousness by asking the teacher to respond to the question, “How serious is this conflict?” after viewing each vignette. The teacher responds to a Likert type scale ranging from 1 (Not at all Serious) to 5 (Very Serious). The BAQ-M measures empathy by asking the teacher to rate their level of empathy toward the victim in each of the vignettes using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree) in response to the statement, “I would feel sympathetic toward the victim.” The BAQ-M measures likelihood of intervention by asking teachers to rate their response to the question “How likely are you to intervene?” after viewing each bullying vignette. Teachers rated their responses using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not at all likely) to 5 (Very Likely).

**BAQ-M (Revised)**

**Instrument Reliability and Validity**

Reliability refers to the degree to which subjects’ scores remain consistent over repeated administration of the same instrument (Crocker & Algina, 1986). Thus, an instrument is considered reliable if it yields consistent scores across administrations. Cronbach alpha is an estimate of reliability that results in a reliability coefficient between 0 and 1. The reliability coefficient is based on the average inter-item correlation and a scale is assumed to be reliable if the coefficient is ≥ .70 (Gall et al., 2007).

Davis et al (2015) revised the 54-item BAQ-M. The reliability analyses of the BAQ-M Revised were sufficiently reliable with an overall score of (a = .92). The BAQ-M Revised (Davis et al., 2015) subscales for Seriousness (a = .84), Empathy (a = .85), and Likelihood of Response (a = .88) were also found to be sufficiently reliable. See Table 1 for a presentation of these data.
Validity refers to the degree that an instrument or method measures what it is supposed to measure. “Although a high reliability coefficient might indicate consistency in the subjects’ scores, it does not ensure that the instrument is valid” (Crocker & Algina, 1986, p. 217). It is noted that all items contained on the BAQ-M Revised (Davis et al., 2015) were designed to measure the three types of bullying as recognized in the field, thus attempting to assist with validity. Because modified steps were taken to address the content validity of the revised instrument, a measurement and statistical expert reviewed all modifications to the instrument and made recommendations prior to administration. To add, reviewers examined the instrument to determine whether the items adequately sampled the domain of interest and the results were used to provide feedback on the instrument’s clarity, wording, and other potential areas of concern. Thus, these steps assisted with establishing content validity of the revised instrument and usability (Crocker & Algina, 1986, p. 218).

The modified version of the Bullying Attitudes Questionnaire referred to as the BAQ-M Revised (Davis et al., 2015) employed the original six written vignettes from the BAQ-M (Yoon & Kerber, 2003). See Appendix A and B for author permission for the original vignettes. Each vignette assessed (1) teacher perceived seriousness of bullying; (2) empathy toward the victim; and, (3) teacher likelihood of intervention using two hypothetical scenarios of: verbal, physical, and relational bullying. The vignettes were counterbalanced in order to avoid presentation bias and included scenarios that were directly witnessed by the teacher. The modification to the instrument was designed to improve content validity and involved adding two additional questions after each vignette to further assess the constructs of perceived seriousness, empathy, and likelihood of intervention.

**Perceived Seriousness Construct Scale**
The *BAQ-M Revised* (Davis et al., 2015) measured perceived seriousness by asking teachers to respond to three items after viewing each of the six written vignettes. Next, teachers responded to the question, “How serious is this conflict?” by responding to a Likert type scale ranging from 1 (*Not at all Serious*) to 5 (*Very Serious*). The next question states, “Is this conflict a normative part of the teasing process?” after which the teacher responds to a Likert type scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). Finally, the teacher responds to the prompt, “This conflict should be addressed with the student at the end of the day.” The teacher then responds using a Likert type scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). In this study the seriousness subscale was comprised of 18 items and yielded ($a = .84$). See Table 1 for a description of instrument reliabilities.

**Empathy Construct Scale**

The *BAQ-M* (Revised; Davis et al., 2015) measures empathy by asking teachers to respond to three items after viewing six written vignettes. After viewing the vignette the teacher responds to the first statement, “I would be upset by the student’s remarks and feel sympathetic toward the victim.” After the statement the teacher responds according to a Likert type scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). Next, the teacher responds to the second statement, “I would feel the need to help the victim.” The teacher then responds to a Likert type scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). The final prompt says, “I cannot imagine what it feels like for the victim.” The teacher then responds to a Likert type scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). In this study the 18 item Empathy subscale yielded ($a = .85$). See Table 1 for a description of instrument reliabilities.

**Likelihood of Intervention/Response Construct Scale**

The *BAQ-M* (Revised; Davis et al., 2015) measures Likelihood of Intervention by asking
teachers to respond to three questions after viewing six written vignettes. With the first question, “How likely are you to intervene in this situation?” the teacher then responds to a Likert type scale ranging from 1 (Not at All Likely) to 5 (Very Likely). After responding to the second statement, “I would not classify this scenario as bullying,” the teacher then responds to a Likert type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The final statement, “This conflict does not require teacher intervention,” asks the teacher to respond to a Likert type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). In this study, the 18-item likelihood of response subscale yielded ($a = .88$). See Table 1 for a description.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bullying Vignettes</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Cronbach (a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Bullying Vignette #1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriousness (a = .138, n = 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy (a = .538, n = 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response (a = .762, n = 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Bullying Vignette #2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriousness (a = -.027, n = 3)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy (a = .366, n = 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response (a = .673, n = 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Bullying Vignette #3</td>
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<td>.743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriousness (a = .403, n = 3)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy (a = .428, n = 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response (a = .816, n = 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Bullying Vignette #4</td>
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<td>.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriousness (a = .382, n = 3)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy (a = .544, n = 3)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response (a = .762, n = 3)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Bullying Vignette #5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy (a = .610, n = 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response (a = .640, n = 3)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Bullying Vignette #6</td>
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<td>.755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriousness (a = .449, n = 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy (a = .352, n = 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response (a = .771, n = 3)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Verbal Bullying Vignette</td>
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<td>.758</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Physical Bullying Vignette</td>
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<td>.839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Relational Bullying Vignette</td>
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<td>.868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Verbal Seriousness</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Verbal Empathy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Verbal Response</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Physical Seriousness</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Physical Empathy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.725</td>
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<td>Overall Physical Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Relational Empathy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Relational Response</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAQ-M Revised Instrument</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>.920</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BAQ-M Vignettes

*Verbal Bullying*. There were two verbal bullying vignettes on the instrument. Each vignette depicted the same type of bullying and included 9 questions after each vignette. The Cronbach alpha for the Verbal Vignette #1 was \( a = .65, n = 9 \). The Cronbach alpha for Verbal Vignette #2 was \( a = .56, n = 9 \). See Table 1 for a description of reliabilities.

*Physical Bullying*. There were two physical bullying vignettes on the instrument. Each vignette depicted the same type of bullying and included 9 questions after each vignette. The Cronbach alpha for the Physical Vignette #3 was \( a = .74, n = 9 \). The Cronbach alpha for Physical Vignette #4 was \( a = .72, n = 9 \). See Table 1 for a description of reliabilities.

*Relational Bullying*. There were two relational bullying vignettes on the instrument. Each vignette depicted the same type of bullying and included 9 questions after each vignette. The Cronbach alpha for the Relational Vignette #5 was \( a = .79, n = 9 \). The Cronbach alpha for Physical Vignette #6 was \( a = .75, n = 9 \). See Table 1 for a description of reliabilities.

**Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)**

**Instrument Reliability and Validity**

The *Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale* – short form (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy; 2001) was designed to measure domain-specific efficacy. The scale is comprised of three subscales: student engagement, efficacy in instructional practices, and efficacy in classroom management. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk–Hoy (2001) asserted that the TSES is more highly correlated with the construct of personal teaching efficacy \( r = .64 \) than general teaching efficacy \( r = .16 \). The measure has two versions, (long form) consisting of 24 questions and a (short form) consisting of 12 questions. Reliability for the TSES short form was reported as .90 according to the authors of the instrument (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Internal
consistency for the subscale for engagement was reported as .81 (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Internal consistency for the subscales for instruction and classroom management were reported as .86 (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001).

Tschannen-Moran and Wolfolk-Hoy (2001) conducted a factor analysis in their study finding three moderately correlated factors, student engagement, efficacy in instructional practices, and efficacy in classroom management. Past studies report the TSES has adequate construct validity through its correlation with existing scales of teaching efficacy such as the Rand Corporation Self Efficacy Scale (Armor et al., 1976); Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) (Gibson & Dembo, 1984); the Teacher Locus of Control Scale (Rose & Medway, 1981); Ashton Vignettes (Ashton, Buhr, & Crocker, 1984); and the Webb Scale (Ashton et al., 1982). The instrument has also been validated with pre-service and in-service teacher populations (Tschannen-Moran & Wolfolk-Hoy, 2001).

In the present study, the TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Wolfolk-Hoy, 2001) short form was used. Internal consistency for the instrument was .94. Internal consistency for the subscales was reported as: .82 for Instructional Practices, .86 for Student Engagement, and .81 for the Classroom Management subscale. These scores were consistent with previous studies that have utilized this instrument. Since the interest in this study was on teacher’s perceptions about their classroom management skills and preschool bullying, only the Classroom Management (CM) subscale was used. The classroom management subscale was comprised of items 1, 6, 7, 8. See Table 2 for a presentation of the results.
Table 2
Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale Instrument Reliabilities by Construct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Cronbach (α)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy in Instructional Practices</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy in Student Engagement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy in Classroom Management</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedures

In order to gauge interest in the study, the principal researcher sent introductory letters explaining the purpose and structure of the study to local education agencies. One agency, which serves as a nonprofit grantee serving 12 counties in one state in the southeast expressed interest. The agency has 90 community-based Headstart classrooms with two teachers per classroom and twenty-five state funded Pre-K classrooms housed on public school campuses. The agency director served as the liaison and expressed interest in having all teachers employed by the agency participate in the study to further develop agency training initiatives.

All required documents were submitted to the University of Alabama’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) in order to secure approval for the study. See Appendix E for permission to conduct the study. The researcher received approval on July 22, 2014 from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Alabama to conduct dissertation research. Following approval for the study, the survey items on the BAQ-M Revised (Davis et al., 2015) were entered into Qualtrics Survey Software, an online survey software format for collecting survey data. Next, a meeting was held with the director of the agency to obtain written consent for the study. See Appendix A for a copy of the consent. Once the survey was activated, a unique Uniform Resource Locator (URL) address was generated for the study. The URL to access the study was embedded in an email along with a cover letter to individuals who voluntarily consented to
participate in the study. Upon accessing the link, the teachers viewed a welcome letter reviewing the purpose and indicating their consent for participation. The measures were presented in the following order: Demographics survey, *Bullying Attitudes Questionnaire-Modified Revised*; Davis et al., 2015) and the *Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form* (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). All measures used in the study took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

**Assumptions**

The study had several underlying assumptions. First, the assumption was held that all participants would follow all directions and be truthful when answering the questions. The researcher also assumed that each teacher would correctly identify all self-reported demographic information. The assumption was also held that each vignette would accurately depict the appropriate construct of verbal, physical, or relational bullying. Further, the researcher also assumed that all teachers had access to a computer along with the requisite knowledge and skills to complete the web-based survey.

**Sample Size**

A power analysis was conducted to determine the minimum sample size for the study. According to research, high response rates are desirable, but response rates of 70% are considered adequate (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). A power analysis assists with determining the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when the null hypothesis is false (i.e., power = 1-β). For research question one, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. The estimated minimum sample size per group was 100 using a power or .80 for a medium effect size (d = .5) and at the .05 level of significance using the statistical software program G* Power 3 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). To answer Research Question Two, a four-predictor scenario with an estimated
treatment effect of $R_2^2 = .13$ ($f_2^2 = .15$) was used. The minimum size for the overall model was $N = 79$ (Green, 1991).

**Data Analysis**

The independent variables in the study were school type and race. The dependent variables in the study were empathy, perceived seriousness, and likelihood of response. In order to answer Research Question One, “Does the likelihood of teacher response to bullying in preschool differ between school type, and teacher race as measured by the *BAQ-M Revised* (Davis et al., 2015)?” an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed. For Research Question Two, “How does empathy, perceived seriousness and likelihood of response to bullying in preschool as measured by the *BAQ-M Revised* (Davis et al., 2015) relate to teacher self-efficacy as measured by the Classroom Management Subscale of the *Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES)*?” regression was used as the statistical analysis.

**Summary**

Chapter 3 was a detailed account of the research study, participants, instrumentation, and data analyses used in the study to answer the research questions. To add, the instruments were described, with validity and reliability reported. Chapter 4 will discuss the results of the study.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The current study examined the relationship between teacher characteristics (Empathy, Seriousness, and Likelihood of Response) and perceived self-efficacy skills in responding to preschool bullying situations. One hundred thirty-three preschool teachers between the ages of 21 and 66 completed the study. Participants completed three measures (i.e., BAQ-M Revised; Davis et al., 2015) TSES - short form (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001), and a demographic questionnaire). There were two research questions for the study:

1. Does the likelihood of teacher response to bullying in preschool differ between school type, gender, and race as measured by the (BAQ-M Revised; Davis et al., 2015)?

2. How does Empathy, Perceived Seriousness and Likelihood of Response to bullying in preschool as measured by the (BAQ-M Revised; Davis et al., 2015) relate to teacher self-efficacy as measured by the Classroom Management subscale of the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001)?

Demographic Variables

Descriptive statistics were computed on all questionnaires in the study. One hundred ninety-two web-based surveys were sent to all preschool teachers working in a nonprofit agency in a southeastern state in the U.S. One hundred and fifty-seven teachers responded to the survey however, 23 surveys were discarded due to missing major portions of the survey such (i.e.,
omitting one or more questions from the *BAQ-M Revised* (Davis et al., 2015) bullying vignettes or the *TSES Classroom Management subscale* (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). Therefore, the final sample consisted of $N = 133$ usable surveys, with a response rate of 86%. An acceptable response of 70% is considered adequate (Gall, et al., 2007). Data were checked for errors and then examined to determine if the assumptions of parametric statistics were tenable. All statistical analyses used in the study were conducted using the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 22* (SPSS, 2013). A summary of all demographic statistics is reported in Table 3.

A majority of the sample were female (99.2%; $n = 132$), there was one male (.8%; $n = 1$). Most participants selected White as their racial identity (82.4%; $n = 112$) while (16.9%; $n = 23$) of the respondents identified as Black. The mean age of the sample was 40.83 ($SD = 11.25$) with an age range of 21 – 66 years. Of the total teachers surveyed, 51.6% ($n = 65$) teachers had obtained an Associate’s degree, 41.3% ($n = 52$) had a Bachelor’s degree and 7.1% ($n = 9$) had obtained Master’s degrees. Eighty-five teachers identified themselves as lead teachers and 46 identified themselves as teacher aides.

With regard to work setting, 78.9% ($n = 105$) teachers reported working in a community-based setting and 20.3% ($n = 27$) identified working in school-based or non-community based setting. With regard to teaching experience, the data indicated that 29.3% ($n = 39$) had 0-5 years of experience, 26.3% ($n = 35$) had between 6 and 10 years of experience 21.1% ($n = 28$) had 11-15 years of experience, and 23.3% ($n = 31$) had 16 years or more experience. The data also indicated that the majority of teachers 56.6% ($n = 73$) had between 0-5 years of teaching experience at their current school and 7.8% or ($n = 10$) had 16 years or more of experience at their current location.
Table 3
Survey Participant Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25-29</td>
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<td>18.2%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>30-34</td>
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<td></td>
<td>35-39</td>
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<td>9.1%</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>55-59</td>
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<td>9.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>99.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>131</td>
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<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>Master’s Degree</td>
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<td>Educational</td>
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<td>Teaching Experience</td>
<td>0-5 Years</td>
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<td>6-10 Years</td>
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<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 years +</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience at Current School</td>
<td>0-5 Years</td>
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<td>56.6%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11-15 Years</td>
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<td>Non-Community Based</td>
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<td>20.5%</td>
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<td>Program Type</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-K</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Descriptive Statistics Seriousness Construct

The mean scores ($M$) and standard deviation ($SD$), scores for the seriousness construct were computed by averaging the scores across each vignette. Scores ranged from 1 (Not at all serious) to 5 (Very Serious). A presentation of these data appears in Table 4. The sample size included 133 teacher respondents. Based on the results, the mean score for verbal seriousness was ($M = 4.01, SD = .56$) and the mean score for physical seriousness was ($M = 4.05, SD = .64$). The mean score for relational seriousness was ($M = 3.55, SD = .57$). These findings suggest that teachers perceive physical bullying, as depicted in the vignettes, as slightly more serious than physical or verbal bullying, as depicted in the vignettes. Second, the seriousness scores for vignettes depicting verbal bullying were next. Finally, the seriousness scores for vignettes depicting relational bullying were perceived as less serious than physical or verbal bullying.

Descriptive Statistics Empathy Construct

Scores ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The mean score for vignettes depicting verbal empathy was ($M = 3.92, SD = .51$). The mean score for vignettes depicting physical empathy was ($M = 3.96, SD = .56$). The mean score for vignettes depicting relational empathy was ($M = 3.63, SD = .50$). A comparison across the vignettes depicting Empathy were evaluated. Findings revealed that mean scores for empathy across all bullying vignettes despite the type of bullying (i.e., physical, verbal relational) were closely related. The empathy scores for vignettes depicting physical bullying were rated higher indicating that teachers were more likely to demonstrate empathy for the victim of physical bullying.
Descriptive Statistics Response Construct

Scores ranged from 1 (Not At All Likely) to 5 (Very Likely). The mean scores for the response construct were calculated by averaging the scores across each bullying vignette. Verbal response was ($M = 4.64, SD = .37$). Physical response was ($M = 4.25, SD = .45$). Relational response was ($M = 4.07, SD = .49$). When comparing the findings, mean scores for the teacher response construct in vignettes depicting verbal bullying was highest, followed by physical bullying and relational bullying.

Table 4
Average Seriousness Empathy and Response Scores by Vignette Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Verbal (SD)</th>
<th>Physical (SD)</th>
<th>Relational (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seriousness</td>
<td>4.01 (.560)</td>
<td>4.05 (.643)</td>
<td>3.55 (.576)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>3.92 (.518)</td>
<td>3.96 (.563)</td>
<td>3.63 (.509)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>4.64 (.376)</td>
<td>4.25 (.453)</td>
<td>4.07 (.493)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Seriousness = Seriousness of bullying; Empathy = Empathy toward the victim; Response = Likelihood of response

Teacher Sense of Efficacy (TSES)

Descriptive Statistics TSES

The TSES-Efficacy in Classroom Management subscale is a four-item scale comprised of items 1, 6, 7 and 8. One hundred thirty-three teachers rated these items along a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Nothing) to 9 (A Great Deal). Question 1 asked, “How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in your classroom?” Question 6 asked, “How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?” Question 7 asked, “How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy? Question 8 asked, “How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?” The mean scores for on the TSES-Efficacy in
Classroom Management was \((M = 28.29, SD = 5.42)\) suggesting that overall teacher perceived they had efficacy in classroom management. The mean scores for the four items that make up the classroom management subscale ranged from \((M = 6.79)\) to \((M = 7.30)\) indicating that most teachers perceived they had “Some influence” or were able to do “Quit a bit” with regard to classroom management.

The mean score for question 1, “How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in your classroom?” was \((M = 7.30, SD = 1.55)\), suggesting that teachers felt they could do quite a bit to control disruptive behavior in their classrooms. The mean score for question 6, “How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?” was \((M = 6.79, SD = 1.49)\), suggesting that teachers felt they had some influence in getting children to follow classroom rules. The mean score for question 7, “How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?” was \((M = 7.38, SD = 1.29)\), suggesting that teachers felt they could do quite a bit to calm disruptive or noisy students. The mean score for question 8, “How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?” was \((M = 7.30, SD = 1.33)\), indicating that teachers felt they could do quite bit to establish a classroom management system.

**Research Question 1**

Research Question 1, “Does the likelihood of teacher response differ between school type, teacher gender and teacher race as measured by the \((BAQ-M Revised; Davis et al., 2015)\)? An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to answer the question. Prior to analyzing the research question, the three basic parametric assumptions were tested: (1) independence among and within subjects, (2) normality and (3) homogeneity of the variances across groups (Gall et al., 2007). Because there was only one male participant, the variable of gender was removed from the sample.
A two-way ANOVA was conducted in order to test the independent variables of race and setting. The dependent variable was empathy. The first assumption of independence was satisfied as there was no relationship among the participants. The next assumption of normality assumes that the dependent variables were normally distributed in the population. A visual inspection of the histogram was assessed for normality. Normality was also examined based on the skewness and kurtosis of the dependent variable, which fell within the range from \(-1.0\) to \(+1.0\) (Lomax, 2001). To test the assumption of homogeneity of the variances, Levene’s test was conducted. The Levene’s test yielded \(F(3, 121) = 1.43, p = .237\) on the construct of empathy. These findings supported the assumption of homogeneity of the variance between groups on the construct of empathy. A review of the box plots indicated there were no outliers.

The results indicated that the mean ratings for the independent variable of empathy for White teachers was \((M = 3.76, SD = .05)\) while empathy for Black teachers was \((M = 4.12, SD = .14)\). The school-based sample of teachers had mean scores of \((M = 3.95, SD = .13)\).

The results indicated that the ANOVA was significant for the construct of empathy based upon race, \(F(1, 121) = 5.9, p = .01\). The effect size statistic, eta-squared, revealed \(.047\), which indicated a very small effect based on Cohen’s (1988) guidelines. Setting was not significant \(F(1, 121) = .024, p = .87\). Significant differences were noted in that Black teachers scored significantly higher on the construct of empathy \((M = 4.13, SD = .14)\) than White teachers \((M = 3.76, SD = .05)\) on this same construct. There was no significance in setting or no interaction between race and setting.

A two-way ANOVA tested the independent variables of race and setting on the construct of seriousness. The first assumption of independence was satisfied as there was no relationship among the participants. The next assumption of normality was met after a visual inspection of
the histogram was conducted. Normality was also examined based on the skewness and kurtosis of the dependent variable, which fell within the range from −1.0 to +1.0 (Lomax, 2001). To test the assumption of Homogeneity of the Variances, Levene’s test was conducted. The Levene’s test yielded a $F(3, 123) = 1.24, p = .29$. These findings supported the assumption of homogeneity of the variance between groups on the construct of seriousness. A review of the box plots indicated there were no outliers.

Results indicated that mean scores for white teachers in the community-based sample was ($M = 3.87, SD = .05$). The scores for Black teachers in community-based settings were ($M = 3.95, SD = .12$). Mean scores for white teachers in the school-based sample were ($M = 3.71, SD = .10$). Mean scores for Black teachers in the school-based sample were ($M = 4.51, SD = .30$).

Results of the ANOVA indicated that there were significant differences in race, $F(1, 120) = 6.65, p = .01$. There was no significance for setting. There was a significant interaction for race and setting on the construct of seriousness $F(1, 123) = 4.35, p = .03$. There were no differences overall between teachers across community-based and public school settings. However, Black teachers in the school-based settings had higher seriousness scores than those in community-based settings.

A two-way ANOVA tested the independent variable of race and setting on the construct of response. The first assumption of independence was satisfied as there was no relationship among the participants. The next assumption of normality was met after a visual inspection of the histogram was assessed. Normality was also examined based on the skewness and kurtosis of the dependent variable, which fell within the range from −1.0 to +1.0 (Lomax, 2001). To test this assumption, Levene’s test was reviewed. The Levene’s test yielded $F(3, 124) = 1.54, p = .207$ on the construct of response. These findings supported the assumption of homogeneity of the
variance between groups on the construct of response. Based on a review of box plots, there were no outliers. There were also no significant interactions or differences.

Results indicated that mean scores for White teachers in community-based settings was \( M = 4.39, SD = .04 \). Mean scores for Black teachers in community-based settings were \( M = 4.50, SD = .08 \). Mean scores for White teachers in the school-based settings was \( M = 4.41, SD = .07 \). Mean scores for Black teachers in school-based settings was \( M = 4.59, SD = .21 \). The results of the ANOVA did not yield any significant differences or interactions between the groups on the construct of seriousness.

**Research Question 2**

“How does empathy, perceived seriousness and likelihood of response to bullying in preschool as measured by the \( BAQ-M\ Revised;\ Davis\ et\ al.,\ 2015 \) relate to teacher self-efficacy as measured by the Classroom Management subscale of the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale \( TSES;\ Tschannen-Moran\ &\ Woolfolk-Hoy \)?” The analysis used to answer this question was Multiple Regression. Regression models were used to explore the association between Seriousness, Empathy, Likelihood of Response, and the \( TSES \) (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001) subscale scale score of CM (classroom management).

Prior to analyzing the research question the three basic parametric assumptions of Regression were assessed: (1) Linearity (2) Independence of the observations and (3) Homoscedasticity. In the first model the predictors were Seriousness, Empathy, Response, and the \( TSES \) (Classroom Management) subscale. The criterion variable was Verbal Bullying. The four predictors were entered simultaneously. The assumption of linearity was met after conducting a visual inspection of the scatterplot. To test the assumption of independence a visual inspection of the scatter plot was conducted. The assumption of homoscedasticity was met by
conducted a visual inspection of the residuals plot. The assumption of multicollinearity was met as correlations between criterion and predictor variables were not too low and none over .80. Tolerance was calculated using the formula \( T = 1 - R^2 \). Variance inflation factor (VIF) is the inverse of Tolerance \( (1 \div T) \). Commonly used cutoff points for determining the presence of multicollinearity are \( T > .10 \) and \( VIF < 10 \). There were no correlational results violating this assumption; therefore, the presence of multicollinearity was not assumed (Gall et al., 2007). The data were reviewed for outliers and there were none present.

The results of the regression analyses was significant, indicating the model was significant. The model explained 70.5% of the variance \( (R^2 = 70.5\%; F (4,122) = 76.15, p = .000) \). Three of the predictors, Empathy \( (\beta = .021, p = 000) \), Seriousness \( (\beta = .016, p = 000) \), Response \( (\beta = .009, p = .017) \), significantly predicted verbal bullying. However an inspection of the beta weights revealed that the TES-Classroom management \( (\beta = .005, p = .138) \) was not a significant predictor in the model. See Table 5 for a presentation of these data.

**Table 5**

*Multiple Regression Seriousness, Empathy, Response, TSES, and Verbal Bullying*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>( \beta )</th>
<th>Sig. ((p))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>.021</td>
<td>.000 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriousness</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.000 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.017 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TES-CM</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note \( R^2 = 70.1\% \) \( * p < .05 \).

In the second model, the predictors were Seriousness, Empathy, Response, and the *TSES Classroom Management* subscale. The criterion variable was Physical Bullying. The four predictors were entered simultaneously. The assumption of linearity was met after conducting a visual inspection of the scatterplot. The assumption independence was satisfied as there was no
relationship between the variables. The assumption of homoscedasticity was met by conducting a visual inspection of the residuals plot. The assumption of multicollinearity was met as correlations between criterion and predictor variables were not too low and none over .80. The presence of multicollinearity is not assumed (Gall, et al., 2007). A visual inspection of the residual plots revealed no outliers were present.

The results of the regression analysis was significant indicating the model was significant. The model explained 84.1% of the variance ($R^2 = 84.1\%$; $F(4,122)= 167.75, p = .000$). Three of the predictors, Empathy ($\beta = .019, p = .000$), Seriousness ($\beta = .022, p = .000$), and Response ($\beta = .019, p = .000$), significantly predicted physical bullying. However an inspection of the beta weights revealed that the $TSES$-$Classroom \text{ management}$ ($\beta = .000, p = .923$) was not a significant predictor in the model. See Table 6 for a description of these data.

**Table 6**

*Multiple Regression Seriousness, Empathy, Response, TSES, and Physical Bullying*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>Sig. ($p$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.000 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriousness</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.000 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.000 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TES-CM</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.923</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $R^2 = 84.1\%$ * $p < .05$. **$p < .01$

In the third model the predictors were Seriousness, Empathy, Response, and the $TSES$-$Classroom \text{ management}$ subscale. The criterion variable was Relational Bullying. The four predictors were entered simultaneously. The assumption of linearity was met after conducting a visual inspection of the scatterplot. The assumption of independence was satisfied as there was no relationship between the variable. The assumption of homoscedasticity was met by conducting a visual inspection of the residuals plot. The assumption of multicollinearity was met as correlations between criterion and predictor variables were not too low and none over .80.
There were no correlational results violating this assumption; therefore, the presence of multicollinearity was not assumed (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

The results of the regression analysis was significant indicating the model was significant. The model explained 73.9% of the variance ($R^2 = 73.9\%$; $F(4,122)= 90.03, p = .000$).

Three of the predictors, Empathy ($\beta = .015, p = .000$), Seriousness ($\beta = .012, p = .000$), and Response ($\beta = .029, p = .000$), significantly predicted Relational Bullying. However, an inspection of the beta weights revealed that the TSES-classroom management ($\beta = -.004, p = .275$) was not a significant predictor in the model. See Table 7 for a description of these data.

Table 7

*Multiple Regression Seriousness, Empathy, Response, TSES, and Relational Bullying*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>Sig. ($p$)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>.015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seriousness</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.000 *</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.000 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSES-CM</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note $R^2 = 73.9\%$ * $p < .05$. **$p < .01$**

**Summary of the Findings**

In summary, this chapter presented the demographic results as well as the results of teacher perceptions about preschool bullying. A review of mean scores for the Seriousness construct suggests that teachers perceive physical bullying as more serious. Also, Empathy scores, although closely related across all bullying types (i.e., verbal, physical, and relational) were noted to be higher when the type of bullying was physical and lower on relational bullying. Finally, when looking at the perception of teachers on the Response construct, response scores were higher on vignettes depicting verbal bullying.
The results of the ANOVA were significant for race on the construct of Empathy, indicating that Black teachers scored higher, however the effect size statistic, eta-squared, revealed .047, a very small effect based on Cohen’s (1998) guidelines. For the construct of Seriousness there was a difference in race, but not setting. However, a significant interaction between race and seriousness was noted in that Black teachers scored higher for Seriousness. To add, the level of seriousness scores were higher for Black teachers in the non-community/school-based settings as opposed to those in community-based/center settings. With regard to the Response construct, there were no significant differences or interactions noted.

Findings from the regression model containing the constructs of Seriousness, Empathy, Response, and Classroom Management were significant. However, only three predictors (i.e., Seriousness, Empathy, and Response) were significant, while the TSES-CM was not. An inspection of the beta weights indicated the relationship between each independent variable and dependent variable appears to present as a stronger predictor in verbal bullying than seriousness and response when compared across variables in the study. To add, an inspection of the beta weights on the seriousness scores appears to be a stronger predictor in vignettes depicting physical bullying than empathy and response when compared across variables in the study. The beta weights for response indicated that response appears to be a stronger predictor in vignettes depicting relational bullying when compared across the variables in the study.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions, limitations, and recommendations resulting from data collection using the BAQ-M Revised (Davis et al., 2015) and the Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). Despite a plethora of research devoted to bullying, many unclear findings remain in the area of teacher attitudes and perceptions about bullying in preschool populations. The purpose of this research study was to examine teacher perceptions and teacher characteristics about bullying and to see how distinctions in these variables relate or affect teacher attitudes when responding to bullying situations in preschool classrooms. The study also investigated how variables such as preschool program type (i.e., community-based/center models or non-community/school-based models) and race impacted teacher perception when responding to preschool bullying scenarios. The study was conducted with a sample of preschool teachers working in a nonprofit agency that served students in community and non-community based settings across a thirteen county area in one state.

This chapter is organized around two research questions that were presented in previous chapters. The chapter discusses the significant findings of this study while comparing the results to the related literature. The last sections of this chapter summarize the limitations of the study, offer implications and recommendations for future research, and draw final conclusions.
Research Question 1

There were 105 (79%) teachers who indicated they worked in community-based settings and 27 teachers (20.5%) who indicated they worked in non-community/public school-based settings. There were three independent variables in the study: school type, race, and gender. Gender was removed as a variable of consideration as there was only one male respondent in the sample. Thus, race and school type served as the independent variables under review in this study.

Research Question 1 addressed whether there were any differences in the likelihood of teacher response to preschool bullying between school type and race as measured by the BAQ-M Revised (Davis et al., 2015). There were significant findings from the analyses of Research Question 1, shedding light on general teacher responses to bullying. Specifically, teachers in this study observed three types of bullying in preschool classrooms (i.e., verbal, physical, and relational bullying), based on the descriptive statistics from the demographic survey. These results align with other research studies, affirming the notion that bullying roles can form at the preschool level, and that bullying is emerging in preschool classrooms (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Estell, 2007; Goryl et al., 2013; Salmivalli et al., 2004). The teacher responses in this study also point to an encouraging trend, (i.e., teachers were not only aware of bullying but were willing to respond to all three types of bullying incidents). This willingness among teachers to intervene is important since preschool represents a time when early identification, elimination, and/or escalation of deficits in emotional and academic functioning can be initially addressed in a school setting (Alink, 2006; Arbeau, 2007; Bullough; Swearer; 2007). Further, this information is critical for developing high quality preschool programs as early intervention literature has
revealed that contextual influences (i.e., home, school, and primary care settings) are instrumental in helping to shape brain structures that support early academic functioning, social skills, and executive functioning skills (Burger, 2010; Perry, 2006).

Preschool programs that offer comprehensive services to enhance the developmental skills of children not only help students with the acquisition of new knowledge and skills but also assist parents (Goryl et al., 2013; Lasser & Fite, 2011). That is, programs that include skills building components for parents may also augment gains through modeling, vicarious learning, and opportunities for parents to practice the feedback received in the program. These findings highlight practical implications for educators, school psychologists, and school counselors who often design and select curriculums aimed at enhancing academic and social skills and linkage with community resources.

These findings also have implications for practice as they may raise awareness and facilitate insight into the intricacies that foster and maintain bullying behaviors in early childhood. Specifically, because research has indicated that teachers serve as key socializing agents for behavioral change (Swearer, 2007), teachers can be effective by modeling and teaching bystander intervention (Bandura, 1994; Swearer, 2007). When children observe teachers taking active roles in bullying intervention efforts, research has indicated (Yoon, 2004) that these proactive teacher initiatives often serve as an impetus for change and lead to overall improvements (i.e., changes in the behavior of the bully, protection for the victim, and general school and classroom climate improvement). Further, it is surmised that teacher interest and involvement, such as found in this study, may also signal teacher willingness to participate in anti-bullying intervention and to seek training on bullying in the future (Goryl et al., 2013). The teacher interest in bullying found in this study should encourage school districts to offer
professional development activities and training to help intervention efforts.

Racial differences and school type differences were also investigated with Research Question 1, yielding several important results. First, significant racial differences were found between the participants in the study on the construct of empathy. That is, Black teachers scored significantly higher on the construct of Empathy than White teachers based on the results from the Empathy construct scale of the BAQ-M Revised (Davis et al., 2015). A noteworthy finding from the ANOVA results indicated racial differences whereby Black teachers scored higher than White teachers for demonstrating empathy across bullying vignettes. The study also noted teacher differences on Empathy across community and non-community based settings. The literature has been clear that Empathy serves as a powerful tool for communicating thoughts, feelings, and ideas (Craig, 2000; Snell, 2011; Swearer, 2012). Moreover, the literature has also indicated that Empathy is integral to formulating student-teacher partnerships and also serves as a central component for developing cultural competence (Burger 2010; Dee 2005). Practice implication exists for teachers such that the application of empathy is pivotal to establishing classroom norms and practices. In regard to race, the significant differences found between Black and White teachers are compelling. While research has noted racial disparities with regard to disciplinary practices (Dee, 2005; Hekner & Swenson, 2011) the reason why Black teachers had higher Empathy scores in this study is not clear. Although, Empathy is composed of many components, the researcher speculates that Empathy as measured in this study may have varied according to individual teacher perceptions. Nonetheless, the race variable should be included in future replications of this study.

In relation to empathetic responses, this study indicated that teachers demonstrated similar levels of empathy despite the type of bullying depicted in the bullying vignettes. While
some research studies have pointed to factors such as race, gender, IQ, and parental status as having an impact on teachers’ response level (Dee, 2005), studies assessing the factors that influence teacher response style have noted that perceptions often guide decisions about whether or not to intervene in bullying situations (Rigby, 2002; Yoon & Kerber, 2003). That is, teachers who reported high levels of self-efficacy and Empathy for the victim were more likely to perceive the need to intervene in the bullying scenarios.

Based on this study, teachers had some knowledge about each bullying type and expressed awareness of the need to be responsive to bullying, as depicted in the scenarios. This was another encouraging finding since children can be hesitant to report bullying for fear of reprisal. Responsiveness is important since teachers serve as valuable conduits for amplifying or diminishing the extent of bullying or aggression-related instances and the reporting of such behaviors. Of importance, while teachers indicated an awareness and desire to respond to bullying in this study, they reported having little training or professional development on anti-bullying efforts, which could indicate insufficient or ineffective intervention training. This is a concern since the intervention literature has been clear that intervention alone is not enough (Belden et al., 2012), focused intervention is integral to designing effective prevention and intervention efforts (Ttofi, 2011)

This study points to the need for increased teacher awareness of bullying and training in anti-bullying efforts. With proper teacher training, students should become more inclined to report bullying if teachers are knowledgeable, respond with respect and Empathy, and have classroom norms that assist bystanders and victims. Designing teacher education programs that target the development and nurturance of teacher dispositions (e.g., respect, empathy) will be central components as identified in this study (Byers, et al., 2011; Coldarci, 1992; Coyle, 2008;
Yoon & Kerber, 2003).

With the construct of Seriousness, the BAQ-M Revised (Davis et al., 2015) scale revealed significant differences in race. Results indicated that mean scores for White teachers in both the community-based and school-based sample had lower scores than Black teachers in community-based and non-community/school-based settings. When comparing descriptive statistics across the Seriousness construct, teachers in this study were found to be more likely to respond to Verbal Bullying followed by Physical Bullying and finally Relational Bullying.

The overall results involving teacher perceptions about Seriousness of bullying align with the literature which supports that teachers are likely to perceive instances involving physical bullying as serious and are likely to intervene (Craig et al., 2000; Swearer, et al., 2007; Yoon & Kerber, 2003). Contrary to the bullying literature, which has indicated that teachers were more likely to consider their responses to Physical Bullying as more serious, descriptive statistics indicated teachers from preschool settings in this study were more likely to respond to instances of Verbal Bullying as depicted in the vignettes. There was also a significant interaction for race and setting on the construct of Seriousness $F(1, 123) = 4.35, p = .03$, indicating that Black teachers had higher scores than White teachers for Seriousness scores as depicted in the bullying vignettes. To add, Black teachers in non community/school-based settings had higher Seriousness scores than those in community-based settings. These findings suggest that both teachers in school-based and community-based settings are aware of bullying and recognize that some response may be necessary. These findings may also suggest that preschools housed within schools may have more focused and pervasive bullying prevention messages, reflecting the programs in place in the K-12 settings, leading to an anti-bullying climate. To add, school-based settings have more personnel (i.e., school counselors, school psychologists, and principals) that
may deliver a comprehensive mode of communication about bullying. On the other hand, community-based preschool may not have access to similar personnel or as much anti-bullying exposure which could lead to varying teachers views related to Seriousness and whether to intervene or not in bullying scenarios. To support this notion, over 17% of the teachers in the study indicated that their schools did not have policies on suspension or removal of preschool students for misbehavior, while 20% of the teachers in the sample indicated they did not know whether there were policies in existence on preschool suspension or removal for their setting. Additionally, 51.9% of teachers from this sample indicated that students should be suspended or expelled/removed for aggression or misbehavior. The need for increased training initiatives aimed at teachers in community-based settings is a compelling finding from this study. While, the literature points to racial differences in that teachers tend to respond similarly to those of a similar race with regard to disciplinary strategies, further review of racial differences is indicated.

**Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 addressed how Empathy, Perceived Seriousness, and Likelihood of Response to preschool bullying as measured by the *BAQ-M Revised* (Davis et al., 2015) relate to teacher self-efficacy as measured by the Classroom Management Subscale of the *Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001)*. There were significant findings from the analyses of Research Question 2, which shed light on teacher responses to bullying. The analyses revealed teachers were likely to respond to all bullying scenarios, and that most teachers were empathetic to the victim despite the type of bullying (i.e., verbal, physical or relational). Teachers were also less likely to respond to relational bullying as depicted in the
scenarios when compared to physical and verbal types of bullying which is similar to findings in the literature (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Graves, & Howes, 2011).

While the analyses of teacher perceptions and classroom management using the TSES were not a significant predictor in the model, a review of (TSES) classroom management scale indicated that teachers endorsed high efficacy beliefs on their abilities to manage classroom disruptions, get students to follow classroom rules, and establish a classroom management system with each group of students. While previous studies have indicated a relationship between Empathy, Seriousness, Response, and Self-Efficacy in classroom management in both pre-service and in-service teachers (Craig et al., 2000; Yoon & Kerber, 2003) this study failed to find a similar connection.

The results of the regression analyses were significant indicating the model explained 70.5% of the variance ($R^2 = 70.5\%$, $F(4, 122)$, with Empathy, Seriousness, and Response significantly predicting Verbal Bullying. These findings are in line with other research studies that have reported a correlation between teacher perceptions about the seriousness of the bullying scenario, level of Empathy toward the victim, and response to physical bullying scenarios (Craig et al., 2000; Kahn et al., 2012; Yoon & Kerber, 2003). The findings were similar to other studies with regard to teacher perceptions about bullying which indicated that teachers perceive physical bullying and verbal bullying as more serious and necessary to respond to (Espelage & Swearer 2003). Traditionally, teachers have felt that responding to physical bullying was paramount, however new research studies (Kaminsky, 2012) have indicated that there is a need to respond to each type of bullying scenario (i.e., verbal, physical, relational) based on the collateral effects to the classroom, and those involved in the bullying dynamic.
In the second model the predictors were Seriousness, Empathy, Response, and the TSES Classroom Management subscale. The results of the regression analyses were significant indicating the model explained 84.1% of the variance ($R^2 = 84.1\%$; $F(4,122) = 167.75$, $p = .000$). Three of the predictors, Empathy, Seriousness, and Response significantly predicted Physical Bullying. However an inspection of the beta weights revealed that the TSES-Classroom management subscale was not a significant predictor in the model. The mean score for vignettes depicting verbal empathy was ($M = 3.92, SD = .51$). The mean score for vignettes depicting physical empathy was ($M = 3.96, SD = .56$). The mean score for vignettes depicting relational empathy was ($M = 3.63, SD = .50$). These findings revealed that mean scores for Empathy across all bullying vignettes despite the type of bullying (i.e., physical, verbal relational) was closely related (Yoon & Kerber, 2003).

The Empathy scores for vignettes depicting physical bullying were rated higher indicating that teachers were more likely to demonstrate Empathy for the victim of physical bullying. The implication of these findings indicated that regardless of the type of bullying, teachers demonstrated similar levels of empathy. This result supports previous studies (Yoon & Kerber, 2003) that have pointed to Empathy as an important teacher characteristic because teachers who empathize are more likely to take action. One compelling finding in the present study involved the bullying vignettes, which asked teachers about Empathy for the victim (as portrayed in bullying vignettes). Consequently, the vignettes did not explore questions or perceptions about Empathy for the bully involved in the scenario. Thus, Empathy levels may have been different depending on whether empathy was measured on the bully.

In the third model the predictors were Seriousness, Empathy, Response, and the TSES Classroom Management subscale. The results of the regression analyses were significant
indicating the model was significant, explaining 73.9% of the variance ($R^2 = 73.9\%$, $F(4,122) = 90.03, p = .000$). Three of the predictors, Empathy, Seriousness and Response significantly predicted Relational Bullying. However, the TSES Classroom Management was not a significant predictor in the model.

The mean scores for the response construct were calculated by averaging the scores across each bullying vignette. Verbal response was ($M = 4.64, SD = .37$). Physical response was ($M = 4.25, SD = .45$). Relational response was ($M = 4.07, SD = .49$). When comparing the findings, mean scores for the teacher response construct in vignettes depicting verbal bullying was higher, followed by physical bullying and relational bullying.

**Limitations**

There were limitations associated with this study. The first limitation involved the diversity of the sample. Specifically, the sample included unequal sample sizes with regard to race and gender. Yet, it should be noted that while female participation in the study was far greater than male participation, this gender difference is quite reflective of the percentage of female teachers working in preschool settings. Moreover, females are more likely to serve as teachers not only in preschool, but also in elementary school settings. Furthermore, because this study used a self-report questionnaire, and it is possible that socially desirable responding may have affected the results.

Teacher experience may have also influenced the results of the study. Nearly half the sample reported they had less than 5 years of teaching experience at their current school. This may have led to socially desirable responding as teachers are often transferred across schools because of attrition or an anxiety that their supervisor in a new employment setting may become aware of their results. Finally, because the type of bullying and severity of incidents involving
bullying ranges in severity, and complexity across incidents, altering the scenarios to reflect issues more germane to preschool populations may offer a more in depth assessment to guide prevention and intervention efforts. Also, since teachers in the sample worked across rural and suburban areas they may hold geographically related norms and perceptions about bullying.

**Implications and Future Research**

The study has implications for professionals, teachers, school psychologists, school counselors, and other allied health professionals. Specifically, the literature is clear that early intervention efforts are paramount and that bullying is unlikely to stop without focused prevention and intervention efforts. Implications exist for school psychologists as they are trained in mental health assessment and multi-tiered proactive service models. This specialized training places school psychologists in a unique position to assume a leadership role in facilitating prevention and intervention efforts in community-based and non-community based school settings. School psychologists serve parents and students from birth to 5 years providing pediatric assessments, developmental screenings, and mental health counseling services within school districts with children who may or may not be enrolled in school.

Because of increased accountability in educational settings coupled with early intervention literature, this study highlights the need for more comprehensive services for preschool age populations. Specifically, implications exist for school psychologist and school counselors to work conjointly to design prevention and intervention campaigns. Because school counselors spend a great deal of time on personal and social skills enhancement in the classroom (i.e., group guidance lessons), they are in position to recognize and assist with primary intervention and training responses in the K-12 school settings. However, preschools located in community-based settings appear to be at a disadvantage because they often do not have access
to school counselors. Likewise, many school districts employ a limited number of school psychologists who serve a vast number of schools, thereby limiting opportunities to work with other professionals. Thus, an important finding from this study is the identification of this intervention gap that must be noted and filled by school psychologists and other professionals that currently work with preschool populations. This lack of proximity to helping professionals in the community-based settings also underlines the importance of thorough training of the preschool classroom teachers and parents.

Because school psychologists serve as change agents and work to quell more insidious forms of bullying included in this study, as well other forms (e.g., cyber-bullying), they are in line to team with school counselors and other helping professionals to offer parent training and the enhancement of family/school collaboration efforts. For example, there are opportunities to help parents discourage bullying behaviors while at the same time model positive behavior. Thus, school districts may need to focus on additional counseling and psychological services for preschool age children and their families to ensure continuity of care. Advocating for more services and for more professionals to work with children in pre-K settings in community-based settings is strongly encouraged.

Because most teachers in the study indicated they had limited or no professional development on bullying, the results of this study could serve as a baseline to evaluate curriculum/training if the teachers in the study are evaluated after professional development. A follow-up to this study might include teacher training on bullying specific to preschool populations. Some studies have found that racial disparities persist between teacher and student race (Dee, 2005), however, since the variable of gender was removed in this study, future research should investigate whether response to bullying differs along teacher gender lines.
Also, while students were not included in the study, exploring student perceptions, and patterns of similarity, and differences between student and teachers would be informative and could guide future training. To add, while the literature points to increases in the numbers of children being expelled (Gilliam, 2005; Gilliam & Shakur, 2006; Kaiser & Sklar-Raminisky, 2012), only 2 teachers from the sample indicated they had recommended a child be expelled over the past 12 months. This lower than expected finding could have been related to the fact that data collection occurred from July to August, prior to the start of school. Future research may be more efficacious by collecting data after school starts as teachers may have an opportunity to work at a particular school to understand policies. For example, many teachers in the study indicated they were not aware if their centers/schools had policies on suspension/expulsion or if anti-bullying policies existed. The research has suggested that self-efficacy and classroom management skills are more efficacious when polices and expectations are clearly communicated (Woolfolk-Hoy, 2000).

**Conclusions**

The literature has indicated that bullying crosses racial, gender, ethnic, grade and age-related lines (Gendron, et al., 2011; Graves & Howes, 2011; Kokkinos & Antoniadou, 2013). The literature is also clear that the assumptions that teachers hold about bullying and the characteristics of bullies and victims can complicate teacher responses and decision-making with regard to managing bullying (Craig, 2000; Mishna 2005). To add, bullying is associated with deleterious effects that often persist into adulthood without proper intervention (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Graves & Howes, 2011; Kokkinos, 2013; Nansel, 2001; Olweus, 1993; Olweus & Limber, 2010). Thus, understanding how variations affect teacher response style is paramount.
While intervention efforts have traditionally focused on middle and high school students, compelling reasons exist for intervening in preschool populations to prevent negative and long-term trajectories, especially since a dearth of early intervention literature points to the efficacy of intervening with students with academic and emotional deficits (Phillips & Meloy, 2012; Wolke, 2001). To add, making sure that preschool teachers are properly trained to recognize the bullying dynamic with preschool children is germane since the responsibility for implementing anti-bullying intervention and prevention programs often falls under the purview of teachers (Byers et al., 2011; Cowie et al., 2008).

The results of this study indicated that all teachers believed bullying existed in preschool classrooms and that anti-bullying interventions, programs, and trainings were necessary in preschool populations. To add, because the literature has suggested there are gender differences in bullying, with males demonstrating more physical aggression and females demonstrating more relational bullying (Crick et al., 2006), implications exists in that teachers may feel that intervention into instances of relational aggression are not as serious, and as such may underestimate or fail to apply appropriate intervention to victims or to discipline those who perpetuate relational bullying. Further, this study appeared to indicate that teachers needed professional development to understand more about the various types of bullying. According to self-efficacy measures of the classroom, teachers in this study had average classroom management skills to deal with disruptions. This finding was compelling given that the 69% of teachers had very little training on bullying, but believed that they could manage bullying behaviors effectively. Although bullying has been investigated with older populations, the results of this study, as well as other studies (cite), support the need for early childhood intervention programs.
Given the connection of bullying and victimization to clinical mental health difficulties, addressing developmental and mental health concerns in preschool children is important. Particular attention should also be paid to boys who display frequent bullying behavior, and especially to frequent bully-victims because they are at risk of developing psychiatric disorders in early adulthood (Sourander et al., 2011). To add, because the literature indicates that African American boys are expelled at higher rates across preschool, middle school, and high school (Howes, 2011; U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014), interventions for this population should be considered.

With the advent of different delivery models within teacher preparation programs (i.e., online education), better efforts to educate teachers about the bullying dynamic will be necessary, especially with pre-service teachers since teachers often have a single course in classroom management. Further, while most anti-bullying interventions programs include families, as bullying continues to expand, family/school collaboration will become even more important (i.e., especially if parents need support and training on how to intervene with their child or to report more insidious forms of bullying such as cyber-bullying). It is important for parents to contact schools and feel supported when they believe their child has been bullied (NASP, 2010). Finally, it is clear that preschool children who bully or who experience victimization are at risk for negative trajectories that could include, mental health difficulties, academic difficulties, and other difficulties without early intervention.

Because the nature and face of schools has changed, intervention efforts must occur earlier and must be more comprehensive in nature to demystify the influences that maintain bullying. This study was unique because constructs such as Empathy, Perceived Seriousness, and Likelihood of Response have traditionally been studied in middle and high schools across
various bullying types. In this study, the constructs were studied across bullying type and setting with preschool teachers. By examining cultural contexts and teacher characteristics, critical information related to bullying was gained to hopefully ensure that schools will be safe for all children from preschool to high school in the future. The findings were compelling and should prompt further review and replication.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

Agency Permission

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Partnership will assign bullying surveys/vignettes to each teacher and teacher assistant across the 15 county area.

Mrs. Davis will provide The Partnership with necessary survey questions and vignettes. Mrs. Davis will conduct necessary evaluations of the surveys and provide research data to The Partnership. Mrs. Davis will not use any identifiable information about the participants or the agency. Her dissertation Chair Dr. Joy Burnham will serve as her major advisor. The data will be maintained in a secured setting and will be collected for her dissertation and/or publication purposes to be submitted to the University of Alabama.

IV. TERMS OF UNDERSTANDING

The term of this MOU is for the period of March 1, 2014 to December 30, 2014.

Authorization

The signing of this MOU is not a formal undertaking. It implies that the signatories will strive to reach, to the best of their ability, the objectives stated in the MOU. On behalf of the organization I represent, I wish to sign this MOU and contribute to its further development.

Kim H. Dodd
Director of Children's Services
Community Action Partnership of North Alabama, Inc.

Tonya Davis
Licensed Professional Counselor
Doctoral Candidate, University of Alabama Tuscaloosa

Date
Appendix B

BAQ Author Permission

Wendy Craig <wendy.craig@queensu.ca>
3/27/14
to me

Please find it attached.
Best of luck with your research.

From: Tonya Davis, Burnham, & Mills, 2015 [mailto:tonyaDavislpc@gmail.com]
Sent: March-04-14 11:08 PM
To: Wendy Craig
Subject: Bullying Vignettes

Hi Dr. Craig,

My name is Tonya Davis, and I am a 5th year doctoral student in the School Psychology program at the University of Alabama Tuscaloosa. Our program coordinator is Dr. Patti Harrison.

I am working on my dissertation proposal and I am writing to ask for permission to use your Bullying Vignettes for my study. My study involves looking at preschool teacher perceptions about bullying in Headstart and Pre-kindergarten classrooms. Specifically, I am looking to see if there are differences in the perceptions and beliefs about bullying among teachers in these different programs. My dissertation chair is Dr. Joy Burnham.

Thank you very much for considering my request.

Best,

Tonya Davis, SLPC, NCC CFME
McNair Fellow
Jina Yoon

to me

Hi Tonya,
Here it is. Please know that the original was developed by Craig et al. and modified it, as stated in our publication.

j

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Jina Yoon, Ph.D.
Doctoral Program Director, School Psychology concentration
Associate Professor, Educational Psychology
Associate Editor, Journal of School Psychology
335 College of Education
5425 Gullen Mall
Wayne State University
Detroit, MI 48202
phone)313-577-1427 fax)313-577-5235
email) jyoon@wayne.edu
Appendix D

TSES Author Permission

Dear

You have my permission to use the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale in your research. A copy of both the long and short forms of the instrument as well as scoring instructions can be found at:

http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/ahoy/researchinstruments.htm

Best wishes in your work,

Anita Woolfolk Hoy, Ph.D.
Professor
Appendix E

IRB Permission

July 21, 2014

Tonya Davis, M.A.
ESPRMC
College of Education
The University of Alabama
Box 870231

Re: IRB # TX-14-CM-086 “Teacher Beliefs and Perceptions About Preschool Bullying”

Dear Ms. Davis,

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research.

Your protocol has been given exempt approval according to 45 CFR part 46, 101(b)(2) as outlined below:

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, unless:

(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects’ responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Your application will expire on July 20, 2015. If your research will continue beyond this date, complete the relevant portions of Continuing Review and Closure Form. If you wish to modify the application, complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol Form. When the study closes, complete the appropriate portions of FORM. Continuing Review and Closure.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the assigned IRB application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,
Appendix F

Data Management Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question(s)</th>
<th>Measure(s)</th>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the likelihood of teacher response differ between school type, gender and race</td>
<td>Demographic survey, BAQ-M (Revised)</td>
<td>School Type (school based versus community-based), Gender M/F, Race White/Non-white</td>
<td>Avg. /Mean scores across all teachers on BAQ-M (Revised) Vignettes for: Likelihood of Response; Perceived Seriousness; Empathy</td>
<td>ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How does empathy, perceived seriousness and likelihood of response relate to teacher self efficacy</td>
<td>TES Scale BAQ-M (Revised)</td>
<td>Bullying (Verbal, Physical, Relational)</td>
<td>Avg. /Mean scores across all teachers on BAQ-M (Revised) Vignettes for: Likelihood of Response; Perceived Seriousness; Empathy</td>
<td>Avg. TES subscale score across all teachers for efficacy in classroom behavior mgt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G

Demographic Questionnaire

Directions: Please answer the following questions about your personal and professional characteristics. The next few questions will ask demographic questions about your background and educational level.

1. What is your age?

2. What is your gender?
   - Male
   - Female

3. How do you identify your race?
   - White
   - African American
   - White Hispanic
   - Black Hispanic
   - Asian
   - Pacific Islander

4. Are you a certified teacher?
   - Yes
   - No

5. What is your highest level of education you have completed?
   - Associates Degree (AA)
   - Bachelors Degree (BS/BA)
   - Masters Degree (M.S., M.A., M.Ed., EdS)
   - Doctoral Degree (Ph.D., EdD., Psy.D)

6. How many years of (Total) teaching experience do you have?
   - 0-5 years
   - 6-10 years
   - 11-15 years
   - 16 years or more

7. How many years of teaching experience do you have at your CURRENT school?
   - 0-5 years
6-10 years
11-15 years
16 years or more

8. Which classification below describes your current employment status?
   Full-Time/Lead Teacher
   Teacher Aide/Assistant

9. Which classification below describes your program?
   Preschool Headstart
   Pre-K
   Early Headstart
   Home-based

10. Please identify the type of preschool setting that best fits your classroom?
    Single site (building holding one classroom only)
    Multi-site (building with two or more classrooms)
    Classroom within a public school setting

11. Are you a member of any early childhood professional organization?
    Yes
    No

   Now think about bullying in the preschool setting. The next few questions ask about your school and your own perceptions of bullying.

12. Does your school or center have an Anti-bullying Policy?
    Yes
    No
    I Don’t Know

13. Does your preschool program have written policies on preschool expulsions/removal of students?
    Yes
    No
    I Don’t Know

14. Have you participated in any Anti-Bullying trainings or workshops?
    Yes
    No

15. Have you recommended that a child be removed or expelled from preschool within the past 12 months?
16. Thinking back on your own personal years in school, how would you characterize yourself?
   I was a bully.
   I was a victim of bullying and I bullied others.
   I was a victim of bullying but I did not bully others.
   I was a bystander or friend of a bully but did not participate.
   I was not involved in bullying.

17. Do you believe bullying exists in preschool?
   Yes
   No

18. What types of bullying you have witnessed in preschool classrooms over the 12 months.
   Verbal
   Physical
   Relational
   I have not witnessed any bullying instances

19. Do you feel there is a need for bullying prevention programs in Preschool settings/programs?
   Yes
   No

20. Do you believe preschool children should be expelled/removed from preschool based on misbehavior?
   Yes
   No
Appendix H

BAQ-M Revised Bullying Vignettes

Directions: Please read each of the scenarios below and then circle your answer to each question:

At one of the play centers, you hear a student chant to another child "Teachers pet, browner, suck-up, kiss-ass." The child tries to ignore the remarks but sulks at his desk. You saw this same thing happen the other day.

(1) “How serious do you rate this conflict?”
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Not serious to 5 Very Serious)

(2) “Is this conflict a normative part of the teasing process?
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(3) “This conflict should be addressed with the student at the end of the day?”
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(4) “I would be upset by the student’s remarks and feel sympathetic to the child being teased?
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(5) “I would feel the need to help the victim?
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(6) “I cannot imagine what it is like for the victim?”
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(7) “How likely are you to intervene in this situation?
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Not at All Likely to 5 Very Likely)

(8) “I would not classify this scenario as bullying”

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Your class is getting ready to go to lunch and the kids are in line at the door. You hear a kid say to another child, "Hey, give me your lunch money or I'll give you a fat lip." The child complies at once. This is not the first time this has happened.

1. "How serious do you rate this conflict?"
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Not serious to 5 Very Serious)

2. "Is this conflict a normative part of the teasing process?"
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

3. "This conflict should be addressed with the student at the end of the day?"
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

4. "I would be upset by the student’s remarks and feel sympathetic to the child being teased?"
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

5. "I would feel the need to help the victim?"
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

6. "I cannot imagine what it is like for the victim?"
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

7. "How likely are you to intervene in this situation?"
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Not at All Likely to 5 Very Likely)

8. "I would not classify this scenario as bullying”
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

9. "This conflict does not require teacher intervention”
   1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)
A student brought a dinosaur shaped eraser to school. He boasts that it was a prize from a game arcade. Another child goes over and smacks his head, demanding the eraser. The child refuses at first, but eventually gives in.

(1) “How serious do you rate this conflict?”
    1 2 3 4 5 (1 Not serious to 5 Very Serious)

(2) “Is this conflict a normative part of the teasing process?”
    1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(3) “This conflict should be addressed with the student at the end of the day?”
    1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(4) “I would be upset by the student’s remarks and feel sympathetic to the child Being teased?”
    1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(5) “I would feel the need to help the victim?”
    1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(6) “I cannot imagine what it is like for the victim?”
    1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(7) “How likely are you to intervene in this situation?”
    1 2 3 4 5 (1 Not at All Likely to 5 Very Likely)

(8) “I would not classify this scenario as bullying”
    1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(9) “This conflict does not require teacher intervention”
    1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

As your kids return from outside you see a student kick another child without provocation. Bruising is evident. This student has been known to engage in this type of behavior before.

(1) “How serious do you rate this conflict?”
    1 2 3 4 5 (1 Not serious to 5 Very Serious)

(2) “Is this conflict a normative part of the teasing process?”
(3) “This conflict should be addressed with the student at the end of the day?”

(4) “I would be upset by the student’s remarks and feel sympathetic to the child being teased?”

(5) “I would feel the need to help the victim?”

(6) “I cannot imagine what it is like for the victim?”

(7) “How likely are you to intervene in this situation?”

(8) “I would not classify this scenario as bullying”

(9) “This conflict does not require teacher intervention”

During table time you overhear a child say to another student, "If you don't let me have the purple marker, I won't invite you to my birthday party." This is not the first time you have heard this child say this type of thing.

(1) “How serious do you rate this conflict?”

(2) “Is this conflict a normative part of the teasing process?”

(3) “This conflict should be addressed with the student at the end of the day?”
You have allowed the kids in your class to have free time to choose an activity because they've worked so hard today. You witness a kid say to another student, "No, absolutely not. I already told you that you can't play with us." The student is isolated and plays alone for the remaining time with tears in her eyes. This is not the first time this child has isolated someone from playing.

(1) “How serious do you rate this conflict?”
1 2 3 4 5 (1 Not serious to 5 Very Serious)

(2) “Is this conflict a normative part of the teasing process?”
1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(3) “This conflict should be addressed with the student at the end of the day?”
1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(4) “I would be upset by the student’s remarks and feel sympathetic to the child
Being teased?
1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(5) “I would feel the need to help the victim?
1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(6) “I cannot imagine what it is like for the victim?”
1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(7) “How likely are you to intervene in this situation?
1 2 3 4 5 (1 Not at All Likely to 5 Very Likely)

(8) “I would not classify this scenario as bullying”
1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)

(9) “This conflict does not require teacher intervention”
1 2 3 4 5 (1 Strongly Disagree to 5 Strongly Agree)
Appendix I

Introductory letter

Dear Program Directors and Educators,

Bullying is an increasing concern in schools in the United States. Most bullying research concentrates on the population of elementary, middle, and high school students rather than on the preschool population. There is growing interest in the examination of the aggression of preschool children and the effects of bullying behavior on young children, demonstrating that bullying can be observed in this early childhood population. With this in mind, my doctoral dissertation at the University of Alabama Tuscaloosa, Alabama, examines the teacher perceptions about bullying in preschool populations. My Committee Chair is Dr. Joy Burnham at University of Alabama and the dissertation will explore teacher perceptions about bullying in preschools.

I have received approval from the University of Alabama’s Institutional Review Board and permission from the program director/principal of your facility/school to survey preschool teachers.

Your experiences with preschool bullying are vital to this study and may increase your knowledge about teacher perceptions and bullying in preschool classrooms. You will be asked to access a short survey by accessing an embedded link in your email. You may take the survey at your convenience.

Please be assured of the confidentiality of your participation in the study to the extent allowed by law. Facility locations and participant names will not be used in the study. There are no known risks for participating in this study.

You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. There are no direct benefits or incentives offered for your participation. The results of the study, however, may add to your understanding about bullying in preschool populations.

Sincerely,

Tonya Davis, M.S., EdS
Doctoral Student
University of Alabama Tuscaloosa
Appendix J
Sample Teacher Recruitment/Invitation

Dear Classroom Teacher,

My name is Tonya Davis, and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Alabama Tuscaloosa. I am inviting you to participate in a research project entitled “Teacher Beliefs and Perceptions About Preschool Bullying.” To collect the data for the study, the researcher will administer written vignettes on bullying, and questionnaires about efficacy of classroom management to classroom teachers. In addition, you will complete a short questionnaire for purposes of demographic and school information.

In order for you to participate in the study, you will access a link embedded in your email. The link will open the survey. Clicking on the link indicates your consent for participation in the study. There are no risks to you or your privacy should you decide to participate in the study. Participation is voluntary and there is no penalty for not participating in the study. In addition, you may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason.

Please note that the data collected from the questionnaire will be shared with faculty at the University of Alabama Tuscaloosa. If you have questions about the study, please feel free to contact my dissertation Chair, Dr. Joy Burnham using the email link (jburnham@bamaed@ua.edu) or by calling her at (205) 348-2302.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Tonya Davis
Doctoral Candidate
University of Alabama Tuscaloosa