COPING STRATEGIES AND SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS MIDDLE SCHOOL
STUDENTS REPORT WHEN PRESENTED WITH POTENTIAL CYBERBULLYING

By

Jenny Mischel
A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
Education

Committee:

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Fairfax, VA

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ii

Dedication

A wise professor once said, conferment of a doctoral degree is not only the accomplishment of the conferred, but of their family as well.

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving and supportive husband, Brian. His continuous encouragement pushed me to keep going and inspired me to reach each goal. I am very grateful for his continued understanding, especially when it meant he had to take on additional roles in caring for our family. He was my biggest cheerleader throughout the entire process. This is also dedicated to my children, Alexander, Iain, Graeme, and Anya for their continued encouragement and understanding throughout this process. My family has been played a key role throughout this journey.

To my mom (Lois), who understood when I needed to hide up in my office and for always listening. You're the best mom! To the greatest sister ever, Kathy. I couldn't have finished this summer without your support and encouragement! Words don't express how appreciative I am.

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To all of my friends who have provided unwavering support and wished me good luck time and time again. You are the best and have been like family to me.

Finally to my dad (Bill), I hope you are looking down and enjoying this moment with me.

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"If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants." — *Isaac Newton*

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

Creating a Peaceful School Learning Environment……………………………... CAPSLE
Helpless Cognition Scale…………………………………………………….... HiS
Institutional Review Board…………………………………………………..... IRB
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support...PBIS
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder…………………………………………….... PTSD
Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies…………………………………..….PATHS
Randomized Controlled Trials ....RCT
Social Cognitive Theory .... SCT
Ways of coping scale .... COPE

Abstract

COPING STRATEGIES AND SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS MIDDLE SCHOOL
STUDENTS REPORT WHEN PRESENTED WITH POTENTIAL CYBERBULLYING

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The purpose of this study was to better understand what constitutes cyberbullying

behavior, what types of coping strategies are perceived as being effective, and the role of

self-efficacy beliefs to carry out stated strategies with middle school students through a

mixed methods design. The study was conducted at two middle schools ($N = 189$) in the

Mid-Atlantic region. In order to investigate these questions, an exploratory mixed

methods design was used. Descriptive vignettes of potential cyberbullying situations

were implemented to elicit participants' beliefs about cyberbullying behavior followed by

open-ended reporting of coping strategies, and a self-efficacy rating scale to indicate

beliefs in ability to apply stated strategies. Additionally, interviews were conducted with

middle school participants ($n = 6$) in order to ascertain a deeper understanding of how

adolescents perceived potential cyberbullying situations, and whether they were credible.

Findings indicated further validity and reliability for the cyberbullying instrument using

vignettes. Types of cyberbullying specified through interviews included intent to harm,

repetition, repeated victimization, and social dominance. Themes to describe vignettes included denigration and outing/trickery. The most frequent coping strategies students reported were telling an adult and confrontation and blocking. When a coping strategy was not indicated, the main reason reported was hopelessness. For those who did report access to a coping strategy, only moderate ratings were indicated for belief in their capability to apply the stated coping strategy. Implications for educators and adolescent parents are suggested with future research directions presented.

Keywords: bullying, cyberbullying, vignettes, coping strategies, self-efficacy

Chapter One

Introduction

  Bullying behavior is not a new phenomenon, yet research on this topic is still considered to be in its infancy (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Throughout history, literary writers have referenced forms of bullying behavior in such novels as *The Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1954)*, Of Mice and Men* (Steinbeck, 1937)*,* and more recently, Draco Malfoy from Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. Bullying behavior has evolved throughout time and is indicative of social "Darwinism" in which societal aspirations for attaining success, even if at the expense of others, is desirable (Allanson, Lester, & Notar, 2015). This behavior is bred out of intolerance for others and is still viewed by many as a rite of passage and a normal part of childhood (Allanson et al., 2015). However, suffering and the potential for victims to experience long-lasting detrimental outcomes from this type of behavior has now been brought to the forefront due to the groundbreaking research, in the 1970s, by Olweus (1995). Bullying behavior has increasingly continued to capture the attention of researchers, educators, and parents.

  This is especially true with the more recent form of bullying known as cyberbullying. Although there continues to be a discrepancy in the conceptualization and operationalization of the phenomenon, most researchers agree that cyberbullying is considered to be intentional and aggressive behavior through an electronic device (Wang,

1

Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009). This disparity may be due to the continuously evolving

platforms and social media sites available to adolescents (Corcoran, Guckin, & Prentice,

2015; Smith et al., 2008), as well as their increasing adeptness in using electronic devices

to interact (Pieschel, Porsch, Kahl, & Klockenbusch, 2013; Van Hee, Verhoeven,

Lefever, DePauw, Daelemans, & Hoste, 2015). Additionally, unlike traditional forms of

bullying, cyberbullying is seemingly inescapable (Burton & Mutongwizo, 2009; Hinduja

& Patchin, 2008; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). Researchers, educators, and

policy makers continue to struggle in terms of effective measures to address this growing

problem (Cassidy, Brown, & Jackson, 2012), and prevention/intervention programs

which diminish the behavior and detrimental outcomes. Therefore, a potentially viable

solution, focused on effective coping strategies, is suggested.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of such a proposed dissertation study.

Throughout this chapter, the reader will be presented with a brief introduction to

cyberbullying, the statement of the problem, the purpose, the research questions

proposed, the lens in which the questions were addressed, a conceptual framework to

inform the analysis, and the delimitations of the study. Further clarification of key terms

will be included at the end of this chapter.

Background of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying has become an increasingly ubiquitous problem with today's

adolescents (Li, 2006). With the rapidly evolving use of social media sites in which

adolescents communicate, there is potential for cyberbullying behavior to escalate in

pervasiveness (Lam, Law, Chan, Wong & Zhang, 2015; Van Hee et al., 2015). Whilst

cyberbullying is not currently reported to be as prevalent as traditional forms of bullying, research has shown that this type of behavior is on the rise (Li, 2006; Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell, & Tippett, 2008), extends beyond the school day (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Von Marées & Petermann, 2012), and has the potential to be more harmful psychologically (Van Geel, Vedder, & Tanilon, 2014).

Adding to the ambiguity of cyberbullying is the ease to disseminate information through social media outlets due to instantaneous access and the ability for information to be widespread (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010). Due to this easy accessibility, there seems to be little shortage of potential perpetrators (Patchin & Hinduja, 2008). For example, a quick Google search generates a long list of tragic events such as the Amanda Todd case in which a young girl is relentlessly stalked via social media, and finds no escape from past indiscretions (Shaw, 2012). Another tragic story, heavily publicized, was the Audrie Potts case. Audrie was 15 years old, and heavily intoxicated, when raped by three teenage boys. The boys took photos of the incident and posted them online (Giammona, 2013). Another story equally horrific involved a trio (a mother, daughter, and family friend) of perpetrators who represented themselves as a boy interested in Megan Meier to elicit information for allegedly spreading rumors that the daughter was gay (Jones, 2008). Hours after her death, Megan's father found the phrase, "This world would be a better place without you," on her computer. These incidents are more of the exception than the norm; however, statistical data has shown that the problem still warrants attention.

Much current U.S. statistics are reported predominantly through the Department of Education, the National Center for Education Statistics, PACER, StopBullying.gov,

3

and other online educational resources that focus on cyber safety and information. According to the Department of Education's latest statistics (2015), up to 20% of students aged 12-18 reported experiencing bullying behavior. The National Center for Education Statistics (2015) concurred with these findings, with seven percent also experiencing cyberbullying. PACER (2016) has a component known as the National Bullying Prevention Center that conducts yearly reports on bullying/ cyberbullying prevalence. The latest survey shows that 35% of adolescents report victimization with 15% experiencing cyberbullying. Another large organization that targets bullying behavior is the organization known as StopBullying.gov that found that 28% of students in Grades 6-12, reported bullying, with 30% admitting to bullying. Bystander behavior rose to nearly 71% with 70% of teachers witnessing the behavior. Large governmental or non-profit organizations have the advantage of being able to reach a widespread participant pool in addition to being able to conduct survey studies on a yearly basis.

Empirical studies concur with much of the statistics found from the Center for Education Statistics, PACER, the National Bullying Prevention Center, and StopBullying.gov. Raskauskas and Stoltz (2007) implemented a survey that found 49% of students reported being cyberbullied within the United States. Not surprising, those who reported being bullied by traditional means rose to 71%. In a study by Nansel et al. (2004), of the sixth through 10th grade students surveyed, 24% reported being bullied once or twice, 8.5% indicated being bullied on occasion, and 8.4% on a weekly basis. Additionally, Bosworth, Espelage, and Simon (1999) found that only 19% of the students reported not being engaged in bullying behavior within a month's time period. Wang et

al. (2009), also found that students were bullied 20.8% by physical means, 53.6%

verbally, 51.4% socially and 13.6% electronically. More recently, Ybarra, Boyd,

Korchmaros, and Oppenheim (2012) implemented a two-split form survey using the

"gold standard" as defined by Olweus (1994), to define bullying behavior in order to

investigate percentages of bullying occurrences. They found that 25% reported being

bullied on a monthly basis and 10% reported experiencing monthly cyberbullying. Of

those being cyberbullied on a monthly basis, seven percent stated it was by phone,

whereas 8 eight percent reported text messaging. Although research has found conflicting

evidence to support the behavior is on the rise, these reports are seemingly staggering and

worrisome.
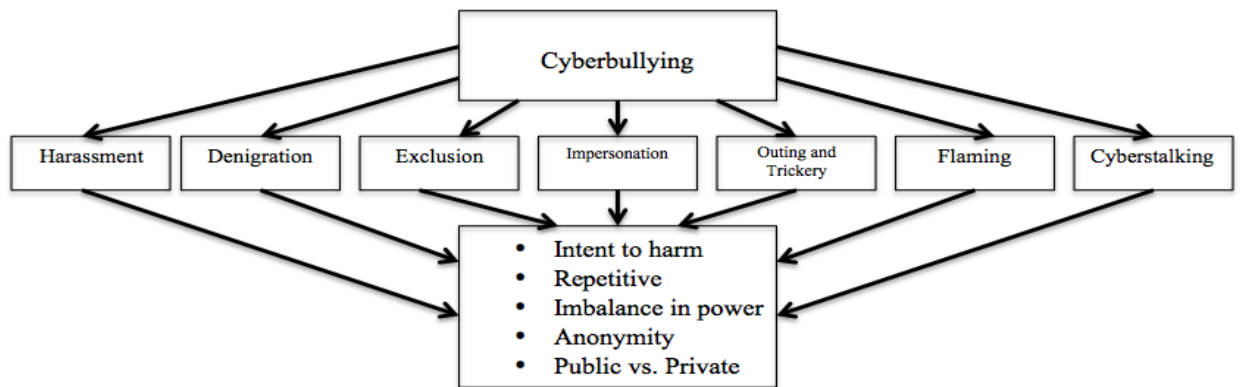
Figure 1. Types of cyberbullying.

Compounding this situation further is the various types of cyberbullying

adolescents' exhibit while interacting. In reference to Willard's (2006) taxonomy of

cyberbullying, Li (2010); Noncentini, Calmaestra, Schultze-Krumbholz, Scheithauer,

Ortega and Menesini (2010); and Ortega, Mora-Merchan, and Jager (2007) propose seven types of cyberbullying:

- Harassment: repeated offensive messages

- Denigration: harmful or untrue statements

- Exclusion: intentionally excluding a person or group online

- Impersonation (masquerading): pretending to be someone else while posting online

- Outing and trickery: sending or posting sensitive, private or embarrassing information

- Flaming: sending angry, rude, or vulgar messages

- Cyberstalking: threatening to harm or intimidate an individual online

Willard (2006) described seven categories, however only four fall under the distinct characteristics of bullying behavior, such as: harassment, trickery and outing, denigration, and exclusion (Reibel, Jager, & Fischer, 2009). Burton and Mutongwizo (2009) further describe these types of cyberbullying through a variety of forums including text messages, picture and video clips, phone, email, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites and blogs, social networking sites, and Internet gaming. Cyberbullying through these forums may reduce positive feelings of using the Internet, perceived parental inability to help stop the behavior, and an increased ability for messages to spread quickly to a large audience (Sticca & Perren, 2013). When adolescents experience cyberbullying through these forums, depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation might arise (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013).

Current programs. In order to diminish detrimental outcomes from arising, researchers and educators have been actively researching the phenomenon to explore and develop intervention/prevention programs that can effectively address the behavior and potential victimization. One such program is called iSafe Internet Safety Program (2017). iSafe provides a K-12 online curriculum that promotes education and empowerment of safe online interaction for educators and parents with a community outreach component. Cyberbullying: A Prevention Curriculum, a program geared toward Grades 6- 12, provides lessons on what constitutes cyberbullying, potential consequences, strategies to help regulate participation in cyberbullying, and ways to intervene (as cited in hazelden.org/cyberbullying, 2008). Another program is Sticks and Stones: Cyberbullying (Wilson, 2012). The crux of this program is a video depicting an individual who is cyberbullied, followed by group discussions.

School wide programs have also become popular. The program, Let's Fight It Together: What We All Can Do to Prevent Cyberbullying (Childnet, 2018), can either be used as a school assembly or within individual classrooms. The information is disseminated through video segments with accompanying lessons and study guides. Another program gaining increased attention is Rachel's Challenge (2001). This program does not solely focus on bullying and cyberbullying, but rather encourages a school climate that promotes kindness and compassion. They concentrate on the 5 A's which include the components of awakening, assessing, analyzing, applying, and finally achievement (Rachel's Challenge, 2001). No Place for Hate, developed by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is another program being adopted throughout many school

districts (ADL, 2017). The premise of this program is to combat bias and bullying, which can escalate into "hate." Schools follow a certain protocol, such as forming a committee and engaging in three school-wide bullying prevention activities. The pioneer in bullying research, Olweus, extended his bullying prevention program to include one that addresses cyberbullying. The curriculum targets Grades 3-5 and 6-12 focusing on attitudes and behaviors of cyberbullying (Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, 2019). The program includes a CD-ROM with reproducible resources for parents, educators, peer leaders, and program facilitators. Although all of these programs are moving in the right direction, there is not necessarily empirical evidence to support their efficacy with the exception of the Olewus Bullying Prevention Program.

Therefore, Cantone et al. (2015) conducted a systematic search to determine which bullying/cyberbullying programs were efficacious in their ability to diminish aggressive behavior. Of the 1051 papers selected, only 17 studies met the criteria of an experimental research design that additionally used randomized controlled trials (RCT). Eight of the programs were studied within the United States, three within Australia, and the remaining six in Europe. Those programs yielding "high efficacy" over an extended period of time included Steps to Respect, Creating a Peaceful School Learning Environment (CAPSLE), Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), KiVa, and the Peaceful Schools Approach. KiVa was the only program that specifically addressed cyberbullying. Thus, it is evident that development of cyberbullying programs to combat detrimental outcomes is warranted.

Laws and policies. In addition to intervention/prevention programs being implemented into schools, states have also enacted laws and policies to address cyberbullying. The U.S. Department of Education's (2011) website covers these laws and policies for each state. As of 2011, 45 states mandate that school districts adopt bullying policies. Forty-two states provide clear statements against bullying behavior, and 36 now include cyberbullying. Twenty of these states require school districts to submit their bullying policies. At the time of this review, the Department of Education cited 42 laws that included publication of bullying policies within school districts. Ten states mandate school districts to establish bullying prevention task forces, and 25 states require training for school personnel. In order to ensure transparency and monitoring of bullying behavior, 18 state laws require data gathering regarding bullying complaints. Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon, and Virginia are the only states that specifically include cyberbullying in state policies and guidance by legislative requirement. More states include school district policy definitions, but cyberbullying is still seemingly lacking recognition in definition, school district policy requirements, and laws (Lane, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Although there are a few anti-bullying programs that have reported significance in reducing the behavior (Gradinger, Yanagida, Strohmeier, & Spiel, 2015), the effect size is almost negligible (Ferguson, San Miguel, Kilburn, & Sanchez, 2007). Meta-analyses of anti-bullying programs have shown an increase in awareness, yet again, no discernable decreases in the behavior after an intervention is implemented (Merrell, Gueldner, Ross,

& Isava, 2008). Additionally, concerns have arisen regarding the validity across studies making it difficult to determine efficacy of measures (Volk, Veenstra, & Espelage, 2017).

Compounding this further is the lack of an agreed upon operationalization and conceptualization of a pervasive and worrisome type of bullying, cyberbullying. Therefore, in addition to focusing on a clearer operationalization and conceptualization of cyberbullying, researchers suggest concentrating on coping strategies to help adolescents navigate this type of elusive bullying behavior (Li, 2007; Ybarra, Mitchell, Finkelhor, &Wolak, 2007b).

Coping, as defined by Skinner and Wellborn (1994), is described as action, or failure to act, by an individual in order to regulate a stressful situation. Coping can be appraised either using a problem-focused approach, or emotion-focused approach. The strategies then employed dependent on the approach are either adaptive, maladaptive, or absence of action (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Herman & Tetrick, 2015).

Finding effective coping strategies is salient as experiencing cyberbullying can escalate stress levels for adolescents (Weinstein, Selman, Thomas, Kim, White, & Dinakar, 2015), potentially threating their wellbeing (Machmutow, Perren, Sticca, & Alsaker, 2012; Perren, Dooley, Shaw, & Cross, 2010). Middle school is considered a transitory period in which vulnerabilities may elicit potential conflicts with individuals as they navigate their social worlds while trying to implement appropriate online etiquette (Bowes et al., 2013; Ge, Lorenz, Conger, Elder, & Simons, 1994; Mezulis, Abramson, Hyde, & Hankin, 2004; Wigfield & Eccles, 1994). Additionally, this is a developmental

period in which societal demands, such as exploration of sexual identities, can create

doubt and angst for individuals (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009; Costa & Davies,

2012). Moreover, acts of social normativity, such as hegemonic masculinity and gender

policing, can persuade others to conform to heteronormative expectations, therefore

influencing reactions in a group setting or on an individual level (Sanders, 2011). Our

youth's dependency on electronic devices as a primary tool to communicate compounds

these issues further. More so, as social motivation is continually evolving, the desire to

increase one's social status is especially compelling for this age group (Juvonene &

Graham, 2014).

Coping strategies have been found to buffer potential detrimental outcomes from

aggressive, online interactions (Rasaukus & Huynh, 2015). Therefore, researchers have

increasingly focused on coping strategies to prevent and overcome cyberbullying

victimization (Aricak et al., 2008; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Li, 2010; Machackova, Cerra,

Sevcikova, Dedkova, & Daneback, 2013; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel, Jaeger, &

Fischer, 2009; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2008). However, this can be dependent

on the individual's self-efficacy beliefs in their perceived capability to employ a

particular coping strategy (Rasaukus & Huynh, 2015).

Purpose of the Study

Finding effective coping strategies is instrumental in determining whether

prevention/intervention programs are effective (Cicchetti & Rogosch, 2009), especially

with adolescents as they tend to be the age group that mainly experiences detrimental

outcomes from victimization due to maturity and limited coping strategies (Talwar,

Gomez-Garibello, & Shariff, 2014). Research has shown that most studies still do not accurately capture these victims' perceptions of whether coping strategies are effective (Machackova et al., 2013). Moreover, individual perceptions of cyberbullying severity might be dependent on the platform in which the interactions occur (Nocentini et al., 2010). Furthermore, Li (2010) stated that few studies have explored students' beliefs in capability to employ strategies to overcome cyberbullying behavior. Exploration of coping strategies in isolation is not enough to determine what is deemed effective. Therefore, as Li posited, self-efficacy beliefs also necessitate exploration in relation to coping strategies.

Previous research has relied on both quantitative (e.g. survey questionnaires) and qualitative (e.g. interviews) data to better inform adolescent perceptions. In addition, Smith (2019) stated the importance of further longitudinal or mixed method approaches to studying cyberbullying. In addition, research into cyberbullying continues to lack an accurate tool for measurement, a theoretical framework, and how coping strategies correlate to self-efficacy beliefs (Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015). Therefore, a mixed methods approach, using a piloted cyberbullying instrument, will be used through the lens of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT).

Theoretical Lens

As cyberbullying still lacks a widely accepted definition and replication of assessment tools, the need for a theoretical framework, such as SCT, is needed in order to better understand the broader process of the phenomenon as well as guiding hypotheses (Tokunga, 2010). Key components of SCT look at human behavior as being motivated

through a self-regulatory causal process in which individuals monitor their behavior, assesses potential outcomes, and evaluate effects in order to act (Bandura, 1991). As Bandura eloquently stated, individuals are not completely dependent on external sources in order to act, much like a weather vane, but instead have the capability to be reflective and reactive (Bandura, 1991). The social cognitive model of this self-regulatory process, as defined by Zimmerman (1989), is based on Bandura's social learning theory and is represented as a triadic reciprocal causation model including the self, behavioral events, and the environment (Bandura, Pastorelli, Barbaranelli, & Caprara, 1999; Puustinen & Pulkkinen, 2001). These constructs are symbiotic in nature and create a cyclical loop of reinforcement, either positive or negative. Outcome expectations for a particular behavior motivate individuals to act (Zimmerman, 1989). In looking closer at our thought processes, Bandura (1989) stated that although people are capable of rational thinking, they do not always employ appropriate reasoning abilities. This process can be achieved, or diminished, depending on the goals set and subsequent personal beliefs regarding performance attributions (Schunk, 1991). Although modeling can influence an individual's perceptions of an outcome, actively engaging in an activity will result in a more accurate reaction (Bandura et al., 1999; Zimmerman, 1989). Social cognitive theorists postulate that self-regulatory behaviors differ depending on an individual's ability to proactively transfer mental abilities into other tasks (Zimmerman, 2002). This is especially insightful when investigating why children might engage in cyberbullying behavior, or become victimized (Swearer, Wang, Berry, & Meyers, 2014). Therefore, understanding the cycle of regulatory processes a cyber victim might proactively engage

in, or avoid, is a salient component in understanding how to overcome, or prevent, the reoccurrence of cyber victimization.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 2 (see below) represents a conceptual framework to describe what potentially transpires during a cyberbullying incident. According to SCT, the environment, behavioral patterns, and inner forces all interact and influence each other (Bandura, 2001). Gross (2013) stated that when an individual first becomes aware of a situation (consciously or unconsciously), the individual appraises the situation and then responds. This, again, is dependent on the perception of the individual being victimized (Diazgranados, Selman, & Dionne, 2015). The emotions that arise influence the coping process and whether the individual alters the relationship (problem-focused coping), or changes how they react or alter the meaning of the situation (emotion-focused; Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). This coping process then leads to employment of an adaptive or maladaptive coping strategy, or no action at all. SCT helps explain how these thoughts, beliefs, and feelings can support, or detract, from vulnerabilities, why a certain coping strategy is used, and how self-efficacy beliefs are a driving force to understand why an individual is capable of employing a particular strategy (Bandura, 1989). Maladaptive strategies arise when emotions are not changed or when short-term strategies are not effective in the long run (Jeffires, McLeish, Kraemer, Avallone, & Fleming, 2016). If maladaptive strategies such as avoidance, self-blame, and rumination are employed, there is a potential for the victim to be at risk for greater distress (Mennin, Holaway, Fresco, Moore, & Heimberg, 2007; Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, & Lyubomirsky, 2008). However,

if an individual chooses an adaptive strategy such as reappraisal, resiliency is possible but dependent on an individual's self-efficacy beliefs in in their capability to carry out the coping strategy. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the types of maladaptive and adaptive coping strategies used most often (see Figure 2 in Chapter 2).

Delimitations

The scope of this study will focus on middle school students in Grades 6-8, as research states that, developmentally, this time period is one of great transformations both physically and socially (Pelligrini & Long, 2002). Another criterion was access to a computer in order to take the online survey, as well as the ability to clearly answer the research questions. The criterion of having a history of cyber victimization was not necessary. The reasoning for this is that most, if not all, middle school students use electronic devices in some capacity, and research studies suggest that most are aware of cyberbullying occurrences (Selkie, Fales, & Moreno, 2016).

Significance

Research suggests that bullying can increase the likelihood of detrimental outcomes for individuals experiencing victimization (Volk et al., 2017), and there is a need to continue exploration of this phenomenon. This is especially relevant as the proliferation of cyber interactions has the potential to increase the prevalence of aggressive behavior online (Lam et al., 2015; Li, 2007; Van Hee et al., 2015). In addition, online interactions have the potential to be anonymous, extend beyond the school day, reach a wide pubic audience, and seem inescapable to those suffering (Katzer, Fetchenhauer, & Belschak, 2009; Sticca & Perren, 2012; Van Hee et al., 2015).

Complicating this is the continued discrepancy in how researchers conceptualize and operationalize cyberbullying as well as the need for a theoretical framework to better understand the phenomenon (Tokunga, 2010). Furthermore, research has shown that effective coping strategies can help buffer negative experiences from victimization and increase well-being (Lowe et al., 2008; Mahady Wilton, Craig, & Pepler, 2000; Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015). Yet, this is dependent on the individual's self-efficacy beliefs in their capability to carry out a particular coping strategy (Li, 2010; Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015). Therefore, this study hopes to add to the literature by investigating how middle school students determine at what point in severity a situation escalates into cyberbullying, the types of coping strategies they believe are effective, and self-efficacy beliefs in their capability to execute stated strategies. In using vignettes developed in a prior pilot study, the researcher hopes to elicit more authentic responses from participants, followed by brief semi-structured interviews in order to gain a deeper understanding of middle school students' perceptions of the vignettes. Finally, in viewing cyberbullying victimization through the lens of social cognitive theory, the researcher hopes to understand how the self-regulatory causal process motivates the individual to respond and act (Bandura, 1991). To the best of my knowledge, only a few studies have utilized vignettes to better understand cyberbullying beliefs and coping strategies. Yet none have created scenarios that escalate in severity and explored self-efficacy beliefs in capability to execute stated coping strategies.

Positive self-efficacy can result in employment of adaptive coping strategies, whereas maladaptive can result in further cyber victimization. Children are a precious

resource, but often lack the confidence or ability to successfully navigate confrontational situations. Therefore, in order to develop prevention/intervention programs that successfully target reduction in cyber victimization to implement within schools, further conceptualization and operationalization of cyberbullying behavior is needed for clarification purposes and for the ability to build upon existing literature. Furthermore, in viewing cyberbullying behavior through the lens of SCT, researchers may be better able to understand how self-efficacious beliefs mediate capabilities to employ adaptive, maladaptive, or non-action coping strategies in addressing cyberbullying behavior.

Research Questions

The research questions this study will seek to answer are:

1. How do middle school students perceive potential cyberbullying situations?

    a. Are there differences in ratings of severity between primary and secondary vignettes?

2. What strategies, if any, do middle school students suggest as being effective to address cyberbullying?

    a. Is there a relationship between severity ratings of vignettes and whether participants have a coping strategy?

3. To what extent do self-efficacy beliefs impact students' capability to employ strategies to cope with cyberbullying incidents?

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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Although traditional bullying research has flourished, and evidence-based programs have been assessed, cyberbullying research is still considered to be in its

infancy (Della Ciopa O'Neil & Craig, 2015). Many researchers continue to rely on Olweus' (1977) seminal work and definition of traditional bullying to define cyberbullying, and assessment on intervention programs continues to lack scientific merit (Della Ciopa, O'Neil & Craig, 2015). However, there are additional components with cyberbullying which continue to create a disparate on how researchers conceptualize the phenomenon (Dooley, Pyżalski, & Cross, 2009). The three main dimensions within traditional bullying are aggressive behavior (with intent to harm), repetition, and imbalance in power (Olweus 1997; Pieschel, Kuhlman, & Porsch, 2015). Currently, these dimensions are also included within cyberbullying; however, repetition and imbalance in power are still up for debate due to the forums in which aggressive behavior transpires. Additionally, cyberbullying contains the elements of anonymity and the ability to reach a wider audience.

Similar to traditional bullying, cyberbullying also has the potential for detrimental outcomes. Due to the ability for cyberbullying to occur at any time during the day, researchers claim this form of aggressive behavior may be more detrimental, and on the rise (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Li, 2006; Smith et al. 2008; Van Geel et al., 2014; Von Marées & Petermann, 2012). Therefore, it is imperative to investigate coping strategies that are effective, easy to implement, taught, modeled, and reinforced with adolescents.

Coping can help reduce distress and promote positive emotions but is multi-dimensional and sensitive to the individual and external forces, such as the environment (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Lowe et al., 2008). Coping can either be problem-focused or emotion-focused and determines the type of coping strategy employed. The framework

(see Figure 2 in Chapter 2) depicts strategies as either being adaptive or maladaptive. However, the capability to employ these strategies is dependent on the individual's self-efficacy beliefs.

An individual's belief in their capability to employ effective coping strategies is vital. Without self-efficacy, there is little incentive to act when faced with a negative situation that can lead to depression (Bandura et al., 1999). Self-efficacy beliefs are instrumental in an individual's capability to enact a coping strategy to overcome the potential detrimental outcomes from cyberbullying.

Conceptual Definitions

Coping strategies. Coping strategies are ways to regulate emotion, cognition, behavior, physiology, and the environment when faced with stressful situations (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen, & Wadsworth, 2001).

Emotion-focused. Emotion-focused coping aims to reduce or manage distress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988).

Problem-focused. Problem-focused coping finds ways to alter a stressful situation, or environment, by reducing the emotional reaction to the incident (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Herman & Tetrick, 2015).

Adaptive. Adaptive coping strategies are the highest level of processes that intervene between a stressful situation and potential outcomes in which information about the environment is gathered and a possible means of escape are explored (Skinner, Edge, Altman, & Sherwood, 2003).

Maladaptive. Maladaptive coping strategies are ineffective strategies for regulating emotions that impede on wellbeing, can create a vicious cycle of cybervictimization, and encourage mood or anxiety disorders (Campbell-Sills, Barlow, Brown, & Hoffman, 2006; Gratz & Roemer, 2008).

Bullying. Bullying is on-going aggressive behavior, that is repetitive in nature, and there is an imbalance in power (Ybarra et al., 2012).

Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is aggressive behavior experienced through electronic means (Wang et al., 2009).

Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a person's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over a situation is an important component of human agency within the SCT framework (Bandura, 1991).

Cyberbullying incident examples include:

- Harassment: repeated offensive messages

- Denigration: harmful or untrue statements

- Exclusion: intentionally excluding a person or group online

- Impersonation (masquerading): pretending to be someone else while posting online

- Outing and trickery: sending or posting sensitive, private or embarrassing information

- Flaming: sending angry, rude, or vulgar messages

- Cyberstalking: threatening to harm or intimidate an individual online

(Li, 2010; Noncentini et al., 2010; Ortega, Mora-Merchan and Jager, 2007; Willard 2006)

Vignettes. Vignettes are short, realistic scenarios depicting realistic content the participant might experience (Leicher & Mulder, 2016)

Resiliency. Resiliency is the ability to recover from trauma or maintaining balance when faced with a stressful situation (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990).

Hopelessness. Hopelessness is a feeling that future desires are non-existent or unattainable (Alloy, Abramson, Metalsky, & Hartlage, 1988; Beck, Weissman, & Trexler, 1974).

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Bullying continues to be a salient topic in that the behavior is elusive, is difficult to define due to varying meanings, and has the potential to instigate detrimental outcomes (Bonanno & Hymel, 2013; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). This type of behavior is not a new phenomenon but has increasingly gained the attention of parents, educators, and policy makers. Volk, Camilleri, Dane, and Marini (2012) stated that bullying is difficult to prevent due to the continuing evolution and adaptability of this type of pervasive behavior throughout the world.

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on middle school students' perceptions of cyberbullying experiences, coping strategies to overcome such experiences, and self-efficacy beliefs in capabilities to do so, through the use of vignettes piloted in a previous study. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature on these three constructs, the conceptual framework developed to explain the cycle of victimization from cyberbullying, and the rationale for the proposed study. The literature review begins with a background on bullying behavior. An examination on the emergence of cyberbullying and key similarities, and differences, between the two will then be addressed. As the underpinning of the conceptual framework is based on SCT, the review will explain how this theory helps explain victimization experienced due to

cyberbullying behavior. Also included is a review of relevant theories that explain the conceptual framework. The discussion will include a review of coping strategies that are considered effective and ineffective, and the potential outcomes of implementation. Furthermore, an exploration of how self-efficacy beliefs affect this implementation will also be discussed.

Defining Traditional Bullying

In order to understand perceptions of cyberbullying, it is salient to first understand the defining characteristics of traditional forms of bullying as these constructs are often used to explain cyberbullying behavior. Olweus is considered the pioneer of bullying research and his seminal work laid the foundation (for further study into this phenomenon (Olweus, 1997). In response to three suicides of Swedish adolescents in 1983, Olweus investigated the perceptions of bullying behavior (through surveying 150,000 Swedish students (Olweus, 1995). Olweus found that nearly nine percent of students considered themselves to have experienced bullying, whereas seven percent admitted to engaging in bullying behavior.

These findings were the impetus to develop The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003; Olweus, 1994). This program helped solidify a clear understanding of the behavior as well as providing specific actions and protocols to implement. Olweus defined bullying behavior to be any unwanted behavior, which is repetitive, and contains the element of a perceived imbalance in power. Subsequently, since defining bullying behavior and creating a prevention program to address the occurrence, Olweus' research into this phenomenon has since proliferated.

Research into bullying behavior has since divided the phenomenon into four well-defined categories to include physical, verbal, relational, and cyber bullying. Physical bullying involves behavior such as hitting, kicking, punching, shoving, or stealing an individual's belongings (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008). Verbal bullying consists of teasing, taunting, and name-calling. Both physical and verbal forms of bullying are more overt in nature, easier to detect, and considered direct forms of aggression (Craig, 1998; Olweus, 1994; Rivers & Smith, 1994). Relational and cyber forms are more covert, easily misinterpreted, perceived in different ways, dependent on the individual, and are considered indirect aggressions making it difficult to address (Björkqist, 1994; Craig, 1998; Olweus, 1994). Relational bullying generally refers to behavior that is exclusionary or involves the spreading of rumors. Cyberbullying is unwanted behavior experienced through electronic means (Wang et al., 2009). More recently, sexual harassment has increasingly fallen under the umbrella of bullying as it occurs in all four areas. Yet, whereas most bullying behavior is not currently considered illegal, sexual harassment is and placing this behavior under the construct of bullying, diminishes the significance of this behavior in all four areas (Gruber & Fineran, 2008).

Roles. Vital to understanding this construct further are the various roles undertaken by individuals engaging in, or experiencing, bullying behavior. These roles include the bully, the victim, the bully-victim, and the bystander (Espelage & Holt, 2012). Research has shown that these roles tend to evolve due to precipitating factors that act as a catalyst to this behavior. Individual characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation, tendency to internalize or externalize emotions, propensity to empathize,

inclination towards depression and anxiety can all affect bullying behavior, whether experienced by the perpetrator or victim (Espelage, Mebane, & Swearer, 2004). Those individuals who engage in bullying may also display problematic behavior at school and struggle with peer relationships (Tobin, Schwartz, Gorman, & Abouezzeddine, 2005). Careful analysis as to what precipitates these roles helps researchers gain insight into what types of interventions might be successful in helping reduce these behaviors.

Bully. A bully is a person who engages in unwanted aggressive behavior toward another or a group of individuals (Olweus, 1997). A bully tends to act aggressively toward a person who appears weak, giving them a sense of power and control over the victim (Shore, 2011). The bully might also be lacking in empathy for others (Sutton, Smith, & Swettenham, 1999). Furthermore, although considered negative, bullying can also be a coping strategy used to release frustrations as well as an outlet for perceived lack of control (Carney & Merrell, 2001).

Researchers refer to overt and covert forms of aggressive behavior to explain potential reasons for bullying. Behavior that is confrontational and directed towards an individual is referred to as overt aggression, and is obvious in nature (Griffin & Gross, 2004). Defined further are two forms of overt behavior known as reactive and proactive. When individuals sense a perceived threat as a means of protection, they may exhibit a physical reaction toward the perpetrator (Price & Dodge, 1989). In contrast, proactive behavior is unprovoked and intentional. More discreet and difficult to detect is covert aggression, also referred to as social or relational bullying.

In order to adequately address bullying behavior, it is salient to understand the

25

precursors that might increase the proclivity to behave aggressively. It has been theorized that bullies might be lacking the ability to control inhibition or appropriate behavioral responses due to a lack in sufficient frontal lobe functioning (Coolidge, DenBoer, & Segal, 2004). A bully may also suffer from psychological disorders as found in the study by Kumpulainen and Räsänen (2000), suggesting that, between the ages of 8 and 12, those who bullied showed an increase in psychiatric symptoms. In addition, those who bullied also tended to display depression, anxiety, and exhibit more antisocial behavior (Craig, 1998; Coolidge et al., 2004). Coolidge et al. suggested that bullying behavior might coincide with conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, and ADHD. Furthermore, they found that bullies exhibited more passive-aggressive and histrionic behavior, were easy to anger, were inclined to defy authority with little affect, and parents cited lower academic achievement with basic learning skills.

Victim. Victims are perceived as being more vulnerable, withdrawn, display low self-esteem (Shore, 2011), are ostracized due to annoying or awkward social skills, sexual orientation, or perceived sexual tendencies (Mischel & Kitsantas, in press). According to Olweus (1997), other common characteristics are cautiousness, being sensitive, and/or quiet. Lack of a social support system might also affect victimization (Olweus, 1997; Rigby, 2000). Whereas bullies tend to externalize and internalize feelings, victims predominantly internalize and report more anxiety and depression (Craig 1998).

Bully/Victim. When an individual is categorized as a bully/victim, they have experienced and engaged in both behaviors. Griffin and Gross (2004) referred to this type

of individual as the proactive victim. Bully/victims may lack appropriate social skills, and

therefore tend to provoke others unintentionally and suffer from impulse control, eliciting

negative responses from most of their classmates (Carney & Merrell, 2001; Griffin &

Gross, 2004). According to Solberg and Olweus (2003), bully/victimization tends to

occur less often, however bully/victims can become isolated and are therefore at a greater

risk for developing psychological and social problems.

Bystander. The spectator who passively watches, encourages, or tries to dissuade

bullying behavior, is considered a bystander (Espelage & Holt, 2012). Given the

bystander wields potential power over the situation, the actions they take are paramount

in whether the behavior escalates (Twemlow, Fonogay, & Sacco, 2004). Padgett and

Notar (2013) suggested that although most bullying situations occur in front of peers, the

majority will not intervene. Additionally, being a bystander can have an effect on social-

emotional wellbeing (Rivers, Poteat, Noret, & Ashurst, 2009). Thankfully, bystander

behavior has been shown to decrease as children age, as older children tend to show more

empathy towards their peers (Hong & Espelage, 2012). Reducing bystander support for

bullying behavior can have a positive effect on the amount of bullying that transpires,

promoting a positive school climate (Thornberg & Jungert, 2014; Twemlow, Fonagy, &

Sacco, 2004).

Factors. It is additionally essential to be conscious of the external factors that

affect the proclivity to engage in aggressive behavior as well as being vulnerable to

victimization. Espelage and Swearer (2004) viewed the behavior through the lens of a

social-ecological framework. They posited that bullying is not an isolated occurrence.

This behavior is dependent not only on the individual, but the family culture, peer groups, school climate, and the surrounding culture of the community. Additionally, the family environment such as parental modeling, family dynamics, socio-economic status, and exposure to violence can influence the behavior (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000; Gorman-Smith, Tolan, Zelli, & Huesman, 1996). Peer ecologies are also instrumental in deterring or encouraging the behavior as seen through a desire for attainment of social affiliations and increased stature (Rodkin, 2004). Furthermore, researchers have stated the importance of school perceptions such as teachers, school climate, and classroom ecologies in mitigating or encouraging bullying behavior (Doll, Song, & Simers, 2004; Hanish et al., 2004). Last, community cultures such as the common values shared, crime rates, and social support systems in place, can impact the inclination to engage in bullying behavior (Cubbin, LeClere, & Smith, 2000).

Cyberbullying

As the Internet has become a primary form of communication and identity exploration for adolescents, study into this type of bullying is warranted (Pieschel et al., 2013; Van Hee et al., 2015). Undeniably, this digital revolution also holds many positive aspects such as the wealth of educational knowledge available and the variety of entertainment outlets (Giedd, 2012). Therefore, a balance between risks and advantages needs continuous evaluation, in addition to constant monitoring of social media sites frequented by middle school students (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013; Keipi & Oksanen, 2014). Most likely, communication through electronic devices will continue to increase

in complexity and availability (Giedd, 2012). Therefore, further research is needed to investigate the benefits and costs of this type of social interaction.

Yet, the study of cyberbullying is more complex than the other forms defined earlier. Although this has recently come under debate (Volk, Veenstra, & Espelage, 2013), traditional bullying has well-established characteristics that remain consistent, whereas there is an on-going debate as to what types of aggressive online behaviors are considered cyberbullying (Patchin & Hinduja, 2012). In conceptualizing and operationalizing cyberbullying, many researchers would agree that cyberbullying is considered to be aggressive behavior through an electronic forum (Wang et al., 2009), yet an accurate definition has yet to be determined. Another added conundrum is the constant fluctuation in types of social media sites used by adolescents (Corcoran et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2008). For example, Kik (kik.com) was once a very popular social media app for teens (Wagner, K. September 29, 2016), yet Snapchat (snapchat.com) and Instant Messenger (apps.apple.com/us/app/im-instant-messenger/id285688934), are currently the most widely used (Mischel & Kistantas, under review). In scrolling through newspapers that report current social media forums, the most frequented sites seem to be dependent on the year they were reported (as seen in *Bullying Statistics: Anti-Bullying, Help, and More*, 2017). New types of social media sites are developing at such a rapid pace, it is increasingly difficult to address potential negative outcomes.

This seems especially salient when addressing the negative impacts of social interactions making it imperative to have a clear, widely accepted conceptualization and operationalization of cyberbullying (Olweus, 2013; Tokunga, 2010; Volk et al., 2017).

Furthermore, if researchers studying this phenomenon define the behavior differently, research problems arise such as inconsistencies in how participants respond to questions, discrepancies in what is being studied, and a lack in valid measures (Tokunga, 2010; Volk et al., 2017). For example, Vandebosch and Van Cleemput (2008) posited that cyberbullying must meet three criteria including an intention to harm or perceived as being harmful, be repetitive, and have a power imbalance (e.g., age difference, strength discrepancy, or differing IT skills). A bit more ambiguous is the definition espoused by Juvonen and Gross (2008), which defines the behavior as using the Internet, or communication devices, to insult or threaten someone. If researchers are using different definitions to describe the behavior, it is difficult to find, or reinforce, consistency in addressing potential negative outcomes.

More recently, Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, and Lattanner (2014) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate how researchers defined cyberbullying. The established criteria when choosing studies included research that was empirically based; included a self-report measure of cyberbullying or cyber victimization; used an ordinal/interval scale for at least one measure; reported past experiences with bullying; and students were in middle school, high school, or college. For the purposes of this paper, only those studies that included middle school students were analyzed. In total, 131 papers, reported on Table 1 (Kowalski et al., 2014, pp. 1078-1106) of the study, were coded for location, age level studied, and how researchers defined cyberbullying behavior. The most prevalent location was the United States ($n = 41$), followed by Canada ($n = 14$), Turkey ($n = 10$), Australia ($n = 8$), online reporting ($n = 7$), and a remaining 22 countries ($n < 7$). The

statements used to define the behavior included: online bullying ($n = 92$), exposure ($n = 2$), threats ($n = 23$), posting pictures or video clips ($n = 28$), being mean or harassed ($n = 44$), deception ($n = 11$), unclear of definition ($n = 12$), anonymity ($n = 1$), cyberstalking ($n = 2$), stranger contact ($n = 4$), sexual in nature ($n = 4$,) repetitive ($n = 1$), imbalance in power ($n = 4$), and racial discrimination ($n = 1$). Currently, it seems that most researchers continue to refer to cyberbullying as "online bullying."

This may also be due to the overlap of the two constructs. Olweus (2013) postulated that being a bully, or victim, through traditional or cyber means may be a behavioral pattern, subject to a repetitive cycle of behavior. In his study, he found a significant overlap of those that reported to be a bully, or were victimized, through both traditional or cyber means. Similarly, Patchin and Hinduja (2006) posited that characteristics that preclude a person to becoming victimized by traditional forms of bullying, may also be subject to cyberbullying. In the study by Kowalski and Limber (2013), in which the relationships between traditional and cyberbullying were examined, a clear overlap between the two constructs was discovered. This may be a predominant reason that many researchers refer to cyberbullying as traditional bullying via an electronic device.

Dooley et al., (2009) found that most researchers used Olweus' definition of traditional bullying to define cyberbullying. This is a plausible assertion as cyberbullying falls under the heading of bullying yet continues to be the only category researched on its own. Therefore, there is continued debate as to whether cyberbullying is on the rise, or if this increase is instead due to being studied in isolation (Olweus, 2013). Olweus' warning

is based on findings from a 4-year longitudinal study with 440,000 American students showing that even though reports of being bullied, or bullying, were as high as 88%, only 10% reported cyberbullying as being the reason. Conversely, in a longitudinal study by Schenider, O'Donnell, and Smith (2015) in which 16,000 students were surveyed, the findings showed that cyberbullying increased from 15-21% from 2006 -2012, whereas reports of traditional bullying had decreased. These rates were reported to be even higher for those within the LGBT community (Cooper & Blumenfeld, 2012). Besides the discrepancies in which form is most prevalent, there are several factors that justify the need to conceptualize and operationalize cyberbullying separately.

Additional factors and nuances of cyberbullying behavior do not necessarily correlate with traditional bullying, meriting further refinement (Perren & Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, 2012; Slonje, Smith, & Frisen, 2013). Within each of the constructs, there are subtle differences that can create confusion on what clearly defines cyberbullying behavior. Unlike traditional bullying, in which the victim can escape from the aggressive behavior, cyberbullying goes beyond the school day (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). The venues in which the behavior may occur continues to evolve as well. For example, in one study by Kowalski and Limber (2007) participants reported mainly using Instant Messenger, whereas 2 years later Katzer, et al. (2009) found that participants mainly engaged in this type of behavior through social chat rooms.

In the latter study, of the 1700 fifth through 11th grade students surveyed, 69% reported regular engagement in chat rooms. The average age was nearly 12 years old, and

47% of those that chatted on a regular basis considered their online friends to be just as important as those that they had offline. With the plethora of forums available, coupled with the ability to find companionship with people of similar interests, it is understandable why social interactions through the Internet continue to increase.

However, the ease of communication style this type of interaction affords can also increase the potential for aggressive behavior. Therefore, it is also significant to address the vocabulary used to describe the differing roles between traditional and cyber bullying. According to Van Hee et al. (2015), cyberbullying has four types of roles within the construct. There is the harasser (the bully), the victim, the bystander-defender (helps the victim), and the bystander-assistant (does not initiate, but engages). In order to encapsulate these roles through cyber means, Van Hee et al. (2015, p. 4) described examples of how each of the roles might engage:

You're a total moron. (harasser)

Why do you talk shit about me? (victim)

Stop making fun of people. She's a good person (bystander-defender)

LOL, you're right. He is a nobody. (bystander-assistant)

They additionally warned that it can be difficult to decipher between the bully and the victim, as the victim may be acting in retaliation (Burton & Mutongwizo, 2009). These terms could also be applied to traditional bullying, as they are more descriptive.

Defining the behavior. As the roles defining cyberbullying are similar to those of traditional bullying, researchers also rely on the three main dimensions (intention to harm, repetition, and imbalance in power) to understand cyberbullying. However, even

within the three main dimensions there are differentiations between traditional and cyberbullying as anonymity, disinhibition, and interactions being shared publicly. This distinction provides further clarity as to why cyberbullying may need to be studied separately. First, it is fundamental to explore these three main dimensions and how they apply to cyberbullying.

Intention. In both traditional bullying and cyberbullying, aggressive behavior is considered to be purposeful, with intent to harm (Olweus 1997; Volk et al., 2017). However, as cyber aggression is lacking in face-to-face contact, intention may be difficult for the recipient to surmise. This is especially true for younger social media users, as they may not fully understand the intentions behind the interactions (Talwar et al., 2014). Also, there is the potential for divergence in what is being sent as a joke or is actually meant to harm (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). The difficulty with cyberbullying is a potential victims' inability to view the perpetrator's affect, tone, or demeanor.

Repetition. The element of repetition is clear-cut with traditional bullying yet lacks clarity with online interactions. Repetition in the cyber world is dependent on the forum as the nature of the repetition can be direct or indirect (Langos, 2012). Direct is when a person sends any electronic form of communication directly to the other person, whereas indirect is through another person or outlet (Langos, 2012). A picture, text, or video may have only been posted once, but if it remains online, is posted to another person, or posted to a group site, it can then be considered repetitive (Corcoran et al., 2015; Slonje & Smith, 2008). Therefore, unlike traditional bullying which is repetitive in nature, one online incident may be perceived as cyberbullying.

Imbalance in power. An imbalance in power with traditional bullying is defined by a physical or psychological advantage one individual, or group, has over another (Mensini & Nocentini, 2009). Some researchers have stated that an imbalance in power is one person's technological abilities over a potential victim (Pieschel et al., 2009). However, victims have the advantage of blocking or deleting messages from a perpetrator, creating a more equitable power differential (Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell, & Ybarra, 2008; Ybarra & Mitchell 2004). Also, Ybarra and Mitchell found that aggressors/victims both reported being adept at online interactions. Interestingly, harmless false posts in which there was a perceived imbalance of power were rated as cyberbullying more than when there was an imbalance of power (Talwar et al., 2014). In relating this defining characteristic to cyberbullying, further conceptualization and operationalization is necessary to better understand the meaning, or possible deletion, of this component.

In order to better understand this dilemma, Menesini et al. (2013) conducted a mixed method study with adolescents from Italy, Spain, Germany, Sweden, and Estonia. They conducted focus groups and implemented a survey to find what adolescents consider as essential criterion for defining cyberbullying. Interestingly, the focus groups reported that key characteristics were the effect the behavior had on the victim, if the behavior was intentional, and repetitive as being defining elements of cyberbullying. However, the survey did not suggest adolescents felt repetition was crucial. Other additional factors noted as being significant were anonymity and public access, and therefore affirm further exploration.

Anonymity. There is also the potential for a cyberbully to feel more inclined to engage in cyber aggressive behavior if they believe their transgressions are anonymous (Suler, 2004). For example, Wright (2014) coded 5, 230 online forums in search of anonymity and found that beliefs in anonymity predicted online aggressive behavior. Seemingly, the aspect of culpability for injuring another is diminished. This is known as the disinhibition effect (Raskaukas & Stoltz, 2007). Researchers expressed concern as to whether repeated exposure to cyber aggressions desensitize individuals to harmful effects, creating disinhibition (Pabian, Vandebosch, Poels, Van Cleemput, & Bastiaensens, 2016). Even if the perpetrator's identity is known, the victim is still unaware of the person's actual intentions normally inferred by affect or tone of voice (Slonje & Smith, 2008). Pieschl, Porsch, Kahl, and Klockenbusch (2013) warned that further research into desensitization is imperative to keep the behavior from escalating. First, there is the aspect of moral disengagement due to the lack of face-to-face interaction (Kowalski et al., 2014) as well as the possibility to continue perpetration due to a lack of reward, albeit negative in nature (Dooley, Pyzalski, & Cross, 2009). As the transgressions occur online, the victim is not always aware of the assailant, making it difficult to stop or prevent (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Li, 2006). Researchers have found that in some cases this can cause less angst if the victim is not aware of who is attacking them and are therefore more inclined to disregard the provocations (Menesini et al., 2012). However, this can also produce anxiety and a feeling of no escape when the perpetrator is relentless in their improprieties (Smith, 2013). Anonymity gives the perpetrator a false sense of being "invisible" to the recipient.

Public versus private. Public versus private cyber interactions may occur privately between two people, or with a larger audience (Thomas, Connor, & Scott, 2015). If a cyberbullying incident only occurred once, but was public, it could be considered cyberbullying (Noncentini et al., 2010). Slonje and Smith (2008) found that participants stated that cyberbullying that occurred with a large audience was the most severe form of bullying. Chen and Cheng (2017) concurred findings that participants rated public cyberbullying incidents as being more detrimental than those that are private. Thomas, Connor and Scott (2015) suggested that anonymity may also play a role in the severity of private versus public interactions. In order for a private message to be considered cyberbullying, it would need to be repeated several times whereas one public post may be considered "repetitive" depending on the breadth of the audience.

These additional dimensions are not necessarily experienced in traditional types of bullying. Although traditional bullying also has the potential to escalate to dangerous levels, it lacks the component of anonymity and continuous access. These two components can increase detrimental outcomes for victims and can arise from a myriad of forums.

Types. As our connectivity to one another through Internet use and the increasing proliferation of social media sites continues to develop and evolve, some researchers have called for this phenomenon to be categorized as a public health concern (Aboujaoude, Savage, Starcevic, & Salame, 2015).
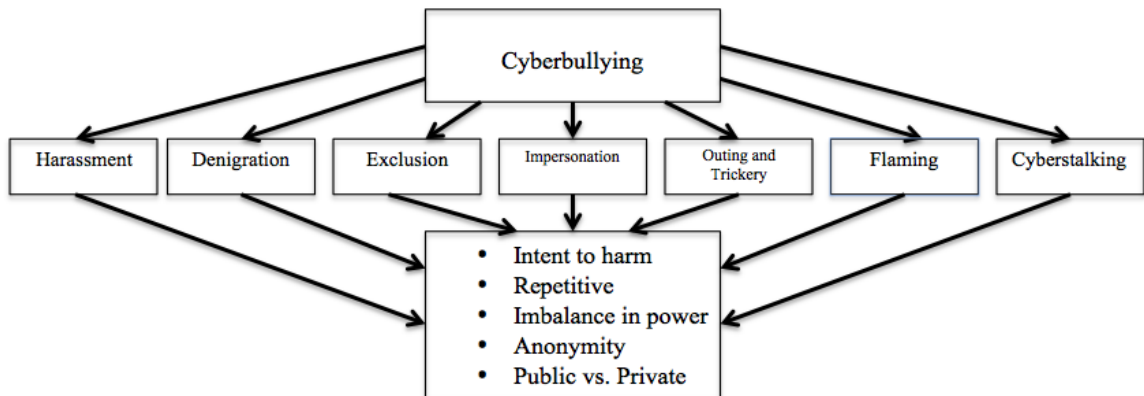
Figure 2. Types of cyberbullying.

Whereas traditional bullying is comprised of four main forums in which the aggressive behavior occurs (e.g., physical, verbal, relational, and cyber), to the best of my knowledge, cyberbullying is currently comprised of seven forums. According to Willard (2007, pp. 1-2), these forums can be defined as follows:

Flaming: *Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language.*

Harassment: *Repeatedly sending nasty, mean, and insulting messages.*

Denigration: *"Dissing" someone online. Sending or posting gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships.*

Impersonation: *Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material to get that person in trouble or danger or to damage that person's reputation or friendships.*

Outing &: *Sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or*
Trickery *images online; Talking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information, then sharing it online.*

Exclusion: *Intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group.*

Cyberstalking: *Repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear.*

These covert types of online aggression may increase an individual's potential to experience cyberbullying behavior (Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, & Coulter, 2012). Additionally, this perceived ability to engage with others under an unknown identity can provide a gateway for perpetrators to solicit, or respond to, unwanted sexual advances (Ybarra et al., 2007b). Furthermore, cyberbullying can lead to distress for those being victimized (Sourander et al., 2010).

Detrimental outcomes. Victimization can be linked to long-term psychological problems, as many victims tend to continue in this role for up to 3 years or more (Olweus, 1977; Sourander et al., 2007). At a minimum, victimization can cause stress and physical health problems (Luukkonen, Räsänen, Hakko, & Riala, 2010). Those who are bullied in adolescence are at an increased risk of developing anxiety disorders, depression, and suicidal thoughts in adulthood (Cowan & Rossen, 2013). Chen, Williams, Fitness, and Newton (2008) posited that those types of bullying behaviors that are not physical in nature, such as cyberbullying, may be more harmful as there is a tendency for the victims to ruminate on the experience, referred to as "social pain" (Vaillancourt, Hymel, & McDougall, 2013). Psychosomatic symptoms may develop such as stomachaches, headaches, bed-wetting, and sleep disturbances (Sourander et al., 2010). Furthermore, those who are victimized may have increased school absences or resort to alcohol and drug consumption (Mitchell, Ybarra, & Finklehor, 2007). If an individual is repeatedly subjected to cyberbullying situations, the probability of experiencing detrimental outcomes is increased.

These situations can additionally cause physiological responses within individuals. For example, victimization can have neuroscientific effects in which the body experiences pain as though it were physical in nature (Vaillancourt, Hymel, & McDougall, 2013). A dysregulation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis can also occur when a person is victimized (Knack, Jensen-Campbell, & Baum, 2011). This reduction in cortisol levels (Resnick, Yehuda, Pitman, & Foy, 1995) is similar to what is seen in repeated rape victims, or those with PTSD (Morris, Compas, & Garber, 2012). Victimization can also affect individuals genetically with regards to the DNA methylation, which maintains gene activity and is responsible for activating or silencing genes (Vaillancourt, Hymel, & McDougall, 2013), and may help in explaining the development of neuropsychiatric disorders (Tsankova, Renthal, Kumar, & Nestler, 2007). Furthermore, victimization can be associated with shortened telomere length, which is responsible for increasing disease, weight gain, and psychological stress (Shalev et al., 2012). Physiological problems may not be initially apparent during victimization but can develop later in life.

In order to study the prevalence of detrimental outcomes, Schneider et al. (2012) studied high school students ($N = 20,406$) from the Boston Metropolitan area to investigate prevalence and psychological distress. Findings suggest that 34% of cybervictims reported depressive symptoms, with suicide attempt close to 15%. Schneider et al.'s (2015) findings were similar reporting, "depressive symptoms (adjusted odds ratio [AOR] = 4.38; 99% CI = 3.76, 5.10), suicidal ideation (AOR = 4.51; 99% CI = 3.78, 5.39), self-injury (AOR = 4.79; 99% CI = 4.06, 5.65), and suicide attempt (AOR =

5.42; 99% CI = 3.56, 8.26)" (p.174). Furthermore, Sourander et al. (2010) implemented an anonymous survey to investigate adolescents'cyberbullying experiences (aged 13-16) and subsequent detrimental outcomes. Analysis revealed that those who reported cyberbullying incidents had high levels of difficulties with emotional regulation and peer relationships. Hinduja and Patchin (2007) also sought to better understand maladaptive behavioral choices cyber victims might make in order to inform educational administrators. They surveyed 1,388 students online and found that over 30% of victims felt anger and frustration from the experience and later reported engaging in offline problem behaviors such as delinquency. The study by Patchin and Hinduja (2010), followed up on these findings to reveal a significant correlation between victimization from cyberbullying and low self-esteem.

The above studies are relevant in understanding the detrimental outcomes cyberbullying might incite upon victims. Unlike traditional bullying, there is seemingly little reprieve from the onslaught of potential aggressive online behavior as the Internet is accessible to perpetrators 24 hr a day (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). This awareness that aggressive online interactions can occur 24/7 can elevate psychological distress for those who experience cybervictimization (Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, & Coulter, 2010).

Perspective. The last component that is salient when understanding cyberbullying victimization is that of perspective taking (Diazgranados et al., 2015). Of course, not all who experience cyberbullying will experience detrimental outcomes. Perspective taking is a type of theory of mind in which social interactions promote understanding or misunderstandings (Martin, Sokol, & Elfers, 2008). The expectation is that as adolescents

mature, they tend to lessen tendencies toward egocentrism and gain the ability to see

other's viewpoints (Diazgranados, Selman, & Dionne, 2015). However, problems can

arise when one individual perceives an act as normal behavior, and another discerns the

act as hurtful (Vandebosch & VanCleemput, 2009). For example, Li (2010) found that

64% of students reported that their perceptions of why others cyberbullied was due to the

activity being "fun," and that expressing beliefs online, even if it hurt another individual,

fell under the Freedom of Speech amendment. In justifying indiscretions as acceptable,

the perspective of the perpetrator is grossly misaligned with that of the recipient.

As stated earlier, perceptions vary, and therefore the need to address severity with

cyberbullying behavior is salient (Menesini, Nocentini, & Calussi, 2011). For example, a

study by Slonje and Smith (2008) found that students reported that video/photo clips

were considered more distressing forms of cyberbullying than other modalities. Thus, this

could be considered a more "severe" form of cyberbullying. Additionally, perceived

anonymity can encourage a false feeling of the capability to express ideas that might not

normally transpire in face-to-face interactions (Kowalski et al., 2014). Due to the

plentitude of forums available, the potential for increased cyberbullying severity can

occur without the perpetrator being fully cognizant of the repercussions.

Although there are overlaps between traditional bullying and cyberbullying, there

are additional factors found with cyberbullying that increase the risk for potential

detrimental outcomes that can cause immediate distress or produce longer lasting effects.

The false sense of anonymity and ability to reach a widespread audience is daunting.

First, it is imperative researchers establish an agreed upon conceptualization and

operationalization of cyberbullying (Volk et al., 2017). In doing so, research can build

upon prior findings to help forge a consistent direction in addressing adaptive coping

strategies and positive self-efficacious beliefs in order to diminish detrimental outcomes.

However, it is salient to first understand the process of cyber victimization. As the

outcomes of such experiences have the potential to create a cyclical process and can be

mediated by self-efficacious beliefs, I will view cyberbullying behavior through the lens

of social cognitive theory (SCT).

How Middle School Children Cope with Cyberbullying: A Social Cognitive Theory

Framework

Key components of SCT look at human behavior as being motivated through a

self-regulatory causal process in which individuals monitor their behavior, assess

potential outcomes, and evaluate effects in order to act (Bandura, 1991). As Bandura

eloquently stated, individuals are not completely dependent on external sources in order

to act, much like a weather vane, but instead have the capability to be reflective and

reactive (Bandura, 1991). The social cognitive model of this self-regulatory process, as

defined by Zimmerman (1989) is based on Bandura's social learning theory and is

represented as a triadic reciprocal causation model including the self, behavioral events,

and the environment (Bandura, et al., 1999; Puustinen & Pulkkinen, 2001). These

constructs are symbiotic in nature and create a cyclical loop of reinforcement, either

positive or negative. Outcome expectations for a particular behavior motivate individuals

to act (Zimmerman, 1989). In looking closer at our thought processes, Bandura (1989)

stated that although people are capable of rational thinking, they do not always employ

appropriate reasoning abilities. This process can be achieved, or diminished, depending on the goals set and subsequent personal beliefs regarding performance attributions (Schunk, 1991). Although modeling can influence an individual's perceptions of an outcome, actively engaging in an activity will result in a more accurate reaction (Bandura et al., 1999; Zimmerman, 1989). Social cognitive theorists postulate that self-regulatory behaviors differ depending on an individual's capability to proactively transfer mental abilities into other tasks (Zimmerman, 2002). This is especially insightful when investigating why children might engage in cyberbullying behavior, or become victimized (Swearer et al., 2014). Therefore, understanding the cycle of regulatory processes a cyber victim might proactively engage in, or avoid, is a salient component in understanding how to overcome, or prevent, the reoccurrence of cyber victimization.

Similar to Zimmerman's model (1989), the emotional system is also tripartite and reciprocal in nature, which modulates between internal feelings and external displays of emotion (Mahady Wilton, Craig, & Pepler, 2000). In order to understand how humans are able to manage these emotions, researchers have studied cognitive appraisal, coping theory, and regulation of emotions (Compas et al., 2014; Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986). Cognitive appraisal is an assessment by the individual as to whether a particular situation is relevant (Folkman et al., 1986). Coping theory was studied formerly (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004), and in the late 1970s research transformed from a primary focus on a trait or style emphases, to viewing the construct more as a process that can change and adapt over time (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Lazarus, 1993). Coping, as being defined by Skinner and Wellborn

(1994), proceeds cognitive appraisal and is described as action, or failure to act, by an

individual in order to regulate a stressful situation. Coping can be

enacted using either a problem-focused approach, or emotion-focused approach.

Adapted from Folkman and Lazarus (1988) Coping as a mediator of emotion
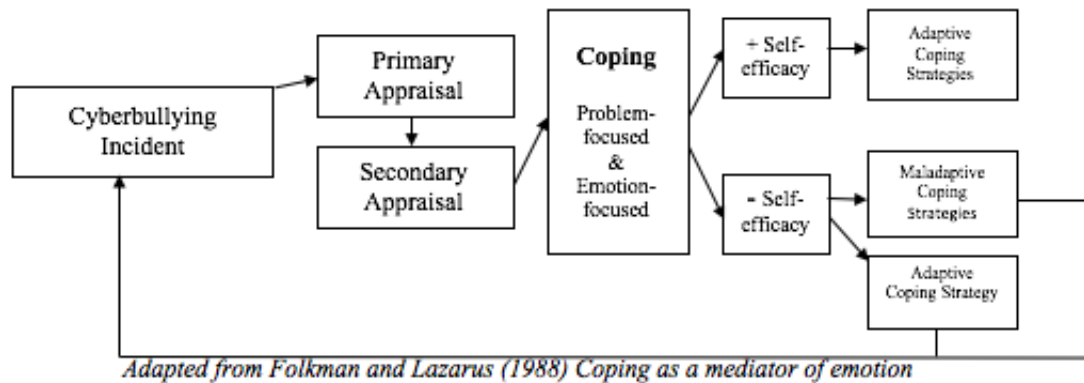
Figure 3. Conceptual framework of cyber victimization.

Figure 3 represents a conceptual framework to describe what potentially

transpires during a cyberbullying incident. According to SCT, the environment,

behavioral patterns, and inner forces all interact and influence each other (Bandura,

2001). Gross (2013) stated that when an individual first becomes aware of a situation

(consciously or unconsciously), the individual appraises the situation and then responds.

This, again, is dependent on the perception of the individual being victimized

(Diazgranados et al., 2015). The emotions that arise influence the coping process and

whether the individual alters the relationship (problem-focused coping), or changes how

they react or alter the meaning of the situation (emotion-focused; Folkman & Lazarus,

1988). This coping process then leads to employment of an adaptive or maladaptive

coping strategy, or no action at all. SCT helps explain how these thoughts, beliefs, and

feelings can support, or detract, from vulnerabilities, why a certain coping strategy is

used, and how self-efficacy beliefs are a driving force to understand why an individual is

capable of employing a particular strategy (Bandura, 1989). Maladaptive strategies arise

when emotions are not changed or when short-term strategies are not effective in the long

run (Jeffires, McLeish, Kraemer, Avallone, & Fleming, 2016). If maladaptive strategies,

such as avoidance, self-blame, and rumination are employed, there is a potential for the

victim to be at risk for greater distress (Mennin et al., 2007; Nolen-Hoeksema et al.,

2008). However, if an individual chooses an adaptive strategy such as reappraisal,

resiliency is possible but dependent on an individual's self-efficacy beliefs in in their

capability to carry out the coping strategy. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the types

of maladaptive and adaptive coping strategies used most often.

Cognitive Appraisal

Cognitive appraisal is a multidimensional construct in which an individual's locus

of control is dependent on the perceived capability to make a change (Parkes, 1984).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) eloquently explained that this relationship between the

individual and the environment can be divided into two types of cognitive appraisal. The

first is termed primary and is the initial evaluation an individual ascertains from a

particular situation. This is when the individual assesses if the situation is relevant to their

well-being. If there is no viable threat, then the situation is viewed as benign However, if

the situation poses a potential threat or challenge, then the situation is deemed as stressful

and evidenced by one's emotional reaction (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). This is followed

by secondary appraisal which evaluates whether anything can be done to overcome the

situation and make it more beneficial to the individual (Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, &

DeLongis, 1986). If resources are available and the situation can be managed, then the

emotional reaction will also change. Folkman

referred to this as process orientation in that appraisals are likely to change, and shift,

when experiencing a stressful situation.

Investigating cognitive appraisal evaluations is central to understanding coping

and coping strategies (Hunter & Boyle, 2004). The appraisal process can be affected

depending on whether the individual feels the situation can be controlled or whether it is

likely to induce stress (Folkman, 1984). When cognitive appraisal evaluations are

ambiguous, coping is directly affected (Lazarus & Launier, 1978).

Coping

Coping is the process in which individuals execute their cognitive appraisal

assessments (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). Coping acts a buffer to reduce

internal distress and reinstate positive emotions (Lowe et al., 2008). This process is

complex in nature and sensitive to both the environment and the person (Folkman &

Moskowitz, 2004). This process can be dependent on an individual's access to resources

such as those that are social, spiritual, psychological, material, or the nature of the

problem (Folkman, 2013). Coping can be classified into dichotomous styles referred to as

problem-focused and emotion-focused (Folkman et al., 1986). Problem-focused coping

searches for ways to alter the stressful situation (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988) by reducing

the emotional reaction to the incident (Herman & Tetrick, 2015). This type of coping is usually associated with adaptive strategies (Herman & Tetrick, 2015) but can also revert to non-responsive strategies or ones that are maladaptive (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). An example of an adaptive strategy to problem-focused coping would include talking to a friend, or trusted adult, about a cyberbullying incident. Whereas emotion-focused coping aims to reduce or manage the distress (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988), and is typically seen as maladaptive. Examples include such strategies as deliberate action to not think about a situation, drinking, or overeating (Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Schweizer, 2010). Whether the appraisal to the cyber incident is problem-focused or emotion-focused, both are means to help cybervictims deal with the stressful situation.

In 1980, Folkman and Lazarus conducted a study to better understand how often problem or emotion-focused coping were reported. They investigated over 1,300 stressful encounters reported by the 100 middle aged men and women. They found that 98% of the time participants reported problem or emotion-focused coping. As expected, participants that felt the situation was changeable tended to report problem-focused coping, whereas those who felt the situation was futile reported emotion-focused coping.

Carver et al. (1989) built upon Lazarus and Folkman's (1980) work, further categorizing potential problem-focused and emotion-focused coping in order to study the range of self-regulatory functions which are often not measured with previous coping scales referred to as the Ways of Coping scale (COPE).Within problem-focused coping, they determined that there were five aspects to this type of coping including: "active coping, planning, suppression of competing activities, restraint coping, and instrumental

social support" (Carver et al., 1989, p. 267). Emotion-focused coping included such aspects as: "seeking emotional social support, positive reinterpretation, acceptance, denial, and turning to religion" (Carver et al., 1989, p. 267). Additionally, they felt it salient to include a third, not as useful, option to include a "focus on venting of emotions, behavioral disengagement, and mental disengagement" (Carver et al., 1989, p. 267). Findings suggest that individuals tend to cope more effectively when they rely on familiar strategies. When said strategies are not available, depending on the context of the situation, the individual tends to cope less effectively.

In a later study, Carver (1997) condensed the scale, COPE, he helped create in 1989. He felt the previous scale was too involved and sought to shorten the measure while also including self-blame as a coping strategy. This inclusion is salient as self-blame has been found to have a negative influence of adjustment due to stressors. After conducting an exploratory factor analysis, Carver found that the brevity of this measure did not greatly affect the Cronbach's alpha in comparison to the previous study leading to a more efficient means of implementation. As research on coping continues to necessitate further inquiry, this adjustment was beneficial for future researchers studying this phenomenon.

More recently, Folkman (2013) hypothesized a third style she refers to as meaning-focused coping. She stated that in order to promote positive well-being, individuals need to approach coping with a more meaning-based focus. Rather than taking a positive or emotional-focused approach, the individual relies on their values, beliefs, goals, ability to reappraise a situation positively, and focus on positive thoughts

throughout the day (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). This is an area to explore in future studies when investigating preventative measures to overcome cyberbullying experiences.

Skinner and Zimmer-Gembeck (2007) postured that additional research into the developmental conceptualizations of coping were also necessitated, in addition to scales such as COPE, as much of the previous research on coping had only been implemented with adults. They also took a closer look at coping through developmental periods, creating a framework to describe when types of coping may undergo a shift. This is salient when looking at the coping differences between young children, adolescents, and adults.

Adolescence and coping. As much of coping literature relies on interactions with adults, it is salient to find literature that focuses on adolescence (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). As most adolescents continue to rely on parental resources, the environment must also be considered rather than a reliance on the child's temperament, skills, and resources (Compas, 1987; Seiffge-Krenke, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2009). Compas (1998) posited that the development of hypothetical reasoning and abstract skills may play a vital role in the use of particular coping strategies. Kohoutek, Mareš, and Ježek (2010) discussed the need to consider five key areas when investigating how adolescents cope, including relationships with peers, academic performance, conflicts with parents, identity problems, and finally perceived developmental changes from earlier childhood. These factors can also influence how an adolescent appraises a situation. Additionally, coping approaches may vary depending on context of the situation (Seiffge-Krenke,

Aunola, & Nurmi, 2009), such as bullying or cyberbullying.

Coping Strategies

In addition to developing psychosocial competence, adolescents are discovering effective coping strategies to overcome distressing experiences. Coping strategies are the actions taken to address the stressor being experienced and how they develop and change over time (Biggs, Brough, & Drummond, 2017; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). Coping is a dichotomous process in that it regulates emotions and also involves the processes that help with this regulation (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007).

This might make one wonder if there are differences between emotional regulation and coping strategies as the descriptions seem similar. Skinner and Zimmer-Gembeck (2007) asserted that coping and emotional regulation are of the same ilk in that coping is a way to regulate an emotional response. They discussed coping as a dual-model process in that when experiencing a situation, the individual is subjected to regulating their emotions or impulses, followed by the necessary processes in order to do so. For the purposes of this study, we will look at these two constructs under the heading of coping strategies.

Additionally, there is some debate as to whether coping strategies are separate from defense mechanisms (Fiz Pérez & Laudadio, 2008). According to Cramer (1998), defense mechanisms are enacted to protect the individual from experiencing anxiety yet is done so unconsciously, whereas coping strategies are consciously enacted. Cramer further postured that researchers tend to view defense mechanisms as relating to one's personal character, whereas coping strategies are more situational in nature. Newman

(2001) stated that this presumption is problematic is that awareness and intentionality both fall under the umbrella of cognitive processes. He further posited that individuals are not always aware of what triggers their emotions and even if they are, they are not always cognizant of the connection between the two. Hence, we will again consider defense mechanisms to fall under the umbrella of coping strategies.

The main goal of any coping strategy is to promote the well-being of the individual. Folkman and Moskowitz (2000) emphasized the need to look at which coping strategies increase and sustain positive affect from distressing situations. Appraisal of the situation, temperament, and ability to regulate one's emotions are all critical in the efficiency of coping strategies in achieving resilience (Mikolajczak, Nelis, Hansenne, & Quoidbach, 2008). Perez and Laudido (2008, p. 62) broke coping efficiency down into certain criteria:

"(a) Conflict resolution or settlement of the stressful situation: coping process should work for the abatement or the resolution of the stressful event;

(b) Reduction of physiological and biochemical reactions: coping is considered efficient if it helps in reducing arousal and its markers (heartbeat, breathing, blood etc.);

(c) Reduction of psychological suffering: an adaptive strategy may help in controlling emotional discomfort;

(d) Social normative functioning: a deviant attitude with regards to the social norms may be read as a sign of a non-adaptive coping;

(e) Usual activities' retrieve: being able of retrieving the normal routine is an

index of an efficient coping, however also a strong change in life habitudes after

stress may be an indicator of an advantageous coping;

(f) Self wellness and wellness of all the people involved in the stressful situation;

(g) Positive self-esteem;

(h) Efficacy's perception."

The ability to employ these positive coping strategies is most often seen with

those individuals with a higher capability to regulate emotions and subsequent use of

adaptive coping strategies (Mikolajczak et al., 2008). This helps lessen the potential to

experience negative psychological and somatic symptoms (Mikolajczak, Luminet, Fillée,

& Timary, 2007).

This is especially salient when studying negative psychological and somatic

symptoms with adolescents. Studying adolescent coping strategies has recently extended

into the area of bullying behavior. For example, Garnett, Masyn, Austin, Williams, and

Viswanath (2014) conducted a study with 1,223 high school adolescents to investigate

behaviors reported when experiencing distress such as bullying. There were 15 options

given in total, and researchers asked participants to choose the two most prominent

behaviors employed when upset. Reported most often were distracting activities such as

surfing the web, watching TV, or listening to music (35.4%). This was followed by

spending time alone (33.1%), hanging out with friends (27.8%), and finally playing

sports or exercising (27.3%). In analyzing all the results, the researchers determined that

distractive coping strategies were rated most effective, followed by finding support from

others, with avoidant being least effective.

Another study looked at reported coping strategies of bullying victimization using a qualitative approach (Evans, Cotter, & Smokowski 2017). The original study was a 5-year longitudinal panel study which looked at more than 7000 middle and high school students through an online assessment to determine experiences of bullying behavior. In order to develop a richer understanding of students' reports, the researchers conducted interviews with 22 of the participants. All participants reported negative emotions from bullying experiences in which they either internalized or externalized feelings or experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). They additionally reported feelings of sadness, loneliness, fear, stress, embarrassment, and a feeling of worthlessness. A common coping strategy reported by all participants was seeking help from school personnel or adults. This was sought for both emotion and problem-focused coping. Seeking help from school personnel or adults was reported as more effective for emotion-focused coping as adults tend to be viewed as supportive figures. Conversely, the problem-focused solution of telling an adult to resolve a situation was less effective and sporadic. Fighting back, the second most reported coping strategy was problem-focused in that the goal was to stop the bullying.

Another study, by Didaskalou, Skrzypiec, Andreou, and Slee (2017), also investigated coping strategies when Australian middle school students were victimized from bullying behavior. They postured that, to the best of their knowledge, there were no definitive strategies that helped overcome all types of bullying situations. In order to test this out, the Student's Coping with Bullying Strategies Scale (Frydenberg & Lewis, 1993) was used. Eleven strategies were noted, including "seeking social support, sticking

up for oneself, nonchalance, reducing tense emotions/ assertiveness, learning how to deal with bullying, problem-focusing, escapism, distancing, submission, internalizing, and externalizing" (Frydenberg & Lewis, 1993, p. 111). Of these 11 coping strategies reported, seeking social support from a friend or a parent was rated the highest followed by sticking up for oneself.

Focusing specifically on coping with cyberbullying experiences, Weinstein et al., (2015) conducted a study to investigate coping strategies employed when faced with aggressive online interactions. The researchers looked at 628 comments posted online in response to 181 accounts of situations considered to induce digital stress from MTV's *A Thin Line* (2017) platform. Users of this site share personal experiences with digital drama. The researchers used six specifically known digital stressors to parse out relevant data. These stressors included public shaming, humiliation, smothering, breaking and entering, mean and harassing personal attacks, and impersonation. The five most prominent coping strategy recommendations with these types of situations were to seek help from others, communicate directly to the perpetrator, cut ties with the person, ignore or try to avoid the situation, and finally use a digital solution, such as blocking or unfriending the person. The coping strategy reported to be most effective was, similar to the previous study, to seek help from others. If the situation involved a close friend, the most common recommendation was to cut ties with that person.

Maladaptive coping strategies. Those who do not feel they have effective strategies for regulating their emotions are more prone to destructive behavior patterns (Gratz & Roemer, 2008). Maladaptive coping strategies can impede on wellbeing, create

a vicious cycle of cyber victimization, and encourage mood and anxiety disorders (Campbell-Sills et al., 2006). However, there are inconsistencies in measuring coping strategies due to limited knowledge as to how adolescents process and believe in capabilities to execute coping strategies, and whether they are effective (Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015). The potential problem with investigating effective strategies in this manner is that most cyber victims do not have knowledge or access to appropriate strategies, nor a firm grasp of the conceptualization or operationalization of the phenomenon.

Complicating this further is that researchers suggest outcomes might be similar or worse than traditional bullying (Campbell, 2005; Gámez-Guadix, Orue, Smith, & Calvete, 2013). Adverse outcomes can range dependent on the individual, the context of the perpetration, and the severity of the situation. Engaging in cyberbullying, or being victimized, can induce stress and trauma by instigating emotional triggers (Gross & John, 2003). In order for individuals to adapt to stress and adversity, management of one's emotions is necessary for resilience (Compas et al., 2001). Yet again, if cyber victims are lacking tools, they may remain in a perpetually negative cycle.

Self-blame is considered a maladaptive coping strategy. This is an emotion-focused coping strategy in which the individual feels they deserve the negative outcome, attribute blame to one's behavior, and feel culpable for being victimized (Shelley & Craig, 2010). Self-blame can be either characterological or behavioral internalizations, yet the former is considered stable but uncontrollable, with the latter being unstable but controllable (Batanova, Espelage, & Rao, 2014). In the study conducted by Shelley and

56

Craig (2010), they found that boys who reported higher levels of characterological self-blame, who internalized and distanced themselves, experienced higher levels of victimization. Girls who reported high characterological self-blame, depression, with minimal support systems in place, also predicted higher levels of victimization. In the study by Wright (2014), girls tended to report more tendencies towards self-blame with both traditional and cyberbullying situations, yet less so with cyberbullying as face-to-face interactions were considered less ambiguous.

This was supported by a recent study by Wright et al. (2017) in which students from China, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, India, Japan, and the United States were studied as to their gender and cultural differences in attributing causality to face-to-face and online victimization. In the study, 3,432 adolescents aged 11-15 were surveyed using hypothetical victimization scenarios. The adolescents were then asked to rate whether certain attributions might be the cause of victimization. Self-blame was reported most often especially if the interactions had gone public. Self-blame is multi-faceted dependent on the individual and whether they attribute self-blame to their character or behavior.

Rumination is similar to self-blame and is also considered maladaptive. This coping strategy is repetitive and passively focuses behavior on distressing experiences that dissuade an individual from active problem solving (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, & Lyubomirsky, 2014). Not only do those who ruminate tend to lose support from social groups (Nolen-Hoeksema & Davis, 1999), they are at an increased risk for depression or anxiety disorders (Abbott & Rapee, 2004; Kocovski, Endler, Rector, & Flett, 2005). For example, Feinstein, Bhatia, and Davila (2013) implemented an online survey with

undergraduate students ($N = 620$), from a public university in the northeastern United States. to assess cybervictimization and maladaptive coping strategies. They found that cybervictimization increased the tendency for rumination to occur ($p < .04$), which was significantly correlated with depressive symptoms ($p < .001$). Worry is additionally considered a maladaptive strategy but precedes cyberbullying experiences. For the scope of this paper, we are only concentrating on those strategies employed following a cyberbullying incident.

Avoidance, sometimes referred to as suppression, is an individual's response to reduce somatic experiences and control emotions and is often considered maladaptive (Hayes et al., 2004). This type of maladaptive strategy is linked to psychological stressors in addition to further harassment (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002). Machmutow et al. (2012) conducted a two-wave cyberbullying study with seventh graders ($N = 1,655$) from Switzerland and found that avoidant strategies were positively associated with depressive symptoms. Hinduja and Patchin (2007) also found that 25% of cybervictims reported doing nothing, but this was not always considered maladaptive. If avoidance does not cause distress in the victim, then it could instead be considered adaptive, yet is dependent on the individual's emotional response and is therefore referred to as "no action" in the conceptual framework.

Finally, and most concerning is hopelessness. Hopelessness is described as a feeling that future desires are non-existent or unattainable (Alloy et al., 1988; Beck et al., 1974). Hopelessness can result in the loss of identity through the disconnect of not being in tune with one's values (Dilmaç, 2017). This can negatively impact wellbeing (Joiner &

Rudd, 1996). Cyberbullying behavior, whether the perpetrator or victim, can create

feelings of hopelessness or loneliness, that might lead to suicidal ideation (Hinduja &

Patchin, 2010).

        Adaptive coping strategies. Adaptive coping strategies are also helpful in

determining how certain individuals are able to avoid or overcome potential cyber

victimization. Positive reappraisal is one such adaptive strategy in that the cyber victim

reframes the situation through evaluation and determination as to why an individual may

have perpetrated the incident (Machakova et al., 2013). Another adaptive coping skill is

employing technical strategies. Smith et al. (2008) found that students reported blocking

or avoiding messages as a strategy used most often. Pieschel et al. (2013) found similar

findings in which 465 participants, between the ages of 12 and 19, answered online

questions related to cyberbullying with an open answer section in which participants

reported the types of coping strategies they might employ. Participants reported reactive

coping most often, which includes avoidance of the situation, acceptance that this

behavior was a normal part of life, and justification about why the experience should not

be bothersome. Previous to these studies, Garnefeski, Kraanij, and Spinhoven (2001)

developed the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire to measure coping strategies

individuals reported after experiencing a negative event. A principal component analysis

was conducted in which nine factors were extracted. Those that were considered positive

strategies were: perspective taking, positive refocusing, positive reappraisal, acceptance,

and refocusing on planning. Worth noting, although these were considered "positive"

strategies, they are considered to be more adaptive as employing such strategies do not

necessarily yield a positive outcome but rather allow individuals to move beyond a distressful situation.

A final adaptive strategy often supported through prevention/intervention programs is to tell a trusted adult. However, as seen with traditional bullying, research has found that adolescents do not report cyberbullying behavior. Mishna, Saini, and Solomon (2009) found that only eight percent of participants would tell a parent, and only three percent would notify a teacher. Bauman (2010) found similar findings in that 12% would tell an adult, but only nine percent of participants stated that they would tell a parent. This was in direct contrast of parental reports in which 84% of parents stated their child would report the behavior. This may in part be due to a fear that a parent would relinquish their electronic device (Bauman, 2010; Mishna et al., 2009; Willard, 2006). Li (2010) found that 67% of students perceived adults stopping a cyberbullying incident when informed, yet only 34% actually told an adult. Telling an adult does not seem to be an adaptive coping strategy, yet school staff reinforce this notion. Students tend to report that telling a teacher can make the situation worse (Glover, Gough, Johnson & Cartwright, 2000). Therefore, if adolescents feel that telling a parent might result in the loss of an electronic device, or that telling an adult at school might exacerbate the problem, it seems that promoting this as an adaptive coping strategy may not be useful.

Linking maladaptive, adaptive and strategies back to the conceptual framework, it becomes a bit clearer why individuals might continue in the vicious cycle of cyber victimization or are able to overcome or stop the potential of detrimental outcomes. Those strategies deemed as maladaptive tend to decrease well-being and increase mood

disorders, anxiety, and depression (Campbell-Sills et al., 2006; Gratz & Roemer, 2008).

Examples include self-blame, rumination, and avoidance (Batanova et al., 2014; Craig,

2010; Hayes, et al., 2004; Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 2014; Shelley & Craig, 2010).

Conversely, adaptive strategies such as positive reappraisal, technical strategies,

avoidance, and telling a trusted adult (Machakova et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2008; Pieschl

et al., 2015) may deter potential detrimental outcomes that can lead to positive outcomes

such as resiliency (Garmezy, Masten, & Tellegen, 1984). The key is to stop the cycle of

victimization through the employment of adaptive, rather than maladaptive, coping

strategies.

Resilience

If adolescents employ adaptive coping strategies when encountering a

cyberbullying situation, they are more likely to achieve resiliency. Resilience can be

defined as ability to recover from trauma or maintaining balance when faced with a

stressful situation (Masten et al., 1990). Characteristics commonly found in adolescents

who are resilient include high intellectual functioning confidence, compliant personality,

high self-esteem, talents, supportive and caring familial relationships, and prosocial

positive activities outside the home (Masten et al., 1990; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

Although, these characteristics can be affected by situational and environmental

occurrences that transpire throughout maturation (Herrenkohl, Herrenkohl, & Egolf,

1994). In order to overcome high stress or traumatic events, resilient individuals are

competent in their abilities to employ stress resistant coping strategies (Garmezy et al.,

1984). Children who tended to struggle in adolescence, tended to have fewer resources

available to adapt to adverse situations at that time period, and tended to experience even more adversity into their teenage years (Masten & Tellegan, 2012). Beliefs in capability to employ a particular coping strategy can also affect ability to achieve resiliency.

Self-efficacy

Capability to actively cope using strategies is mediated by self-efficacy, an important construct within SCT. Bandura posited (1991) that a person's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over a situation is an important component of human agency within the SCT framework. This can influence choices made, effort exerted, task perseverance especially in difficult situations, positive or negative thought patterns, coping capabilities and susceptibility to detrimental outcomes (Regan, Lorig, & Thoresen, 1998). Bandura stated, "Among the mechanisms of personal agency, none is more pervasive than people's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over their own level of functioning and over events that affect their lives" (1991, p. 257). In order for individuals to successfully employ adaptive strategies, an individual's self-efficacy beliefs in their capability to execute the strategies are imperative. Self-efficacy has also been shown to be a strong motivating factor in outcome performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1979). In setting self-efficacious goals, coping strategy selection can positively affect motivation both directly and indirectly (Bandura, 1991). However, if capacities are controlled or perceived negatively, then biases in beliefs affect internal validity and can reduce self-efficacy and motivation (Vancouver & Purl, 2017). For example, Bandura stated that if an individual has low perceived self-efficacy, they are more prone to not

take-action (Bandura, 2004). Self-efficacy beliefs can determine a person's capability to act or not to act, subsequently affecting future implications.

Most studies investigating self-efficacy beliefs focus on health-related behavior (Forsyth & Carey, 1998; Kitsantas, 2000; Van Alen, Noser, Littlefield, Seegan, Clements, & Patton, 2017) or academic achievement (Kitsantas, Cheema, & Ware, 2011; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2005, 2007). However, few studies have explored students' beliefs in capability to employ strategies to overcome cyberbullying behavior. (Li, 2010) Cyberbullying research continues to lack an accurate tool to measure how coping strategies correlate to self-efficacy beliefs (Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015).

Ando, Asakura, and Simons-Morton (2005) conducted a study to better understand how self-efficacy beliefs helped students manage interpersonal conflict. The study took place in Japan with participants ranging in age from 12-15 years. In total, 3,486 middle school students participated in the study. The four areas investigated included self-efficacy with interpersonal relationships, overcoming difficulty, self-control, and problem solving. Findings suggested that when an individual experiences indirect forms of bullying, their self-efficacy beliefs to engage in the four constructs noted above decreases, especially with self-control ($\beta = -.06$; $p < .01$).

When studying potential intervention methods to combat detrimental outcomes from bullying behavior, Swearer, Collins, Radliff, and Wang (2010) noted that higher self-efficacy was an outcome for those in the treatment group. The longitudinal 1,173 middle school students from the United States, Japan, Korea, Australia, and Canada. The intervention consisted of school counselors working individually with those involved

with bullying by implementing the Bullying Intervention Program developed by Swearer and Givens (2006) and using treatment plans to address depression and anxiety. Unfortunately, limited significance was found overall. However, increased self-efficacy in capability to address interpersonal conflicts is promising.

Trompeter, Bussey, and Fitzpatrick (2017) recently looked into coping self-efficacy and ability to execute coping strategies. Participants were recruited from five independent Australian school in Grades 8 and 10 with age ranges between 13 and 15 years. The questionnaire included a cyberbullying scale, an emotional dysregulation scale, a depression scale, anxiety scale, and a coping self-efficacy scale. The findings suggested that those students who experienced higher levels of cyber victimization tended to report lower levels of self-efficacy which led to emotional dysregulation and higher internalization of emotions. Data analyses revealed similar findings from previous research investigating coping efficacy with traditional bullying.

If a child who is victimized does not have self-efficacy in their capabilities to employ an adaptive coping strategy, persistent victimization may occur and affect longer-term psychosocial development (Dooley, Shaw, & Cross, 2012; Jacobs, Völlink, Dehu, & Lechner, 2015; Lowe et al., 2008; Tofti, Loᐧsel, Farrington, & Lober, 2011b). Victims must additionally learn to monitor and control their emotions, appraise signals the bully is exhibiting, and integrate both intra and interpersonal skills.

Rationale for Vignettes as a Tool for Assessment of Cyberbullying

Vignettes are short, realistic scenarios depicting realistic content the participant might experience (Leicher & Mulder, 2016). The use of vignettes allows participants the

opportunity to report authentic responses without the need to share personal information (Mulder, 2015; Schoenberg & Ravdal, 2000). Participants are also able to make normative statements rather than divulging their personal beliefs (Finch, 1987). This type of instrument can provide the platform to discover which types of coping strategies middle school students might report when faced with scenarios such as those depicted in the vignettes.

Wright, Burnham, Inman, and Ogorchock (2009) used scenarios to investigate middle school students' reaction to cyberbullying incidents. Their study was divided into three parts with the first concentrating on a survey to collect cyberbullying information, followed by in-depth focus groups discussing the survey results, and finally the creation of simulated cyberbullying incidents based on findings from the previous data collection. Their findings suggest that the creation of scenarios or simulations are not only more interesting to this age group, but also more effective in gaining their attention.

Walker and Jeske (2016) used vignettes to understand bystander reactions to bullying and cyberbullying interactions. They implemented eight scenarios in total, four using traditional bullying and the other four cyberbullying. In each of the scenarios, a specific incident was described, and the participants were asked how willing they would be to intervene. They found the scenarios to be effective and that online aggressive interactions were more likely to encourage bystander behavior. A limitation they reported was that the scenarios were not described in detail and that further audio/visual components would elicit more responses.

Gomez-Garibello, Shariff, McDonnell, and Talwar (2012) also used vignettes to explore perceptions of cyberbullying experiences. Their sample included 115 participants between 12 and 17 years of age. Participants were given eight vignettes which included a potential victim and perpetrator. They were asked whether the perpetrator's actions were good or bad on a 5-point. Likert scale (1 being very bad and 5 being very good). Participants were also asked about the perceived intentions of the perpetrators. Those vignettes in which there was a perceived intention to harm, imbalance in power, and the posting of false stories were rated the most severe. This study was informative as all three variables, especially intent to harm and imbalance in power, are difficult to assess through cyber interactions.

A qualitative study by used Berne, Frisen, and Kling (2014) used a vignette, developed by the authors, to stimulate a conversation about cyberbullying. The researchers asked the participants to imagine the they had recently posted a photo of themselves on Facebook. When they checked their post later in the evening, they noticed nasty messages had been posted about how they look. Participants were then asked questions about their perspectives on appearance-related cyberbullying incidents. Participants indicated this was more relevant for girls than boys, and both agreed this tactic is used as a weapon to lower someone's confidence. The authors did not discuss the importance of using a vignette to probe the participants; however, it may be due to descriptions of a potential scenarios often used to elicit responses with qualitative inquiry.

Bauman and Newman (2013) also saw the value in creating vignettes, and therefore used a questionnaire to create 16 cyberbullying scenarios. Eight of the scenarios depicted traditional types of bullying, whereas the other eight were through the use of electronic devices. The vignettes were implemented through an online survey with participants ($N = 588$) from a large southwestern university. A confirmatory factor analysis was initially conducted separating traditional bullying and cyberbullying, but statistics proved to be weak. They then went on to conduct a principal component analysis of the two types of bullying together resulting in three components of general victimization which includes humiliation and embarrassment, name calling, and explicit sexual images. Overall, the spread of explicit sexual images was reported to be the most damaging. The researchers noted that this is typically associated with cyber interactions, which may be the reason cyberbullying is cited as being more harmful. There was, again, no report of the effectiveness regarding the use of vignettes as an instrument; however, the findings were still significant and salient.

Another example is the two-part study in which the primary study sought to determine whether the current definition of cyberbullying behavior, including power imbalance, is appropriately depicted through perceived popularity using vignettes conducted by Pieschl et al. (2013). The researchers also wanted to determine if cyberbullying experiences are more distressing if perpetrated by a popular student versus an unpopular student. Last, the researchers sought to investigate the differing effects of media and type of cyberbullying on ability to cope and coping strategies employed. The participants for Study 1 included 186 students between the ages of 12 and 19. Fifty-six of

the participants were boys and 130 were girls. Following the three-tiered German school system, 128 of these students were in the highest track, 19 in the middle track, 3 were in the lowest track, 18 attended a comprehensive school, 9 attended a vocational school, and the remaining 9 students reported a different type of school setting. The participants for Study 2 included 127 students (65 males and 62 females) from three sixth grade classes and three seventh grade classrooms. Ages of students ranged from 11-15 years, with most students attending the middle track schooling, and the remainder in the lowest track.

In Study 1, the students were presented with two cyber scenarios in a two-by-two design. Before beginning, students were asked to name the most and least popular students at their school, the sex of those students, and whether they liked those students named. These names were then inserted into the vignettes. The students were also given three scales to rate and describe the vignettes, followed by a cyber experience questionnaire. The first scale administered was the Current Mood Scale which is comprised of 19 adjectives and was divided into five main scales with subsequent subscales. The five main scales included: sorrow (Cronbach's alpha = .91-.93), despair (Cronbach's alpha = .81-.90), positive mood (Cronbach's alpha = .84-.89), anger (Cronbach's alpha = .88-.91), and negative mood (Cronbach's alpha = .91-.93). Each of the adjectives was rated on a 7-point scale. The next scale was the Helpless Cognition Scale (HiS). This scale was also rated on a 7-point scale. There were 20 items students had to answer in reference to the cyberbullying vignettes, such as "I feel helpless." This scale was reliable (Cronbach's alpha = .86-.94). The third document administered was the Coping Strategies Questionnaire. For this portion, students were asked to explain how

they would respond to particular cyber scenarios. These answers were placed into categories, including social, aggressive, passive, technical, helpless, confrontation, rationalization, and depreciation. The last component administered was the Cyberbullying Questionnaire, adapted from Riebel et al. (2009) and Willard (2007). Students were asked how often they experienced particular cyber incidents and how often they had been the aggressor.

In Study 2, the participants were given one of four versions of a questionnaire comprised of fictitious vignettes. The vignettes described harassment via text, harassment via video, outing via text, and outing via video. The questionnaire consisted of three scales used during Study 1 including the Current Mood Scale, the Coping Strategies Questionnaire, and the Cyber Experience Questionnaire. In addition, the Internet Use Questionnaire was also administered. The latter scale was based on a 6-point scale that asked participants how often they used a particular Internet application.

The findings in this study have several implications. First, in comparing the defining characteristics of traditional bullying to cyberbullying, the component of power imbalance was evident in perceptions of popularity for Study 1. The authors noted that cyberbullying could also include other types of power imbalance. However, they also distinguished differences between the two types of aggressive behavior, such as the dimensions and types of media used to cyberbully in comparison to traditional types of bullying behavior. Researchers also suggested that there continues to be a discrepancy in characteristics that accurately define cyberbullying and that it may relate to the amount of distress caused to the victim. They also mentioned that repetition of the experience and

the intention to harm could have equally distressing outcomes for the victims as an imbalance in power. Their findings also identify vulnerabilities that should be addressed in intervention and prevention programs to combat cyberbullying, as well as teaching effective coping strategies. Last, they suggest that although these findings do not reduce the prevalence of cyber-victimization, there is the potential to help in diminishing the negative outcomes.

Another interesting study by Sticca et al. (2015), implemented 32 hypothetical cyberbullying scenarios to elicit coping strategy responses from students in three countries in Europe ($N = 3,970$). The main components of the scenarios were varying degrees of severity and publicity. Participants were asked to imagine they had experienced the scenario presented and were then asked how likely they would use 18 of the potential coping strategies on a scale from 1 (definitely not) to 4 (definitely). Two examples included such phrases as, "Imagine that for the last few days, you frequently received text messages telling you that everyone in school thinks that you are a total loser," and "Imagine that yesterday, a friend told you that he or she saw a YouTube video of you from the last school trip. In this video, you are seen in an embarrassing state of undress for several minutes while changing your clothes" (Sticca et al., 2015, p. 519). Although they indicated this is a promising instrument, they suggested further exploration and psychometric testing.

Finally, the use of vignettes to assess self-efficacy ratings can also be useful. Typically, in studies measuring self-efficacy capability beliefs, participants are asked to rate their perceived capability to employ a particular behavior to cope with a

situation (Ajzen, 2002; Hofstetter, Sallis, & Hovell, 1990). These rating can change depending on the context of the situation (Chesney, Neilands, Chambers, Taylor, & Folkman, 2006). Therefore, in order to achieve explanatory power in why a particular phenomenon is occurring, the rating scale must adhere to a specific activity or experience (Forsyth & Carey, 1998), such as vignettes.

As cyberbullying can be a sensitive topic, use of vignettes allows the researcher to ask participants how they view a situation without directly asking them to share personal experiences (Barter & Reynold, 2000; Klineberg, Biddle, Donovan, & Gunnell, 2011). Barter and Reynold found this type of approach to be especially effective when depicting vignettes about bullying. Additionally, vignettes must include internal validity, reliability, appropriate timing, and interest to participants (Hughes & Huby, 2012). Therefore, it is judicious to ask domain experts whether vignettes are realistic (Schoenberg & Ravdal, 2000). Cognitive interviews provide an additional means to assess the validity and reliability of vignettes by systematizing participant responses (Knafl et al., 2007).

The purpose of this study was to better understand what constitutes cyberbullying behavior, what types of coping strategies are perceived as being effective, and the role of self-efficacy beliefs to carry out stated strategies with middle school students. In order to investigate these questions, descriptive vignettes of potential cyberbullying situations (Mischel, Sheridan, & Kitsantas, 2017, November) were implemented to elicit participants' beliefs about cyberbullying behavior followed by open-ended reporting of coping strategies, and a self-efficacy rating scale to indicate beliefs in capability to execute stated strategies.

Conclusion

Bullying behavior warrants further investigation as the pervasiveness of this behavior affects millions of lives (Volk, Farrell, Franklin, Mularczyk, & Provenzano, 2016), especially as cyberbullying extends beyond the school day and is seemingly inescapable (Li, 2006; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Smith et al. 2008; Van Geel et al., 2014; Von Marées & Petermann, 2012). Compounding this issue further is the absence of an agreed upon conceptualization and operationalization of the construct (Olweus, 2013; Tokunga, 2010; Volk et al., 2017). Most researchers tend to rely on Olweus' seminal definition of traditional bullying when defining cyberbullying (Dooley et al., 2009). However, as the platforms used in cyberbullying continue to evolve, as does the proclivity for adolescents to interact online, it seems even more imperative to have an agreed upon conceptualization and operationalization of the phenomenon (Burton & Mutongwizo, 2009).

The further difficulty with this type of behavior is the potential for victims to experience detrimental outcomes (Olweus, 1977; Sourander et al., 2007). Victimization can cause both psychological and psychosomatic symptoms that can inhibit academic achievement, daily functioning, or lead to detrimental outcomes in adulthood (Cowan & Rossen, 2013). Unfortunately, perpetual victimization can also lead to suicidal ideation or suicide (Cowan & Rossen, 2013). Researchers posited that in order to diminish the potential for somatic and negative psychological experiences to occur from cyber

victimization, it is imperative to continue exploration of effective coping strategies (Mikolajczak et al., 2008; Perez & Laudido, 2008).

The ability to cope through the implementation of coping strategies has been identified as a key component in reducing potential detrimental outcomes (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Lowe et al., 2008) through regulation of emotions incorporating instrumental processes that aid this regulation (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). The strategy employed to minimize the stressful situation is dependent on which approach the individual employs (Carver et al., 1989). Although coping strategies are implemented to reduce a stressful situation, strategies can be considered adaptive (positive), maladaptive (negative), or no action (context dependent; Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). However, the ability to employ such coping strategies are dependent on the individual's self-efficacy beliefs in capability to do so (Bandura, 1991).

In order to gain an accurate depiction of this process, vignettes will be implemented. This is a preferred method to use as cyberbullying is considered a sensitive topic and vignettes alleviate potential personal distress (Mulder, 2015; Schoenberg & Ravdal, 2000). Bauman and Newman (2013) stated there is great value in using vignettes to explore perceptions of bullying (Finch, 1987; Mulder, 2015; Schoenberg & Ravdal, 2000). Vignettes have been pilot tested for validity and reliability (Mischel & Kitsantas, 2018).

As research continues to find little effectiveness with preventative school wide programs to address aggression during adolescence, it is salient to continue exploring alternative approaches (Yeager, Dahl, & Dweck, 2017). As many adolescents are

negatively affected by the outcomes from cyberbullying, focus on this topic is imperative. The hope of this study is to better understand how middle school students perceive cyberbullying incidents, what types of coping strategies they feel are effective in diminishing detrimental outcomes, and self-efficacy beliefs in capability to do so. In order to do so, these are the proposed research questions:

1. How do middle school students perceive potential cyberbullying situations?

   a. Are there differences in ratings of severity between primary and secondary vignettes?

2. What strategies, if any, do middle school students suggest as being effective to address cyberbullying?

   a. Is there a relationship between severity ratings of vignettes and whether participants have a coping strategy?

3. To what extent do self-efficacy beliefs impact students' capability to employ strategies to cope with cyberbullying incidents?

Chapter Three

Method

       The purpose of this study was to better understand what constitutes cyberbullying behavior, what types of coping strategies are perceived as being effective, and the role of self-efficacy beliefs to carry out stated strategies with middle school students. In order to investigate these questions, descriptive vignettes of potential cyberbullying situations (Mischel et al., 2017) were implemented to elicit participants' beliefs about cyberbullying behavior followed by open-ended reporting of coping strategies, and a self-efficacy rating scale to indicate beliefs in capability to execute stated strategies. Additionally, the researcher conducted interviews with middle school participants in order to ascertain a deeper understanding of how adolescents perceive potential cyberbullying situations and whether they are credible.

Participants and Setting

       Convenience sampling was used for the survey portion of this explanatory mixed method study. According to Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016), convenience sampling includes participants who engage in the study voluntarily. The sample of students ($N =$ 195) ranged in age from 11 to 14 with a diversity of ethnicities and socio-economic levels represented. To be eligible, participants had to be currently enrolled at a middle school within the Mid-Atlantic region. The questionnaire was administered to those students

who were interested in taking the cyberbullying survey, sought approval from their parents, and returned a signed assent/consent form.

The survey was administered at two middle schools within the Mid-Atlantic region. One of the middle schools set up laptops in the cafeteria and in an auxiliary computer room which allowed students to take the survey in shifts, lasting a little over an hour in total duration. Students at the other middle school also took the survey in shifts using computers provided by the school located in one room.

Demographic Data

Initial questions consisted of demographic questions such as grade, age, and gender. Next, participants answered questions such as what type of electronic device is used most often and which types of social media sites they frequent. This information was sought in order to investigate potential discrepancies between gender or age groups but also to explore the ever-changing social media sites used by middle school students. One hundred and eighty-nine middle school students, from two middle schools within the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, participated in this exploratory study. As seen in Table 1, respondents included males ($n = 80$), females ($n = 106$), and other ($n = 3$). Grade breakdown (see Table 1) indicated that most of the participants ($n = 122$) were in seventh grade. When asked if the participant owned a cell phone, the majority ($n = 159$) responded yes, with almost all participants ($n = 177$) stating they had access to a computer at home. Finally, participants were asked which type of social media they used most often. Participants were allowed to check off more than one response to this question and there were 285 responses in total. Respondents indicated that 37.4% used Instagram,

33.7% used Snapchat, 7.7% used Twitter, and 3.7% used Facebook. Those respondents

who reported using other types of social media (74.0%), YouTube or none, was reported

most often. Other types of social media reported included Tik Tok, Musical.ly, and

Houseparty.

Table 1

Descriptives for Participants

Category	*n*	*%*
Gender		
Male	80	32.5
Female	106	43.1
Other	3	1.2
Grade		
Sixth	63	25.6
Seventh	122	49.6
Eighth	4	1.6
Phone Ownership		
Yes	159	64.6
No	30	12.2
Access to a computer		
Yes	177	72.0
No	12	4.9
Social Media		
Instagram	92	37.4
Snapchat	83	33.7
Twitter	19	7.7
Facebook	9	3.7
Other	182	74.0

Procedure

Before implementing the study, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from George Mason University was sought (see Appendix A). Once approval was granted, school districts were contacted to assess interest in implementing the study. One school district within the Mid-Atlantic region was interested and requested an IRB submission. The IRB director reviewed the application and stated that it would need approval from the Assistant Superintendent of Middle Schools. Additionally, the IRB director requested the researcher meet with the Prevention Specialist in order to select appropriate schools for the study. This meeting transpired soon after the Assistant Superintendent of Middle Schools gave approval. The Prevention Specialist then met with the IRB administrator to share which schools would be appropriate. The IRB administrator then reached out to the principals to asses interest. Two principals agreed to implement the study, and the researcher was given their names and asked to contact them directly to describe the study in further detail and arrange a date for implementation.

When the researcher reached out to the principals, the researcher explained that once the study had been implemented and analyzed, the principals would be notified and receive a written analysis with the findings for their particular school. In order to provide confidentiality, the analysis was delivered to both of the schools in person. Furthermore, once the analysis had been completed overall, the principals received an overall analysis of the research findings via electronic mail. In addition, the prevention specialist was presented both a hard copy and in-person summary of the findings.

Recruitment. The recruitment process was two-fold in that a hard copy description and parental consent form were sent home to 1,432 students in addition to a

mass email sent to the parents at both middle schools. Middle school students were sought for this study as research purports this time period to be tumultuous for adolescents (Bowes et al., 2013; Ge et al.,1994; Mezulis et al.,2004; Wigfield & Eccles, 1994).

The principals both agreed to send out a flyer to students at the schools, announcing the survey, the contents, potential reward for participation, and an assent/consent form to be signed and returned. The reward for participation was entrance into a drawing to win one of 10, $20 Amazon gift cards. Additionally, the flyer also contained information regarding counseling support numbers to parents and participants in case undue stress, anxiety, or depression occurred. The first principal asked to send a flyer to all students at the middle school, whereas the other middle school chose to only implement the survey with their seventh-grade students. The researcher was responsible for making copies of the announcement handed out to all middle school students at both participating schools. Once the copies were made, the researcher delivered the flyers to each school.

Students were given the flyer during school hours to take home and share with their parents. In case students forgot or lost the hard copy form of the consent form, an additional follow-up email was also sent to parents containing identical information printed on the flyer. It was then up to parent's discretion as to whether they allowed their child to participate. Parents were asked to first read through the consent form and vignettes. If they were agreeable, they could then ask their child if they were interested in participating. If students were interested, parents needed to complete the necessary

paperwork giving consent to allow their child to participate (see Appendix B). The

students were also asked to read through the assent form and give their permission to

participate before beginning the survey (see Appendix C). Finally, in order to have the

ability to participate, students needed to return the signed permission form into the office.

     Survey procedure. If the students returned the permission forms with parental

consent and their assent, they were able to participate in the survey. The survey link was

sent to the principal's secretary so that the school staff could set up the survey on school

computers. The survey program used was Qualtrics (2019). One of the middle schools set

up laptops in their school cafeteria and auxiliary computer room, rotating in shifts. Those

students interested in participating in a follow-up interview wrote their name and grade

on an index card. Participants at the other middle school also used school computers to

take the survey, again, rotating in shifts.

     Once the participants started the survey, it took an average of 15 min for

participants to complete the study. Participants began by answering demographic

questions in order to identify grade, age, gender, and types of social media used. This was

followed by the vignettes. Participants were asked to read through vignettes and answer

to what severity they believed the situation indicated on a 3-point Likert-type scale (e.g.,

not cyberbullying, on the border, cyberbullying). Initial vignettes then lead into a more

severe situation at which point the participant, again, rated the severity of the situation on

the same 3-point Likert scale (e.g., not cyberbullying, on the border, cyberbullying).

Following this section, participants were asked if they had a potential coping strategy that

they would employ if faced with a similar situation. If they responded "yes," they were

asked to state the coping strategy in an open-ended question format. If they responded "no," they were asked to state why they did not have a particular strategy for that situation in the same space. If they answered "yes," and reported a coping strategy, they were then be asked their belief in their capability to carry out the stated coping strategy if faced with such a cyberbullying situation. This rating scale was based on a 10-point Likert-type scale (Kitsantas, 2000). Once they completed the survey, they were thanked for their participation and told they would be entered into a drawing for a $20 Amazon gift card. The researcher did not have access to the participant names, but the principal's secretary chose 10 consent forms randomly and passed out gift cards to those students.

Procedure for interviews. For the qualitative portion of the study, the researcher only contacted those participants who met the preliminary criteria of participating in the survey, expressed concern regarding cyberbullying behavior, and a willingness to participate in an interview. The researcher chose 10 random index cards for interviews. The names were sent to the principal's secretary, and she contacted the students. Students were then given another consent and assent form specifying the purpose of the interviews, the process, and the reward for participation (another $20 Amazon gift card). Similar to the first consent form, counseling services were again displayed to address any unforeseen harm participants might experience. If parents agreed and the student was still interested, the parents were asked to sign the consent form allowing their child to participate. Additionally, the consent forms indicated their child would be audio-recorded, so parents were asked to give consent for this as well. The student was only allowed to participate if the consent form was returned. Six students returned the signed

consent forms. Interviews took place at the middle school 1 week after the implementation of the survey.

Research Design

Much of the current bullying statistics are based on quantitative research, yet studies consistently suggest that there are few prevention/intervention programs that elicit positive progress in diminishing bullying behavior or detrimental outcomes (Merrell et al., 2008). Additionally, adolescents tend to report a sense of disconnect between their views of bullying behavior and those of adults. In order to accurately capture middle school students' perspectives, this study used an explanatory mixed methods design, predominantly quantitative with supplementary qualitative research. In implementing such a design, a wider variety of tools were used to better elicit middle school students' perspectives on cyberbullying to understand this phenomenon on a deeper level (Maxwell, 2012). Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) postured that using multiple methods (e.g. triangulation) can offset biases. They further postulated that using multiple methods can provide a deeper understanding of a phenomenon through elaboration and overlapping themes discovered in using both methodologies. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) agreed with this statement positing mixed methods research provides opportunities for greater reliability as the convergence of the two methods allows for triangulation of data. Kidder and Fine (1987) discussed the difficulties in finding agreement between the two methodologies but also the potential to create a powerful study if done well. Therefore, in order to adequately assess what middle school students deem to be cyberbullying, what strategies they suggest are effective in addressing

cyberbullying situations, self-efficacy beliefs in capability to do so, and finally incorporating middle school student voices to enrich data, this study used an explanatory mixed methods design.

With reliance on a critical realist ontological and epistemological stance, the goal was to synthesize a final analysis that was, "more than a sum of the individual quantitative and qualitative parts" (Bryman, 2007, p. 8). The main focus of the study relied on quantitative components with supplementary qualitative interviews in order to incorporate middle school students' voice in a more naturalistic manner. Therefore, an exploratory mixed methods approach was used.

Data Collection Instruments

Several sources of data were used to answer the research questions (see Appendices D-G). Besides the demographic portion reportedly previously, the study was comprised of four components: (1) vignettes depicting potential cyberbullying scenarios; (2) open-ended questions about strategies; (3) self-efficacy beliefs in capability to execute stated strategies; and (4) semi-structured interviews with survey participants.

The overall study was based on vignettes. The idea to use such a medium was suggested as a vehicle to determine how adolescents perceive these types of interactions in a more authentic approach. The vignettes were initially developed through shared experiences with high school students. In order to test the efficacy of the questionnaire, an online survey was initially implemented through Survey Monkey (2019) to middle school students including the Prevalence of Bullying and Teasing Scale (Cornell, 2016) and Cyberbullying Vignettes (Mischel et al., 2017). The purpose of this pilot study was to

determine how middle school students defined cyberbullying and whether the use of

vignettes is an effective tool for defining and assessing cyberbullying. The study included

31 participants in total. Initially, a bullying prevalence survey and eight vignettes were

implemented to middle school students ($n =24$) to check for reliability. Findings indicated

a need for further refinement as there was not a discernable difference between the

beginning of the vignette and the follow-up scenario. Therefore, cognitive interviews

were conducted with middle school students ($n =4$) and cyberbullying experts ($n = 3$).

Data from the cognitive interviews suggested that the rating scale should be changed

from a 5-point Likert-type scale to a 3-point scale (1 = not cyberbullying; 2 = on the

border; and 3 = cyberbullying). After suggested changes were applied, the researcher

engaged in member checking to assess accuracy and consensus of refinements to ensure

new vignettes adequately represented the responses by middle school students and

cyberbullying experts. Although the researcher employed further validation of vignettes

through the dissertation process, vignettes had adequately met reliability and validity for

the purpose of further investigation.

After participants read through these vignettes, students responded as to whether

they believed each scenario was not cyberbullying, on the border (e.g., being mean, or

unkind, but not yet considered cyberbullying), or cyberbullying. This allowed the

researcher to further understand cyberbullying perspectives of middle school students.

Next, students were asked to share coping strategies they might employ if faced with that

particular cyberbullying situation. Finally, a 10-point self-efficacy Likert–type scale was

implemented to determine beliefs in capability to employ stated strategies. The

qualitative portion consisted of brief interviews, further investigating beliefs about the scenarios depicted in the vignettes and whether they felt the situations depicted were credible. Random sampling with the criteria of concern about cyberbullying in addition to reported interest to participate in interviews was used to find interview participants.

Cyberbullying vignettes. Vignettes were used to identify what students believe to be cyberbullying behavior (Mischel et al., 2017). This instrument consisted of 8 vignettes, 16 questions in total, with a 3-item ranking scale for each (1 = not cyberbullying, 2 = on the border, 3 = cyberbullying) finalized by Mischel and Kitsantas (2018). Within each vignette, the scenarios escalated in severity to determine at which point middle school students perceived the situation to become cyberbullying. For this study, severity was interpreted as the degree of aggression perceived by the participant.

An example of this measure describes a middle school boy, James, who has become the victim of an email account hack. Classmates send fake emails to other boys telling them James has a crush on them. Students are first asked to rate this scenario, which later escalates to his perpetrators increasing the amount of love letters sent. James then begins receiving threatening emails.

Another example includes two girls trying out for cheerleading:

Taylor and Jessie both tried out for cheerleading and practiced for try-outs together. Only Taylor made the team and Jessie was very upset. Jessie texted one of their mutual friends to say she was surprised Taylor made the team because she couldn't jump very high and would struggle to fit into a cheerleading uniform. The friend shared the text with another friend.

85

Is this cyberbullying?

___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

The messages were eventually copied and reposted to a social media site that most of the students in their grade were on. A few students stood up for Taylor, but many posted mean comments.

Is this cyberbullying?

___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

The situation escalates in the second question with comments posted to a wider audience.

Open-ended questions. Open-ended questions asked participants what coping strategy they might employ if faced with the cyber situation depicted through the vignettes. This portion of the study was primarily analyzed using qualitative tools, but quantitative measurements were additionally used to cover the breadth of the data. Percentages as to whether participants reported a coping strategy were calculated. Next, frequencies of reported coping strategies were then calculated once themes emerged and were compared to research conducted in prior studies (see Pieschl et al., 2013; Sticca et al., 2015).

Self-efficacy scale. This scale consisted of a 10-point Likert scale based on previous work by Kitsantas (2000). The scale ranged from "not at all sure," (1), to "somewhat sure," (5), and finally "totally sure," (10). The question posed was related to the particular coping strategy the participant indicated they might employ, if suffering from the depicted vignette. The self-efficacy scale question was, "*How sure are you that*

you could carry out your way to make them stop? The scale was presented during the

initial validation of the survey (Mischel & Kitsantas, 2018).

Research Analysis

As the study was implemented at two schools one month apart and the principals

were interested in the data for their particular school in addition to the overall findings,

the data were initially analyzed separately and reported to the prospective schools.

Interviews were also transcribed, coded, and analyzed for recurring themes before the

second round of data were collected. Following this, the data from both schools was

merged and analyzed, sequentially, by research questions.

In order to best capture data findings from the vignettes, four types of analysis

were conducted. First, descriptives were run to capture percentile ratings, means, and

standard deviations for each of the vignettes. The Chi-square Goodness of Fit and Test of

Independence tests were also run to determine whether observed frequencies differed

from the frequencies expected and if there was an association between the primary and

secondary vignettes. In order to test the validity of the instrument, a Cronbach's alpha

was run for the primary vignettes, secondary vignettes, and then a combination of the

two. Finally, interviews were coded for six participants who reported a concern about

cyberbullying while completing the survey.

As there is little research on what coping strategies adolescents find effective

when experiencing cyberbullying (Li, 2007; Ybarra et al., 2006), the open-ended

questions were analyzed using an In Vivo approach (Saldaña, 2016), then compared to

descriptions from two previous studies. Themes emerged through a comparative analysis

approach by looking at the themes from the current study and comparing to those found in the other studies (see Pieschel et al., 2013; Sticca et al., 2015). Reasons as to why certain participants did not have a coping strategy were analyzed in a similar manner. Frequencies for coping strategy themes were reported, as well as for those themes describing reasons for not having a coping strategy.

Finally, self-efficacy beliefs in participants' perceived abilities to employ coping strategies were analyzed using descriptives of overall means and standard deviations for each vignette. Further analysis reported means for particular coping strategies reported within each vignette.
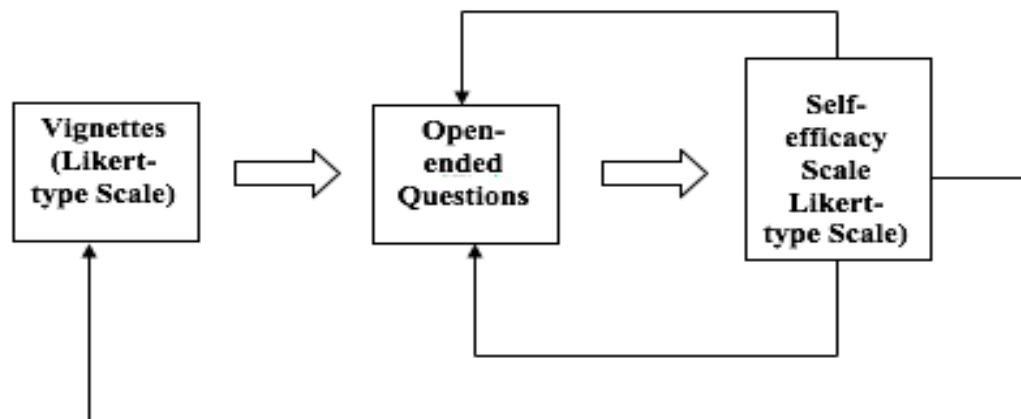
Figure 4. Iterative research design process.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative portion of this study focused on perceptions of the vignettes, discrepancies between the beginning and follow-up portions of the vignettes, frequency reports of coping strategies related to vignette scenarios, descriptives of the self-efficacy scale, and means in relation to self-efficacy reports dependent on coping strategy reported.

Quantitative data were entered into SPSS, a statistical package for the social sciences (IBM, n.d.). After entry, data were cleaned to identify missing values, normality, and univariate outliers (Meyers, Gamst & Guarino, 2013). Once the data were cleaned, the researcher categorized descriptive data to indicate frequency counts and percentages of ages, gender, year in school, accessibility to social media, and sites frequented on a regular basis. The data were then divided into three separate analyses (e.g., vignettes, open-ended questions, self-efficacy scales), and then compared using an iterative process (Greene, 2007).

The first point of analysis was focused on Research Question 1: How do middle school students perceive potential cyberbullying situations? And, what are the differences between beginning and follow-up vignettes?

First, the researcher investigated beliefs about the severity of the vignettes, rated on a 3-point Likert-type scale. The original study rated the vignettes on a 5-point Likert scale, but cognitive interviews with middle school students and cyberbullying experts suggested a clearly defined rating scale with a choice of three ratings (1 = not cyberbullying; 2 = on the border; 3 = cyberbullying). Chi-square tests (Goodness of Fit and Test of Independence) were then conducted to check for statistical significance of

89

vignettes as well as similarities, or discrepancies, between the beginning of the vignettes and the latter portion of the vignettes (McHugh, 2013).

Percentages were recorded to indicate how participants perceived situations depicted in the vignettes on a 3-point Likert-type scale. In addition, means and standard deviations were recorded. As each vignette contained a primary situation (Vignette a) followed by a follow-up situation (Vignette b), two tables were created to depict outcomes. As the data was non-parametric and the researcher was interested in observed versus expected frequencies as well as effect size, a Chi-square goodness of fit test was run reporting x^2 outcomes, standardized residuals, and Cohens' d. Next, a Chi-square test of independence was run to check for associations between the primary (Vignette a) and follow-up (Vignette b) vignettes. The researcher hypothesized that there would not be an association between the two vignettes.

Research Question 2 was addressed next: What strategies, if any, do middle school students suggest as being effective to address cyberbullying? And, is there a relationship between severity ratings of vignettes and whether participants had a coping strategy?

This portion of the analysis was focused on the open-ended questions regarding whether participants had a coping strategy they might employ if faced with the situations in the vignettes. Generally, open-ended questions can be more qualitative in nature. However, for the purposes of this portion of the study, percentages were first calculated as to whether participants indicated a coping strategy and then frequencies were calculated for open-ended answers after codes and themes were established (see pages

95-97). Frequencies were reported for stated coping strategies and reasons for not having a coping strategy.

The last quantitative data component was Research Question 3, which analyzed self-efficacy ratings: To what extent do self-efficacy beliefs impact students' capability to employ strategies to cope with cyberbullying incidents?

As an individual's belief in their capability to employ a goal, such as a coping strategy, can affect the outcome, asking participants their beliefs in their capability to execute their stated coping strategy is imperative (Kokkinos & Kipritsi, 2012). This scale was rated on a 10-point Likert scale and was directly related to the coping strategy stated in the open-ended portion of the study. Descriptive data were analyzed to study overall means and standard deviations regarding self-efficacy beliefs as well as means related to each of the coping strategies stated in the open-ended portion. This was salient in that it suggested which coping strategies reported the highest and lowest self-efficacy ratings.

Qualitative Data Analysis

There were two components that comprised the qualitative portion of the study. Qualitative data can enhance the credibility of findings from quantitative methods (Greene, 2007). In order to give a better understanding to perceptions of vignettes, interviews were conducted with participants from the first school in which the survey was implemented. Open-ended questions were also coded and investigated for developing themes in order to understand what types of coding strategies participants reported most often.
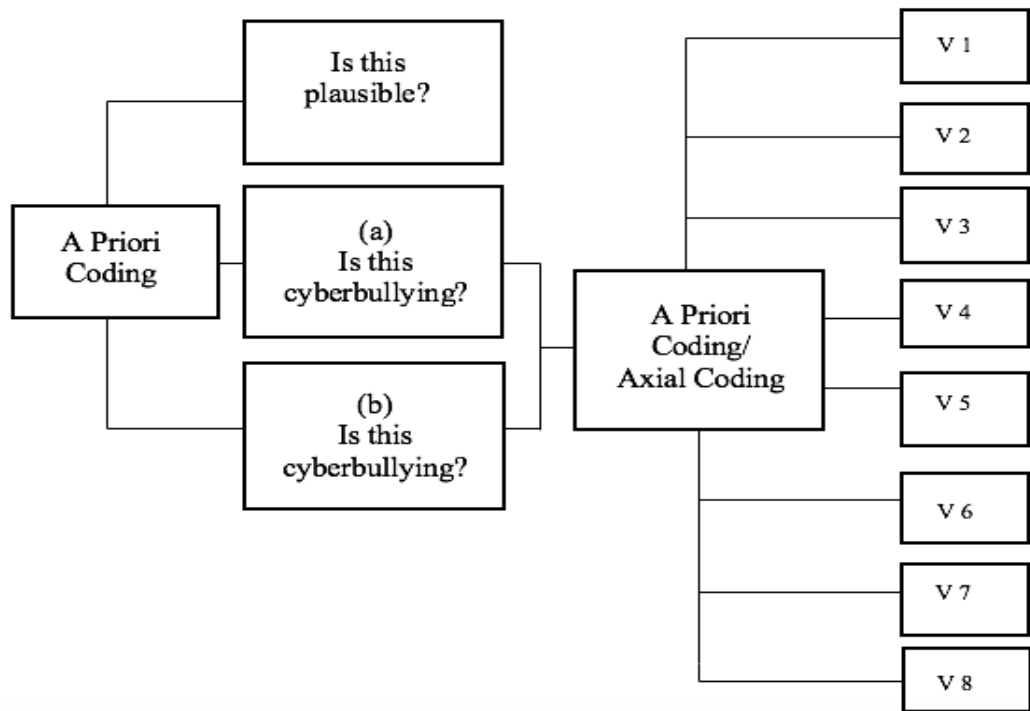
Figure 5. Coding and theme development.

Interviews. Throughout the interview process, in addition to recording participant responses, the researcher also took notes in order to capture student affect. During the initial scan of the transcriptions, the researcher took notes to reflect upon first impressions. On the next read-through, the researcher used a priori coding (Blair, 2015), such as was the situation plausible, did the interview participants believe the primary vignette was cyberbullying, and did they feel the secondary vignette was cyberbullying? (see Table 2). The participants were then probed further as to the reasons for the previous responses. Responses were coded using an open-coding technique. These codes were then compared to a priori codes synthesized from previous literature findings (Corcoran

et al., 2015; Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2008; Langos, 2012; O'Moore, & Minton, 2009; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009) as shown in Table 2. Once the codes had been compared and consensus was established, codes were finalized. From these codes, axial coding was used to develop emerging themes to explain participants' responses as to why they perceived the vignettes to be cyberbullying as shown in Table 2 (e.g., intent to harm, 24/7, repetition, social dominance, and repeated victimization).

Finally, in order to capture the type of cyberbullying occurring through the perceptions of the participants, descriptions from previous literature findings were synthesized (Li, 2010; Noncentini et al., 2010; Ortega, Mora-Merchan, & Jäger, 2007; Willard 2006;see Table 3). The seven types suggested in the literature included: harassment, denigration, exclusion, impersonation, outing and trickery, flaming, and cyberstalking. Codes shown in Table 2, were used to determine what type of cyberbullying was being described.

Table 2

Descriptions, Codes, and Themes from Participant Interviews

Descriptions	Codes	Coding themes
Intent to harm (traditional bullying): dependent on the perspective of the one being harmed	being mean; on purpose; making fun; hurtful; causing depression	Intent to harm
Ability to attack at any time	none were reported	24/7
Repetition (traditional bullying): does not necessarily need to be posted repeatedly, but can include being shared to a wider, and unknown audience.	public; reposting; others can see; shared	Repetition
Imbalance in Power (traditional bullying): anonymity in cyberspace, or the ability to capitalize on superior technological skills	popular	Social dominance
Repeated victimization: when bystanders comment, like, or share humiliating content	comments; sharing; others can post	Repeated victimization

(Corcoran et al.,2015; Kowalski et al., 2008; Langos, 2012;
O'Moore & Minton, 2009; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009)

Table 3

Types of Cyberbullying

Descriptors	Types
Repeated offensive messages	Harassment
Harmful or untrue statements	Denigration
Intentionally excluding a person or group online	Exclusion
Pretending to be someone else while posting online	Impersonation (masquerading)
Sending or posting sensitive, private or embarrassing information	Outing and trickery
Sending angry, rude, or vulgar messages	Flaming
threatening to harm or intimidate an individual online	Cyberstalking

Open-ended responses. Open-ended responses were then copied and pasted onto

a separate document from the SPSS data output. The researcher read through all of the

responses and reported initial coding schemes through the process of memoing (Saldaña,

2016). Once the second site had implemented the survey and data were retrieved, open-

ended responses were also copied and pasted onto a separate document from the SPSS

data output. The researcher then methodically coded the data using an In Vivo approach

in order to capture the exact words described by the participants (Saldaña, 2016). For

participants indicating the lack of a coping strategy, they were asked to explain the reason

for the absence of a strategy. These responses were not originally coded but underlined.

Again, the researcher employed an In Vivo approach (Saldaña, 2016) to analyze

the open-ended responses indicative of the participant not having a coping strategy.

In order to ensure reliability and frequencies of coded data, the researcher asked a

secondary researcher to corroborate the data as well as comparing themes to previous

research. The secondary researcher spent 11 hr recoding the data according to a codebook

established by the initial researcher. Additional codes were also encouraged. Both

researchers met to discuss the discrepancies and similarities, with data being analyzed

one final time by the original researcher to include suggestions by the second researcher.

Finalized codes were then compared to previous research on coping strategies (see Tables

4 and 5). Some of the codes aligned with the previous studies, yet new and modified

codes were initiated to reflect data from the current study. Some codes were also broken

down further due to their prevalence. The discrepancy in codes may have potentially

arisen due to differences in demographic locations in which the data were collected.

Table 4

Comparative Coding Scheme per Pieschl et al. (2013)

Pieschl et al. (2013)	
Coping strategy	Explanation of coping strategy
Social	• Seeking support from adults or peers
Aggressive	• Online retaliation
Passive	• Ignoring the incident
Technical	• Notifying the internet service provider, changing account settings, or blocking the person
Helpless	• Not knowing what to do
Confrontation	• Seeking an active problem-solving solution with the perpetrator
Rationalization	• Seeking an explanation for the incident
Depreciation	• Devaluing the situation

Table 5

Comparative Coding Scheme per Sticca et al. (2015)

Sticca et al. (2015)	
Coping Strategy	Explanation of coping strategy
Distal advice	• Go to the police • Seek professional advice • Inform a teacher or the principal • Call a helpline
Assertiveness	• Ask the bully why this is he/she is doing this • Tell the bully to stop it
Helplessness/Self-blame	• Be completely desperate • Ask myself why this happened to me • Not know what to do
Active ignoring	• Get around that person • Avoid any further contact with the bully
Retaliation	• Get back at him in the real world • Get back at him in the virtual world (online, e.g., SMS/email) • Write mean and threatening things to the bully • Get back at him/her personally
Close support	• Talk to my friends because it's good for • Go to someone who listens to me and comforts me • Spend time with my friends to take my mind off it • Go to someone who accepts me the way I am
Technical coping	• Pay more attention to who gets access to my data • Block that person so that s/he cannot contact me anymore • Put less information on the Internet

Quality and Ethical Considerations

In order to ensure ethical considerations for participants with a sensitive topic such as cyberbullying, approval from the IRB was sought before implementing the study. Parental consent and child assent were required before the participants began the study. As an additional precaution, parents were given the vignettes within the parental consent

page in order to have access to the material their child would be reading. Finally, there was a list of counselors included on the consent form, available near the vicinity of the schools, in case a child, or parent, felt this type of intervention was warranted. With regards to the brief interviews, the researcher used a semi-structured interview format which focused on perceptions of the vignettes described in the study, without delving deeply into personal experiences in order to reduce any potential distress to the participants.

First, participants were asked to answer demographic questions such as their grade, access to social media, social media sites frequented most often, and concern for cyberbullying. This was followed by eight vignettes which each increased in severity, to total 16 in all. After each vignette, participants were asked to rate the cyberbullying situation on a 3-point Likert-type scale (e.g., no, on the border, and yes). Responses on these items shaped how participants answered the open-ended questions which asked participants if they had any strategies if experiencing the vignette described. The open-ended questions were first coded using an initial coding scheme to record overall impressions. Next, the data were analyzed using axial coding techniques. In order to obtain intercoder reliability, a secondary researcher was sought to corroborate codes. The researcher then compared themes to prior research in order to triangulate the data (see Pieschl et al., 2013; Sticca et al., 2015). Next, responses to the final quantitative portion, in which participants rated their self-efficacy beliefs in capability to execute stated strategies, were analyzed. This data were compared to specific coping strategies reported to understand the relationship process between coping strategies and self-efficacy beliefs

in capabilities to execute those strategies. This was a crucial component in determining whether stated coping strategies were actually effective or not, according to participants. Finally, in order to allow middle school student's voice to enrich the data, brief interviews were conducted to further extend quantitative findings (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003) on perceptions of cyberbullying related to vignettes.

In order to reduce biases with the qualitative data in the study, several strategies were implemented. For the open-ended responses, a second researcher was sought to ensure inter-coder reliability. For the interview data, the researcher used memoing when initially looking at the data, and then used triangulation through a comparison with prior research and a constant comparative analysis between survey data and interview codes when developing themes.

Validity

Maxwell (2013) stated the saliency of addressing validity in research design and that doing so encourages trustworthiness. Instrumental in strengthening validity of a quantitative design is to implement qualitative components (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007), in which a constant comparative analysis is conducted to encourage triangulation of the data (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Researchers can further establish validity by creating an audit trail in which reflections and impressions are reported throughout the data collection process (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Finally, the researcher can employ intercoder reliability by asking another colleague to code data to look for commonalities or discrepancies.

In order to ensure validity, the researcher conducted a pilot study to validate the vignettes. This initially began as a quantitative survey, but results indicated the need to conduct cognitive interviews. Therefore, the researcher engaged in cognitive interviews with middle school students and cyberbullying experts. Both middle school students and cyberbullying experts concurred that the 5-point Likert-type scale originally implemented was too vague, and all agreed that a shift to a 3-point Likert-type scale would be clearer. Furthermore, some of the scenarios were unclear and required clarification. Member checking with all cognitive interview participants occurred in order to assess accuracy and clear interpretation of suggested refinements.

Interviews indicated that middle school students and cyberbullying experts perceived the vignettes differently, with middle school students tending to report them as being less severe than the cyberbullying experts. Additionally, research has shown that victims do not tend to report bullying incidents to adults, yet the pilot study indicated that most students reported telling an adult as the most effective coping strategy (Mishna, Saini, & Solomon, 2009). Furthermore, an individual's perspective can influence their reactions to a cyberbullying situation (Diazgranados et al., 2015). Those subjected to victimization over a period of time, tend view this type of aggressive behavior as a personal attack (Mischel & Kitsantas, 2017). Hence, the researcher continually reflected upon personal biases about such discrepancies when analyzing brief interviews about coping strategies.

Chapter Four

The purpose of this study was to investigate perceptions of cyberbullying incidents through vignettes piloted through a former study, reported coping strategies, and self-efficacy beliefs in capability to employ stated strategies. This chapter provides an analysis divided by research question.

Research Question One

Research question 1 assessed middle school students' perception's on specific cyberbullying situations through vignettes piloted in a prior study (Mischel & Kitsantas, under review). A survey was implemented initially to assess student perceptions of vignette severity. Beginning scenarios of all vignettes depicted were developed to be less severe in nature, with the latter portion escalating to include social media postings to a wider audience. Percentage results for how middle school students rated vignettes on a 3-point Likert-type scale are divided into separate tables depicted in Table 6 (beginning vignette scenarios) and Table 7 (follow-up scenarios). Additional analysis included Cronbach alpha's for vignettes in order to assess reliability as well as utilizing the Chi-squares results in order to analyze differences between primary and secondary vignettes with non-parametric, categorical data (McHugh, 2013).

Quantitative data results. Results for Tables 6 and 7 will be combined to better understand perceived escalation within each vignette.

Table 6

Percentages for Primary Vignettes

Variables	N	% Not CB	On the Border	Yes	M	SD
1. Vignette 1 (a)	189	7.4	13.20	79.40	2.72	.59
2. Vignette 2 (a)	189	7.4	13.20	79.40	2.72	.59
3. Vignette 3 (a)	189	2.60	18.00	79.40	2.77	.48
4. Vignette 4 (a)	189	10.10	43.90	46.00	2.36	.66
5. Vignette 5 (a)	189	31.20	45.50	23.30	1.92	.74
6. Vignette 6 (a)	189	21.70	45.50	32.30	2.11	.73
7. Vignette 7 (a)	189	33.90	40.20	25.90	1.92	.77
8. Vignette 8 (a)	189	32.80	41.30	25.90	1.93	.77

*CB= cyberbullying

Table 7

Percentages for Secondary Vignettes Following Ratings for Primary Vignettes

Variables	N	% Not CB	On the Border	Yes	M	SD
1. Vignette 1 (b)	189	3.20	7.90	88.90	2.86	.43
2. Vignette 2 (b)	189	12.20	33.90	52.40	2.43	.72
3. Vignette 3 (b)	189	2.60	8.50	88.90	2.86	.42
4. Vignette 4 (b)	189	3.70	11.60	84.70	2.81	.48
5. Vignette 5 (b)	189	3.70	20.60	75.70	2.72	.53
6. Vignette 6 (b)	189	1.61	9.00	88.90	2.88	.37
7. Vignette 7 (b)	189	5.80	29.60	64.60	2.59	.60
8. Vignette 8 (b)	189	4.80	27.50	67.70	2.63	.58

* CB = cyberbullying

The first portion of Vignette 1 describes two girls who tried out for cheerleading and only one of the girls was chosen. The girl who was not chosen, spread rumors about the other girl due to her jealousy of not being chosen. The girl that was jealous sent the other girl a nasty text message. Analysis indicates that 7.40% of participants reported this

scenario as not cyberbullying, 13.20% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 79.40% stated they perceived the scenario to be cyberbullying. The second portion of the vignette escalates in that the jealous girl begins to repeatedly text message the girl that was chosen. She then posts a picture of the girl chosen for the cheerleading team with the words, "Stuck up snob," underneath. Others join in posting additional comments. Analysis for this portion indicates that that 3.20% of participants reported this scenario as still not perceived as cyberbullying, 7.90% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 88.9% stated they perceived the scenario to be cyberbullying.

The first portion of Vignette 2 describes a tall skinny middle schooler who is one of the known smart kids at school. Taking notice of this shyness, a group of boys send text messages to each other making comments and laughing out loud saying that the boy is gay. Analysis indicates that 12.20% of participants reported this scenario as not cyberbullying, 33.90% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 52.40% stated they perceived the scenario to be cyberbullying. The second portion of the vignette escalates in that one day when the boy is changing next to another boy in the locker room, one of the boys who has been teasing him saying he is gay, snaps a picture of him in his underwear and posts to social media with the caption, "I'm gay," underneath. The post is shared throughout the school. Analysis for this portion indicates that 7.40% of participants reported this scenario as not cyberbullying, 13.20% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 79.40% stated they perceived the scenario to be cyberbullying. The decrease in percentages between the primary vignette findings and those found in the secondary percentages were anomalous to other vignette findings. This discrepancy may

be due to a variety of reasons such as the actions depicted may be considered illegal, reducing the tendency to report this situation as cyberbullying. This will be discussed further in the qualitative findings.

The first portion of Vignette 3 describes an attractive, new student who incites jealousy from other female students due to the attention she is receiving from other males. Some of the girls spread rumors that the new student is a "slut." The girls begin to post that they have just passed, "the slut" to their social media boards. Analysis indicates that 2.60% of participants reported this scenario as not cyberbullying, 18.00% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 79.40% stated they perceived the scenario to be cyberbullying. The second portion of the vignette escalates in that boys start believing the rumors and the new student is receiving rude, sexual posts from boys she does not know. Analysis for this portion indicates that 2.60% of participants continued to report this scenario as not cyberbullying, 8.50% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 88.90% now stated they perceived the scenario to escalate into cyberbullying.

The first portion of Vignette 4 describes a male whose classmates are harassing him about his sexuality. A fake account is created in order to post a fake love note from this male to another male classmate who is openly gay. Analysis indicates that 10.10% of participants reported this scenario as not cyberbullying, 43.90% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 46.00% stated they perceived the scenario to be cyberbullying. The second portion of the vignette escalates in that the initial perpetrators send out more love notes from this male to other boys. He begins to receive threatening posts from the males receiving his love letters. Analysis for this portion indicates that that 3.70% of

participants now reported this scenario as not cyberbullying, 11.60% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 84.70% stated they perceived the scenario as cyberbullying.

Vignette 5 begins by describing a sleepover with a group of females. When one of the girls falls asleep, her friends notice some compromising pictures of the sleeping female. They send one of the embarrassing pictures to a male she is fond of. Analysis indicates that 31.20% of participants reported this scenario as not cyberbullying, 45.50% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 23.30% stated they perceived the scenario to be cyberbullying. The second portion of the vignette describes the friends creating a fake blog, posturing as the girl, with additional pictures posted with comments underneath each photo. People start responding to the female's blog immediately, posting nasty and embarrassing comments. Analysis for this portion indicates that that 3.70% of participants reported this scenario as not cyberbullying, 20.60% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 75.70% stated they perceived the scenario as cyberbullying.

The first portion of Vignette 6 describes two adolescents who have been dating for 3 months. Pressured by friends, the male asks the female to send a compromising picture of herself in just a bra. The female complies, and the male then sends the photo to his best friend. Analysis indicates that 21.70% of participants reported this scenario as not cyberbullying, 45.50% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 32.30% stated they perceived the scenario to be cyberbullying. The second portion of the vignette escalates in that the best friend then posts the picture on social media, available for the entire school to view. Analysis for this portion indicates that 1.61% of participants

reported this scenario as not cyberbullying, 9.00% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 88.90% stated they perceived the scenario as escalating into cyberbullying.

The first portion of Vignette 7 describes two classmates who are good friends that, after a picture is posted on social media, are named the "Next New Couple." Analysis indicates that 33.90% of participants reported this scenario as not cyberbullying, 40.20% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 25.90% stated they perceived the scenario to be cyberbullying. The second portion of the vignette escalates in that the picture goes viral and classmates post both positive and negative comments about the couple. Analysis for this portion indicates that that 5.80% of participants reported this scenario as not cyberbullying, 29.60% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 64.60% stated they perceived the scenario to now escalate into cyberbullying.

The first portion of vignette 8 describes two females who have a disagreement which results in one of the female's exclusion from a birthday party. The other females invited are warned of exclusion if they chose to empathize with the excluded female. Analysis indicates that 32.80% of participants reported this scenario as not cyberbullying, 41.30% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 25.90% stated they perceived the scenario to be cyberbullying. The second portion of the vignette escalates to pictures posted on social media describing the party with the phrase, "Too bad that a certain someone was rude and got herself uninvited." Analysis for this portion indicates that that 4.80% of participants reported this scenario as not cyberbullying, 27.50% reported the scenario to be on the border, and 67.70% stated they perceived the scenario to now escalate into cyberbullying

Table 8

Chi-Square, Standardized Residuals, and Cohen's d Data for Primary Vignettes

Variables	x^2	Standardized Residuals			Cohen's *d*
		Not CB	On the border	Yes	
1. Vignette 1 (a)	**181.18	-6.17	-6.17	9.33	.97
2. Vignette 2 (a)	**181.18	-6.17	-4.79	10.96	.97
3. Vignette 3 (a)	**186.89	-8.45	-6.85	15.31	1.30
4. Vignette 4 (a)	**46.22	-6.41	2.92	3.50	.25
5. Vignette 5 (a)	**14.38	-.66	3.35	-2.77	.08
6. Vignette 6 (a)	**16.22	-2.74	2.94	-.21	.09
7. Vignette 7 (a)	5.81	-.15	1.90	-2.04	.03
8. Vignette 8 (a)	*6.70	-.15	2.19	-2.04	.04

Note. $* = p < .05, ** = p < .001$.

Table 9

Chi-Square, Standardized Residuals, and Cohen's d Data for Secondary Vignettes

Variables	x^2	Standardized Residuals			Cohen's *d*
		Not CB	On the border	Yes	
1. Vignette 1(b)	**349.56	-8.40	-6.85	15.25	1.85
2. Vignette 2 (b)	**89.92	-3.50	-5.39	15.74	.48
3. Vignette 3 (b)	**263.46	-8.45	-6.85	15.31	1.30
4. Vignette 4 (b)	**225.81	-8.16	-5.98	14.14	1.21
5. Vignette 5 (b)	**160.51	-8.16	-3.50	11.66	.85
6. Vignette 6 (b)	**267.14	-7.54	-5.77	13.30	1.43
7. Vignette 7 (b)	**98.95	-7.59	-1.02	8.60	.53
8. Vignette 8 (b)	**115.27	-7.87	-1.60	9.48	.62

Note. $* = p < .05, ** = p < .001$.

The Chi-Square goodness of fit test examining participants' ratings of potential cyberbullying situations was statistically significant for Vignette 1a [χ_2 (2, *n* = 189) = 181.18, *p* = .001]. Thus, we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude the observed

frequencies differ from the frequencies expected. Based on the standardized residuals, more students report the situation to be perceived as cyberbullying ($SR_{not\ cyberbullying}$ = -6.17; $SR_{on\ the\ border}$ = -6.17; $SR_{cyberbullying}$ = 9.33). The effect size was .97 and interpreted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines as a very large effect. For the follow-up portion, Vignette 1b [χ_2 (2, n = 189) = 349.56, p = .001], the Chi-Square goodness of fit, again, rejected the null hypothesis when looking at the observed frequencies from the expected. Based on the standardized residuals, more participants reported that the second portion of Vignette 1 was considered cyberbullying as suggested by the report ($SR_{not\ cyberbullying}$ = -8.40; $SR_{on\ the\ border}$ = -6.85; $SR_{cyberbullying}$ = 15.25).The effect size 1.85, interpreted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines, also suggested a very large effect.

For Vignette 2a [χ_2 (2, n=189) = 181.75, p = .001], the Chi-Square goodness of fit was statistically significant rejecting the null hypothesis to conclude the observed frequencies differed from the frequencies expected. Based on the standardized residuals, more students reported the situation as cyberbullying ($SR_{not\ cyberbullying}$ = -6.17; $SR_{on\ the\ border}$ = -4.79; $SR_{cyberbullying}$ = 10.96). The effect size was .97 and interpreted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines as a very large effect. For the follow-up portion, Vignette 2b [χ_2 (2, n =189) = 89.92, p = .001], the Chi-Square goodness of fit, again, rejected the null hypothesis when looking at the observed frequencies from the expected. Based on the standardized residuals, when analyzing Vignette 2b, more participants considered the secondary scenario as cyberbullying, rather than not, suggested by the report ($SR_{not\ cyberbullying}$ = -3.50; $SR_{on\ the\ border}$ = -5.39; $SR_{cyberbullying}$ = 15.74). The

effect size .48, interpreted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines, suggested a medium to large effect.

For Vignette 3a [χ_2 (2, n = 189) = 186.89, p = .001], the Chi-Square goodness of fit was statistically significant rejecting the null hypothesis to conclude the observed frequencies differed from the frequencies expected. Based on the standardized residuals, more students reported the situation as cyberbullying ($SR_{not\ cyberbullying}$ = -8.45; $SR_{on\ the\ border}$ = -4.23; $SR_{cyberbullying}$ = 12.68). The effect size was 1.00 and interpreted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines as a very large effect. For the follow-up portion, Vignette 3b [χ_2 (2, n =189) = 263.46, p = .001], the Chi-Square goodness of fit, again, rejected the null hypothesis when looking at the observed frequencies from the expected. Based on the standardized residuals, more participants reported that the second portion of Vignette 3 was considered cyberbullying as suggested by the report ($SR_{not\ cyberbullying}$ = -8.45; $SR_{on\ the\ border}$ = -6.85; $SR_{cyberbullying}$ = 15.31).The effect size 1.30, interpreted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines, suggested a very large effect.

For Vignette 4a [χ_2 (2, n = 189) = 46.22, p = .001], the Chi-Square goodness of fit was statistically significant rejecting the null hypothesis to conclude the observed frequencies differed from the frequencies expected. Based on the standardized residuals, more students report the situation to be perceived as not cyberbullying ($SR_{not\ cyberbullying}$ = -6.41; $SR_{on\ the\ border}$ = -2.92; $SR_{cyberbullying}$ = 3.50). The effect size was .25 and interpreted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines as a medium effect. For the follow-up portion, Vignette 4b [χ_2 (2, n = 189) = 225.81, p = .001], the Chi-Square goodness of fit, again, rejected the null hypothesis when looking at the observed

frequencies from the expected. Based on the standardized residuals, more participants

reported that the second portion of Vignette 4 was considered cyberbullying as suggested

by the report ($SR_{not\ cyberbullying}$ = -8.16; $SR_{on\ the\ border}$ = -5.98; $SR_{cyberbullying}$ =

14.14).The effect size 1.21, interpreted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines, suggested a very

large effect.

For Vignette 5a [χ_2 (2, n = 189) = 14.38, p = .001], the Chi-Square goodness of

fit was statistically significant rejecting the null hypothesis to conclude the observed

frequencies differed from the frequencies expected. Based on the standardized residuals,

more students report the situation as on the border ($SR_{not\ cyberbullying}$ = -.66;

$SR_{on\ the\ border}$ = 3.35; $SR_{cyberbullying}$ = -2.77). The effect size was .08 and interpreted using

Cohen's (1988) guidelines as a very small effect. For the follow-up portion, Vignette 5b [

χ_2 (2, n = 189) = 160.51, p = .001], the Chi-Square goodness of fit, again, rejected the

null hypothesis when looking at the observed frequencies from the expected. Based on

the standardized residuals, again most participants reported that the second portion of

Vignette 5 was on the border and that the situation de-escalated as suggested by the

report ($SR_{not\ cyberbullying}$ = -2.74; $SR_{on\ the\ border}$ = 2.94; $SR_{cyberbullying}$ = -.21).The effect

size .09, interpreted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines, suggested a very small effect.

For Vignette 6a [χ_2 (2, = 189) = 16.22, p = .001], the Chi-Square goodness of fit

was statistically significant rejecting the null hypothesis to conclude the observed

frequencies differed from the frequencies expected. Based on the standardized residuals,

more students report the situation as on the border, followed closely by not cyberbullying

($SR_{not\ cyberbullying}$ = -2.74; $SR_{on\ the\ border}$ = 2.94; $SR_{cyberbullying}$ = -.21). The effect size

was .09 and interpreted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines as a very small effect. For the

follow-up portion, Vignette 6b [χ_2 (2, n = 189) = 267.14, p = .001], the Chi-Square

goodness of fit, again, rejected the null hypothesis when looking at the observed

frequencies from the expected. Based on the standardized residuals, more participants

reported that the second portion of Vignette 6 was considered cyberbullying as suggested

by the report ($SR_{not\ cyberbullying}$ = -7.54; $SR_{on\ the\ border}$ = -5.77; $SR_{cyberbullying}$ =

13.30).The effect size 1.43, interpreted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines, suggested a very

large effect.

For Vignette 7a [χ_2 (2, n = 189) = 5.81, p = .06], the Chi-Square goodness of fit

was not statistically significant, and therefore accepted the null hypothesis to conclude

the observed frequencies did not differ significantly from the frequencies expected.

However, for the follow-up portion, Vignette 7b [χ_2 (2, n = 189) = 98.95, p = .001], the

Chi-Square goodness of fit was statistically significant and rejected the null hypothesis

when looking at the observed frequencies from the expected. Based on the standardized

residuals, more participants reported that the second portion of Vignette 7 was considered

cyberbullying as suggested by the report ($SR_{not\ cyberbullying}$ = -7.59; $SR_{on\ the\ border}$ = -

1.02; $SR_{cyberbullying}$ = 8.60).The effect size .53, interpreted using Cohen's (1988)

guidelines, suggested a large effect.

Finally, for Vignette 8a [χ_2 (2, n =189) = 6.70, p = .04], the Chi-Square goodness

of fit was statistically significant rejecting the null hypothesis to conclude the observed

frequencies differed from the frequencies expected. Based on the standardized residuals,

more students report the situation to be on the border ($SR_{not\ cyberbullying}$ = -.15;

$SR_{on\ the\ border}$ = 2.19; $SR_{cyberbullying}$ = -2.04). The effect size was .04 and interpreted using

Cohen's (1988) guidelines as a medium effect. For the follow-up portion, Vignette 8b [χ^2

(2, n = 189) = 115.27, p = .001], the Chi-Square goodness of fit, again, rejected the null

hypothesis when looking at the observed frequencies from the expected. Based on the

standardized residuals, more participants reported that the second portion of Vignette 8

was considered cyberbullying as suggested by the report, followed closely by not

cyberbullying ($SR_{not\ cyberbullying}$ = -7.87; $SR_{on\ the\ border}$ = -1.60; $SR_{cyberbullying}$ = 9.48).

The effect size .62, interpreted using Cohen's (1988) guidelines, suggested a large effect.

In addition to running a Chi-square goodness of fit test, the researcher was

interested in whether there was an association, or independence, between the beginning

and follow-up scenarios depicted through the vignettes. Therefore, a Chi-square test of

independence was also investigated for each vignette.

Table 10

Chi-Square Test of Independence Between Vignettes

Vignettes	Variables							
	Vignette 1(a)	Vignette 2(a)	Vignette 3(a)	Vignette 4(a)	Vignette 5(a)	Vignette 6(a)	Vignette 7(a)	Vignette 8 (a)
Vignette 1(b)	5.24							
Vignette 2(b)		2.06						
Vignette 3(b)			37.46**					
Vignette 4(b)				87.68**				
Vignette 5(b)					34.95**			
Vignette 6(b)						15.68**		
Vignette 7(b)							52.67**	
Vignette 8(b)								47.89**

Note. * = p < .05, ** = p < .001.

113

First, the Chi-square test of independence results for Vignette 1 $\chi2(df = 4; n =$ 189) = 5.24, p > .05, were analyzed. Chi-square results did not exceed statistical significance, accepting the null hypothesis. Participants indicated that there was no association between the beginning of the vignette and the ending scenario.

Vignette 2 had similar results. Chi-square test of independence results were $\chi2(df = 6; n = 189) = 2.05, p > .05$. Chi-square results did not exceed statistical significance, accepting the null hypothesis. Participants indicated that there was no association between the beginning of the vignette and the ending scenario.

Output changed considerably upon analysis of the remaining data output. For Vignette 3, Chi-square test of independence results were $\chi2(df = 4; n = 189) = 37.46, p < .001$. Vignette 4 Chi-square results were $\chi2(df = 4; n = 189) = 87.68, p < .001$. Chi-square test of independence results for Vignette 5 were $\chi2(df = 4; n = 189) = 34.95, p < .001$. Results for Vignette 6 were $\chi2(df = 4; n = 189) = 52.68, p < .001$. Finally, results for Vignette 7 were $\chi2(df = 4; n = 189) = 52.67$ p < .001, and results for Vignette 8 were $\chi2(df = 4; n = 189) = 47.90$ p < .001. Vignettes 3-8 exceeded statistical significance and therefore rejected the null hypothesis for these survey items. Participants' responses indicate that there is an association between the two vignettes. Chi-square results for the remaining vignettes indicated that there was not independence between the two vignettes (a and b).

In order to test the reliability of the vignettes, a Cronbach's Alpha test was run for overall findings from all vignettes, only the primary vignettes (Vignette a), and the secondary vignettes (Vignette b). Findings suggest a high Cronbach's alpha reliability for

all vignettes together (α =.79). When combining all of the 8 primary vignettes (Vignettes a), the Cronbach's alpha findings indicated very good internal consistency (α = .75), and findings for the Cronbach's alpha reliability for the 8 secondary vignettes (Vignettes b) also exhibited good internal consistency (α = .66) for a newly designed instrument.

Table 11

Cronbach's Alpha Test of Reliability

Test of reliability	Vignettes a	Vignettes b	Vignettes a & b
Cronbach alpha	.75	.66	.80

Qualitative data results. Interviews were conducted with (n = 6) middle school students from only one of the schools in which the initial study was implemented. Students volunteered to participate in the interviews which took place one week after the initial study. Four of the six participants were female with two in sixth grade and the other two in seventh. The two males were both in sixth grade. Interviews were conducted to give plausibility to questions regarding perceptions of cyberbullying incidents and to further validate vignettes for future research (see Tables 12-18). Therefore, semi-structured interview questions were administered, and a combination of a priori codes and axial coding techniques were used to analyze the data. The researcher was interested in investigating if the participants believed the vignettes were credible and whether they considered the situations to be cyberbullying, on the border, or not cyberbullying. Blair (2015) referred to the type of a priori coding used as template coding in that the codes were predetermined by the researcher.

Table 12

Vignette 1 Interviews

	Becca	Chelsea	Tina	Ashley	Joe	Todd
Grade	Seventh	Seventh	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth
V1a	No	No	No	No	No	On the border
V1b	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Plausible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Theme	repetition; social dominance	intent to harm	intent to harm	repetition	repeated victimization; intent to harm	repetition; intent to harm
Type	denigration	denigration	denigration	denigration	denigration	denigration

Amongst all six participants, it was agreed that Vignette 1 depicted a plausible cyberbullying situation. Of the six participants interviewed, five reported the primary vignette as not cyberbullying with Todd, a sixth-grade male student, stating it was on the border through his explanation:

Well, it's kind of bullying, but at the same time, it's like in the middle.

Because it's not like everyone's going to know, but it's not going to be cyberbullying because they're not really bullying her, they're just talking about her. (Todd)

The other students did not think the primary vignette warranted the rating of cyberbullying. For example, Joe shared, "I think that since they just shared the text with one person, it's not really cyberbullying." Ashley shared similar thoughts, "I don't think it's cyberbullying that much because it's on text and not social media or anything, and it

was only shared to two people." However, when queried about the second portion of the vignette, all of the students stated that it had now escalated into cyberbullying.

In analyzing the codes, four themes emerged from participants' responses to Vignette 1 including: intent to harm, repetition, repeated victimization, and social dominance. Intent to harm was reported most often, followed by repetition. An example of intent to harm was encapsulated in Tina's comment, "Because they copied it, and they re-posted it without her consent. So, it was just [I feel] like they had a bad intention." Chelsea agreed stating, "Making others feel bad is cyberbullying." Posts being available to a wider audience for viewing and comments, coded as repetition, was also another prominent theme to emerge. One sixth grade girl, Ashley, shared, "That would probably be cyberbullying because then everyone would see it." Becca shared a similar perception through comments such as, "I do think that it is because she's doing it more publicly because she's more popular."

All participants' comments described denigration (harmful or untrue statements) as the type of cyberbullying reported. When participants perceived the actions depicted in the vignettes as harmful toward the recipient, they considered the scenario to be cyberbullying. Overall, students felt that once the interactions on social media went beyond a two-way interaction communication model, and were perceived as mean-spirited, the situation was considered to be cyberbullying.

All interviewees, again, reported that the scenario in Vignette 2 could happen. Differing from the perceptions reported on Vignette 1; however, four of the interviewees stated that the beginning scenario in Vignette 2 was cyberbullying with two stating it was

either on the border or not cyberbullying. The predominant reason for this belief was that the interaction was repetitive and not solely contained between two people. Becca stated that it was cyberbullying, "Because that's multiple times that they called him that name and repetitive is considered bullying." Ashley and Joe were not a definitive "no," but felt the behavior was unkind.

Table 13

Vignette 2 Interviews

	Becca	Chelsea	Tina	Ashley	Joe	Todd
Grade	Seventh	Seventh	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth
V1a	Yes	Yes	Yes	On the border	No	Yes
V1b	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Plausible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Theme	repetition; repeated victimization	repetition; repeated victimization	repetition; repeated victimization	intent to harm	repetition; intent to harm; repeated victimization	repetition; repeated victimization
Type	outing/ trickery	outing/ trickery	outing/ trickery	outing/ trickery	denigration	outing/ trickery

As the discussion progressed to the secondary vignette, all stated it was definitely cyberbullying. When the other participants were asked why they felt it was cyberbullying, Chelsea stated, "It definitely is cyberbullying because it's sending it to even more people." There was an overall consensus that when a post is re-posted, it encourages comments which can, at times, be detrimental to the recipient. For example, Todd shared his concern about the posts being broadcast to a wider audience through his

comments, "So more people from different schools can see it and post it over and over again which can get all over the place."

Coding analysis revealed that three themes emerged for Vignette 2 including: intent to harm, repetition, and repeated victimization. Repetition and repeated victimization were reported most often, followed by intent to harm. Tina captured both themes through her comment that:

> Because one of the boys shared it online to humiliate him, and even though the picture got taken down pretty quickly, a lot of people at their saw it. So now Peter is gonna be made of even more possibly. (Tina)

Intent to harm was also present, but much less so. Ashely conveyed concern by sharing that the boys were, "Just being mean for no reason," which could result in loss of friendships.

The type of cyberbullying reported by interview participants most represented the description of outing/trickery (sending or posting sensitive, private or embarrassing information). Most participants felt this would embarrass Peter, especially as this was inferred rather than being based on factual information. Joe, however, stated that the situation best reflected denigration (harmful or untrue statements) in that the statements being posted were not necessarily factual and could have a detrimental effect on Peter's reputation.

Table 14

Vignette 3 Interviews

	Becca	Chelsea	Tina	Ashley	Joe	Todd
Grade	Seventh	Seventh	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth
V1a	Yes	On the border	Yes	On the border	Yes	No
V1b	Yes	Yes	Yes	On the border	Yes	Yes
Plausible	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Theme	repeated victimization repetition	repeated victimization	repeated victimization; intent to harm	intent to harm	intent to harm; repeated victimization	intent to harm
Type	outing/ trickery	outing/ trickery	outing/ trickery	outing/ trickery	outing/ trickery	harassment

Five out of six participants agreed that Vignette 3 could happen. When probed as to whether the beginning situation was cyberbullying, three participants stated it was cyberbullying, and three considered the situation to be on the border with one stating it was not cyberbullying. Those who believed the scenario was on the border were not able to clearly articulate why they made this statement. Those that did feel the scenario was cyberbullying, such as Becca, commented, "I think the fact that they're calling her that is cyberbullying, and they called her that multiple times." As the situation in the vignette escalates, all participants but Ashley emphatically stated that it was now cyberbullying. For example, Chelsea shared, "I definitely think that would be cyberbullying. If a lot of people are commenting or making mean comments or making fun of them, then I definitely think it would be." Joe also commented saying, "I think it makes her feel really bad because people are saying all this stuff about her that's not true." Ashley felt the

situation was still on the border due to the rude behavior and that the recipient most likely would not approve of the picture, but it was not cyberbullying.

The two prominent themes that emerged from codes were intent to harm and repeated victimization. For example, Tina stated that the other students were posting intentionally mean comments because, "She's new and because she's pretty." Joe raises the argument that the posts are inducing repeated victimization due to the potential that, "More and more people are saying stuff about it. I think it makes her feel really bad because people are saying all the stuff about her that's not true."

Outing/trickery was described as the type of cyberbullying depicted in Vignette 3. This was not surprising as most students described the vignette as providing a platform for others to post derogatory comments through initial posts, that could be further commented on by others. For example, Chelsea's comment, "It is actually cyberbullying because it says that it's shared and asking who else agrees," accurately describes outing/trickery.

Table 15

Vignette 4 Interviews

	Becca	Chelsea	Tina	Ashley	Joe	Todd
Grade	Seventh	Seventh	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth
V1a	Yes	Yes	On the border	On the border	Yes	No
V1b	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Plausible	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Theme	intent to harm	intent to harm; repetition; repeated victimization	intent to harm	intent to harm	intent to harm; repetition; repeated victimization	NA
Type	outing/ trickery; denigration	outing/ trickery; denigration	outing/ trickery	denigration	impersonation	NA

In analyzing Vignette 4, five participants agreed this scenario was plausible.

Ashley stated it was not believable as she had never heard students harass others

regarding their sexuality. All of the other participants stated this was a regular

occurrence. In looking at the primary vignette, three shared that this was cyberbullying.

Joe felt, "For the first part, I think it's cyberbullying because they have a fake account

and they're sending stuff to him." Tina stated it was on the border because the behavior

had not elicited a response from the victim, whereas Ashley felt it was on the border

because it had not been posted publicly. Similar to Tina, Todd felt it was not

cyberbullying as the victim was unresponsive to the harassment. Although Todd held

steadfast with his original statement that the vignette did not indicate cyberbullying as the

victim still had not responded, Tina and Ashley felt the secondary vignette did escalate

into cyberbullying. Tina stated, "Now it's even progressed to the point where the boys are

saying it. The day before they used to like her, and now they're even commenting."

Three themes were prominent when discussing this vignette: intent to harm, repetition, and repeated definition. With the exception of Todd, all of the participants described the vignettes as containing actions with intent to harm. For example, Becca shared: Doing that can really hurt somebody and really harm them in the head

> because you could really feel unaware to anything after that. You could think that
> even something little could be cyberbullying because you're so scared after that.
> (Becca)

Chelsea and Joe seemed perturbed by the situation and, in addition to intent to harm, shared that the situation was repetitive and contained the potential for repeated victimization.

Joe described the type of cyberbullying present as impersonation, whereas the other four participants leaned more towards outing/trickery and/or denigration. Many felt that the posts were hurtful and untrue, as well as embarrassing. Chelsea stated, "Some people might think that it would be real. They could make fun of him for being that way." Yet, there was also the belief that if James did not respond or was not aware of what was transpiring, then it might not be as detrimental.

Table 16

Vignette 5 Interviews

	Becca	Chelsea	Tina	Ashley	Joe	Todd
Grade	Seventh	Seventh	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth
V1a	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
V1b						
Plausible	Yes	Maybe	Maybe	Yes	Yes	Yes
					repetition;	
	repeated	repeated	repeated		repeated	
Theme	victimization	victimization	victimization	NA	victimization	NA
	outing/	outing/	outing/		outing/	
Type	trickery	trickery	trickery	NA	trickery	NA

Although there was some hesitation by two participants, overall statements indicated that Vignette 5 was plausible. When asked about the beginning portion of Vignette 5, only Becca felt that it was cyberbullying. She stated that it was cyberbullying because, "I think that because it was probably not a picture that Katerina wanted anyone to see." The other students shared that it was mean, but there was not necessarily intent to harm nor was it shared with a public audience. Three participants who previously thought the primary vignette was not cyberbullying, changed their stance with the secondary vignette. Chelsea shared, "I still think it would be cyberbullying because if other people started responding to the posts or whatever, I think they might start making fun of Katerina even if she doesn't know." Joe agreed stating, "The second part is cyberbullying because people are responding to it and it's getting out." Ashely still felt it was not cyberbullying because she could just delete the pictures, but also warned that if there were quite a few pictures posted, this could be hurtful to Katerina.

Repeated victimization was the prominent theme indicated this vignette. Participants stated there was the potential for more people to comment on the pictures, which is descriptive of repeated victimization. As stated earlier by Joe who shared the potential for the messages to reach a wider audience, repetition was also included.

With the exception of Ashley and Todd, who did not perceive the vignettes as cyberbullying, all of the other participants described outing/trickery to be the type of cyberbullying portrayed. Tina expressed that it was unlikely Katerina's friends posted the pictures and comments with malicious intent. However, the posts were still embarrassing and without Katerina's consent, therefore Tina perceived the situation as cyberbullying.

Table 17

Vignette 6 Interviews

	Becca	Chelsea	Tina	Ashley	Joe	Todd
Grade	Seventh	Seventh	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth
V1a	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
V1b	Yes	On the border	No	No	Yes	Yes
Plausible	Yes	Maybe	Yes	No	Yes	Maybe
Theme	repeated victimization	repetition; repeated victimization	NA	NA	repeated victimization	repeated victimization
Type	outing/ trickery	outing/ trickery	NA	NA	outing/ trickery	outing/ trickery

Vignette 6 is interesting as it depicts a middle school girl sending her boyfriend a compromising picture of herself. In the pilot study (Mischel & Kitsantas, 2018), the adults considered this to be the most disturbing scenario but much less so for the students interviewed. Similar findings were present in this current study. All students said the

situation was plausible with the exception of Ashley. Chelsea and Joe thought it might potentially occur but felt it was more likely to transpire in a high school setting. Becca and Todd were the only two to report the initial scenario was cyberbullying. Todd felt the primary vignette was cyberbullying for this reason:

> I don't think she wants to send inappropriate pictures and him show it to his friends because that can just get out of hand. His friends can send it to other people which she doesn't want people to see, and her parents can find out and she can get in trouble. (Todd)

Participants shared several reasons that this scenario was not cyberbullying. They felt that she wanted to send him the pictures because she obviously liked him and he was being pressured by his friends. Ashley blamed the situation on the girl who sent the picture of herself. Due to this reason, she continued to perceive the situation as Shelby's fault even when posted to a wider audience.

However, once the picture was posted to a public audience, four of the participants commented that it had now escalated into cyberbullying. For example, Becca stated, "Because he manipulated her and then posted it to everybody to see, to comment on it, and say mean things and say all these names about her." Joe and Todd shared similar thoughts in that others would most likely make comments about the picture. Conversely, Tina did not feel it was cyberbullying and compared the situation to a person dealing with opposing advise given by an angel on one shoulder, and a devil on the other.

The prominent theme was repeated victimization as the four participants shared the potential for others to post mean comments. For example, Joe shared, "When lots of

people comment stuff and if someone's reading all the comments, then it's going to affect them." Becca stated that the constant barrage of comments could lead to depression.

Therefore, it was not surprising that the type of cyberbullying described by the participants was outing/trickery. The reposting of Shelby's compromising picture was viewed as private and embarrassing. It was inferred that Shelby trusted her boyfriend to keep the compromising photo confidential. Yet that trust was violated and viewed by the participants as inciting potential detrimental outcomes for Shelby.

Table 18

Vignette 7 Interviews

	Becca	Chelsea	Tina	Ashley	Joe	Todd
Grade	Seventh	Seventh	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth
V1a	No	No	No	No	No	No
V1b	On the border	On the border	On the border	Yes	Yes	On the border
Plausible	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Theme	repeated victimization	repeated victimization	repeated victimization	repeated victimization	repeated victimization	repeated victimization
Type	denigration	denigration	denigration	denigration	denigration	denigration

All participants, but Ashley, stated that Vignette 7 was possible but agreed the primary vignette was not cyberbullying. Chelsea commented, "It doesn't seem that anybody commented on it. It might have just been a joke or something. I don't really think it would be cyberbullying." However, two participants agreed that the secondary vignette depicted cyberbullying with four stating it was on the border. Joe perceived the situation as escalating: "Yeah, that's cyberbullying because people are saying mean stuff

about it even though people are saying nice stuff." Todd, who felt the situation was on the border, counters by saying:

> It depends on what people are saying. If it's bad, maybe. If it's not that bad, and it's not really rude and it's not hurting her feelings, then it's not really cyberbullying. (Todd)

The others who stated the vignette was on the border also felt that there was the potential for positive comments to be posted, which would reduce the severity of the postings.

The sole theme that emerged from this vignette was repeated victimization. This arose from participants' acknowledgement that mean comments might be posted. They shared, however, that if comments were positive, there was less potential for harm. An example of this is the comment by Todd in the previous paragraph. Joe's perception was similar with him sharing, "That's cyberbullying because people are saying mean stuff about it even though people are saying nice stuff." Chelsea concurred stating that if the comments were positive, then most likely the statements would not be hurtful.

They type of cyberbullying described is most accurately captured through the description of denigration. The participants described the posting of mean comments as being hurtful. Additionally, the comments might be based on a situation that is not true or inaccurate.

Table 19

Vignette 8 Interviews

	Becca	Chelsea	Tina	Ashley	Joe	Todd
Grade	Seventh	Seventh	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth	Sixth
V1a	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
V1b	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Plausible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Theme	repetition; repeated victimization	intent to harm	intent to harm	intent to harm	repeated victimization	NA
Type	denigration	denigration	denigration	denigration	denigration	NA

All participants indicated that Vignette 8 was plausible and that similar situations have been witnessed amongst their friend groups. Only Chelsea and Joe, however, felt the primary scenario depicted a cyberbullying situation. Chelsea shared:

Yeah, that is cyberbullying because it's calling them out and saying mean things about them because they can sense there is a fight. Megan probably wants Pia to be even less popular because she probably doesn't like Pia anymore. (Chelsea)

Tina felt that this was not cyberbullying through her comments:

I think she was just being mean because she didn't have time to go over things with the fight with Pia, like what happened. I feel like she just did that in her anger, didn't care what other people felt, just like her. (Tina)

Joe agreed with Tina stating, "The only thing that's really online is that Megan uninvited her through a text message. It's not really cyberbullying." Once the comments were available to a wider audience, all participants but Todd, felt the situation had escalated to cyberbullying. Becca shared, "I think it is cyberbullying because it's posting it to everybody that is saying that Pia's a loser or Pia is a nobody." On the open-ended portion

of the survey when asked to state coping strategies, many students stated that an apology should have been made. Becca disagreed stating, "I feel like she'd still have hate in her heart and still would keep it. An apology doesn't always fix things in my opinion."

Intent to harm, followed closely by repeated victimization, and then repetition, were the prominent themes to emerge in this vignette. Chelsea's response was heavily focused on the intent to harm stating:

That is cyberbullying because it's calling them out and saying mean things about them because they can sense there is a fight. Megan probably wants Pia to be even less popular because she probably doesn't like Pia anymore. (Chelsea)

There was also the impression that others might comment on the posts once shared to a wider audience. Becca shared, "I think it is cyberbullying because it's posting it to everybody saying that Pia's a loser or Pia is a nobody." Similar to the Vignette 7, there was the perception that the potential for harm was dependent on whether the posts were positive or negative.

The type of cyberbullying described by participants indicated denigration evidenced through their comments. All, but Todd who felt the situation depicted girls just talking negatively about each other, agreed that the posts were harmful to Pia. Additionally, they felt the initial exchange of text messages were hurtful to both girls involved.

Finally, an overall analysis of participant interviews, across all eight vignettes, was investigated to look for patterns and report conclusive findings. A majority of participants felt that all eight vignettes were plausible. Most believed the primary and

secondary situations for Vignettes 1-4 depicted cyberbullying, whereas the tendency to only report cyberbullying for the secondary situations for Vignettes 5-8 was indicated. Vignettes 1-4 depicted situations on an individual level, whereas Vignettes 5-8 involved more than one individual. The theme that emerged most often was repeated victimization, followed by intent to harm, and finally repetition. The type of cyberbullying described most often was outing/trickery followed closely by denigration.

Research Question Two

Research question 2, survey data that used open-ended questions, investigated what coping strategies, if any, middle school students suggested as being effective to address each particular vignette. A Chi-square test of association was also conducted to determine if there was a relationship between severity ratings of vignettes and whether participants had a coping strategy. The test was conducted using an alpha of .01. It was hypothesized that participants would have a coping strategy for each of the vignettes depicted.

In order to explore and better understand reported coping strategies, a grounded theory approach was used when analyzing reported strategies or reasons why they did not have a coping strategy to report. In basing the analysis on a grounded theory approach (informed by open-coding techniques; a priori, in vivo, and processing), the researcher was better able to understand student reports of coping strategies after rating perceptions of the vignettes (Charmaz, 1996). Prior to probing participants as to what coping strategies they might implement, they were asked whether they had a coping strategy (see Table 19). Most students reported a coping strategy they could employ with the range

131

between 64.7-89.3%. For those who did not report a coping strategy, the percentages

ranged between 10.7-35.3%. The highest reported coping strategies were shown in

Vignette 1 (88.4%) and Vignette 5 (89.3). The highest reported data for those who did not

have a coping strategy to report was for Vignettes 6 (35.3%) and Vignette 8 (30.9%).

Next, data from the open-ended questions were first transcribed and then coded

using a combination of an In Vivo and Process Coding (act of coding) approach. This

was not initially intended, but the researcher quickly noted that participants' authentic

voices were coded through participants' exact words and inferred coping strategies

(Saldaña, 2016). Frequencies were calculated to visualize coping strategies reported most

often (see Table 19). Each of the reported coping strategies were segmented to compare

with the vignettes described.

Table 20

Student Percentages of Reported Coping Strategies

Variable	Yes (%)	No (%)
Vignette 1	88.4%)	11.6%
Vignette 2	79.9%	20.1%
Vignette 3	77.3%	22.8%
Vignette 4	75.0%	25.0%
Vignette 5	89.3%	10.7%
Vignette 6	64.7%	35.3%
Vignette 7	77.4%	22.7%
Vignette 8	69.1%	30.9%

Findings on whether participants had a coping strategy, or not, varied. The vignette reported to have the highest frequency of a potential coping strategy was related to Vignette 5, which described a sleepover in which females took a sleeping friend's phone and posted embarrassing pictures to a boy she liked. This was followed closely by the situation in Vignette 1 in which two females experienced a falling out due to results of cheerleading try-outs. Participants reported that they had the least confidence in employing a coping strategy for Vignette 6. This vignette described a photo of friends whose picture was posted on a social media site stating they were the next new couple.

The researcher initially looked through all open-ended responses to check whether participants had understood the directions. Initial impressions were written down and referred to once final analysis of the data were complete. This was an enlightening exercise as initial impressions indicated that most students reported a coping strategy. Yet, this was not evidenced through further analysis. This underlines the saliency in employing an iterative process with qualitative data analysis (Tufford & Newman, 2010).

First, open-ended questions were analyzed using an initial coding scheme (Saldaña, 2016) using the practice of memoing to reflect inceptive impressions of the data. Open-ended questions were then recoded separating reported, and absence of reported, coping strategies. In order to validate coding, intercoder agreement was sought with the help of another researcher (Saldaña, 2016). In order to achieve corroboration, a code book was developed by the primary researcher with flexibility to include additional codes found by the secondary researcher. The primary researcher explained the coding

process and code book to the secondary researcher to ensure understanding of the codes and code book.

In determining themes for this study, quantitative patterns were sought to include prevalence of codes (Boyatzis, 1998) reported at least 10 or more times. Four main themes indicated included telling an adult, confronting the bully, blocking, and ignoring the cyber bully. Additional themes arose but were dependent on the scenario depicted through the vignette. These themes included changing passwords, deleting texts or pictures, explanatory reasons, apologizing, and ending relationships.

In order to further validate coping strategy findings, the researcher corroborated themes with those from previous research findings (see Pieschel et al., 2013; Sticca et al., 2015). Those themes that aligned with coding strategy themes established by Pieschel et al. included: Social (seeking support from adults or peers), Passive (ignoring the situation), and Confrontation (seeking an active problem-solving solution with the perpetrator) coping strategies. Depreciation (devaluing the situation) was used in the study by Pieschl et al., but for this current study, depreciation was better suited under the theme of ignoring the situation for which we included both passive and aggressive forms. Additionally, Pieschl et al. found significant reports of online retaliation by participants which was less evident in this study and fell under the theme of "Other," as the incidence was quite low. Finally, Rationalization (seeking an explanation for the incident) was not evident at all in this current study. However, there was a desire for the victim to explain the situation to others, rather than seeking an explanation for why it happened.

In relation to the coping strategies previously reported in the study by Sticca et al. (2015) using vignettes, several themes aligned with this current study. Instead of using the theme of "Social," to explain seeking support, Sticca et al. split this description into two themes: Distal Advice (going to the police, seeking professional advice, informing a teacher or principal, and calling a helpline) and Close Support (talking to friends, seeking someone who listens and comforts, spending time with friends, and finding someone who accepts me for who I am). Findings suggest participants most often reported telling a non-specific adult or parent with only some participants indicating a desire to talk to a friend, and few, if any, indicated seeking out friends for support. Instead of the theme "Assertiveness," we used the term "Confront" to describe the action of asking the cyber bully to stop. Participants also used the term "confront" to describe how they might cope with a particular situation. We agreed with the theme of Active Ignoring (getting around that person, avoiding any further contact with the bully), but also included Passive Ignoring with this theme. Retaliation (getting back at the bully, getting back online, writing mean and threatening things to the bully, getting back at them personally), was also indicated in the Sticca et al. study. This, again, was rarely indicated in the current study. Finally, Technical Coping (paying more attention to who gets access to data, blocking the person, putting less information on the Internet) was also evident in the current study.

Some themes in the current study were changed to reflect those stated in the previous studies (Pieschel et al., 2012; Sticca et al., 2015) in order to establish consistency for future research. Inconsistencies between the studies may be due to

geographical locations in which the studies took place as research has shown that cross-cultural comparisons when studying effects of cyberbullying, can have differing outcomes (Kowalski et al., 2014; Li, 2008). The study conducted by Pieschel et al. (2012) was implemented in an American-equivalent middle school setting in Germany, whereas the study by Sticca et al. (2015) was conducted in Switzerland, Ireland, and Italy with adolescents. Although the age range is similar, there are most likely cultural differences amongst these European countries and middle schools within the United States, in addition to how vignettes were designed and implemented.

Reported most frequently as an effective coping strategy, with the exception of Vignettes 5 and 7, was telling an adult. There were 6 predominant subcategories that fell within this description including a non-specific identification of an adult, parent (especially the mother), teacher, principal, counselor, and administrator. Overall, telling a non-specified adult was reported most often ($M = 30$) for each vignette, with telling a counselor ($M = 3$) as being reported the least often. Telling a parent ($M = 11.38$) was comparable to telling a teacher ($M = 12$). In order to adequately address potential coping strategies reported by participants, an in-depth description of coping strategy themes representative of each vignette will be discussed.

Table 21

Vignette Frequencies for Open-Coding of Coping Strategies

Vignettes	Coping strategy	*f*	No coping strategy
Vignette 1	Tell an adult	101	13
	Confront	91	
	Block	26	
	Ignore	14	
	Other	25	
Vignette 2	Tell an adult	117	26
	Confront	48	
	Ignore	13	
	Other	24	
Vignette 3	Tell an adult	57	42
	Confront	28	
	Ignore	20	
	Other	27	
Vignette 4	Tell an adult	68	31
	Confront	36	
	Block	26	
	Ignore	13	
	Other	5	
Vignette 5	Tell an adult	41	16
	Confront	54	
	Ignore	15	
	Change Password	46	
	Delete	16	
	Other	24	
Vignette 6	Tell an adult	53	43
	Confront	36	
	Break up	35	
	Delete	16	
	Other	28	
Vignette 7	Tell an adult	40	30
	Confront	41	
	Explain	61	
	Other	12	
Vignette 8	Tell an adult	34	29
	Confront	23	
	Ignore	11	
	Apologize/Work out	33	
	Other	23	

In Vignette 1, the coping strategies reported most often if faced with a situation in which one female makes the cheerleading squad and the other does not and spiteful

exchanges ensue through texting which finally escalates into derogatory posts on social media were Tell an Adult ($n = 101$), followed by Confront ($n = 91$), Block ($n = 26$), and Ignore ($n = 14$). Tell an Adult included all the examples included in Table 6. Example statements for each theme are listed below:

> I would mostly tell them to stop and then I would get an adult. (Tell an Adult and Confront)

> Just ignore it or block them. (Block and Ignore)

The code most often reported for Confront included telling the perpetrator to stop which was also indicated for those who approached the scenario as a bystander. At times the actual word "confront" was used as was "standing up to the bully." Surprisingly, only two participants mentioned talking to their friends as a way to cope. This vignette also reported the least number of participants who did not have a coping strategy to address the potential situation, which suggests the possibility of this being a situation that is easier to manage.

Tell an Adult was broken down further (see Table 6) to include a non-specified Adult ($n = 45$), Parent ($n = 16$), Teacher ($n = 17$), Principal ($n = 8$), Counselor ($n = 4$), and Administrator ($n = 10$). Representative comments included descriptions such as:

> Copy the message and send it to a trusted adult.

> Tell a teacher or my mom and dad.

Many participants stated the position to first confront the perpetrator and if that did not work, seek help from an adult. They also indicated the perception that telling an adult

might resolve their dilemma with a comment such as, "I will tell a trusting adult and they can help me on what to say."

In Vignette 2, the coping strategies reported most often if males take a picture of you changing in the locker room and then post on social media with derogatory, sexual statements underneath included Tell an Adult ($n = 117$), followed by Confront ($n = 48$), and Ignore ($n = 13$). Blocking was also reported, but only by two students. Again, asking the perpetrator to stop was one of the most frequent codes under the theme Confront. Other phrases under this theme included such statements as, "Try to stand up for yourself," or "I would tell them that they shouldn't have done that because now they are cyberbullies and ask why they have to do it? Because it was funny? They were bored?" As seen in Vignette 1, for the theme Ignore, participants used this exact phrase to describe how they might handle the situation.

Tell an Adult was broken down further to include a non-specified Adult ($n = 52$), Parent ($n = 19$), Teacher ($n = 25$), Principal ($n = 6$), Counselor ($n = 6$), and Administrator ($n = 9$). Often, when the participants stated they would tell a non-specific adult, the word "trust" or "trusted" would be associated with this code. This is a common term used to teach adolescents whom to seek when bullied (Perren et al., 2012; Roberto, Eden, Savage, Ramos-Salazar, & Deiss; Snakenborg, Van Acker, & Gable, 2011; Sticca & Perren, 2013; Swartz, 2009; Willard, 2005). One student indicated that this may not even be enough through the comment, "Talk to your parents or a person in administration if it carries on to serious things in which someone may say things like, 'kill yourself,' then I'd

talk more into a legal issue." Also, noteworthy is the continuing pattern of the school counselor being one of the least likely adults told, present with this vignette as well.

Similar to Vignette 2, in Vignette 3 the coping strategies reported most often if you are a new female at school who is receiving an abundance of attention from males at the school, and thus receiving malicious comments and posts from other females who are jealous were Tell an Adult ($n = 57$), followed by Confront ($n = 28$), and finally Ignore ($n = 20$). Reporting the incident to social media sites was only slightly less reported than ignoring. Three of the students stated that they would choose not to confront but rather change themselves such as deciding to "stop wearing makeup," in order to stop the aggressive behavior. Other students who chose to confront the perpetrator stated that they would escalate to physical force if necessary stating, "I would probably ask them to stop, or if I must, punch them."

In Vignette 3, Tell an Adult was broken down further to include a non-specified Adult ($n = 28$), Parent ($n = 6$), Teacher ($n = 16$), Principal ($n = 2$), Counselor ($n = 4$), and Administrator ($n = 1$). As seen in previous studies that found a discrepancy in how adults and adolescents perceive bullying behavior (Mischel & Kitsantas, in press), some participants suggested that they would tell their parents, but they might not believe them with statements such as,

> I would have to talk to my parents. Yet again, if they don't agree that it's a form
> of bullying and hate, I'd have to speak with the principal and inform them that I
> (Gigi) is being called a slut and having nasty rumors spread about me. (Gigi)

In Vignette 4, the coping strategies reported most often if classmates make comments about your sexuality and then create a fake account and send messages to other individuals of the same sex prophesying your interest in them were Tell an Adult ($n = 68$), followed by Confront ($n = 36$), Block ($n = 26$), and Ignore ($n = 13$). Many participants agreed that the behavior depicted in this vignette was "mean and hurtful," and one student labeled the behavior as "sexual harassment." Quite a few responded that no one has a right to tell another person whom to love or how to behave. For example, one participant stated, "I would say that it does not matter what I look like and who I love. It is not nice to talk to people like that." Another commented, "I would ignore them and tell them I have a right to be who I am."

Tell an Adult was broken down further in Vignette 4, to include a non-specified Adult ($n = 27$), Parent ($n = 11$), Teacher ($n = 20$), Principal ($n = 2$), Counselor ($n = 4$), and Administrator ($n = 4$). Telling an adult was often non-specified with comments such as, "Tell an adult." With this particular vignette, when participants stated that they would tell a parent, it typically included both parents. Also, telling a teacher was reported more often than a parent. The incident transpired at school which may be the reason for this disparity.

In Vignette 5, the coping strategies reported most often if faced with a situation in which your friends log into your phone and send embarrassing photos of you to a boy you are interested in included Confront ($n = 54$), followed by Change Password ($n = 46$), Tell an Adult ($n = 41$), Delete ($n = 16$) , and Ignore ($n = 15$). The individuals involved in this vignette were all friends which may account for the high reporting of confronting the

perpetrator. Respondents made such comments as, "I would tell the friends to stop and delete the posts." Another responded, "I would tell them that I trusted them and that they were not good friends and tell them to tell everyone that those are fake." They also stated the need to, "Change your password so they don't do it again." Many stated that they would no longer stay friends with people who treated them with such disregard.

When they stated they would tell an adult, codes included a non-specified Adult ($n = 20$), Parent ($n = 16$), Teacher ($n = 2$), Principal ($n = 2$), Counselor ($n = 1$), and Administrator ($n = 0$). It is not surprising that telling an adult and/or parent was reported most often as the incident occurred at a sleepover. Typically, if the participant stated they would confront the individual, they did not also report the need to tell an adult.

In Vignette 6, the coping strategies reported most often if faced with a situation in which a girl sends a picture of herself in just her bra to her boyfriend who then shares it with his friend were Tell an Adult ($n = 53$), followed by Confront ($n = 36$), Break Up ($n = 35$), and Delete ($n = 16$). Five participants stated that they would not have taken a revealing picture of themselves. One participant responded, "In the first place, I would not have let him take the picture of me, and I would tell him to stop sending the picture around." Additionally, they placed the blame on the girl or the boy's friend for pressuring him to ask this of his girlfriend. Another participant stated, "She shouldn't have done it in the first place." Only five of the 35 who stated they would break up with Luke mentioned speaking to Luke about what transpired. Nine out of the 36 stated they would confront Luke. One participant indicated that they would, "Ask Luke if he was pressured to do this, and tell his friends to stop." Noted throughout the interviews and open-ended

responses, participants indicated that the situation was instigated by peer pressure. Although deleting the picture was reported, more students felt there was not a way to delete the photo once it had surfaced on social media.

Tell an Adult was broken down further to include a non-specified Adult ($n = 30$), Parent ($n = 6$), Teacher ($n = 7$), Principal ($n = 3$), Counselor ($n = 1$), and Administrator ($n = 8$). Again, it was not surprising that telling a parent was not reported as often as telling a non-specified adult, teacher or administrator. Interestingly, using the term "trusted adult" was reported less often than other vignettes, but participants instead used the phrase, "Tell an adult," for how they would respond.

In Vignette 7, the coping strategies reported most often for classmates commenting on two students who are good friends were first to Explain ($n = 61$), followed by Confront ($n = 41$), and finally Tell an Adult ($n = 40$). When students stated they would explain the situation to others, 10 participants also included ignoring the situation. For example, one participant shared they would, "Just tell them you're not dating and if that doesn't work then just ignore them." Others felt it best to, "Just say that they are just friends." An example of a participant that would confront through social media suggested, "If I were both of them, I would make a post on my social media that WE'RE NOT DATING." Most who stated that they would confront the perpetrators stated that they would, "Ask them to stop."

Tell an Adult was broken down further (see Table 21) to include a non-specified Adult ($n = 21$), Parent ($n = 5$), Teacher ($n = 7$), Principal ($n = 3$), Counselor ($n = 2$), and Administrator ($n = 2$). Similar to Vignette 6, only one participant indicated that the best

approach would be to tell a "trusted adult." Those who indicated telling an adult would be effective also mentioned that the adult would be able to help them resolve the problem. For example, one participant stated, "I would talk to a teacher or parent and let them take care of it."

Finally, in Vignette 8, the coping strategies reported most often if faced with a situation in which you were excluded from a social gathering were Tell an Adult ($n = 34$), followed by Apologize ($n = 33$), Confront ($n = 23$), and Ignore ($n = 11$). Apologizing was mentioned quite often, but answers placed the onus of the apology on the girl (Pia) excluded from the party. One participant shared that if she was in this position she would, "Apologize to Megan and ask for forgiveness." Many stated that they would confront the perpetrator and explain how their behavior made them feel. An example is one participant's explanation that they would, "Tell them (the perpetrator) how I felt about (the situation), and it hurt me."

Table 22

Frequency of Reporting to a Particular Adult

Variable	Vignette 1	Vignette 2	Vignette 3	Vignette 4	Vignette 5	Vignette 6	Vignette 7	Vignette 8
Adult	45	52	28	27	20	30	21	17
Parent	16	19	6	11	16	6	5	12
Teacher	17	25	16	20	2	7	7	2
Principal	8	6	2	2	2	3	3	1
Counselor	4	6	4	4	1	1	2	2
Administrator	10	9	1	4	0	8	2	1

Tell an Adult was broken down further (see Table 21) to include a non-specified Adult (*n* = 17), Parent (*n* = 12), Teacher (*n* = 2), Principal (*n* = 1), Counselor (*n* = 2), and Administrator (*n* = 1). It is interesting that some participants, although few, mentioned sharing the situation with school staff as the incident was not during school hours but did include students from the school. Not surprising was the perpetrator's parents were mentioned within the sub-code of parent. This might be due to the two females, initially engaged in the situation, portrayed as good friends. For example, in reference to the posts on social media posted by the female host of the party, one survey participant mentioned they would, "Talk to their parents about (this) and ask them to tell Megan to take it down."

Finally, the studies conducted by Pieschel et al. (2012) and Sticca et al. (2015) included the theme of Helpless or Self-Blame to describe when a participant indicated not knowing what to do. As response levels in the current study ranged from 11.6-35.3% for no coping strategy, and explanatory reasons varied, a separate table was created to describe this data. In order to determine whether participants indicated not having a coping strategy, the researcher investigated responses to this paraphrased question, "Pretend this situation was happening to you. Do you have a way to make it stop?" While coding initial open-ended responses, the researchers noted those responses in which the participant noted they did not have a response. Next, the researchers then underlined those responses that seemed to indicate the participant really did not have a coping strategy even if they had indicated a positive response to the initial question. Again, these codes were evaluated by another researcher to ensure reliability through intercoder

agreement. The themes that surfaced were Hopelessness (no hope, depression, no confidence), Unsure (not sure on what to do), Escalation (worry that the problem would become worse), No Control (not having the ability to do anything, posts have already been seen), Active/Passive Ignoring (the victim not being aware, pretending the situation did not happen), Other, and Not Cyberbullying (not considering the situation to be a problem so no coping strategy is necessary).

Table 23

Vignette Sample Sizes and Frequencies Under Themes for Not Having a Coping Strategy

Vignettes	*n*	Hopelessness	Escalation	Active/passive ignoring	Other	Not CB
V 1	13	9	3		1	
V 2	26	24		4		
V 3	42	37	2	3		
V 4	31	29	2			
V 5	16	13	2	1		
V 6	43	42			1	
V 7	30	15	1	9	2	2
V 8	29	20		4		5
Total	230	189	10	21	4	7

When the primary researcher analyzed the underlined sentences, indicated through the data corroborated by the primary and secondary researchers, the primary researcher used assigned individual codes to label responses. Patterns began to emerge, and the researcher settled on seven themes including Hopelessness, Unsure, Escalation, No Control, Active/Passive Ignoring, and Not Cyberbullying. As these codes were not corroborated by the secondary researcher, the primary researcher sought to ensure rigor

through triangulation of the studies by Pieschl et al. (2012) and Sticca et al. (2015) and theory driven research (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013).

The first theme to emerge, and most prominent, was hopelessness. According to researchers, hopelessness consists of negative perceptions about the future (Beck et al.,1974), and the inability to change the likelihood of the occurrence (Alloy et al., 1988). The researcher then went back to the open-ended responses to validate that codes applied to hopelessness matching these definitions. The codes Unsure and No Control seemingly fit within this definition and were therefore folded into the theme of Hopelessness.

The next theme investigated was Escalation. According to Mahady, Wilton, and Craig (2000), when a bullying situation de-escalates, the situation is resolved. Hodges, Boivin, Vitaro, and Bukowski (1999) described the escalation of bullying as an increased risk for victimization. The researcher concurred that open-responses aligned with these descriptions. Those that indicated they did not have a coping strategy because they did not feel the situation was a problem were placed under the theme Not Cyberbullying.

In analyzing the eight vignettes overall, the primary and secondary researchers determined that participants responded 230 times (15.28% overall), that they did not have a coping strategy to use if faced with the particular situation depicted in the vignette. It should be noted that some participants did not supply a reason when reporting they did not have a coping strategy. Reasons given for those who did supply an answer included Hopelessness ($n = 189$), followed by Active/Passive Ignoring ($n = 21$), fear of Escalation ($n = 10$), Not Cyberbullying ($n = 7$), and Other ($n = 4$). Examples for responses related to each vignette, with the exception of Other, will be shared.

Vignette 1, in which the two females had a heated exchange precipitating from one of the females making the cheer squad and the other not, had the least ($n = 13$) participants report that they did not have a coping strategy. Main themes for Vignette 1 included Hopelessness ($n = 9$) Escalation ($n = 3$), and Other ($n = 1$). A few disconcerting statements as to why the participant did not have a coping strategy included comments such as, "I don't think that I would because I struggle standing up for myself even online." Another survey participant shared, "Sadly, what I have found is that no matter how hard I try, cyberbullies will not stop no matter what and that makes me sad. I am frequently cyberbullied, and I have never been able to stop them myself." Those that were unsure made comments such as not being able to "think of any." Those that described not feeling in control of the situation stated comments such as, "No because there is nothing you can do beside block Jessie, but the group chat is still going to be there." Finally, an example of participants anxious the situation may escalate shared, "You would just make the situation more bigger."

Vignette 2 depicts the skinny, non-athletic middle school male who is harassed by his appearance. Four themes emerged from codes assigned to participant explanations of why they did not have a coping strategy to handle the situation described in the vignette reported. These themes included Hopelessness ($n = 24$) and Active/Passive Ignoring ($n = 4$). The theme of hopelessness increased four times for this particular vignette. Examples participants gave for Hopelessness included statements such as,

Because you can't really control what people say and do to you on the Internet.

It's all behind a screen and you cannot "make" people stop.

If people are posting things about you online, you can't go to their house and

make them stop.

Maybe you could tell someone but if the person's account is anonymous, you

won't always find out who it is.

You could tell everyone that it's not true, but most people believe everything they

see people posting.

Another response that was worrisome included a participant's response that a potential

cyberbullying incident might cause the recipient to believe the statements directed at

them were true indicated by this statement, "If you are smaller than all of them and if you

don't think you fit in, you probably won't because you kinda believe them." The second

most prominent theme was using active or passive ignorance. When prompted to explain

if they had a coping strategy another participant stated, "No I don't. All I can do is go

about my business."

In Vignette 3 describing a new girl who received unrequited attention from males

that incited jealousy with females at school, Hopelessness ($n = 37$) was again noted most

often. Noteworthy, this theme was reported most often with this particular vignette after

Vignette 6. One student described not feeling in control with the comment, "Because it's

everywhere now, and I can't control who posts that stuff." Another participant

commented the incident might have a lasting impact with the statement, "Because even if

I have them stop, it's still gonna hurt me deep down." Still another commented that even

if help was sought, it still may not help, "No, because if you tell an adult, they might keep

going because you can't control what others do." Active/Passive Ignoring ($n = 3$) and

Escalation (*n* = 2) were also reported, but to a considerably lesser degree. An example of passively ignoring the situation and not seeking help was illustrated through this survey participant's comment: "I wouldn't be able to make them stop because just saying, 'Stop' or telling them, 'I will tell an adult,' doesn't do anything. So, I would just leave it alone." Most reported the situation was out of their control, or even if they did take control, a positive change was futile.

Moving on to Vignette 4 in which a male is harassed regarding his sexuality through the posting of a fake account, there were two main themes reported. Hopelessness (*n* = 29) was most prominent with statements such as, "I don't know if there would be any way to stop them," or, "They would not stop because they think it's funny but for James, it may not be and it won't be gone because it is already all over the internet." Many reported the inability to change other's opinions. For example, one participant shared, "I have no power over what people say." Two participants stated that by confronting the situation, it may escalate further. One of the statements that indicated a fear of escalation was, "I couldn't do anything because I don't know the people running the account. If I did respond, telling them to stop, they would probably just post that too."

Vignette 5, however, did not report any fear of escalation but instead indicated a fairly low report of Hopelessness (*n* = 13), Escalation (*n* = 2), and Active/Passive Ignoring (*n* = 2). In fact, this vignette reported the lowest number of no coping strategies by participants. The vignette described a female sleepover in which the sleeping victim's phone was taken and embarrassing pictures were sent to a male she was interested in. One participant's comment alluded to passive ignorance, but mainly described

hopelessness through the comment, "I don't really know this one. You can't make up for what your friends did. You could tell someone but also could get yourself in trouble too. Also, pictures are never gone. They are always online somewhere." Most comments that fell under Hopelessness reported that they wouldn't even be aware that the pictures were sent, so there would be no retribution for her friends' behavior. For example, several participants made similar comments to, "She didn't even know it was happening." The two who's comments were coded under Escalation, described the ability for the perpetrators to repost the pictures. For example, one participant stated, "Because even if I delete the pictures, people could have screen shot them and saved them to their camera roll, and then post them again." The participants who stated they would ignore the situation stated they would not care.

Vignette 6 had the highest reports of Hopelessness ($n = 42$). This vignette described an established couple in which the male asked the female to send a comprising picture of herself, which he then sent to a friend who reposted the picture on social media. Many reported that even if the picture was taken down, "People already saw it." Many respondents made comments that they would not know what to do or that people would not believe them. For example, one survey participant shared, "If even I told people that I was pressured to do it, maybe some people wouldn't believe me." Another shared, "Once the damage is done, there is no erasing something like that." Many also responded that they would not know how to stop them from reposting the picture or how to take the post down through comments such as, "Tell Luke to make them stop and delete the pictures, but the chances of that are very slim," or "I can't do a thing about it

because I can't take the picture down. Only the person who posted it can." Several students also mentioned that both Shelby and Luke were pressured into this type of behavior.

Vignette 7 describes another male and female who are good friends, but others take pictures of them and post to social media where others can comment about their relationship status. Again, Hopelessness ($n = 15$) was reported most often, followed by Active/Passive Ignoring ($n = 9$), Not Cyberbullying ($n = 2$), Other ($n = 2$), and Escalation reported by only 1 participant. Many felt the situation was out of their control through comments such as, "I don't know if there would be a way to make it stop spreading around school." Those that took more of an Active/Passive approach said they didn't have a coping strategy because it either did not bother them, they would be happy to have a girlfriend/boyfriend, or that, "People are just assuming things and don't know the truth." The two that reported the situation to not be cyberbullying, did not have a coping strategy as they felt they did not need one.

Finally, Vignette 8 described two friends whose argument escalated into one of the females not being invited to a party with pictures later posted to social media containing derogatory comments about the female who was excluded. Again, Hopelessness ($n = 20$) was reported most often, followed by Not Cyberbullying ($n = 5$), and Active/Passive Ignoring ($n = 4$). Those that felt the situation was hopeless shared comments such as, "Because when something is posted on social media, you can't make them stop," or "I would not have confidence." One participant stated they would ignore the situation, "I wouldn't say anything and keep to myself." Those that did not feel it was

cyberbullying placed the blame on both females describing it as drama between the two of them.

Overall, there were 1,611 responses to the open-ended questions related to a particular vignette. Of these, 230 responses indicated not have a coping strategy to apply if faced with the situations depicted through the vignettes. Hopelessness was reported as a reason most often. Active/Passive Ignoring was stated as the second most prevalent reason for not having a coping strategy. It seemed that the students who shared this did not want to get involved. Many of those also stated there would not be a way to make it stop, which leads back to a feeling of hopelessness. This can fall under bystander behavior for those who did not perceive the situation happening directly to themselves, but rather another individual (Macháčková, 2014). In the study by DeSmet et al. (2016), they found that participants in their study replicated previous research in that they chose to passively ignore a situation in which they could have responded. Interestingly, many websites (see stopbullying.gov, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.) geared towards educating the community about bullying/cyberbullying behavior tend to state that the reasons children do not report victimization is due to fear of escalation. This was supported in this study but was not a substantially contributing reason for not having a coping strategy. Although most reported knowledge of a coping strategy, 15% did not, and the situations presented were fictional.

Research Question Three

The final research question investigated middle school students' self-efficacy beliefs related to the coping strategies reported, relative to a particular vignette.

Table 24

Overall Means and Standard Deviations for Self-efficacy Scale in
Capability to Employ Coping Strategies Related to Vignettes

Variable	Middle School Students	M	SD
1. Vignette 1 Self-efficacy	189	6.34	1.99
2. Vignette 2 Self-efficacy	189	5.38	1.27
3. Vignette 3 Self-efficacy	189	5.28	1.40
4. Vignette 4 Self-efficacy	189	5.26	1.53
5. Vignette 5 Self-efficacy	189	5.44	1.28
6. Vignette 6 Self-efficacy	189	4.91	1.68
7. Vignette 7 Self-efficacy	189	5.22	1.40
8. Vignette 8 Self-efficacy	189	5.08	1.44

After participants rated the vignettes and were asked to share a coping strategy or reasons for not having a strategy, they were asked to rate their beliefs in their capability to actually follow through with the stated strategy. Descriptives were used to describe overall means and standard deviations for each of the self-efficacy scores as well as mean scores for each of the coping strategies reported within each vignette (1= not at all sure; 5 = somewhat sure; 1-= totally sure). Scores ranged as follows: Vignette 1 (M = 6.34; SD = 1.99); Vignette 2 (M = 5.38; SD = 1.27); Vignette 3 (M = 5.28; SD = 1.40); Vignette 4 (M = 5.26; SD = 1.53); Vignette 5 (M = 5.44; SD = 1.28); Vignette 6 (M = 4.91; SD = 1.68); Vignette 7 (M = 5.22; SD = 1.40); and Vignette 8 (M = 5.08; SD = 1.44).

The range for self-efficacy reports was not widespread. Highest reported self-efficacy scores were reported for Vignette 1 (M = 6.34; SD = 1.99), in which two girls tried out for the cheerleading squad. However, the standard deviation for this vignette was also the most spread out. Lowest self-efficacy ratings were reported for Vignette 6 in

which a girl sends a compromising picture of herself to her boyfriend. Standard deviation scores for this vignette had the highest spread besides Vignette 1. Most scores fell within the range of participants being "somewhat sure" of their capability to employ the coping strategy stated in the open-ended question portion of the survey.

Self-efficacy scores were further analyzed for each coping strategy within each vignette (see Table 13). Again, coping strategies were only reported if a particular strategy was noted at least ten times or more. Only mean scores were calculated for self-efficacy ratings related to coping strategies.

In Vignette 1, Tell an Adult ($M = 5.52$) was reported most often, yet had the lowest self-efficacy score ratings. This was followed by Confront ($M = 6.01$), the second most reported coping strategy. Block ($M = 6.85$) was the third most reported but had the highest self-efficacy score. Finally Ignore ($M = 6.70$) was reported the least but had the second highest self-efficacy rating.

Table 25

Self-efficacy Means for Open-Coding of Coping Strategies

Vignettes	Coping strategy	Self-efficacy M
Vignette 1	Tell an adult	5.52
	Confront	6.01
	Block	6.85
	Ignore	6.70
Vignette 2	Tell an adult	5.22
	Confront	5.58
	Ignore	4.08
Vignette 3	Tell an adult	5.28
	Confront	5.50
	Ignore	5.60
Vignette 4	Tell an adult	5.47
	Confront	5.72
	Block	5.92
	Ignore	5.46
Vignette 5	Tell an adult	5.63
	Confront	5.66
	Ignore	6.33
	Change	5.65
	Password	5.57
	Delete	
Vignette 6	Tell an adult	5.44
	Confront	5.36
	Break up	5.57
	Delete	5.5
Vignette 7	Tell an adult	5.50
	Confront	5.78
	Explain	5.56
Vignette 8	Tell an adult	5.79
	Confront	5.87
	Ignore	5.00
	Apologize/Work out	5.61

Vignette 2 had one less coping strategy stated than Vignette 1. Tell an Adult ($M = 5.22$) was, again, the most reported coping strategy. Confront ($M = 5.58$) was reported

next but had the highest self-efficacy rating score of the three coping strategies. Ignore ($M = 4.08$) was reported least often and had the lowest self-efficacy rating reported.

Vignette 3 followed the pattern in Vignette 2 with only three coping strategies falling within the criteria of being reported ten or more times. Tell an Adult ($M = 5.28$), was reported most often but yielded the lowest self-efficacy score. Confront was next ($M = 5.50$), with the second highest self-efficacy rating. Finally Ignore ($M = 5.6$), was the least reported yet had the highest self-efficacy score.

In Vignette 4, Block ($M = 5.92$) was again stated and received the highest self-efficacy rating of all of the coping strategies. Tell an Adult ($M = 5.47$) was reported most often but had the second to lowest self-efficacy rating score. Confront ($M = 5.72$) was reported second most frequently and had the third highest self-efficacy rating score. Ignore ($M = 5.46$) was rated least often and had the lowest self-efficacy score.

Vignette 5 included five coping strategies. Confront ($M = 5.66$) was first and had the highest self-efficacy rating score. Change Password ($M = 5.65$) was reported fourth most often, but the self-efficacy score for this coping strategy was not far behind Confront. Tell an Adult ($M = 5.63$) was reported third most often and had the third highest self-efficacy score. Delete ($M = 5.57$) was next, followed by Ignore ($M = 6.33$), which reported a higher self-efficacy score rating.

In Vignette 6, there were four coping strategies that were analyzed for self-efficacy ratings. Tell an Adult ($M = 5.44$) was reported most often as a coping strategy but was ranked third in self-efficacy rating scores. Confront ($M = 5.36$) was reported second most often but had the lowest self-efficacy score. Break Up ($M = 5.57$) was

reported only one time less than Confront but had the highest self-efficacy rating. Finally Delete ($M = 5.50$) was reported the least often but the self-efficacy score was rated second most often.

Vignette 7 fell back to only three coping strategies being reported. Explain ($M = 5.56$) was reported most often but had the second highest self-efficacy rating score. This was followed by Confront ($M = 5.78$) which had the highest self-efficacy score. Close behind was Tell an Adult ($M = 5.50$) which had the lowest self-efficacy score rating.

Finally, Vignette 8 was analyzed. This vignette culminated with four coping strategies. Tell an Adult ($M = 5.79$) was reported most often and had the second highest self-efficacy score. Apologize/Work Out ($M = 5.61$) was reported most often next and had the third highest self-efficacy score. Confront ($M = 5.87$) was reported third most often, but again had the highest self-efficacy score. Ignore ($M = 5.00$) was reported least often and had the lowest self-efficacy score rating.

Overall, scores did not necessarily follow a particular pattern, but several coping strategies repeatedly scored the highest or lowest with self-efficacy ratings. Tell an Adult had the lowest self-efficacy scores for three of the vignettes (Vignette 1, Vignette 6, and Vignette 7). Confront, on the other hand, had the highest self-efficacy rating reported the most often. This occurred with Vignettes 2, 5, 7, and 8. It received the second highest self-efficacy scores for Vignettes 3 and 4, but the lowest for Vignette 6.

Summary of Results

Analysis focused on the three research questions with the additional component of further validating vignettes. Most participants reported phone ownership in addition to

access to a computer. The social media sites frequented most often were Instagram (2019) followed by Snapchat (n.d.). When investigating how participants rated vignettes, they were asked to report on a 3-point Likert-type scale (1 = not cyberbullying, 2 = on the border, and 3 = cyberbullying). Those vignettes reported as being cyberbullying most often for the beginning of the scenarios were Vignettes 2 and 3. The vignette reported to be the least likely to be perceived as cyberbullying was Vignette 7. The beginning of Vignette 1 was reported as being on the border most often. When looking at the follow-up vignettes, Vignette 6 reported cyberbullying most often, with Vignette 2 reported the least as cyberbullying. Finally, on the border was reported most often for Vignette 7.

As the 3-point Likert-type scale reported non-parametric nominal data, Chi-Square tests were used to interpret the data. The first test run was the Chi-Square goodness of fit. Those vignettes in which the observed frequencies differed from the expected frequencies included all of the initial scenarios depicted in the vignettes with the exception of Vignette 7. For the follow-up scenarios, all of the vignettes were found to be statistically significant with observed frequencies differing from expected.

As the researcher wanted to investigate associations between the beginning and follow-up scenarios within the vignettes, a Chi-Square test of independence was also used. Vignettes 1 and 2 were not statistically significant indicating that there was an association between the beginning and secondary scenarios within the vignettes. However, Vignettes 3-8 did indicate statistical significance that there was not an association between the beginning and follow-up scenarios within the vignettes.

Next, interviews were conducted with six participants from the original study in order to gain insight into participants' perspectives. Overall, most participants stated that the vignettes were plausible and could potentially occur with middle school students. Additionally, students reported that the scenarios were cyberbullying more often than considering the scenarios to be on the border or not cyberbullying. Using a priori coding from previous literature (see Corcoran et al., 2015; Kowalski et al., 2008; Langos, 2012; O'Moore & Minton, 2009; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009), reasons given for why interview participants considered the situations depicted in the vignettes to be cyberbullying fell under three main coding themes: intent to harm (intentional being mean to someone), repetition (does not necessarily need to be posted repeatedly, but can include being shared to a wider, and unknown audience), and repeated victimization (when bystanders comment, like, or share humiliating content).

According to the literature (see Li, 2010; Noncentini et al., 2010; Ortega, Mora-Merchan and Jager, 2007; Willard, 2006), there are seven types of cyberbullying including: harassment (repeated offensive messages), denigration (harmful or untrue statements), exclusion (intentionally excluding a person or group online), impersonation (pretending to be someone else while posting online), outing and trickery (sending or posting sensitive, private or embarrassing information), flaming (sending angry, rude, or vulgar messages), and cyberstalking (threatening to harm or intimidate an individual online). Through synthesis of the interview data, two types of cyberbullying were reported most often. Outing/trickery and denigration seemed to be the main type of behavior interpreted. Harassment and impersonation were also reported, but only once.

This may be due to the types of situations depicted throughout the scenarios (see Limitations).

The next research question analyzed what type of coping strategy, if any, participants reported as effective when presented with a particular cyber situation. Most students reported a particular coping strategy with the highest reported for Vignette 5 and the lowest for Vignette 6. Those coping strategies reported most frequently included Telling an Adult, Confronting the perpetrator, Blocking, and Ignoring. As Telling an Adult occurred most often, this theme was broken down further to describe the type of adult and included: Adult (non-specified), Parent, Teacher, Principal, Counselor, and Administrator. The vignettes that reported not having a coping strategy most often were Vignettes 3 and 6. The reasons given for not having a coping strategy included the themes of Hopelessness, Escalation, Active/passive Ignoring, and Not Considered Cyberbullying.

Finally, the third research question explored self-efficacy reports for those that indicated a particular coping strategy. Vignette 1 had the highest overall self-efficacy report for employing the stated strategy. Vignette 6 indicated the lowest self-efficacy reports. Surprisingly, the theme that indicated the highest self-efficacy beliefs in capability to employ the stated strategy was Confronting. This was followed closely by Blocking and Ignoring. The coping strategy reported with the least self-efficacy rating was Tell an Adult and Ignore. There was no pattern to the findings which suggests the types of coping strategies reported and self-efficacy beliefs were dependent on the scenario depicted in the vignettes.

Chapter Five

This explanatory mixed methods study sought to better understand adolescent perspectives using SCT as a theoretical framework. SCT was used as environmental factors, behavior patterns, and inner forces can influence human behavior and one's capability to act while helping to explain the reasons why (Bandura, 1989). This framework also helped in the development of the conceptual framework describing the cycle that might potentially occur when faced with a cyberbullying situation.

Using SCT as a theoretical framework, the study looked at defining what constitutes cyberbullying, potential coping strategies that adolescents find effective, and self-efficacy beliefs in capability to implement strategies. Research on this topic is salient as cyberbullying continues to lack a definitive conceptualization and operationalization of the construct (Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015; Tokunga, 2010; Wang et al., 2009), effective programs to combat the behavior, discrepancies in how adults and adolescents view the behavior (Mischel & Kitsantas, under review), and research suggests that those who are recipients of cyberbullying behavior may be more apt to experience detrimental outcomes (Aricak et al., 2008; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Li, 2010; Machackova et al., 2013; Nixon, 2014; Ortega, Elipe, Mora-Merchán, Calmaestra, & Vega1, 2008; Price & Dalgleish, 2010; Riebel et al., 2009; Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2008). To combat and avoid such tendencies, researchers suggest the implementation of adaptive coping strategies

(Rasaukus & Huynh, 2015; Weinstein et al., 2015). However, an individual's self-efficacy beliefs in capability to employ these adaptive coping strategies can affect whether action is taken (Li, 2010; Raskauskas & Huynh, 2015).

Research Question One

How do middle school students perceive potential cyberbullying situations? Are there differences in ratings of severity between primary and secondary vignettes?

Ratings for cyberbullying vignette were recorded then separated into primary and secondary tables to indicate percentages depicting ratings of cyberbullying vignettes. In doing so, the researcher was able to identify overall ratings for each vignette in order to determine which vignettes were considered as not cyberbullying, on the border, or cyberbullying. Overall findings for the primary vignettes suggest that participants rated vignettes 1-4 as cyberbullying, with vignettes 5-8 being rated as on the border. Standard deviation scores were minimal suggesting most of the ratings were close to the average. However, for the secondary vignettes, most participants rated the vignettes as cyberbullying. Each of the vignettes will be discussed separately.

The primary depiction of Vignette 1 described mean-spirited interactions between two friends who pursued a position on the cheerleading team. Most participants reported this as being cyberbullying. One explanation is the potential for the situation to be viewed as traditional bullying as the girl who was not chosen shared hurtful comments within their friend group. Additionally, sending hurtful messages can be perceived as flaming. In looking at Li's (2008) definition of flaming, this type of interaction includes, "Sending angry, rude, vulgar messages about a person to an online group or to that person via email

or other text messaging" (p. 225). However, this was contrary to what was stated during the interviews. Of the six interviewed, five felt the primary vignette was not cyberbullying as the interaction was only between the two people and had not gone public. This occurrence warrants further investigation into the validity of this particular vignette as noted in the Chi-square findings (see Table 8). In analyzing the secondary vignette, given the large percentage of participants reporting the primary vignette as cyberbullying, it was not surprising that survey participant ratings of cyberbullying increased for the secondary, also evidenced through the interviews.

Vignette 2 describes a shy boy whose classmates make fun of him for his stature. Although they are making comments within their friend group, Chester is not necessarily aware of their actions. In the secondary vignette, the boys take their actions a step further by taking a picture of Chester and posting it on Snapchat with the caption, "I'm gay," underneath. The primary ratings for Vignette 2 matched those reported in Vignette 1, although ratings shifted for the secondary vignette. Interestingly, secondary vignette ratings increased for the "not cyberbullying" and "on the border" options, while those rating the scenario as cyberbullying decreased. This could be due to the perception that the actions initiated by the boys escalated into behavior that is strictly prohibited on school campuses as shared by adolescents through cognitive interviews during the pilot study. In addition, although this particular incident may not seem to be a clear-cut criminal offence, taking a picture and distributing without a person's knowledge may be alarming to the individual, their parents, or school authorities raising the possibility for police involvement (Wolak & Finkelhor, 2011). Interview participant responses matched

those reported for the primary vignette, although they continued to report the scenario as cyberbullying for the secondary vignette as the posts were viewed as mean and contained the possibility of receiving continuous derogatory comments.

Vignette 3 depicts a new female student who is the envy of other females at her school. Derogatory posts, meant to harm her reputation, are shared on Snapchat (n.d.). This quickly escalated to male students commenting on the posts and sending sexual messages to her directly. In the primary vignette, most participants considered this, again, to be cyberbullying. There is the element of traditional bullying within this scenario as the jealous girls' spread rumors about the girl's sexual prowess. The act of spreading rumors is widely accepted as a form of bullying (Olweus, 2013), which may explain the high preponderance to rate this as cyberbullying. Although the rating increases to cyberbullying in the secondary vignette by those who rated the scenario as on the border, those who reported the situation as not cyberbullying did not change their stance. As noted in the interviews, those who did not perceive the situation as cyberbullying were either unable to clearly articulate why they perceived the situation as on the border or stated that it was hurtful. But they did not believe it arose to the point of cyberbullying.

In Vignette 4, a male is again harassed regarding his sexuality. Other males at his school impersonate the boy and send fake love notes to another boy who is known to be gay. The highest percentage ratings for the primary vignette was cyberbullying; however, the ratings were much lower than the previous vignettes and nearly equivalent to those who rated the situation as on the border. This was also evidenced during the interviews with three participants stating it was cyberbullying with the other three rating the

situation as either on the border, or not cyberbullying. Sexual harassment of an individual has increasingly been subsumed under the title of "bullying," devaluing the illegality of the behavior stated in Title IX (Brown, Chesney-Lind, & Stein, 2007; Stein & Mennemeier, 2011). However, sexual harassment, including forms that promote hegemonic masculinity, tend to be one of the most prevalent types of traditional bullying (Gruber & Fineran, 2016; Mischel & Kitsantas, 2019). In addition, derogatory sexual terms are used so often, there is the potential for adolescents to brush this type of interaction off as common forms of communication (Pascoe, 2005). With the increased use of online forums to communicate, there is the potential for this type of harassment to continue to expand. Online harassment through gaming has recently expanded, prompting research into this increasing problem (Cross, 2014). In the secondary vignette though, most participants rated the situation as cyberbullying. As stated through the interviews, once the comments have been posted to a wider audience with the potential for additional comments from others, some unknown to the victim, the risk for the victim to not only feel embarrassment but also experience detrimental emotional outcomes, increases.

Vignette 5 depicts a sleepover with females unlocking one of the sleeping females' phones in order to share embarrassing photos with a boy she likes. The females take this a step further by creating a fake blog with additional photos. Most survey participants rated the primary vignette to either be "on the border," or "not cyberbullying." This aligned with interview participant perceptions. During cognitive interviews while developing the instrument, all of the adolescents stated that it was commonplace to share passcodes with friends and that sending an embarrassing picture

was not a big deal (Mischel et al., 2017). Oftentimes, adolescents do not view a situation as cyberbullying but rather as a joke (Thornberg & Delby, 2019). However, once a fake blog was created with additional pictures instigating nasty comments by others, ratings of cyberbullying nearly doubled. Again, this finding was also supported through interview responses.

Vignette 6, again, depicts pictures being taken and shared with others without the person's knowledge. However, the female knowingly sends the compromising picture to her boyfriend who then shares it with a friend, who posts the picture to a wider audience. Although ratings for the primary vignette are fairly evenly distributed, most state the scenario is either "not cyberbullying," or "on the border." This aligns with comments made by most interview participants who shared that the female in the scenario was being pressured to send a compromising picture, but that it was also only sent to one person, her boyfriend. Research suggests that sexting is a prevalent occurrence amongst today's youth (Mitchell, Finklehor, Jones, & Wolak, 2012), and that between 5-44% of the adolescent population engage in this type of behavior (Englander & McCoy, 2018). Most ratings shifted to cyberbullying once the posts were sent out to a wider audience. Interview participants agreed as there was now the element of everyone seeing the picture and the potential to post comments. The two who felt it was still not cyberbullying, placed the blame on the girl who initially sent the photos to her boyfriend. Comments such as this were also present for survey participants who agreed stating the girl was to blame for the situation.

Vignette 7 also includes taking pictures without the person/persons being aware. The primary vignette involves a picture being taken of a male and female, walking in the hallway at school, which is then posted on to Instagram. The picture is reposted onto Snapchat where other students make comments. Survey participants, again, were fairly congruent in responses between the three variables in the primary vignettes, with most rating the situation as "on the border," followed closely by "not cyberbullying." All of the interview participants stated this was not cyberbullying and viewed the situation as being more of a joke. Survey ratings changed for the secondary vignette; with most reporting it had escalated into cyberbullying. However, percentiles were still elevated for those reporting the situation as "on the border." Four of the six interview participants also felt that the situation was "on the border," as they felt the severity mainly depended on how recipients viewed the comments which aligns with prior research (Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2008).

Finally, Vignette 8 describes a birthday party in which one of the friend group members has been excluded by the host. The situation escalates when the host suggests taking a group photo that is posted onto Snapchat with comments targeted at excluded friend. Similar to Vignettes 4-7, the ratings between "not cyberbullying," "on the border," and "cyberbullying," are relatively close in percentiles with "on the border" ranked most frequently. Most of the interview participants ranked the scenario as "not cyberbullying," as they perceived the behavior as just being mean. However, when the pictures are posted with derogatory comments targeted at the excluded friend, most survey participants then stated the behavior was cyberbullying. All but one interview participant agreed with the

survey responses. The literature indicates that exclusionary practices through cyber interactions can be more detrimental depending on the perpetrator's social status (Menesini et al., 2012). As the host of the party had control over who did or did not attend, the host may have been seen as having higher social status to those participants taking the survey and those being interviewed.

In implementing a 3-point Likert-type scale to test perceptions of potential cyberbullying vignettes, non-parametric tests were used to analyze the data (McHugh, 2013). In order to determine whether the data gathered would represent the data derived from an actual population, the Chi-square goodness of fit test was used first (Franke, Ho, & Christie, 2012). The null hypothesis stated there would not be a difference in the frequencies between the primary and secondary vignettes when students answered, "No," "On the Border," and "Yes," as to whether the situation depicted cyberbullying. Next, in order to determine whether there was an association between the primary and secondary vignettes, a test of independence was implemented (Franke et al., 2012).

Sharpe (2015) postured the importance of further analysis when data indicate a statistically significant goodness of fit. One way to investigate further is through the calculation of residuals. Chi-square results from the primary vignettes indicated that all were significant with the exception of Vignette 6, in which observed scores were relatively close to those expected. This will be discussed further in the limitations' section. The results show that the ratings of the vignettes were distinct between cells. This was the desired outcome in further validation of the instrument. Effect sizes varied for the primary vignettes. For Vignettes 1-3 Cohen's *d* output were quite large, whereas

Vignette 4 had a medium effect, and Vignettes 5-8 were minimal. Again, this was expected as the primary vignettes were purposely created to depict ambiguous situations.

As hoped, all secondary vignettes were significant with large effect sizes. The secondary vignettes were purposely created to depict a situation which was more likely to be perceived as cyberbullying. Vignettes depicted situations where there was intent to harm another individual (Olweus 1997; Pieschel et al., 2015), ability of content to reach a wider audience (Smith, 2019), the use of outing/trickery (Reibel, Jager & Fischer, 2009), and potential for repeated victimization through continuous posting of harmful comments (Palladino et al., 2017).

The Chi-square test of independence was used to determine the association between primary and secondary vignettes. For Vignettes 1 and 2, there were no analytical findings to suggest associations between the situations. Therefore, these vignettes will require further modification in order to ensure there is a distinct difference between the situations depicted. Potential reasons for this finding might be due to primary vignettes being viewed as traditional forms of bullying. Intent to harm is a criterion for defining traditional bullying (Olweus 1997; Pieschel et al., 2015), which was present in Vignettes 1 and 2. Specifically, both vignettes described verbal and social forms of bullying (see Wang et al., 2009), and therefore adjustments to these vignettes are recommended.

Finally, in order to further validate an instrument and test for reliability, a Cronbach's alpha is indicated (Nunally, 1978). The output indicated high internal consistency for the primary vignettes ($\alpha = .75$), secondary vignettes ($\alpha = .66$), and a

combination of the two $\alpha = .80$). Although further modifications would be ideal, this finding is promising.

Research Question Two

What strategies, if any, do middle school students suggest as being effective to address cyberbullying? And, is there a relationship between severity ratings of vignettes and whether participants had a coping strategy?

Analyses of this research question relied on survey data alone. After reading through each vignette, students were asked whether they would have a coping strategy if faced with a similar situation. If the participant answered in the affirmative, they were then asked to supply a potential coping strategy they might employ. Similarly, if they stated a lack of a particular coping strategy, they were again asked to provide an explanation. Answers were transcribed and coded with a subsequent code book created in order to corroborate codes with an additional researcher. Once codes were finalized, they were compared to those found in two previous studies (see Pieschel et al., 2013; Sticca et al., 2015). Some codes were adjusted to reflect previous findings.

Before analysis of the codes, student percentiles for reported coping strategies were obtained. As expected, most participants stated they had a potential coping strategy if confronted with a similar situation depicted in the vignettes. Those vignettes where students reported the highest percentiles for a having a potential coping strategy, and lowest for not having a strategy, were for those vignettes that either depicted situations between friends or ambiguity in potential intent to harm. These were also the vignettes in which students reported a high potential to confront their aggressors. Research shows that

online conflicts between females can be a bit ambiguous and therefore overlooked, ignored, or perceived to be everyday "bitchiness" (Ging & O'Higgins Norman, 2016). In addition, if positive comments are being posted even when pictures are posted without the individual's consent, it may be perceived as a positive occurrence due to an increase in social capital (Kuss & Griffiths, 2011). Conversely, the two vignettes that reported the least percentiles for a potential coping strategy, and highest for not reporting a coping strategy, were the vignettes that ventured into possible illegal activity (e.g., a compromising picture of a female), as well as one that indicated the potential to lose an entire friend group. Distributing compromising photos of underage individuals has, unfortunately, become a common occurrence amongst older adolescents (Lievens, 2014). Yet, participants in this particular study were younger and, as evidenced through interview responses, less likely to imagine a similar situation transpiring amongst their age group. Hence, the lowered reporting of having a potential coping strategy. Finally, friendships in the adolescent years are of extreme importance which may be why there was a lowered percentile for having a potential coping strategy when faced with a situation in which friendship loss could occur (Ging & O'Higgins; Norman, 2016).

When analyzing the potential coping strategies, only those that were reported at least 10 times or more, were recorded. Those reported most often included: tell an adult, confront, block, ignore, change the password, delete, break up, explain, or apologize. Tell an adult and confront were coded in all of the vignettes with the former being reported most often. This supports what is found on most anti-bullying websites. Most suggest a combination of strategies such as ignoring the situation, confronting the aggressor, or

telling a trusted adult (mentalhealthamerica.net; stompoutbullying.org; stopbullying.gov; thehopeline.com). Previous interviews with adolescents' state that public institutions that employ anti-bullying programs also suggest similar tactics (Mischel & Kitsantas, 2017,in press). Finally, findings within the literature also concur with the reported coping strategies (Parris et al., 2012; Price & Dalgleish, 2010).

As telling an adult was the most prevalent coping strategy reported overall, this item was categorized further. Results indicated that telling an unspecified adult was reported most often followed by telling a teacher, parent, administrator, principal, and finally counselor. Telling a counselor was reported least often. Although this is perplexing from a logical perspective, this supports prior research in which students report that they worry that telling a counselor will exacerbate the situation, nothing will or can be done, or the student complaining might get into trouble themselves (Li, 2010; Mischel & Kitsantas, 2019). Additionally, when the incident occurred during school hours, participants reported seeking a teacher for support; but, when it occurred after school hours, they tended to report seeking parental support more often.

Lastly, reasons for not having a coping strategy were coded and categorized into themes including: hopelessness, escalation, active/passive ignoring, and not considering the situation to be cyberbullying. The first theme to emerge, and most prominent, was hopelessness.

Hopelessness consists of negative perceptions about the future (Beck et al., 1974), and the inability to change the likelihood of the occurrence (Alloy et al., 1988). Research suggests that this might be due to two reasons. When an individual has a high value

system (meaning they would not engage in this type of activity), it is more difficult to understand why someone might act aggressively towards them (Dilmaç, 2017; Seki & Dilmaç, 2015). Additionally, when one is expecting to be cyberbullied, the feeling of hopelessness can, again, escalate (Dilmaç, 2017).

The next theme investigated was escalation. According to Mahady, Wilton, and Craig (2000), when a bullying situation de-escalates, the situation is resolved. However, participants in this study did not see a resolution to the situation. Hodges, Boivin, Vitaro, and Bukowski (1999) described the escalation of bullying as an increased risk for victimization. This type of feeling was indicated through the open-responses. Some tsurvey participants stated there would not be a way to make it stop, which can lead back to a feeling of hopelessness. Interestingly, many websites (see stopbullying.gov, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019) geared towards educating the community about bullying/cyberbullying behavior tend to state that the reasons children do not report victimization is due to fear of escalation. This was supported in this study but was not a substantially contributing reason for not having a coping strategy.

The third most common theme was active/passive ignoring. This type of coping is when an individual tries to self-regulate the emotional state of distress by not thinking about the situation (Forns, Kirchner, Abad, & Amador, 2012). The study by DeSmet et al. (2016) found that most of their participant chose to passively ignore a situation in which they could have responded. This type of coping strategy can be perceived as either adaptive or maladaptive depending on the individual.

The final reason stated for not have a coping strategy was the perception that the situation did not warrant any action as it was not perceived to be cyberbullying. However, this was only reported seven times overall, and only for Vignettes 7 and 8.

When looking at whether participants reported a potential coping strategy, the initial hypothesis stated that this might be related to severity ratings of vignettes. However, when looking at severity ratings for vignettes, there was not consistency between severity ratings and lack of coping strategy with the exception of Vignette 6 in which the girl sends a compromising picture of herself to her boyfriend.

Research Question Three

To what extent do self-efficacy beliefs impact students' capability to employ strategies to cope with cyberbullying incidents?

This particular question was vital in determining whether participants believed in their capability to employ the coping strategy reported (Li, 2010; Rasaukus & Huynh, 2015). Bandura (1989) suggested that self-efficacy beliefs are the driving force as to whether an individual actually follows through with a particular action. Most research focused on self-efficacy beliefs is centered upon academic pursuits. However, Bandura (1997) posited that self-efficacy can also influence other personal aspects of development that are social, emotional, or behavioral in nature.

Overall mean scores for self-efficacy beliefs (on a 10-point Likert-type scale) were lower than expected especially given the high percentages reported when asked if participants had a coping strategy to employ. The highest mean score was for Vignette 1 with the lowest reported for Vignette 6. This was also reflected in the percentiles in

which participants were asked if they had a coping strategy if faced with a similar situation. All other self-efficacy ratings averaged around 5 on the 10-point Likert-type scale. This was disconcerting as research indicates that when an individual has lowered self-efficacy beliefs, they are less likely to act (Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 1997; Rasaukus & Huynh, 2015).

There may be several contributing reasons for this outcome. Social media platforms continue to evolve and, although research on cyberbullying has proliferated within the past 5 years, the phenomenon remains elusive (Betts, 2016). Additionally, adolescents in middle school may lack the social maturity to deal with particular online situations (Talwar et al., 2014). Even if they are knowledgeable on how to react, they may worry about potential consequences (Mishna, Khoury-Kassabri, Gadalla, & Daciuk, 2012). Furthermore, adolescents may not be aware of the identity of their perpetrator making it difficult to address the situation (Bauman, 2009; Musharraf, Bauman, Anis-ul-Haque, & Milik, 2019).

As Vignettes 1 and 6 were at the high and low ends for self-efficacy ratings, a closer look was warranted. For reference purposes, Vignette 1 describes spiteful interactions between two females which eventually segues into exposure to a larger audience. The higher self-efficacy ratings may be indicative of the propensity to rationalize negative cyber interactions between friends as "normal" friend behavior; this is especially evident with female adolescents (Jackson, Cassidy, & Brown, 2009). The interviewees supported this idea in that all of the participants agreed that the behavior displayed was meant to harm the other individual. The main reason for believing the

situation was cyberbullying was that the hurtful messages were posted to a wider audience. The predominant coping strategy reported was to confront the aggressor. For example, one participant stated, "I would ask them why they were doing it, then I would talk about why they were being rude." As the girls were formerly best friends, the inclination to speak directly with the aggressor is potentially less intimidating than an unknown aggressor (David-Ferdon & Hertz, 2007).

Although the aggressor is also known in Vignette 6, the situation borders potential illegal activity. In this particular vignette, a girlfriend sends a compromising picture of herself to her boyfriend. The boyfriend then shares with a friend who uploads the picture which can be viewed by a wider audience. The main theme reported through interviews was that the behavior was repeated victimization. Some reasons participants gave for not having a coping strategy when faced with a similar situation included:

"I would be embarrassed, and I wouldn't know what to do in a situation like that."

"Because it's already all over the internet."

"It's hard for a situation like this to just "blow over," considering how the picture has been spread around the school."

The number one coping strategy reported was to tell an adult. Yet, research has shown that adolescents do not follow through when the intent is to tell an adult (Tokunga, 2010), which may explain the lower self-efficacy ratings.

The data suggested when faced with potential cyberbullying incidents, even when adolescents have a potential coping strategy, the likelihood to carry out the stated strategy is only minimally positive. The coping strategy reported most often was to tell an adult.

177

But again, as research shows, this coping strategy is not generally enacted unless the behavior has become overwhelming (Mischel & Kitsantas,in press). Therefore, educating adolescents to initiate other coping strategies might be more beneficial in fostering positive self-efficacy beliefs in the capability to act.

Conclusion

Although there is still much to be studied on the elusive construct of cyberbullying, the study provided a deeper understanding as to how middle school students perceive cyber interactions, types of coping strategies they believe to be effective, reasons for not having a coping strategy, and self-efficacy beliefs in capability to employ the coping strategies. The study specifically focused on middle school students for several reasons. First, traditional types of bullying tend to occur within this developmental age group as it is a time of significant transitions both physically and emotionally (Pelligrini & Long, 2002). Next, many high schoolers, within the United States, have access to electronic devices and are even expected to use them for academic purposes which has increasingly spread to students in middle schools. In fact, many schools now provide iPads or laptops for students to use in order to ensure all have equal access. Even though cyber transgressions tend to occur more frequently in the high school aged group, they are more mature emotionally. Therefore, as cyberbullying continues to lack consensus on how to operationalize and conceptualize the construct, it seemed salient to concentrate on the population that is less emotionally mature and may not fully understand the repercussions of such transgressions. This was evident when

conducting the cognitive interviews in the development of the vignettes (Mischel, Sheridan, & Kitsantas, 2017).

With regards to the vignettes, upon analyses of the data, the question arose as to whether it was more appropriate to study whether the participants felt the situation was cyberbullying or to focus on levels of distress. Researchers have noted this possibility when looking at traditional forms of bullying as each individual might perceive a situation differently, such as one incident potentially causing long-term detrimental outcomes. Yet, a one-time transgression does not currently fall under the definition of bullying. In addition, some cyber interactions border on illegal activity, which can be confusing for adolescents. Therefore, it might be more illuminating to concentrate on the amount of distress experienced when exposed to a potential cyberbullying incident.

Online interactions alone can cause angst amongst adolescents (e.g. needing to be up to date on the latest memes, YouTube videos, posts, responding to text messages). But when the interactions rise to cyberbullying, this can cause more distress than traditional forms of bullying. Both types of bullying can cause short-term detrimental outcomes, but whereas traditional bullying allows the individual reprieve when at home, cyberbullying does not. Cyberbullying can occur at all hours of the day and by individuals the recipient is not familiar with (Hoff & Mitchell, 2009; Li, 2006; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Schneider et al., 2010). Cyberbullying can spread to a wide audience within minutes.

Research has shown that when an individual experiences a negative situation, such as cyberbullying, coping strategies can buffer potential detrimental outcomes (Mikolajczak, Luminet, Fillée, & Timary, 2007). Currently, there is not a "magical" list

of coping strategies to utilize if cyberbullied. This study indicated that, although telling an adult was reported most often, there were other potential coping strategies that were realistic, easy to implement, and would stop the perpetration. These included blocking or confronting the person. Confrontation is not always an easy solution for many yet blocking can be performed by anyone once they learn the simple steps to do so. Another potentially effective coping strategy is seeking peer support. Interestingly, this was not a coping strategy reported. This might be remedied by reminding middle school students that sharing difficult experiences with friends can prove beneficial.

With regards to finding effective coping strategies, in addition to fostering the capability to seek out peer support, Kohoutek, Mareš, and Ježek (2010) suggested the need to consider internal factors such as an individual's perspective regarding academics, parental relationships, identity, and perceived early childhood experiences. Perspectives on these aspects can influence whether an individual might choose adaptive or maladaptive strategies. These strategies might be employed out of habituation. This notion is beyond the scope of this study but warrants further exploration.

Internal factors can affect self-efficacy beliefs as well. This can also influence whether the individual chooses adaptive or maladaptive strategies. Initial considerations were given to considering how to increase an individual's self-efficacy beliefs in capabilities to employ a coping strategy, but further reflection indicated that calibration of self-efficacy beliefs might be more appropriate. When there is a deficiency in one's self-awareness or self-knowledge, effective strategies may not be utilized (Klassen, 2002). This tends to occur most frequently when an individual displays overconfidence in

capability to act. As the individual tends to fall short of expectations, this can lower self-efficacy beliefs further and impede self-worth. Instead of encouraging individuals to increase self-efficacy beliefs, promoting self-reflection and evaluation seem more beneficial. Additionally, it is salient to remind individuals that outside influences might also play a critical role in self-efficacy beliefs.

These suggestions indicate a need to consider other theoretical frameworks in addition to SCT. As SCT looks at human behavior as a self-regulatory causal process in which behavior is monitored and assessments of potential outcomes are evaluated before acting (Bandura, 1991), it does not consider other factors that might influence an individual's motivation to act. In reflecting on the work by Kohoutek et al. (2010), inclusion of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model seems fitting. This theory adds to understanding an individual's perspective by including other sources that might be influential such as inner and outer circles as well as those of the greater community (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Having said this, it is still salient to consider the individual's responsibility to self-regulate and therefore a combination of the two theoretical frameworks seems most comprehensive.

Overall Implications

In using a comparative analysis between the quantitative and qualitative data, further measurement and theoretical implications regarding the cyberbullying vignette instrument, coping strategies, and self-efficacy beliefs in capability to employ such strategies were confirmed and expanded. First, through the survey data and interview responses, vignettes accurately depicted potential cyberbullying situations. However, as

181

noted through interviews, the vignettes only depicted a small variety of the types of cyberbullying described in the literature. Further investigation into whether this accurately describes most types of cyberbullying is warranted. Next, the coping strategies reported in the open-ended portion of the survey confirmed previous research findings (Bauman, 2010; Glover et al., 2000; Mischel & Kitsantas, 2019; Mishna et al., 2009; Tokunga, 2010; Willard, 2006). Self-efficacy findings also confirmed prior research in that self-efficacy reports were dependent on the participant's belief in their capability to use the stated strategy in the open-ended portion of the survey (Bandura, 1989; Rasaukus & Huynh, 2015). Findings were moderate, indicating doubt in capability to carry through with a particular coping strategy (Kitsantas, 2000). Moreover, findings suggest that use of SCT as a theoretical framework helps explain the cyclical process of victimization or capability to overcome such victimization, yet findings from this study indicate a need to explore other theoretical frameworks to further explain the phenomenon. Finally, as noted through survey and interview responses, the participants indicated ability to assess a potential outcome and evaluate the potential effects in order to act (Bandura, 1991). The participants assessed their own beliefs, the events, and the environment in which the situation occurred (Bandura et al., 1999; Puustinen & Pulkkinen, 2001). Outcome expectations can motivate an individual to act shown in self-efficacy belief ratings (Zimmerman, 1989). These findings confirm prior research and hope to add to the current literature.

Implications for Instructional Practice

Although research into cyberbullying has proliferated within the past ten years, the phenomenon remains controversial (Smith, 2019). This is due to the lack of a widely accepted conceptualization and operationalization of the definition, measurement issues, prevalence rates (Kowalski et al., 2014; Modecki et al., 2014), and the evolving platforms in which the behavior occurs (Kowalski et al., 2014; Modecki et al., 2014). These problems were widespread in 2008 and, unfortunately, little has changed (Smith et al., 2008; Smith, 2019).

Yet, researchers, parents, and educators can probably agree the potential outcomes from such behavior are worrisome. Therefore, it is imperative to develop an agreed upon conceptualization and operationalization in how the construct is defined (Burton & Mutongwizo, 2009; Olweus, 2013; Tokunga, 2010; Volk, Veenstra & Espelage, 2017). In order to do so, this study sought to better understand how adolescents perceive the behavior.

Currently, there is not one particular cyberbullying instrument used widely (Smith, 2019). It is suggested that this may, in part, be due to the lack of an adequate or agreed upon definition of cyberbullying, or the absence of validity and reliability of instruments used (Berne et al., 2014; Frisén et al. 2013). Berne et al. also stated that most instruments do not even include the word cyberbullying, yet still claim to measure the construct. Furthermore, cyberbullying instruments also need to account for the ever-evolving platforms used by adolescents (Berne et al., 2014).

As the instrument developed for this study showed adequate reliability, the potential to replicate the vignettes in other school settings is appropriate. The instrument

can provide potential benefits in better understanding how adolescents, within a middle school setting, perceive potential cyberbullying situations. This would aid administrators and staff when deciding which types of cyberbullying programs to implement to address student perceptions at their school specifically.

Also insightful were the reports as to whether participants had, or lacked, a particular coping strategy to address the potential cyberbullying situations and what those strategies might look like. Those coping strategies reported most often were tell an adult, block, confront, and ignore. As research has shown that most adolescents do not report cyberbullying incidents to an adult (Tokunga, 2010), it is suggested that encouraging the use of other coping strategies is advised. Reasons as to why adolescents do not generally report to an adult include the potential for parents to escalate the situation (Glover et al., 2000), the perception that nothing will be done if reported (Mischel & Kitsantas, 2019), or they might lose their device (Bauman, 2010; Mishna, Saini & Solomon, 2009; Willard, 2006). It is currently unclear as to whether this situation is resolvable. Therefore, a more focused approach on other coping strategies is encouraged. Adolescents can be taught how to block their aggressor or learn appropriate ways to address the transgressions. Also, discussion on whether ignoring a situation is a positive reaction for the individual should be addressed. For some adolescents, however, ignoring can lead to internalization which generally produces detrimental outcomes (Batanova, Espelage & Rao, 2014; Campbell, 2005; Gámez-Guadix et al., 2013; Shelley & Craig, 2010; Wright, 2014).

Even if an adolescent possesses an appropriate coping strategy, employment of the strategy is dependent on their self-efficacy beliefs in their capability to do so

(Rasaukus & Huynh, 2015). Findings from this study showed that even though percentiles of having a coping strategy were relatively high, self-efficacy belief ratings were moderate. This may be reflective of "telling and adult," as being the coping strategy reported most often. Which, again, research suggests does not occur often. Therefore, readdressing appropriate coping strategies with adolescents, within a school setting, is suggested. By encouraging adolescents to focus, and rely, more heavily on other coping strategies (such as blocking, confronting, deleting, and ignoring) there is potential to raise adolescent self-efficacy beliefs in their capability to employ a strategy.

By increasing an individual's self-efficacy beliefs in capability to implement an appropriate coping strategy resiliency outcomes might increase. Schunk & Miller (2002) posited that resiliency related to self-efficacy can help an individual overcome difficult situations. Research suggests that one way to aid this is through peer groups as they can influence an individual's perception of self-efficacy beliefs (Schunk & Meece, 2006). Students are also more apt to have higher self-efficacy beliefs when they are familiar with a particular environment and also believe that they have a support system in place (Meece, Herman, & McCombs, 2003; Schunk & Meece, 2006). Therefore, encouraging adolescents to utilize other coping strategies besides telling an adult and also including the importance of establishing a strong peer support system, can also increase self-efficacy beliefs.

Limitations

Throughout the study, there were several limitations worth noting. First, when

developing a new instrument, there is often further validation required (Berne et al. 2013). Next, as there continues to be a lack of an agreed upon conceptualization and operationalization of cyberbullying (Tokunga, 2010), this discrepancy may have affected how participants answered the severity ratings of the vignettes. Furthermore, there is the tendency to compare traditional forms of bullying to cyberbullying which may have also affected participant responses. Finally, interview participants were chosen at random and further screening may have yielded further insight.

In looking at the vignettes specifically, several limitations were noted. To begin with, the first four vignettes were predominantly rated as cyberbullying, with the remaining four reported as not cyberbullying or on the border. This indicates the possibility of participants either under or overreporting (Cornell, Klein, Konold, & Huang, 2012), or the possibility of desensitization of reading similar cyberbullying scenarios (Pabian, Vandebosch, Poels, Van Cleemput, & Bastiaensens, 2016). Additionally, consideration to remedy the internal consistency of the vignettes is warranted. Even though the internal consistency was high, further validation is indicated as this is a new instrument. Also, the vignettes were based on actual reported situations and did not follow specific types of cyberbullying (e.g., flaming, impersonation, outing/trickery, etc.). This is addressed in future research suggestions. Second, the vignettes were sometimes perceived as unclear as noted through the interviews. For example, in Vignette 6, the interview participants stated that it was not clear whether comments had been posted. This vignette described a male and female whose picture was taken and posted on social media where potential comments could be posted. Through

interviews, students explained that the situation could be viewed as either positive or negative depending on the types of comments posted. However, the secondary vignette described posts as being negative which provided more clarity for the participants. A clear description of the primary vignettes might resolve this uncertainty. Finally, two of the vignettes bordered on illegal activity which may have affected participant responses. In Vignette 2, boys take pictures of another boy in the school locker room. This is against school rules and is illegal. The results for Vignette 2 suggested participants perceived the primary vignette as being more severe than the secondary vignette. This was unexpected and confusing. However, this may have been due to the perception of the vignette being illegal rather than cyberbullying. Vignette 5 also borders on illegal activity as a girl sends a compromising photo of herself to her boyfriend who then shares with his friend, who posts it to a public forum. These scenarios may have skewed participant ratings of the vignettes and should be modified if implanted in the future.

There is still the tendency for researchers and educators to compare traditional types of bullying to cyberbullying (Dooley, Pyzalski, and Cross, 2009; Perren & Gutzwiller-Helfenfinger, 2012; Slonje, Smith, & Frisen, 2013). This is compounded by a lack in an agreed upon operationalization and conceptualization of the construct, which has increasingly become evident with traditional bullying as well (Olweus, 2013; Tokunga, 2010; Volk et al., 2017). Research suggests that most students do not tend to initiate certain coping strategies when victimized by traditional forms of bullying (Didaskalou et al., 2017). Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether those reported for this study would actually be implemented in cyberbullying situations. As research into

the effectiveness of cyberbullying programs is lacking, the coping strategies reported were compared to those implemented with anti-bullying programs (Gaffney, Farrington, Espelage & Tofti, 2018), which may not be as accurate.

An example of this, and a limitation, is comparing the defining characteristic of repetition between traditional forms of bullying, and cyberbullying. When describing this characteristic with traditional forms of bullying, the aggressive behavior is exhibited over and over. Whereas with cyberbullying, the recipient can receive repeated distressing posts, or a distressing post can be posted repeatedly with the potential to reach a wide audience. The perception of what constitutes an act being repetitive, with regards to cyberbullying, is unclear.

Additionally, throughout the interviews, participants raised concern regarding repetition as being transformative. This was referred to as repeated victimization. For instance, online posts might be positive or negative in nature, but if comments made are derogatory, the recipient might experience on-going victimization every time a new comment is made. Again, a post may not have been maliciously shared, but others' comments could be perceived as hurtful. This is another ambiguous component in defining repetition with regards to cyberbullying.

Another limitation related to perceptions was the high prevalence of participants reporting that "telling an adult" was an effective coping strategies. However, self-efficacy reports indicated a low to moderate rating for beliefs in capability to do so. Prior research suggests that even though adolescents know that telling an adult might resolve the situation, there is also the belief that nothing will be done or that the adult will diminish

the magnitude of the situation. This may have been the reason for the lowered self-efficacy ratings. However, this question was not pursued, resulting in limited understanding of why mid-to lower self-efficacy scores were reported.

Reflecting on these limitations, it became increasingly evident that the main concern related to cyberbullying was the distress it might potentially cause. As there is currently no agreed upon conceptualization or operationalization of the construct, it seems a focus on whether the situation is distressing to an individual might be a better lens on which to focus. This notion was what interview participants were most concerned about and, digging deeper, mainly what the study hoped to uncover.

Finally, in order to gain a better understanding of middle school perceptions of the vignettes, interviews were conducted. In order to be interviewed, participants stated they were apprehensive about cyberbullying and were willing to participate. There were no further criteria to be interviewed and participants were chosen at random. Further insight might have been gleaned had the screening process been more rigorous.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study revealed some interesting and helpful findings, yet further research is justified. Although research into cyberbullying has increased substantially, Smith (2019) suggested researchers consider using more qualitative, mixed methods, and longitudinal data in order to better understand the phenomenon. First and foremost, a widely accepted conceptualization and operationalization of the construct is needed (Tokunga, 2010). Nixon (2014) also indicated the necessity of a contextual framework that addresses at-risk and preventative behaviors. This study sought to create such a framework, yet it was

more focused on describing the cycle of potential cyberbullying victimization. Additionally, establishing reliability and validity of cyberbullying instruments through longitudinal studies is needed (Berne et al., 2014; Smith, 2019).

When implementing the cyberbullying vignette instrument in future studies, several modifications are warranted. In order to reduce the possibility of underreporting, overreporting, or desentisization, having multiple configurations of vignette order might yield new findings. Additionally, including vignettes that portray other types of cyberbullying (i.e. harassment, stalking, impersonation) could also potentially provide further insight into how the construct is perceived as well as the types of coping strategies reported.

In addition to developing reliable and valid instruments, it is salient to address the discrepancy in how the construct is viewed by adults and adolescents. This difference in perspectives can create the impression that adults are out of touch with adolescents (Mischel & Kitsantas, 2019). Conversely, when adults (e.g., educators, parents, school staff), are confronted with a potential cyberbullying situation, they may feel ill-equipped on how to handle the situation appropriately (Holfeld & Grabe, 2012). Further research focused on understanding the differing perspectives is imperative.

Perspectives on potential coping strategies should also be studied further. In addition to this study, prior research indicates that adolescents tend to rely on reporting a situation to an adult as being an effective coping strategy (Bauman, 2010; Mishna et al., 2009). Yet research suggests that the implementation of this coping strategy rarely occurs. One possible area for further research would be to look at the use of reframing

strategies (e.g., thinking about why a person may have been unkind) as these types of strategies tend to produce positive outcomes (Davis & Nixon, 2014). Furthermore, interviewing adolescents who have been cyberbullied in the past, yet have overcome the propensity to experience detrimental outcomes, should be sought to better understand what strategies they implemented. Finally, as peer support groups have been shown to also help when an individual is cyberbullied, research into whether those who experience cyberbullying victimization have those peer support groups in place would be illuminating.

Further investigation into what types of coping strategies would increase an individual's self-efficacy beliefs in capability to implement a particular strategy could also benefit those who suffer from victimization. Even when an individual has an effective coping strategy, if they have a lowered self-efficacy belief in their capability to act on that strategy, there is an increased likelihood it will not happen (Li, 2010; Raskauskas, & Huynh, 2015). Furthermore, increased focus on calibrating self-efficacy beliefs would be beneficial in helping individuals learn how to self-reflect and evaluate capability to employ an effective coping strategy as this might increase motivation and capability to act.

As perceptions of cyberbullying, access to coping strategies, and self-efficacy beliefs are influenced by the individual and outside factors, a combination of two theoretical frameworks seems most apropos. In combining SCT and Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, the individual's self-regulatory processes are taken into account as are other outside influences. There are a number of factors that can impact one's perspective

when subjected to negative experiences, and these factors not only influence how the individual reacts, but can also affect future outcomes.

Finally, bullying tends to occur most often during the middle school years (Talwar et al., 2014). This is not necessarily true for cyberbullying. Some studies suggest it occurs most frequently with college-aged individuals (MacDonald & Roberts-Pittman, 2010). As younger children are increasingly being exposed to technological devices and social platforms, there is an increased need to investigate this behavior with younger populations especially as they are even less inclined to have the emotional skills to deal with cyber aggression (Steinberg, 2008). For those who are more emotionally mature (e.g., adults), there is still a need to investigate into this type of behavior as adult responses and reactions on social platforms are also worrisome and potentially detrimental. Very little research has been done for this age group and is generally related to workplace interactions (Snyman & Loh, 2015).

Recommendations

As cyberbullying has the potential to inflict long-lasting detrimental outcomes, several suggestions are also indicated. As research indicates a discrepancy in how adolescents and adults perceive cyberbullying behavior, continuous investigation into these differing perspectives would be beneficial. For example, schools could implement focus group settings to obtain a better "pulse" on students' perspectives, and similarly with school staff. Findings could then be shared with the two groups so they both have a better understanding of the other's perspective. This would help staff understand how an adolescent might be feeling. Additionally, school staff would also benefit from training

on how to deal with such situations (Li, 2010). School staff could also be trained on identifying potentially problematic behaviors or have better awareness of students' sense of self (Nixon, 2014). Such training might be beneficial to parents as well.

There are several recommendations gleaned from this research study. First, there should be on-going data collection on how adolescents perceive cyberbullying behavior. Due to the evolving nature of social media platforms and the changing behavior related to these interactions, it would be valuable to understand how these types of interactions are perceived. This information should be shared with school staff and parents so that they are aware of how the interactions are being perceived so they are more attune when an adolescent reaches out for help. Furthermore, it would be helpful to understand what types of coping strategies adolescents use to overcome cyberbullying behavior in order to help those that lack such strategies. Another recommendation would be to either stop encouraging adolescents to reach out to a "trusted adult" when they are being cyberbullied, or further explain the benefits of doing so as research suggests an adolescent who is being cyberbullied rarely chooses such a coping strategy. This is especially true for school counselors as participants reported they were one of the least likely "trusted adults" to be told. In addition, by explaining the potential cycle of victimization, developed for this study, those who are being cyberbullied might be more aware of the cyclical nature of victimization and potentially to stop they cycle. Finally, further education in schools on what is and is not acceptable behavior online, descriptions of what defines illegal online interactions, and examples of adaptive coping strategies would greatly benefit adolescents.

Appendix A

IRB Approval

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Office of Research Development, Integrity, and Assurance

Research Hall, 4400 University Drive, MS 6D5, Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: 703-993-5445; Fax: 703-993-9590

DATE:	July 9, 2018
TO:	Anastasia Kitsantas, PhD
FROM:	George Mason University IRB
Project Title:	[1282001-1] Coping Strategies and Self-Efficacy Beliefs Middle School Students Report When Presented with Potential Cyberbullying Incidents
SUBMISSION TYPE:	New Project
ACTION:	APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE:	July 9, 2018
EXPIRATION DATE:	July 8, 2019
REVIEW TYPE:	Expedited Review
REVIEW TYPE:	Expedited review category #7

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The George Mason University IRB has APPROVED your submission. This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that all research must be conducted as described in the submitted materials.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form unless the IRB has waived the requirement for a signature on the consent form or has waived the requirement for a consent process. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by the IRB prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to the IRB office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed (if applicable).

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to the IRB.

The anniversary date of this study is July 8, 2019. This project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. You may not collect data beyond this date without prior IRB approval.

- 1 -   Generated on IRBNet

A continuing review form must be completed and submitted to the IRB at least 30 days prior to the anniversary date or upon completion of this project. Prior to the anniversary date, IRBNet will send you a reminder regarding continuing review procedures.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of five years, or as described in your submission, after the completion of the project.

Please note that department or other approvals may be required to conduct your research in addition to IRB approval.

If you have any questions, please contact Bess Dieffenbach at 703-993-5593 or edieffen@gmu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

GMU IRB Standard Operating Procedures can be found here: http://oria.gmu.edu/1031-2/?_ga=1.12722615.1443740248.1411130601

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within George Mason University IRB's records.

Appendix B

Adult Informed Consent Forms

MIXED METHODS STUDY ON CYBERBULLYING BEHAVIOR

ADULT INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR SURVEY

RESEARCH PROCEDURES
This research study is being conducted to investigate middle school students' perceptions of cyberbullying behavior. We would like your child to participate because your child's perspective will give us a deeper understanding of the behavior. Please first read through vignettes to determine whether you are comfortable with your child participating. If you agree to allow your child to participate, they can proceed with this online survey, which includes demographic questions, questions about their personal experiences with bullying, and vignettes. They will be asked to read through and then rate for perception of severity, followed by open-ended questions regarding potential coping strategies they might utilize or advise to a friend, and their beliefs in carrying out stated strategies or ability to convey stated advice. The questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

RISKS
There is a slight risk that some children may experience stress or discomfort while completing the bullying experiences questions or vignettes. Children may skip any questions throughout the survey that they don't want to answer.

However slight the risks are, child participants may be upset by some of the material within the vignettes. If you have concerns or questions about bullying, please contact:

Crisis Call Center
800-273-8255 or text ANSWER to 839863
Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week
http://crisiscallcenter.org/crisis-services

CyberTipline
800-843-5678
Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week
http://www.cybertipline.com

BENEFITS
There are no benefits to your child, as a participant, other than to further research in cyberbullying behavior.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The data in this study will be confidential. While it is understood that no computer transmission can be perfectly secure, reasonable efforts will be made to protect the confidentiality of your child's transmission. The data from the questionnaire will be placed in a locked safe, in the principal investigators office, at George Mason University for five years once the study ends.

The only people that will have access to the data will be the main researcher (Jenny Mischel), the committee advisor (Dr. Anastasia Kitsantas), and the method committee chair member (Dr. Kimberly Sheridan).

PARTICIPATION

Your child's participation is voluntary, and they may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If they decide not to participate or if they withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you, your child, or any other party. There will be a drawing in which 10 participants will be awarded a $25 Amazon gift card.

CONTACT

This research is being conducted by Jenny Mischel, from the College of Education and Human Development, at George Mason University. She may be reached at (571) 276-2813. The faculty advisor on this committee is Dr. Anastasia Kitsantas, Professor of Educational Psychology from the College of Education and Human Development. She can be reached at (703) 993-2688, for questions or to report a research-related problem. You may contact the George Mason University Institutional Review Board office at (703) 993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your child's rights as a participant in the research.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your child's participation in this research.

VIGNETTES

Vignette 1

Taylor and Jessie both tried out for cheerleading and practiced for try-outs together. Only Taylor made the team and Jessie was very upset. Jessie texted one of their mutual friends to say she was surprised Taylor made the team because she couldn't jump very high and would struggle to fit into a cheerleading uniform. The friend shared the text with another friend.

The message was eventually copied and reposted to a social media site that most of the students in their grade were on. A few students stood up for Taylor, but many posted mean comments.

Vignette 2

Peter is a middle school student who is known for being really smart. He doesn't like P.E. because he is not very good at sports and is embarrassed changing into gym clothes in the boy's locker room because he is noticeably skinnier than the other boys. Later that day, a few of the boys from the locker room post an online group message of a cartoon drawing of Peter with the words, "I'm Peter and I'm gay," underneath.

One of the boys shares this on his public social media board. Even though the picture is only posted for a short period of time, many students at the school see the post.

Vignette 3

Gigi is a new student at a middle school. She is very pretty and many of the boys notice her. The

other girls are jealous of the attention Gigi is getting. One of the girls posts that Gigi is a "slut" on social media. Another girl shares this post and asks who else agrees?

The next day, one of the girls takes a picture of Gigi in the hallway and posts it on social media with the caption, "Slut," underneath. Quite a few of the boys at school, some she doesn't even know, post comments.

Vignette 4
James' classmates have been making comments about his sexuality all year. At lunch one day, a group of boys set up a fake account and send text messages to James pretending to like him in a romantic way. The boys think this is hilarious, but James does not respond.

The boys continue sending James text messages from the fake account and eventually someone posts these messages onto social media sites for others to see.

Vignette 5
Katerina is at a sleepover party with her friends. Since they are all good friends, they sometimes use each other's phones and know each other's passcodes. When Katerina falls asleep, a couple of her friends grab her phone and open up her text messages. They notice some silly pictures Katerina has taken of herself. They send one of the pictures to a boy that Katerina likes.

The girls find more pictures and end up posting funny, but embarrassing comments underneath each photo. People start responding to the posts, even people Katerina doesn't know.

Vignette 6
Shelby and Luke have been dating for about 3 months. They mostly text and sometimes go to Starbucks after school. Shelby really likes Luke and he really likes Shelby. His friends start to tease him about having a girlfriend. Embarrassed, Luke starts to brag about how far he's gone with Shelby even though he hasn't even kissed her yet. His friends don't believe him and ask for proof. The next day, Luke asks Shelby to send a picture of herself in just her bra. Shelby is not comfortable doing this, but he keeps pressuring her. She really likes Luke and doesn't want him to break up with her. So, she sends a picture of herself wearing only a bra. Luke then sends it to one of his friends to prove that he was telling the truth. He feels bad doing this, but only sends it to his best friend.

His best friend, Jack, copies Shelby's picture sends it around to the entire school.

Vignette 7
Adam and Rachel are just good friends. One day at school, someone unknowingly takes a picture of the two of them walking in the hallway. Later that day, the person posts the picture on a social media site with the caption, "The Next New Couple."

The picture quickly blows up all over social media sites. People start commenting on the picture saying things like, "What a cute couple," or, "Finally they are together!" Others write mean comments like, "No way. She's not even on his level," or "What is he thinking?" This spreads all over the school.

<u>Vignette 8</u>

Megan is having a party. She and her best friend, Pia, recently had a fight. Megan uninvited Pia through a text message. The girls then sent nasty text messages back and forth to each other. Most of the girls took Megan's side because they still wanted to go to her party. She said she would uninvite anyone who took Pia's side. Pia tried to talk to the other girls about what was going on with Megan, but they all told her to just apologize to Megan.

The weekend of the party arrived. Halfway through the party, Megan suggested they post how much fun they were having on a common social media site with lots of pictures. Megan then had someone film her saying, "This is the best party ever. I am with all of my best friends. Good thing Pia isn't here. She would have ruined everything!" The video was posted on a social media site for others to see, including Pia.

CONSENT

I have read this form, all of my questions have been answered by the research staff, and I agree to allow my child to participate in this study.

_____
(Electronic Signature)

_____
Date of Signature

IRBNet # 1282001

MIXED METHODS STUDY ON CYBERBULLYING BEHAVIOR ADULT INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This research study is being conducted to investigate middle school students' perceptions of cyberbullying behavior. We would like your child to participate because your child's perspective will give us a deeper understanding of the behavior. Your child will be asked to describe how they define cyberbullying and what coping strategies they feel are effective in overcoming the situations described in the fictional vignettes. If you agree to allow your child to participate, then your child can proceed with the interviews. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Your child will be granted a $20 Amazon gift card at the conclusion of the interview.

RISKS

There is a slight risk that some children may experience stress or discomfort when answering questions regarding cyberbullying and what strategies they would use. Children may skip any questions throughout the interview that they don't want to answer.

However slight the risks are, child participants may be upset by some of the questions being asked during the interview. If you have concerns or questions about cyberbullying, please contact:

Crisis Call Center
800-273-8255 or text ANSWER to 839863
Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week
http://crisiscallcenter.org/crisis-services

CyberTipline
800-843-5678
Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week
http://www.cybertipline.com

BENEFITS

There are no benefits to your child, as a participant, other than to further research in cyberbullying behavior.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data in this study will be confidential. Your child will be given a pseudo name in lieu of their name to ensure confidentiality. The data from the interview will be placed in a locked safe, in the principal investigators' office, at George Mason University for five years once the study ends. The only individuals who will have access to the data will be the main researcher (Jenny Mischel), the advisor of the dissertation committee (Dr. Kitsantas), and the methods committee member (Dr. Sheridan).

PARTICIPATION

Your child's participation is voluntary, and they may withdraw from the study at any time and

for any reason. If they decide not to participate or if they withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you, your child, or any other party.

CONTACT
This research is being conducted by Jenny Mischel, from the College of Education and Human Development, at George Mason University. She may be reached at (571) 276-2813. The faculty advisor on this committee is Dr. Anastasia Kitsantas, Professor of Educational Psychology from the College of Education and Human Development. She can be reached at (703) 993-2688, for questions or to report a research-related problem. You may contact the George Mason University Institutional Review Board office at (703) 993-4121 if you have questions or comments regarding your child's rights as a participant in the research.
This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your child's participation in this research.

CONSENT

I have read this form, all of my questions have been answered by the research staff, and I agree to allow my child to participate in this study.

( ) I agree to allow my child to be audiotaped.

( ) I do NOT agree to allow my child to be audiotaped.

_____
(Signature)

_____
(Date of Signature)

IRBNet # 1282001-1

Appendix C

Minor Assent Form

CHILD ASSENT FOR SURVEY PARTICIPATION

My name is Jenny Mischel and I am a doctoral student in the Education department at George Mason University.

This is a questionnaire to find out middle school student's beliefs about cyberbullying behavior, what they might do to overcome a similar situation, and beliefs in capability to use that coping strategy. Research studies help us to learn new things. If you agree to participate, the questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete, and will be confidential.

Will anyone know that I am in the study? (Confidentiality)

Your answers will be kept confidential. However, the information you tell me will be used in a study to gain a deeper understanding of middle school student's thoughts about cyberbullying behavior, what strategies middle school students might do to overcome the situation or advice they might give to a friend, and their belief in their ability to do so.

What if I am interested in participating in the brief interview?

If you are interested in participating in a brief interview, you will be able to indicate this on the survey. This does not mean you have to participate, and you can say no at a later time. The survey should take about 30 minutes to complete. If interested, your parent's email address will be placed in a drawing for $20 Amazon gift cards which will be given to 10 participants.

What if I do not want to do this?

You do not have to participate in this survey. It is up to you. You can say "no" now, or you can change your mind later. All you have to do is not finish the questionnaire. You will not be in trouble for saying "no" or for changing your mind. If any of the questions or scenarios upset you in any way, please contact one of the listed helplines below:

Crisis Call Center
800-273-8255 or text ANSWER to 839863
Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week
http://crisiscallcenter.org/crisis-services

CyberTipline
800-843-5678
Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week
http://www.cybertipline.com

Who can I talk to about this study?

If you have questions about the study or have any problems, you can talk to your parents, or call the PI at (703) 993-9181. If you have questions about the study but want to talk to someone else, who is not a part of the study, you can call the Institutional Review Board office at George Mason University at 703-993-4121.

This study has been explained to me and I am willing to be in it.

( ) **I agree to participate.**

( ) **I do not agree to participate.**

IRBNet # 1282001-1

CHILD ASSENT FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION

My name is Jenny Mischel and I am a doctoral student in the Education department at George Mason University.

This is an interview to find out middle school student's beliefs about what they think cyberbullying is and what they might do to overcome a similar situation. Research studies help us to learn new things. If you agree to participate, the interview will take approximately 30 minutes to complete, and will be confidential.

Will anyone know that I am in the study? (Confidentiality)

Your responses will be kept confidential. However, the information you tell me will be used in a study to gain a deeper understanding of middle school student's thoughts about cyberbullying behavior and what strategies middle school students might do to overcome a similar situation.

What if I do not want to do this?

You do not have to participate in this interview. It is up to you. You can say "no" now, or you can change your mind later. All you have to do is say that you don't want to answer anymore questions. You will not be in trouble for saying "no" or for changing your mind. You will still be awarded a $20 Amazon gift card even if you decide to stop the interview at any point. If any of the questions or scenarios upset you in any way, please contact one of the listed helplines below:

Crisis Call Center
800-273-8255 or text ANSWER to 839863
Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week
http://crisiscallcenter.org/crisis-services

CyberTipline
800-843-5678
Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week
http://www.cybertipline.com

Who can I talk to about this study?

If you have questions about the study or have any problems, you can talk to your parents, or call the PI at (703) 993-9181. If you have questions about the study but want to talk to someone else, who is not a part of the study, you can call the Institutional Review Board office at George Mason University at 703-993-4121.

This study has been explained to me and I am willing to be in it.

( ) I agree to participate.

( ) I do not agree to participate.

_____

(Signature)   (Date)

( ) I agree to be audiotaped.

( ) I do NOT agree to audiotaped.

_____

(Signature)   (Date)

IRBNet # 1282001-1

Appendix D

Demographic Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

The survey has four sections. The first section, found below, is about you. The rest of the survey asks for your perceptions on potential situations that might occur, what coping strategies you think will help, and your beliefs in your capabilities to carry out those coping strategies.

There are not correct or incorrect answers.

I. About You:

Before you start the questionnaire, please fill I some details about yourself:

I am: male/ female /other (please circle)

How old are you? _____

What grade are you in at school? (please circle)

6th grade

7th grade

8th grade

Do you have a cell phone?   Yes / No (please circle)

Do you have access to a computer at home?   Yes / No (please circle)

Do you have a Facebook account?   Yes / No (please circle)

Do you have a Twitter account?   Yes / No (please circle)

What other types of social media do you use?

Are you concerned about cyberbullying?   ___Yes   ___No

Would you be willing to participate in a brief interview?   ___Yes   ___No

Vignettes

<u>Vignette 1</u>
Taylor and Jessie both tried out for cheerleading and practiced for try-outs together. Only Taylor made the team and Jessie was very upset. Jessie texted one of their mutual friends to say she was surprised Taylor made the team because she couldn't jump very high and would struggle to fit into a cheerleading uniform. The friend shared the text with another friend.

Is this cyberbullying?

    ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

The message was eventually copied and reposted to a social media site that most of the students in their grade were on. A few students stood up for Taylor, but many posted mean comments.

Is this cyberbullying?

    ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

Many times people have difficulty standing up to someone being mean to them online. If this happened to you, would you have any ways to make them stop?
_____Yes   _____No

1. If yes, what would you do?

_____

_____

(If you answered #1, skip #2)

2. If no, why?

_____

_____

If you answered, "Yes," on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest, how sure are you that you could carry out your way to make them stop? If you answered, "No," how would you rate your ability to stand up to a cyberbully in the future?

        1   3   5   7   10
(not at all sure)   (somewhat sure)   (totally sure)

Peter is a middle school student who is known for being really smart. He doesn't like P.E. because he is not very good at sports and is embarrassed changing into gym clothes in the boy's locker room because he is noticeably skinnier than the other boys. Later that day, a few of the boys from the locker room post an online group message of a cartoon drawing of Peter with the words, "I'm Peter and I'm gay," underneath.

Is this cyberbullying?

       ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

One of the boys shares this on his public social media board. Even though the picture is only posted for a short period of time, many students at the school see the post.

Is this cyberbullying?

       ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

Pretend that you are Peter. Do you have any ways to make them stop?

_____Yes   _____No

1. If yes, what would you do?

_____

_____

(If you answered #1, skip #2)

2. If no, why?

_____

_____

If you answered, "Yes," on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest, how sure are you that you could carry out your way to make them stop? If you answered, "No," how would you rate your ability to stand up to a cyberbully in the future?

          1   3   5   7   10
(not at all sure)   (somewhat sure)   (totally sure)

<u>Vignette 3</u>
Gigi is a new student at a middle school. She is very pretty and many of the boys notice her. The other girls are jealous of the attention Gigi is getting. One of the girls posts that Gigi is a "slut" on social media. Another girl shares this post and asks who else agrees?

Is this cyberbullying?

   ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

The next day, one of the girls takes a picture of Gigi in the hallway and posts it on social media with the caption, "Slut," underneath. Quite a few of the boys at school, some she doesn't even know, post comments.

Is this cyberbullying?

   ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

Pretend that you are in Gigi's position. Do you have any ways to make them stop?

_____Yes   _____No

1. If yes, what would you do?

_____

(If you answered #1, skip #2)

2. If no, why?

_____

If you answered, "Yes," on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest, how sure are you that you could carry out your way to make them stop? If you answered, "No," how would you rate your ability to stand up to a cyberbully in the future?

         1   3   5   7   10
(not at all sure)   (somewhat sure)   (totally sure)

<u>Vignette 4</u>
James' classmates have been making comments about his sexuality all year. At lunch one day, a group of boys set up a fake account and send text messages to James pretending to like him in a romantic way. The boys think this is hilarious, but James does not respond.

Is this cyberbullying?

    ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

The boys continue sending James text messages from the fake account and eventually someone posts these messages onto social media sites for others to see.

Is this cyberbullying?

    ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

Pretend you are James and this was happening to you. Do you have any ways to make them stop?

_____Yes   _____No

1. If yes, what would you do?

_____

_____

(If you answered #1, skip #2)

2. If no, why?

_____

_____

If you answered, "Yes," on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest, how sure are you that you could carry out your way to make them stop? If you answered, "No," how would you rate your ability to stand up to a cyberbully in the future?

1	3	5	7	10
(not at all sure)		(somewhat sure)		(totally sure)

Katerina is at a sleepover party with her friends. Since they are all good friends, they sometimes use each other's phones and know each other's passcodes. When Katerina falls asleep, a couple of her friends grab her phone and open up her text messages. They notice some silly pictures Katerina has taken of herself. They send one of the pictures to a boy that Katerina likes.

Is this cyberbullying?

    ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

The girls find more pictures and end up posting funny, but embarrassing comments underneath each photo. People start responding to the posts, even people Katerina doesn't know.

Is this cyberbullying?

    ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

Pretend you are Katerina and this was happening to you. Do you have any ways to make them stop?

_____Yes _____No

1. If yes, what would you say or do?

_____

(If you answered #1, skip #2)

2. If no, why?

_____

If you answered, "Yes," on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest, how sure are you that you could carry out your way to make them stop? If you answered, "No," how would you rate your ability to give advice about a cyberbully in the future?

1	3	5	7	10
(not at all sure)		(somewhat sure)		(totally sure)

<u>Vignette 6</u>
Shelby and Luke have been dating for about 3 months. They mostly text and sometimes go to Starbucks after school. Shelby really likes Luke and he really likes Shelby. His friends start to tease him about having a girlfriend. Embarrassed, Luke starts to brag about how far he's gone with Shelby even though he hasn't even kissed her yet. His friends don't believe him and ask for proof. The next day, Luke asks Shelby to send a picture of herself in just her bra. Shelby is not comfortable doing this, but he keeps pressuring her. She really likes Luke and doesn't want him to break up with her. So, she sends a picture of herself wearing only a bra. Luke then sends it to one of his friends to prove that he was telling the truth. He feels bad doing this, but only sends it to his best friend.

Is this cyberbullying?

   ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

His best friend, Jack, copies Shelby's picture sends it around to the entire school.

Is this cyberbullying?

   ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

Pretend you are Shelby and this was happening to you. Do you have any ways to make them stop?

_____Yes   _____No

1. If yes, what would you say or do?

_____

_____

(If you answered #1, skip #2)

2. If no, why?

_____

_____

212

If you answered, "Yes," on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest, how sure are you that you could carry out your way to make them stop? If you answered, "No," how would you rate your ability to give advice about a cyberbully in the future?

1	3	5	7	10
(not at all sure)		(somewhat sure)		(totally sure)

<u>Vignette 7</u>
Adam and Rachel are just good friends. One day at school, someone unknowingly takes a picture of the two of them walking in the hallway. Later that day, the person posts the picture on a social media site with the caption, "The Next New Couple."

Is this cyberbullying?

    ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

The picture quickly blows up all over social media sites. People start commenting on the picture saying things like, "What a cute couple," or, "Finally they are together!" Others write mean comments like, "No way. She's not even on his level," or "What is he thinking?" This spreads all over the school.

Is this cyberbullying?

    ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

Pretend you are Rachel or Adam and this was happening to you. Do you have any ways to make them stop?

_____Yes   _____No

1. If yes, what would you say or do?

_____

(If you answered #1, skip #2)

2. If no, why?

_____

If you answered, "Yes," on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest, how sure are you that you could carry out your way to make them stop? If you answered, "No," how would you rate your ability to give advice about a cyberbully in the future?

1	3	5	7	10
(not at all sure)		(somewhat sure)		(totally sure)

Megan is having a party. She and her best friend, Pia, recently had a fight. Megan uninvited Pia through a text message. The girls then sent nasty text messages back and forth to each other. Most of the girls took Megan's side because they still wanted to go to her party. She said she would uninvite anyone who took Pia's side. Pia tried to talk to the other girls about what was going on with Megan, but they all told her to just apologize to Megan.

Is this cyberbullying?

    ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

The weekend of the party arrived. Halfway through the party, Megan suggested they post how much fun they were having on a common social media site with lots of pictures. Megan then had someone film her saying, "This is the best party ever. I am with all of my best friends. Good thing Pia isn't here. She would have ruined everything!" The video was posted on a social media site for others to see, including Pia.

Is this cyberbullying?

    ___No   ___On the border   ___Yes

Pretend you are Pia and this was happening to you. Do you have any ways to stop them?
_____Yes   _____No

1. If yes, what would you do?

_____

_____

(If you answered #1, skip #2)

2. If no, why?

_____

_____

If you answered, "Yes," on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest, how sure are you that you could carry out your way to make them stop? If you answered, "No," how would you rate your ability to give advice about a cyberbully in the future?

1	3	5	7	10
(not at all sure)		(somewhat sure)		(totally sure)

Appendix F

Interview Protocol

Thank you for being willing to participate in this interview. Your participation will help researchers better understand what things middle school students might do to overcome distress caused by cyberbullying. I will refer back to the answers you gave in the survey and ask you some additional questions about your answers. Did you receive the vignettes I emailed to you?

For Cyberbullying Vignettes

1.   (Depending on answer given on survey) Why do (Why don't) you consider this cyberbullying?
2.   (If they answer no): What would need to occur for you to consider this cyberbullying?
a)   Why?
For Coping Strategies:

1.   Looking at Vignette 1, you said that you would _____ if you were experiencing that situation.
a.   Do you still agree with that answer? Why or why not?
b.   Is there something else you might also do? Why?

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Biography

Jenny Mischel graduated from Arcadia High School in Arcadia, CA in 1986. She received her bachelor's degree in 1990 from the California Polytechnice State University in San Luis Obispo, CA. She went on to earn a Multiple Subject Teaching Credential from the same university in 1992. She taught elementary school for the next 8 years in Glendale and Hawthorne, CA. While teaching, she earned her master's degree in Psychology from Pepperdine University. Jenny stayed at home to raise her four children for 12 years. During that time, she started an educational publishing company and tutored students from elementary up to high school. When her youngest child was enrolled in second grade, she ventured back into the classroom. These experiences led her to pursue her doctoral degree in Educational Psychology at George Mason University.