USING PATH ANALYSIS TO UNDERSTAND PARENTAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH PARENT TEACHINGS OF BYSTANDER BEHAVIOR

A Dissertation

by

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Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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August 2016

Major Subject: School Psychology

ABSTRACT

Due to the negative effects of bullying, schools have worked to address bullying by adopting anti-bullying prevention programs and policies that include parental components in order to increase student generalization of effective strategies to reduce bullying. Recently, school anti-bullying interventions have focused on increasing appropriate bystander responses, especially because the person or persons that witness bullying can disrupt the frequency of the incidents by deciding to intervene and support the victim. However, according to the social-ecological perspective, children can choose to adopt bystander responses based not only on what they learn in school, but also on what their parents teach them to do. Due to the research indicating that parent teachings to their victimized children can vary by several factors, it seems plausible that parent teachings on what to do when their child is a bystander can vary by their perceptions of their child's school. Using path analysis, the current study examines if parental perceptions of school climate and awareness of anti-bullying interventions impact what parents teach their children to do as bystanders. Results indicated a failed model, with only six of the ten directional paths in the correct direction. There was a significant and positive relationship between parent and school counselor correspondence of anti-bullying interventions and parents teaching their children to stand up for the victim when bullying is witnessed at school. Results also revealed that parent perception of school climate was negatively related to parents teaching their child to tell an adult when witnessing bullying. Possible factors influencing the model, strategies to promote home and school collaborations on anti-bullying initiatives, and future directions are discussed.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my amazing and wonderful husband, Eric Banks. Thank you Eric for your continuous love, support, encouragement, and commitment to making me a better person every day. Without hesitation, you are always willing to ensure my happiness and I am also my most happy when you are happy. Eric, you are an incredible father to our beautiful children and we make a great team!

I also would like to dedicate my dissertation to my children Camille Joy and Eric Keith, Jr. "EJ." Camille, all that I do is especially for you. My prayer is that you continue to know that you will always be a beautiful, loving, curious, and passionate person who can be and do whatever your heart desires. EJ, you are growing up so fast and I cannot wait to see the great things you will do! You keep me smiling and knowing that no matter how old you are, there is always enough time in the day to play. I love you Camille and EJ and want you both to know that I could not have handpicked any children as precious and fun as you all.

To my parents, Rodney and Carrie Swisher, I would like to also dedicate this dissertation to you. I honestly do not know if I could have come this far without your foundational teachings of genuineness, respect, and especially of having faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Thank you Mom and Dad for always being there no matter what, even if it meant driving late at night to watch the kids while I completed an assignment, wrote up a research study, or just needed you all to come down.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Every day, Lord, I pray to be genuine and allow my faith and works to show how excellent You are. I am continuously blessed beyond measure and daily am reminded of Romans 8:28.

I would also like to thank my dissertation chair, Dr. Jamilia Blake. Dr. Blake, you consistently support me and push me to become a better student, researcher, and person. I will be forever grateful that God placed you in my life and am proud to call you my mentor. Thank you for always seeing the success in me before I saw it myself.

Thank you also to my committee members, Drs. Hughes, Willson, and Webb-Hasan. Each of you have also played a role in my growth as a researcher and practitioner. I appreciate your time, encouragement, feedback, and support as members of my dissertation committee.

Last, but of course not least, I would like to thank the faculty and staff of the Texas A&M University School Psychology Department. Thank you for your words of encouragement inside and outside of the classroom, your high expectations for all students, and providing for me the skill set I can apply in practice. I hope to be just as passionate in helping children academically, socially, and emotionally through research and application as you all are.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Research has indicated that individuals involved in bullying often experience adverse outcomes. For example, compared to students not involved in bullying, bullies are more likely to develop aggressive relationships in the future, and victims will avoid school more often than those not bullied (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Bully-victims (*i.e.*, individuals who are both perpetrators and victims) have greater levels of depression and loneliness compared to individuals who are either bullies or victims (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003). Bystanders are more likely to present higher levels of helplessness when witnessing bullying and possible suicidal ideation compared to those that do not witness bullying (Rivers & Noret, 2013).

Schools have adopted many interventions to decrease bullying and the negative effects on those involved. Among the many types of interventions selected by schools, increasing prosocial skills in bystanders (Frey *et al.*, 2005) and involving parents in school anti-bullying interventions (Astor, Meyer, Benbenishty, Marachi, & Rosemond, 2005; Smith, Schneider, & Smith, 2004) are two examples. Although many school interventions are directly geared toward promoting appropriate bystander behaviors (Polanin, Espelage, & Pigott, 2012), limited information exists within the literature on parents' awareness of school-based anti-bullying interventions in general, and the specific ways parents teach their children to respond as bystanders in school bullying situations. Instead, current research primarily focuses on parents' responses to their

child as a victim or bully, which vary depending on parents' perceptions of their child's school climate (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Duong, 2011).

Social ecological theory, proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1986), is one perspective that draws attention to the influence of parents within the school setting, especially their influence on children's behaviors. Specifically, a child's mesosystem (*i.e.*, the interaction of two immediate environments that can influence a child) incorporates the combined home and school influences from which a child can draw in order to decide how to respond to bullying as a witness. A bystander can reinforce the bullying behavior, defend the victim, console the victim, or disengage from the event and walk away (Salmivalli, 2010). Whereas a majority of the literature has focused on the impact of teachers or peers within the school setting on bystander responses (Hektner & Swenson, 2011; Howard, Landau, & Pryor, 2014), research has shown that bystander responses can also be influenced by perceived messages from parents about such behavior (Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Pozzoli & Gini, 2012). Banks, Blake, and Joslin (2013) found an association between parents who teach their child to remain uninvolved as a bystander and children reportedly choosing either not to intervene or, adversely, to partake in the bullying.

These studies highlight that students, as bystanders, may draw upon parent teachings just as much as upon the information they receive at school about anti-bullying strategies and interventions. It is critical to understand the factors that can influence children's bystander responses, especially given the bystander's potential to disrupt and cease bullying situations. The current study assesses the factors that influence parent

teachings of bystander behavior. Specifically, how parents' perceptions of school climate and their awareness of school anti-bullying interventions are associated with what parents teach their children to do as bystanders was investigated. In this study, a parent is identified as any individual who reports to be a guardian or caregiver for a child. Therefore, this definition includes not only biological parents, but also grandparents, stepparents, foster-parents, adoptive parents, or any other identified guardian.

Currently, the literature is replete with information on how bullies and victims can be influenced by peers and teachers (Novick & Isaacs, 2010; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004), as well as by parenting practices and responses (Lovegrove, Henry, & Slater, 2012; Rodkin & Hodges, 2003). Therefore, the current study extends the bullying literature by highlighting the impact of parental influences on children's bystander responses. Expanded knowledge of what factors can predict the actions that parents teach their children to take as bystanders of bullying at school has the potential to increase home and school collaborations to promote positive bystander behaviors.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition and Types of Bullying

Bullying is recognized as both a widespread problem and a topic of concern for schools and families due to its serious implications for children's mental health and school adjustment (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2010; Ttofi & Farrington, 2009; Vanderbilt & Augustyn, 2010). Often identified as a form of aggression, bullying encompasses three characteristics: an imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s), intent to harm, and repeated victimization (Olweus, 1995; Sherer & Nickerson, 2010). Bullying can present itself in a variety of forms. Perpetrators can use physical (*e.g.*, kicking and hitting), verbal (*e.g.*, making threats and calling names), relational (*e.g.*, excluding others, gossiping, and spreading rumors), or even cyber tactics (*e.g.*, using technology to humiliate or threaten) to victimize peers. Peeters, Cillesen, and Scholte (2010) emphasize that bullies are not a homogeneous group; depending on the function of bullying, they can use power, social and physical status, or a combination of these characteristics to exert control over their victims.

Characteristics of Individuals Involved in Bullying

The literature on bullying focuses primarily on the characteristics and negative outcomes of students who are directly involved in bullying as bullies, victims, bully-victims, and bystanders (*i.e.* individuals who witness the instances of bullying) (Cenkseven Önder & Yurtal, 2008; Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Students who bully

are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviors, exhibit lower academic achievement, display physical aggression, and resort to sexual harassment in romantic relationships compared to those who do not bully others (Pepler, *et al*., 2006; Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Victims tend to be more anxious and sensitive, and avoid school more often (Arseneault, Bowes, & Shakoor, 2010; Smith, Shu, & Madsen, 2001; Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). When coupled with social hopelessness (*i.e.*, the negative feelings one has about future interpersonal relationships), they are more likely to exhibit suicidal ideation compared to students who are not victimized (Bonanno & Hymel, 2010). Bully-victims have more severe psychological problems (Yang & Salmivalli, 2013), as well as higher levels of conduct problems, psychiatric disorders, and homicidal ideation (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003; Smokowiski & Kopasz, 2005). Bystanders also experience adverse outcomes; they have a greater likelihood of developing high levels of anger, dissociation, and substance abuse (Polanin *et al.*, 2012).

The current and future maladaptive behaviors of individuals involved in bullying incidents are clearly indicated in extant research. Knowledge of the characteristics of those that participate in bullying situations and the adverse outcomes that often occur can increase awareness of the importance of intervention in order to prevent reoccurrences.

Bystanders' Roles in and Responses to Bullying

Bystanders are present in bullying situations approximately 80% of the time (O'Connell, Pepler & Craig, 1999). Bystanders have the potential to either disrupt or reinforce the cycle of bullying depending on the roles they assume in the situation.

According to Salmivalli (2010), bystanders can act as reinforcers of bullying by providing an audience for the bully, as defenders, *i.e.*, individuals who console and support the victim by attempting to stop the bullying incidents, or as outsiders; that is, students who witness, but stay out of the bullying incident, thus providing no support to the bully or victim. Although bystanders typically function as outsiders in bullying incidents, their responses tend to vary based on several factors. Johnson, Waasdorp, and Debnam (2013) found that student response to bullying was associated with perceptions of school climate such that when students perceived their school to be safe, they were less likely to tell an adult when bullying occurred.

On the other hand, Cortes and Kochenderfer-Ladd (2014) found that children reported bullying to their teachers more frequently when they believed that their teachers would take action. Bystander actions are also influenced by age, gender, and the type of bullying observed (Salmivalli, 2010). In their examination of bystander behavior among children in middle childhood (*i.e.*, ages 6 to 11 years), Rock and Baird (2012) found that older children were able to generate more positive bystander responses including confronting the bully, seeking teacher assistance, and helping the victim. After examining bystander responses in elementary, middle, and high school students, Trach, Hymel, Waterhouse, and Neale (2010) found developmental differences in bystander behavior. Compared to elementary students, middle and high school students who were bystanders were more likely to remain uninvolved or get friends to retaliate against the bully. These findings suggest that age can play a role in whether bystanders initiate support to the victim. In the same study, authors also discovered that gender might

affect bystander responses to bullying. Boys tended to endorse more indirect and retaliatory bystander responses, such as asking their friends to get back at the bully while girls reported using more direct strategies such as telling the perpetrator to stop and helping the victim, and relied more on peer and social networks to stop the bullying. Some examples were talking with the bully's friends in order to implore the bully to stop, asking friends for help to solve the problem, or talking to another peer about the incident.

Bystander responses also vary based on the type of bullying observed. Using bullying vignettes that varied by form, Rock and Baird (2012) found that children in middle childhood were more likely to report helping the victim in relational bullying situations (i.e., excluding others using rumors or gossip) than those that involved property violation, pushing, or teasing. Children's requests for teacher support were higher during scenarios involving teasing than during other types of bullying situations. Overall, these studies show that it is imperative to increase bystander responses that support the victim. Salmivalli, Voeten, and Poskiparta's (2011) study further supports this; of all the different roles that bystanders can assume, the role of defender has the greatest likelihood of decreasing current and future bullying incidents.

Bystander Responses and the Influence of Parents

Although bystanders do not always report bullying to school personnel, research has indicated that bystanders often report bullying incidents to their parents (Sawyer, Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener, 2011; Smith & Shu, 2000). However, there is limited data on what parents teach their child to do as bystanders in bullying situations.

Currently, a small number of studies provide information on how bystanders are influenced by their parents in general. In their study on understanding factors related to helping victims, Rigby and Johnson (2006) found that children whose parents expected them to intervene were more likely to report willingness to help the victim than students who did not believe that their parents expected them to assist the victim. Similarly, results from Pozzoli and Gini (2012) indicate that when students have the perceived parental pressure to defend a victim, they are more likely to take on this role instead of remaining passive in the bullying situation.

While knowledge of the reported influence of perceived parent expectations on students' behavior during bullying incidents is enlightening, it provides only one avenue for understanding parents' role in influencing bystander responses. Obtaining reports from parents regarding the messages they give their children about bystander responses can extend the research on bullying prevention and home and school collaboration. In addition to providing more information on what parents generally teach their child to do when witnessing bullying, these reports can clarify whether those messages align with evidenced-based bystander interventions used in schools to reduce bullying. Secondly, they can inform schools about the extent of congruence between anti-bullying interventions provided at the school and parents' knowledge of these interventions, which would then determine if school staff's means of communication on anti-bullying interventions to parents are successful.

Few studies have examined the bystander messages parents convey to their children. Sawyer *et al.* (2011) found in their qualitative study that few of the parents

who were interviewed elaborated on what they told their child to do when witnessing bullying: stand up for the victim or seek an adult for assistance. In a pilot study examining the association of parental messages and children's reported bystander behaviors, Banks *et al*. (2013) found an association between parents' teaching their children to remain uninvolved as bystanders in bullying situations and children's reports of their tendency to not intervene for the victim but to side with the bully if they did get involved. The findings from the pilot study indicate the messages parents provide to their children regarding appropriate bystander responses to bullying can influence the bullying situation and may even result in increased victimization if parents are not aware of effective strategies to decrease bullying. Consequently, it seems necessary to study what parents teach their children to do as bystanders in order to increase positive outcomes of intervention.

The Social Ecological Perspective

The current study is embedded in the social ecological theory in order to understand factors that can be associated with parents' teachings and children's bystander responses. The social ecological theory for bullying stems from Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological model and identifies how various systems (namely the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystems) influence a child's behavior in bullying situations. The microsystem is defined as interpersonal relationships within one's immediate environment, while the mesosystem is the combination of two or more microsystems. Bronfenbrenner (1979) explains the exosystem as an environment that does not involve the child but the events in which can

influence the child. He describes the macrosystem as the highest level of influence on a child, including contexts such as culture and ideologies. According to the social ecological perspective, bullying is maintained not only because of the individual characteristics of those directly involved, but also as a result of the interplay of additional systems and factors proximal and distal to the individual (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Nickerson, Mele, & Princiotta, 2008; Swearer & Doll, 2001).

The social ecological theory has been used as a framework for conceptualizing bullying and victimization before (Swearer *et al.*, 2006). Boxer *et al.* (2013), for instance, examined the development of aggression in children who are exposed to violence in multiple social systems, while Barboza *et al.* (2009) investigated the individual and multiple systems associated with the continuation of bullying behaviors exhibited by adolescents. The majority of such studies address how the systems in which a student is contained impact the child or adolescent's likelihood of being a bully, victim, or bully-victim, with less attention on how these systems influence bystanders.

In the microsystem, individuals are influenced by factors with which they have direct contact in their immediate environment, such as within home or school settings. At home, parents can influence a child's behavior by their parenting practices; overprotection and coercion can increase the likelihood of a child's victimization (Rodkin & Hodges, 2003). Likewise, parents' personal history regarding bullying can influence the intervention and coping strategies they teach when their child is a victim of bullying (Cooper & Nickerson, 2013). Youth that perceive a negative relationship between themselves and their family members are also at an increased risk for

victimization. Lovegrove *et al*. (2012) found that victims of bullying are more likely to report low family bonding, measured by how well youth reportedly get along with their family. Within the school setting, peer norms as well as teacher attitudes and behaviors can also influence bullying involvement. Salmivalli and Voeten (2004) investigated the impact of attitudes and group norms on elementary students' involvement in bullying situations. Their results indicate that peer norms condoning bullying are associated with higher rates of students' bullying, as well as reinforcing bullying behaviors in others.

Regarding the influence of teacher attitudes, a separate investigation found that teachers' awareness of bullying and ability to coach students on how to manage the situation was highly related to teachers' efficacy to intervene (Novick & Isaacs, 2010). Teachers' decisions to intervene are also associated with the type of participants in the bullying situation. Teachers intervene most when a bully is physically larger than the victim is, when bullies are high achievers and victims are low achievers, and when bullies have a higher socioeconomic status compared to the victims (Blain-Arcaro, Smith, Cunningham, Vaillancourt, & Rimas, 2012). These findings imply that characteristics of students' home and school environments can perpetuate bullying. Accordingly, interventions to disrupt negative patterns at home and school are important in preventing these aggressive interactions.

As stated above, the mesosystem is identified as an interaction of two microsystems that contain the student (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Since students do not reside in one environment at all times, they bring knowledge and information from a variety of contexts to their experiences. Therefore, multiple factors can increase the

likelihood of bullying. For example, bullying can be influenced by the interaction of two microsystems within the school setting such as teacher attitudes and peer responses. Hektner and Swenson (2012) found that when teachers expected victims of bullying to be assertive, other students were less likely to intervene for the victim compared to students whose teachers did not have expectations of victim assertiveness. Conversely, teacher intervention in bullying resulted in increased peer intervention during bullying incidents. Results from the aforementioned study bring attention to how the interaction of multilevel school contexts can affect the rate of school bullying.

Similarly, the interaction of the home and school settings can influence children's bullying behavior. Ayers, Wagaman, Griger, Bermudez-Parsai, and Hedberg (2012) found that students who received a bullying referral and whose parents met with an administrator or teacher had a lower likelihood of receiving a second bullying referral. Likewise, in Ttofi and Farrington's (2009) meta-analysis of school bullying interventions, parent components such as parent training were reported to result in the reduction of bullying and victimization. Finally, Barboza *et al*. (2009) found that parents and teachers who exhibited permissive relationships were more likely to foster a school environment with increased bullying. Even though these findings demonstrate the impact of home and school systems on bullying situations, few studies focus on the combined influence of parent teachings on responses to bullying and school anti-bullying interventions, which is the focus of the current study.

The Research Gap of Parental Impact on Students' Bystander Behavior

Currently, there is a gap in the literature explaining how a child's mesosystem, specifically the interaction of home and school systems, is associated with children's bystander behaviors. When considering the home setting, extant literature draws attention to parent messages to their child as a victim, but not as a bystander, even though research has shown the influence bystanders have on the frequency of school bullying. For example, Frey *et al*. (2005) implemented the *Steps to Respect* curriculum, an anti-bullying intervention that incorporates classroom lessons on building social and emotional skills in students, and provides teacher training on how to help students involved in bullying. Implementation of the Steps to Respect program resulted in students assuming increased responsibility to support bullying victims, and adults being more likely to intervene with bullying. In the same vein, Schumacher (2007) created a bullying video for high school students to watch during class and answer questions on how to solve the problem as a bystander. The results indicated that students who watched the video had significant changes in attitudes toward bullying and reported more prosocial interventions as a bystander on a post-test.

These studies address increasing bystander intervention through school factors such as changing peer and teacher attitudes about bullying, building prosocial skills in students, and using media to view scenarios of bullying in school. In other words, their primary focus is the schools. While intervention at the school level shows promising results in promoting bystander intervention, children's bystander behaviors may also be influenced by messages they hear within their home setting. Parents can influence

children's prosocial behaviors directly through their positive messages at home. Ensor, Spencer, and Hughes (2010) found that parent-toddler mutuality and responsiveness in interactions predicted the helping behavior of children at school. Likewise, as referenced earlier, perceived parent messages of bystander behavior can also have an impact on children's bystander responses outside of the home, as children tend to display the response that they believe their parents want as a bystander (Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Pozzoli & Gini, 2012). Therefore, understanding how parents play a role in children's bystander behaviors can potentially provide more insight into factors that are associated with children's decision to intervene for the sake of the victim.

Waasdorp, Bradshaw *et al*. (2011) report that most parents respond to their children's victimization by talking to them. It has also been found that sometimes, the initial responses to the victimized child comprise recommended strategies to cope with or manage the bullying (e.g., ignore or walk away from the bullying) before involving school administrators for help in reducing victimization (Brown, Aalsma, & Ott, 2013). Parent responses to their victimized child can also vary depending on how effectively the school can prevent and control the rate of bullying (Olweus, 1993), or whether the parent perceives the school to be disordered or unsafe (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2009). These findings indicate that parent responses to their victimized child can vary depending on how they perceive the school climate or the safety level of the school. Goldkind and Farmer (2013) also support the conclusion that one predictor of parent involvement is the parent's perception of school climate. What research has not yet

revealed is how the perception of school climate can influence what parents teach their children to do as bystanders.

School Climate and Parental Involvement in School

School climate can be defined in a variety of ways (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). The literature frequently focuses on four dimensions of school climate; namely those of safety, teaching and learning, relationships, and environmental-structural (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). For the purposes of the current study, the highlighted aspect of school climate is within the dimension of safety, specifically the perception of social and emotional attitudes of students and school staff in their response to bullying, conflict resolution, and behavioral expectations.

As school climate relates to violence, which includes bullying, school climate is multidimensional and can therefore be defined as involving students' perceptions regarding the rate of aggression at school, norms surrounding the appropriateness of aggression, and how often one will seek help and/or support at school to address aggression (Bandyopadhyay, Cornell, & Konold, 2009; Hong & Espelage, 2012). The degree to which parents are involved with the school for non-academic reasons may also depend on parent perceptions of the school climate (Seefeldt, Denton, Galper, & Younoszai, 1998). Seefeldt *et al*. (1998) found that when parents perceive the school climate to be negative, they are more likely to involve themselves in their child's school activities. Parents are also more likely to be involved in the school when they receive updates about their children's academic and behavioral progress, as well as information on school policies and procedures (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991).

To date, only one study has investigated parental perception of school climate and how it affects parents' responses to various forms of victimization. Waasdorp, Bradshaw *et al.* (2011) found that parents who perceived their child's school climate to be positive were less likely to report victimization of their children to school staff or talk with their children about the bullying incident that the school reported to them. The researchers attribute these results to parents perceiving the school to be addressing bullying situations effectively, and agreeing with the interventions that they implement. Although their study addresses a relationship between parent perception of school climate and their messages towards their child about bullying, the sampled population of students was victims, not bystanders. Therefore, more information is needed to determine if parent perceptions of school climate are associated with parent messages about their child's bystander responses.

Parent Involvement and School Anti-Bullying Interventions

Within the past decade, federal policies have recommended that schools collaborate with parents on school interventions. On the national level, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 identifies the requirement of schools to inform and include parents in all student-centered programs in order to receive federal funding for programming. Locally, several states require schools to notify parents about bullying incidents that involve their child, as well as identify the steps schools need to take to prevent reoccurrence (Stuart-Cassel, Bell, & Springer, 2011). As a whole, these statutes seek to build school collaboration with families and communities in order to augment the effectiveness of their bullying prevention and intervention efforts.

The negative outcomes of bullying have resulted in increased parental concern about bullying and its impact, as well as the number of their questions about how to prevent and intervene in bullying situations. Consequently, numerous anti-bullying and violence prevention programs that not only involve implementation within the school setting, but also include parental components are available (Astor *et al*., 2005; Smith *et al*., 2004). Parental components of anti-bullying and violence prevention programs consist of parents discussing anti-bullying strategies at home with their children, and schools sending newsletters to parents, conducting workshops with them, or inviting them to attend parent-teacher conferences to discuss specific bullying issues with their child's teacher (Muscott *et al*., 2008). These components provide a way for parents to be involved in their child's school anti-bullying activities and allow them flexibility in choosing how they wish to participate in the anti-bullying efforts.

Yet, two gaps exist in the literature regarding parents and anti-bullying interventions. First, little is known about how aware parents are of their child's school anti-bullying efforts. This gap remains despite consistent recommendations for including parents in the implementation of school anti-bullying interventions in order to help promote generalization, continuity, and consistency of children's anti-bullying strategies and coping skills (Ayers *et al*., 2012; Sherer, & Nickerson, 2010; Ttofi & Farrington, 2009). Second, most anti-bullying interventions that include parent resources and involvement are those that focus on intervening with both bullies and victims, but they do not address bystander involvement. For example, a review of current anti-bullying programs by Ttofi and Farrington (2009) indicates that anti-

bullying interventions that effectively decrease bullying and victimization are those that are intensive and have multiple components. However, as stated above, little is known about bystander intervention programs that incorporate parental involvement. As a result, there are no studies to date that discuss the role of parents in bystander intervention, or the factors that can influence what parents teach their children to do as bystanders in bullying situations.

The current study contributes to the literature on anti-bullying interventions by examining parent roles in bystander intervention, and by drawing attention to the factors that may be associated with what parents teach their children to do as bystanders. The results of this study have the potential to provide insight into the relationship between parents' perceptions of their child's school climate, and their messages to their children about bystander responses, since this association has not been explored. Furthermore, understanding parent perceptions and their connection to what they teach their children can facilitate increased home and school collaboration related to anti-bullying efforts.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to understand whether or not parents' perceptions of school climate and awareness of school anti-bullying programs predict what they teach their children to do when witnessing bullying. Research indicates that parents' level of involvement in school and communication with their children about bullying vary with parent perception of school climate (Seefeldt *et al.*, 1998; Waasdorp, Pas, O'Brennan, & Bradshaw, 2011). Furthermore, federal policies recommend that parents are included in anti-bullying interventions in order to increase parental involvement in school and

children's generalization of appropriate conflict resolution strategies (Ayers *et al*., 2012; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Ttofi & Farrington, 2009). Thus, it is hypothesized that parent perceptions of positive school climate and parent awareness of anti-bullying interventions are independently and positively associated with parents teaching active bystander responses to their children. Correspondingly, it is also hypothesized that parent perception of positive school climate and awareness of anti-bullying interventions is negatively associated with parents teaching passive bystander responses to their children. If both hypotheses are supported, the current study will be used to help schools increase their efforts in promoting parental awareness and involvement in school anti-bullying interventions and successfully implement these interventions to reflect continuity of effective bystander messages between home and school.

As mentioned before, the current study is one of the first to date to examine the association between parent perceptions of school climate and parental awareness of anti-bullying interventions and how these two factors predict parental teachings of bystander responses.

Conceptual Model and Study Hypotheses

The current study adopts a cross-sectional design that tests the following research hypotheses:

(1) Parental perception of school climate predicts what parents teach their children to do as bystanders to bullying.

(2) Parental knowledge of school anti-bullying interventions predicts what parents teach their children to do as bystanders to bullying.

(3) Parent perception of school climate and knowledge of anti-bullying interventions will make independent contributions to what parents teach their children to do as bystanders to bullying.

The hypothesized model shown in Figure 1 is saturated, in that all exogenous variables have a relationship with each endogenous variable. The model depicts the relationships of the following variables:

(a) Parent Perception of School Climate: Parent perception of how the school responds to reports and witnessing of school bullying

(b) Parent Knowledge of Anti-bullying Interventions: Parent and school counselor correspondence of school anti- bullying initiatives that involve parents

(c) Tell an Adult: Parent bystander teaching of telling an adult when bullying is observed

(d) Stay Out: Parent bystander teaching of stay out of the bullying event and do not get involved when bullying is observed

(e) Stand Up: Parent bystander teaching to stand up for the victim or confront the bully

(f) Walk Away: Parent bystander teaching to walk away and not watch the bullying occur

(g) Comfort Victim: Parent bystander teaching to comfort or befriend the victim when bullying is observed

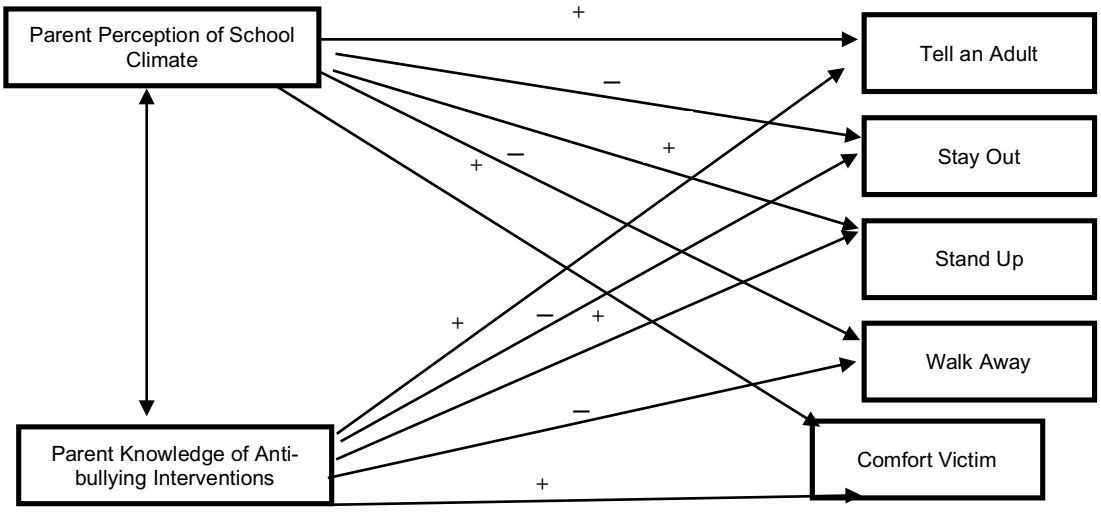

Figure 1. Hypothesized model. The positive sign (+) indicates a hypothesized positive direction. The negative sign (-) indicates a negative direction.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Participants

Participants were parents of fourth through eighth grade students as well as counselors at the student's schools. Parents of fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students were chosen for the study because of research indicating that parental involvement declines in late elementary and middle school (Hill & Tyson, 2009), the same time period in which bullying behaviors typically increase (Nansel, Overpeck, & Pilla, 2001). School counselors were selected to obtain anti-bullying information because of their knowledge of school bullying interventions, given their role as trainer for school staff (Cunningham & Whitten, 2007; Lund, Blake, Ewing, & Banks, 2012).

Parent participants were sought through a variety of avenues. First, meetings were coordinated with local middle school principals to attend Open House and other parent and family events to recruit participation. Due to the availability of the survey in electronic form, a second method of recruitment included emailing school listservs a password protected survey link through the Qualtrics Insight Platform with a request for parent participants to forward the email to other parents. Inclusion criteria for participation in the study were as follows: (a) parents must have at least one child in fourth through eighth grade and (b) at least one school counselor completed a survey based on the school identified in the parent survey.

Out of the 164 consent forms obtained in Fall 2014, Spring and Fall 2015, and Spring 2016, a total number of 105 participants (86 parents and 19 counselors)

participated in the study. Eleven of the nineteen counselors represented more than one parent at the same school. After omitting the nine counselors who did not complete the survey and the parents associated with them, 71 parent and counselor dyads were created.

Eighty-six parents of fourth through eighth grade students from elementary, intermediate, or middle schools in the central Texas and central Arkansas area were recruited for participation in this study. As indicated in Table 1, the majority of the parent sample was African American, and was mothers of seventh and eighth grade students. Out of the 29 schools represented, 19 school counselors completed surveys about anti-bullying interventions at the corresponding school. Most school counselors were White, female, and had 14 years or less of counseling experience (see Table 1).

Table 1

Participant Demographics

		Frequency	%
Parents			
Relationship			
	Mother	71	82.5
	Father	11	12.7
	Stepparent	4	4.6
Ethnicity			
	Black/African American	47	54.6
	White/Caucasian	31	36
	Hispanic/Mexican/Latino/a	5	5.8
	Multi-racial/ethnic	2	2.3
Grade of Child			
	4^{th}	7	8
	5^{th}	2	2
	6^{th}	10	11.6
	7^{th}	29	33.7
	8^{th}	38	44.2
School Counselors			
Gender			
	Male	2	11.1
	Female	17	89.5
Ethnicity			
	Black/African American	4	21.1
	White/Caucasian	10	55.6
	Hispanic/Mexican/Latino/a	3	16.7
	Multi-racial/ethnic	2	11.2

Note. One parent preferred not to provide his/her ethnicity.

Research Design

In order to analyze the hypotheses, path analysis based on the techniques recommended by Kline (2012) was used. Path analysis is similar to Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), with the exception that the path analysis techniques measure relationships among observed variables, whereas SEM techniques measure latent variables. Path analysis uses mathematical terms, to identify linear relationships between complex social systems (Karadağ, 2012). Path analysis was chosen as the method to test the model also because, contrary to regression analysis, this method can test the path coefficients in a hypothesized model simultaneously (Garson, 2008).

In order to ensure that the results of the hypothesized model are interpretable, the following assumptions must be made when conducting path analysis: The model is adequately specified and theoretically driven; the association is linear, and one-way alternate correlates for measured variables are controlled (Billings & Wroten, 1978; Kline, 2012). The path model was assessed with M*plus* 7 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012) using the maximum likelihood estimation, which assumes only continuous variables and normal distribution of the endogenous variables given the exogenous variables (Kline, 2016). The current study has missing data due to some participants' preferences not to endorse items. The recommended and most preferred measure for missing data, Full-Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) was used in M*plus* in order to provide estimations using all available data without computing missing values (Kline, 2016).

In addition to path analysis, Pearson's product moment correlation coefficients were computed to examine associations among study variables. Using Cohen's (1988) criteria, correlations .5 and above were identified as "large", .3 were defined as "medium", and .1 or below were defined as "small".

Consideration of Sample Size

When conducting path analysis, Kline (2016) recommends that at least ten cases be used for each parameter. Several efforts were made to recruit at least 100 parents, and a school counselor representative for each parent. Such efforts are discussed in more detail in the procedures section. However, 86 parents and 19 school counselors completed the study, and the counselors paired with 71 parents. For the exogenous variables, 81 cases on the Parent Perception of School Climate variable and 68 cases for the Parent Awareness of Anti-bullying Interventions variable were used for the study.

Procedures

Institutional Review Board Approval

The Texas A&M University Division of Research, through the Office of Research Compliance and the Office of Biosafety reviewed and approved the application to conduct this research to ensure its process was ethical. The current study protocol was assigned the number IRB2012-0252. The study received expedited approval under Category 7 research on individual or group characteristics or behavior employing surveys. Continuing review of the current study was approved for 2014, 2015, and 2016.

Parent Data

Parent consent and survey responses were collected through convenience and snowball sampling methods. The researcher attended school sponsored parent events, sent emails via Parent Teacher Organization listservs, emailed co-workers who had children within the grade range, and requested for co-workers to pass along the Qualtrics survey link to their friends who met the recruitment criteria. Parents had the option to complete a consent form and survey in either printed form or electronically, per approval by the Texas A&M Institutional Review Board. To gain consent from the electronic link, parents were informed that continuing to the survey meant consent was provided. Parents who completed the printed survey were the minority, and did so onsite (*i.e.*, at the school function). The survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete. Consent and survey data were de-identified, and stored in password protected MS Excel and SPSS files or a locked file cabinet if in printed form. Parents could complete the survey through December 2015. Parents who completed the survey all received a gift card.

Counselor Data

School counselors were recruited from schools identified by the parents on the parent survey. Similar to parent participants, school counselors completed consent and the counselor survey online, using a password protected Qualtrics link. At least one counselor from each school identified was asked to complete the survey. Similar to parent data, counselor surveys took approximately 10 minutes to complete. All data from consent and surveys were de-identified, and stored in password protected MS Excel and SPSS files. All counselors that completed the survey received a gift card.

Measures

The following were measured in the survey in order to provide data points for the path analysis.

Parent Awareness of Anti-Bullying Interventions

Appendix C contains the Parent Survey, in which five items asked parents to rate the frequency of specific anti-bullying interventions used at their child's school using a scalar response format. Parent knowledge of anti-bullying interventions was evaluated by examining the congruence between parent and counselor reports of anti-bullying interventions. In other words, if the parent and school counselor agreed on a specific anti-bullying intervention, the parent received a score of 1, and if the parent identified one that the counselor did not, the parent received a score of 0. A composite was created by adding all scores of 1 on each intervention. At the end of the parent survey, 1 question included the same anti-bullying interventions they reported on earlier in the survey forms, with a request that they endorse what type of interventions they prefer. It should be noted that the list of interventions is not exhaustive, but it coincides with interventions listed in the literature (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009). For the current study, Cronbach's alpha for anti-bullying interventions was .861 for parents, and .865 for counselors.

Parent Teachings of Bystander Responses

Parents were asked about their teachings of bystander responses for each bullying type (*i.e.*, verbal, relational, physical, and cyber) based on five questions adapted from previous research (Appendix C; Banks *et al*., 2013), and to rate how often (*i.e*., never,

sometimes, most of the time, always) they teach their children the following outcome variables: *Tell an Adult, Stay Out of it, Stand Up for the Victim, Comfort the Victim, or Walk Away from the Bullying* using a 4-point Likert scale. In order to ensure consistency in the parents' understanding of bullying, a definition was provided. Previous research indicates that these measures evidence acceptable internal consistency levels with alpha coefficients for each parent teaching to be between .79 and .87 (Banks *et al*., 2013). For the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each parent teaching were the following: .723 (tell an adult), .885 (stay out of it), .921 (participate in the bullying), .912 (stand up for the victim), .888 (comfort the victim), and .932 (walk away and not watch the bullying).

Parent Perception of School Climate

Appendix C also contains items adapted from The School Climate Bullying Survey, (SCBS, Cornell, 2011) and the Parent School Climate Bullying Survey, (PSCBS; Williams, 2008). The SCBS was originally developed as a 43-item student self-report measure assessing bullying involvement, attitudes and behaviors related to school bullying, and perceived school climate. Since its creation, the SCBS survey has been adapted in research as a parent survey to understand parents' perceptions of their child's school climate and responses to school bullying (PSCBS, Williams, 2008). The survey yields a score for Acceptance of Bullying through 6 items and Teacher Tolerance of Bullying through 6 items. As indicated in Table 2, the Acceptance of Bullying score shows parents' attitudes and perceived norms of bullying, and the Teacher Tolerance of Bullying score shows parents' perception of the frequency of adult

response to reports of bullying at school. The final items on the survey ask how much parents agree with general statements about bullying in schools. The SCBS for student reports has been identified as a reasonable fit for items with their respective scales (Bandyopadhyay *et al*., 2009). Cronbach's alpha for Teacher Tolerance was within the acceptable range at .703. Contrary to previous research, however, Acceptability of Bullying was within the low range (α =.322). The differences in alpha levels indicate that for the current study, the correlation between the scores was strong for Teacher Tolerance but weak for Acceptability of Bullying. Thus, school climate for this study was measured using the Teacher Tolerance composite only.

Counselor Survey

As stated earlier, endorsed responses from the counselors on the adopted parental components of anti-bullying interventions served as the criterion when measuring parents' knowledge of anti-bullying interventions at their child's school. Counselors completed a 34-item survey that identifies the current school anti-bullying interventions (Appendix D). Like the Parent survey, the Counselor survey lists anti-bullying interventions adapted from Farrington and Ttofi (2009) and asks how often these interventions are used at school. The counselors are then asked to rate how often parents and teachers refer bullies and victims to them for counseling services. Questions correspond to specific bullying and victimization types in order to account for varying types of bullying at school (Rivers & Smith, 1994). The internal consistency of scores for school counselor reported anti-bullying interventions involving parents was α = .865.

Table 2

Composite Items on the Parent School Climate Bullying Survey

Teacher Tolerance of Bullying	Acceptance of Bullying
• Teachers at this school make it clear that bullying is not tolerated.	• Bullying is just a fact of life and helps kids prepare for the real world.
• The teachers at this school are genuinely concerned about my child.	• Students who are bullied or teased often deserve.
• My child would tell a teacher at this school if he/she was being bullied.	• Students should be able to stand up for themselves.
• If my child tells a teacher that someone is bullying him/her, the teacher will do something to help.	• When a student is punched or kicked, he or she should not hit back.
• There are adults at this school my child could turn to if he/she had a personal problem.	• I have taught my child that it is best to stand up to a bully and give it right back.
• Students tell teachers when other students are being bullied.	• I teach my child how to solve problems with peers peacefully.

Note. Acceptance of Bullying composite was not used in analysis due to a low alpha.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Descriptive and correlational analyses are first reported to describe patterns of observed study variables. Next, the path coefficients of the hypothesized model are reported (see Figure 1).

Descriptive Statistics

According to parents' reports, their children witnessed verbal (77%) and relational (72%) bullying more often than physical (46%) and cyber (35%) bullying behaviors. Parents further reported their child to be a victim of bullying (28%) or to have bullied their peers (9%) within the past month. Regarding perceptions of bullying at school, most parents perceived that bullying is not a normal part of life (90%), and that students should be able to stand up for themselves (66%). Most parents reported teaching their child how to problem solve with peers (97%). Thirty-eight percent of parents reported to be "unsure" about how well teachers respond to bullying at school. The majority of parents (88.2%) identified anti-bullying intervention(s) the school was implementing. The percentage of parents within each school that corresponded with the counselor on anti-bullying interventions ranged between 0 and 80. Means and standard deviations for the observed variables in the hypothesized model are presented in Table 3. One variable, *Tell an Adult*, had values that were greater than the recommended cutoff values of 2 for skewness and 7 for kurtosis, but all other observed variables for the analysis were within the described criteria (West, Finch, & Curran, 1995).

Correlational Analyses

Correlational analyses, means, standard deviations, and percent missing on each composite variable were conducted in SPSS 18 and are shown in Table 3. Three of the observed endogenous variables were significantly correlated with the dependent variable *Stand Up*. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted in M*plus* to determine if an additional factor was present due to the correlations found between four of the five dependent variables. Initial results of the EFA indicated one factor, but the number of iterations exceeded it. The number of iterations was increased to 100,000 and the results of the exploratory factor analysis remained one factor. *Tell an Adult* was dropped due to the variable's low correlation with the factor. Four of the five variables, *Stay Out*, *Stand Up*, *Comfort Victim*, and *Walk Away* continued to be significantly correlated and converged on one factor. However, the one factor model did not have good fit according to Hu and Bentler's (1999) criteria, as reflected by the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) indicated as .375, which is greater than .05.

Table 3

Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of Analysis Variables

Variable	Tell	Stay	Stand	Com	Walk	Ttol	ParCor
Tell	1						
Stay	-.088	1					
Stand	.028	-.472**	1				
Com	.069	-.451**	.708**	1			
Walk	.000	.604**	-.312**	-.231*	1		
Ttol	-.206	-.059	.137	.035	-.172	1	
ParCor	.029	.094	.216	.177	.023	-.105	1
M	3.84	2.41	2.57	3.06	2.2	1.4	2.39
SD	.43	1.00	1.01	.91	1.07	.54	1.38
% Missing	12.7	11.6	11.6	11.6	12.7	5.8	20.9

Note. Tell=Tell Adult; Stay= Stay Out of Bullying; Stand= Stand up for the victim; Com=Comfort the Victim; Walk= Walk Away from the Bullying; Ttol= Parent Perception of School Climate; ParCor= Parent Awareness of Anti-bullying Intervention. ** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Path Analysis

Of the ten paths hypothesized directionally, only 6 were correctly predicted and 4 in the wrong direction. Only 2 paths were significant, however, one in the predicted direction and the other in the opposite signed direction. Figure 2 shows the saturated path analysis model and the estimated path coefficients, tested directionally as in Figure 1 for the exogenous and endogenous variables. The direct relationship between *Parent Awareness of Anti-bullying Interventions* and parents teaching their children to *Stand Up* for the victim was significant. The negative relationship between *Parent Perception of School Climate* and parents teaching their children to *Tell an Adult* was also significant.

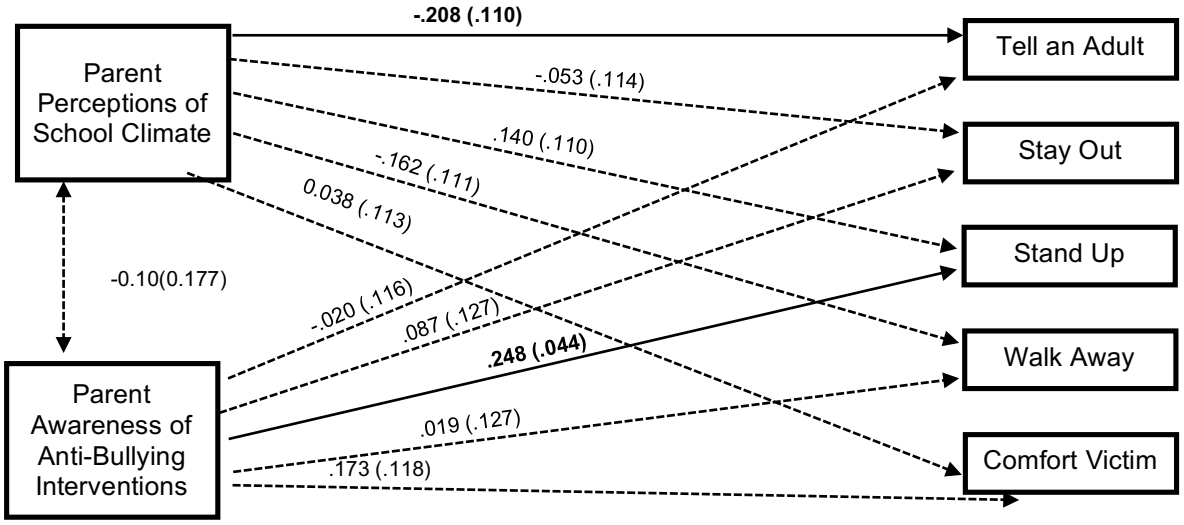

Figure 2. Final Model. All paths are standardized. Standard errors are shown in parentheses. One positive coefficient is significant (p = .022). One negative coefficient is significant (p = .029). Dashed lines are not significant.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The literature is replete with the adverse effects of bullying for those involved, including bullies, victims, bully-victims, and bystanders. Due to the documented negative effects, school staff and stakeholders continue to identify best practices to reduce and end bullying not only in classrooms, but throughout the educational environment. One possible anti-bullying initiative has been to focus on the role of bystanders as a defender, compared to outsider responses (Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). It is also well documented that anti-bullying initiatives do not occur in a vacuum, and student responses to witnessing bullying can be influenced by factors outside of school, including parents (Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Pozzoli & Gini, 2012).

The purpose of the current study was to identify the factors that influence what parents teach their children to do when they witness bullying, focusing on how parents' awareness of anti-bullying interventions and perception of school climate are associated with the responses that parents teach their children as bystanders. Relevant literature has indicated that parental involvement with the school declines as early as a child's fourth grade year, the same time that bullying behaviors at school increase (Hill & Tyson, 2009). The current study expanded upon work that examines parental involvement in anti-bullying interventions. Specifically, it is the first to examine parents' perception of school climate and identification of anti-bullying interventions as influential factors to teaching bystander responses. Although the current study did not support the entire

hypothesized model of direct relationships, two significant paths were found. *Parent Perception of School Climate* was negatively associated with parents teaching their children to *Tell an Adult* and *Parent Awareness of Anti-bullying Interventions* was positively associated with parents teaching to *Stand Up* for the victim. The overall model and directions of each path will be discussed followed by a review of each significant path.

Theoretical Model

Overall, the results indicated a failed theoretical model. Six of the ten hypothesized directional paths were in the correct direction and four paths were in the opposite direction. Although the majority of the paths were not significant, paths not occurring in the hypothesized direction may be due to several reasons. First, it is possible that parents in this sample may perceive their child's school to be safe and that they are aware of the anti-bullying interventions, but parents vary their teachings based on the type of bullying their child witnesses. If true, parents' varying their responses is consistent with children also varying their responses by bullying type (Rock & Baird, 2012; Salmivalli, 2010). Thus, parents may not consistently teach proactive responses if their child reports witnessing covert forms, such as relational bullying (Werner & Grant, 2009). Indeed, parents may want to ensure that their child is safe as a bystander. In their literature review of parents' perception of bullying, Harcourt, Jasperse, and Green (2014) concluded that when children reported to be victimized, parents frequently had negative feelings about the school and felt as though they could not protect their child. Although this study reported parents' perceptions of their victimized children across

several studies, the fear that children could be victimized may also drive teachings of bystander responses (Harcourt, *et al*., 2014).

Second, parents in this sample may vary positive responses even when they are aware of anti-bullying interventions or have a positive perception of the school because of the normalized perception of bullying. Harcourt *et al*. (2014) report that many parents have difficulty in differentiating teasing from bullying. Similarly, some parents also perceive bullying more to be the victim's problem rather than the perpetrator's. Compton, Campbell, and Mergler (2014) found that contrary to teachers, parents and students perceived cyberbullying to be just for fun, and deriving from boredom on the perpetrator's side. Varying teachings of bystander responses based on perceiving that bullying is a typical developmental experience can result in maladaptive outcomes for the victim. Troop-Cordon and Gerardy (2012) found that when parents perceived that victimization was developmental, their children were more likely to have increased maladjustment such as social withdrawal and depression.

Finally, the results of parents varying their responses may be due to the correspondence that there are no anti-bully interventions occurring at the schools. Therefore, parents may rely on past perceptions of bullying as a rationale for their parental teachings. Cooper and Nickerson (2013) found that parents' messages to their victimized children were significantly related to their past personal experiences with bullying or witnessing bullying. Parents that recalled a personal account with bullying when younger were more likely to discuss the bullying event, coping strategies, and contacting the school (Cooper & Nickerson, 2013).

In sum, the described factors may play a part in the failure of the model and the inconsistency in parents' teaching of prosocial responses to their children when they witness bullying. However, the additional parental factors noted are primarily based on parents' responses to their victimized child. In order to assess possible contributing factors to the failed model, the current model should be modified before further analyses. Consideration in the modified model should be given to the parental factors such as the perceptions of the severity of bullying by type and prior experiences with bullying. In order to move from children relying on parents' expectations, it is imperative to be intentional when collaborating with parents to cease the negative effects of bullying and increase proactive bystander responses.

School Climate and Parent Teachings

There was a significant negative relationship between parents' perception of teacher response to bullying and their teaching their child to tell an adult when they witness bullying. In other words, when parents perceive their child's teacher to respond to reported school bullying, they are less likely to teach their child to tell an adult after witnessing bullying. This finding was unexpected, as previous research indicates that parents' perception of school climate in the area of perceived safety influences their participation in school efforts (Goldkind & Farmer, 2013), and increases student perception of school safety (Hong & Eamon, 2012). What may have influenced the negative relationship between perception of school climate and parent teachings of telling an adult is that many parents (38%) reported to be unsure of how well teachers respond to bullying at school. Parents who are unsure about school responses may also

be unsure about how much they should be involved in teaching bystander responses to bullying (Honig & Zdunowski-Sjoblom, 2014).

Knowledge of Anti-Bullying Interventions and Parent Teachings

A significant positive relationship between parents' awareness of the presence or absence of anti-bullying interventions and parents teaching their child to stand up for the victim was found. This finding was expected, as growing research discusses the impact of home and school collaboration in anti-bullying interventions and bystander responses to the reduction in bullying (Hester, Bolen, & Hyde, 2014; Salmivalli *et al.*, 2011). That is, when bystanders take an active role in supporting the victim while the bullying occurs, perpetrators are less likely to continue bullying, especially if the number of active bystanders increases. The current results of parent concordance with the school counselor on the presence or absence of anti-bullying interventions was also expected based on the literature (Cooper & Nickerson, 2013). Involving parents in the efforts to reduce bullying can be promising and promote generalization of prosocial messages in both home and school settings.

It is important to note that some of the parent and counselor correspondences derived from the mutual acknowledgement that either there were no anti-bullying interventions currently implemented at school or that a specific anti-bullying intervention was used, but was not listed on the questionnaire. Thus, the major emphasis on the correspondence between the parent and the school counselor should be the impact of joint communication and congruity between the home and the school, as well as parents teaching their child to take an active stand for the victim when witnessing

bullying. Within the parental involvement literature, communication is identified as a school based strategy that helps support students' educational successes (Wang, Hill, & Hofkens, 2014). Research has indicated that on-going communication between the home and the school can result in decreased disruptive behavior problems in preschool students (LeBel, Chafouleas, Britner, & Simonsen, 2012), increased homework grades (Bennett-Conroy, 2012), and a positive, collaborative perception of the school from parents (Schumacher, 2007). Moreover, parent and teacher correspondence is well known to be low when rating a student's internalizing or externalizing behavior (Efstratopoulou, Simons, & Janssen, 2013;Thompson, *et al*., 2006), but Whitesell (2015) found that when a school grading system was implemented in a school district, the congruence was high between parent and teacher perceptions of the school. To this end, efforts to increase parent and school communication and congruity in school interventions have implications in promoting similar home and school messages to students.

Practical Implications

Research has indicated that parental involvement in school activities promotes behavioral benefits for students (Neymotin, 2014), higher ratings of teacher performance by principals, and a higher self-efficacy for parenting practices (Sheridan, Warnes, & Dowd, 2004). School staff can deliver information about anti-bullying programs to educate parents about the bullying prevention program (Seeley, Tombari, Bennett, & Dunkle, 2011). As the results have indicated, parents may obtain this information but not adopt the received school interventions within the home setting (Blackburn, Dulmus,

Theriot, & Sowers, 2004). This may be due to several factors including parents' perceptions of bullying or perceived responsibility in teaching anti-bullying strategies (Harcourt, *et al*., 2014). Likewise, the results indicated that parents may know that the school is currently not providing anti-bullying interventions; however, based on perceptions about bullying, still teach their children to take action in favor of the victim. In order to increase consistency in messages across settings, it is important to communicate, in easily understood language, the importance of being an active bystander to aid in the reduction of school bullying.

The current study initiates a shift from parental involvement to developing home and school collaborations in helping children as bystanders reduce bullying. Compared to parental involvement that focuses solely on the activities defined by the school, home and school collaboration places emphasis on active collaboration and problem solving (Olvera & Olvera, 2012). Implementing anti-bullying interventions from a home and school collaboration approach can minimize the gap in communication that may occur when parents do not receive anti-bullying intervention resources, when schools may not have anti-bullying strategies to pass along as resources, or when parents may want to provide information to schools on possible interventions due to their familiarity with best practices. Home and school collaboration can also facilitate parents in becoming actively involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes through a common language, and hence increase the prosocial behaviors of students (Brown *et al.*, 2013; Harcourt *et al*., 2014). Thus, in order to increase consistency in messages about anti-bullying interventions and promote a positive perception of safety within the school,

school staff should include parents' voices and perceptions about bullying through a needs assessment before the adoption of a bullying prevention program.

Lastly, the results of this study indicate that parents teach their children to be proactive and stand up for the victim based on their knowledge regarding the presence or absence of school anti-bullying interventions. In other words, even if parents identify anti-bullying interventions implemented at the school or recognize that it does not have any, the parents in this study teach their children to stand up. It is also understandable, however, that at times parents may be hesitant to teach their child to stand up for the victim if the they perceive it to be risky for their child (Cooper & Nickerson, 2013). The results of a school's implementation of anti-bullying interventions that incorporate parent involvement can be affected if the perception is that the school does not address bullying reports. In their qualitative study, Cunningham, Cunningham, Ratcliffe, and Vaillancourt (2010) found that when parents and school staff did not respond to children's reported bullying, the effort of the bullying prevention was compromised because bystanders did not intervene. Therefore, another key component for schools would be to discuss with parents, covertly and overtly, the specific roles that bystanders can take, and to emphasize an active role against the bully. Some schools have incorporated either confidential boxes on their premises or online message boards where concerned individuals can report bullying behavior. In order for these means to be successful, parents and students should believe that school staff will respond to the reports (Weissbourd & Jones, 2012). Pöyhönen, Juvonen, and Salmivalli (2010) found that the factors that influenced the choice of a student whether to stand up for the victim

included their perceived self-efficacy, affective empathy (belief that the same unpleasant experience could occur to oneself), and perceived popularity among peers. Thus, parents and schools can work together to help students build their social skills to increase the students' bystander responses.

Limitations and Future Directions

The hypothesized model failed completely in terms of significance and direction of directed paths. Future studies should extend the current model to include the additional parental factors discussed such as prior involvement in bullying or perception of the severity of bullying by type. The tested model should also include a larger and more diverse sample of parents and schools.

The context of the sample may have also caused the model to fail. The small sample size of parents and school counselors, as well as the convenience sampling method limit the precision and generalization of results. Likewise, the participants in this sample are primarily from small and suburban school districts, which may not coincide with the demographics and participants in larger urban school settings. Furthermore, although the exact number of parents that had the opportunity to participate in the study could not be determined, it is likely that those who completed the survey may be individuals that are interested in the topic of anti-bullying interventions. The paths in the model that yielded significant results may be due to the parents already engaged in school efforts or having regular conversations about anti-bullying responses with their children. Another limitation related to the sample is source effects; the majority of the information to assess the model is coming from only parents. Similarly,

the perceived school climate may covary with actual frequency of bullying at school, resulting in self-selection effects from parents on their choice to participate in the study. Future studies should therefore have a larger sample size, and include urban school district parents and school counselors. Multiple respondents such as parents, school counselors, and students should be recruited as participants in order to reduce bias. A larger sample size can also be used to compare various groups of parent perceptions and teachings based on gender and parental relationship with the child.

Another limitation of the current study was that it was cross-sectional. Cross-sectional studies give information on the predictor and outcome variables at one time point only; a longitudinal study would have been more beneficial. It would entail working with schools for more than one year, so that parents' teachings of bystander behavior could be measured based on their initial awareness of anti-bullying interventions and perception of school climate at the beginning of the year, then in mid-year, and at the end of each school year to assess changes in parent teachings.

Finally, a study variable of school climate, Parent Acceptability of Bullying, was not used in the analysis due to its low alpha of internal consistency. This may have been due to a larger number of parents rating "unsure" on several items within the composite. It is recommended that a confirmatory factor analysis of the PSCBS be conducted with a diverse parent sample to account for varying parent responses and possible cultural norms related to the perception of bullying.

Recommendations for Practitioners

In the midst of the limitations, the current study draws attention to reports from a sample of middle school parents. For this sample, many parents are teaching their child to stand up for the victim in line with a national initiative that is moving in a more positive direction to decrease bullying. However, many parents are still teaching their child to remain passive even when anti-bullying interventions are known, or when the school climate is perceived as positive. More research is needed to determine the factors that influence bullying socialization for not only bystanders, but bullies and victims as well. Learning what influences parent teachings about and responses to bullying can increase collaboration in the development of anti-bullying interventions.

Although the sample size in this study is small and therefore cannot be generalized, the sample of parent reports is unique because the majority of participants were primarily African American. Research has indicated that within the parental involvement and home and school collaboration literature, African American parents are less likely to speak with the school about academic and behavioral prevention strategies compared to European Americans (Wang *et al*., 2014), but more likely to be involved at the school when they perceive that school is making an effort to engage in joint communication compared to European American and Latino parents (Park & Holloway, 2013). This factor may have also been influential in parents' reports of "unsure" regarding teacher response to bullying as well as reports of teaching their child to take a more passive bystander response. Even though no significant ethnic differences could

be found with the independent variables in this study, future studies should also focus on moderators of parental teachings of bystander responses.

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APPENDIX A

Parental Involvement in School Anti-Bullying Interventions Study

Parents of 4th – 8th grade students

Needed

To participate in a research study on understanding ways parents can be involved when implementing school anti-bullying

- **Parents that provide voluntary consent will complete a survey about their perceptions of bullying interventions and school bullying**
- **All parents will receive a small gift for participating in the study.**
- **Parents that complete a survey will also be in a raffle for a chance to obtain a $50.00 gift card.**
- **All information will be kept private.**
- **If interested, please complete the parent permission form and return to your child's homeroom teacher.**

For more information contact:
Courtney Banks, SSP,
Courtney_banks@neo.tamu.edu, 979.845.9722
or Dr. Jamilia Blake, jjblake@tamu.edu, 979.862.8341

APPENDIX B

Participación de los padres en el estudio de anti-intervenciones de la intimidación en la escuela

Padres de los estudiantes en los grados 4-8

Necesitamos

Para participar en una investigación estudio sobre maneras que los padres puedean estar involucrados quando implementando anti-intervenciones de la intimidacion en las esquela

- **Los padres que dar su consentimiento voluntario se completaran una encuesta sobre sus percepciones de las intervenciones de intimidación y intimidación escolar.**
- **Los padres que completen una encuesta también estará en un sorteo para tener la oportunidad de obtener una tarjeta de regalo de $50.00.**
- **Toda la información será confidenciales**
- **En interesado, por favor, complete el formulario de**

Para mas informacion:
Courtney Banks, SSP,
Courtney_banks@neo.tamu.edu, 979.845.9722
or Dr. Jamilia Blake, jjblake@tamu.edu,

APPENDIX C

Parent Survey - school climate protions adapted from (Cornell, 2011 & Williams, 2008)

Child's Name:

_____

(please print)

Name of Child's School:

_____

Child's Gender: ❒ **Male or** ❒ **Female**

Child's Grade: ❒ **4th** ❒**5th** ❒**6th** ❒**7th** ❒**8th**

Your Race/Ethnicity

❒**White/Caucasian** ❒ **Black/African American** ❒ **Asian/Pacific Islander** ❒ **Hispanic/Mexican /Latino/a**
❒ **Multi-racial/ethnic** ❒ **Biracial/ethnic** ❒ **Prefer not to answer** ❒ **Other:** _____

Your Child's Race/Ethnicity

❒**White/Caucasian** ❒ **Black/African American** ❒ **Asian/Pacific Islander** ❒ **Hispanic/Mexican /Latino/a**
❒ **Multi-racial/ethnic** ❒ **Biracial/ethnic** ❒ **Prefer not to answer** ❒ **Other:** _____

Please describe your relationship to your child:

❒**Mother** ❒ **Father** ❒ **Stepparent** ❒ **Guardian**

❒ **Grandparent** ❒ **Prefer not to answer** ❒ **Other:**_____

Definition of bullying

Bullying occurs when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending him or herself. Usually, bullying happens repeatedly and is not isolated to a single incident. There are many different types of bullying, but the most common forms of bullying are:

- **Verbal bullying**: Using mean teasing or making verbal threats
- **Relational bullying**: Gossiping or refusing to let others join one's group
- **Physical bullying**: Intentionally punching, hitting, pushing, shoving
- **Cyber bullying**: Using technology such as cell phones or computers to send threatening, vulgar, or humiliating messages

Please identify the anti-bullying strategies that are used at your child's school this year (circle).

1. Informational brochures or handouts on ways parents can help their children who are victimized, bullied or who witness bullying.	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Not at All**	**Unsure**
2. Parent meetings (scheduled school events when parents are able to listen to speakers, obtain more resources, and ask questions related to school bullying and bullying interventions).	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Not at All**	**Unsure**
3. Provide information to parents about school efforts and curriculum to reduce bullying.	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Not at All**	**Unsure**
4. Schools provide instruction to students on how to prevent bullying.	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Not at All**	**Unsure**
5. Provide parents with information about how they can be involved in the school's anti-bullying programs.	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Not at All**	**Unsure**
6. Additional Anti-bullying strategies used at your child's school (Please describe briefly):	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Not at All**	**Unsure**

Directions: Please read the following statements below and select an answer for each statement. There are no correct or incorrect answers and your response is based on your opinion. Please refer to the above definition and examples of bullying when answering the following questions below.

7. This school year, my child has reported to me that he/she witnessed the following type of bullying behaviors at his/her school:

a. Verbal bullying (i.e., teasing taunting or make verbal threats)	**Never**	**Once or Twice**	**A few Times per Month**	**Weekly**	**Daily**
b. Relational bullying (i.e., gossiping and intentionally excluding)	**Never**	**Once or Twice**	**A few Times per Month**	**Weekly**	**Daily**
c. Physical bullying (i.e., kicking, hitting, or pushing)	**Never**	**Once or Twice**	**A few Times per Month**	**Weekly**	**Daily**
d. Cyber bullying (i.e., use of technology such as cell phones and computers to send threatening, vulgar, or humiliating messages)	**Never**	**Once or Twice**	**A few Times per Month**	**Weekly**	**Daily**
e. My child has not witnessed bullying at his or her school *(circle this statement if applicable)*					

8. When my child witnesses a relational bullying situation, I have taught him or her to respond in a variety of ways. These responses include:

a. Tell an adult	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Most of the Time**	**Always**
b. Stay out of it and do not get involved	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Most of the Time**	**Always**
c. Participate in the bullying	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Most of the Time**	**Always**
d. Stand up or for the victim or confront the bully	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Most of the Time**	**Always**

e. Comfort or befriend the victim (e.g., see if the victim is okay or invite the victim to play)	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Most of the Time**	**Al wa ys**
f. Walk away and not watch the bullying occur	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Most of the Time**	**Al wa ys**

9. When my child witnesses a physical bullying situation, I have taught them to respond in a variety of ways. These responses include:				
a. Tell an adult	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
b. Stay out of it and do not get involved	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
c. Participate in the bullying	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
d. Stand up or for the victim or confront the bully	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
e. Comfort or befriend the victim (e.g., see if the victim is okay or invite the victim to play)	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
f. Walk away and not watch the bullying occur	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always

10. When my child witnesses a cyber-bullying situation, I have taught them to respond in a variety of ways. These responses include:				
a. Tell an adult	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
b. Stay out of it and do not get involved	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
c. Participate in the bullying	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
d. Stand up or for the victim or confront the bully	Nev	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always

	er			
e. Comfort or befriend the victim (e.g., see if the victim is okay or invite the victim to play)	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
f. Walk away and not watch the bullying occur	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
11. When my child witnesses a verbal bullying situation, I have taught them to respond in a variety of ways. These responses include:				
a. Tell an adult	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
b. Stay out of it and do not get involved	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
c. Participate in the bullying	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
d. Stand up or for the victim or confront the bully	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
e. Comfort or befriend the victim (e.g., see if the victim is okay or invite the victim to play)	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
f. Walk away and not watch the bullying occur	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always

Directions: Please read the following statements below and select an answer for each statement. There are no correct or incorrect answers and your response is based on your opinion. Please refer to the above definition and examples of bullying when answering the following questions below.

12. My child been bullied in the past month	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree

13. My child has bullied others in the past month	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**
14. Bullying is a problem at this school	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**
15. Teachers at this school make it clear that bullying is not tolerated	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**
16. The teachers at this school are genuinely concerned about my child	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**
17. There is little you can do to prevent bullying	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**
18. Bullying is just a fact of life and helps kids prepare for the real world	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**
19. Students who are bullied or teased often deserve it	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**
20. Teachers should stay out of student conflicts and let them work things out on their own	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**
21. Students should be able to stand up for themselves	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**
22. Students should not run to the teacher just because somebody teases them	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**
23. My child has sometimes bullied others	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**
24. I have spent time talking with my child about bullying	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**
25. My child would tell a teacher at this school if he/she was being bullied	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**
26. My child would tell me if he or she was being bullied	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**
27. When a student is punched or kicked, he or she should not hit back	**Agree**	**Not Sure**	**Disagree**

28. I have taught my child that it is best to stand up to a bully and give it right back	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
29. I have taught my child that it is best to get help from an adult if he/she is being bullied	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
30. There will always be bullying in schools, it's just human nature	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
31. I teach my child how to solve problems with peers peacefully	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
32. If my child tells a teacher that someone is bullying him/her, the teacher will do something to help	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
33. There are adults at this school my child could turn to if he/she had a personal problem	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
34. Students tell teachers when other students are being bullied	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree

35. Please identify the ways you would prefer to be involved in your child's school anti-bullying interventions below:

Informational brochures or handouts on ways parents can help their children who are victimized, bullied or who witness bullying.	Highly Preferred	Preferred	Never Preferred
Parent meetings (scheduled school events when parents are able to listen to speakers, obtain more resources, and ask questions related to school bullying and bullying interventions).	Highly Preferred	Preferred	Never Preferred
Provide information to parents about school efforts and curriculum to reduce bullying.	Highly Preferred	Preferred	Never Preferred
Schools provide instruction to students	Highly Preferred	Preferred	Never Preferred

on how to prevent bullying.			
Provide parents with information about how they can be involved in the school's anti-bullying programs.	**Highly Preferred**	**Preferred**	**Never Preferred**
Other:	**Highly Preferred**	**Preferred**	**Never Preferred**

Thank you for your participation in the Parental Involvement in School Anti-bullying Interventions Study.
In appreciation of your time, we would like to mail you an incentive. Please write your mailing address below:

_____

APPENDIX D

Counselor Survey

Name of School: _____

Number of Years of Counseling Experience: _____

Approximately how many students do you work with on a weekly basis? _____

What would you say is your most frequent referral source? _____

Your Gender: ❒ **Male or** ❒ **Female**

Your Race/Ethnicity

❒ White/Caucasian ❒ Black/African American ❒ Asian/Pacific Islander ❒ Hispanic/Mexican /Latino/a

❒ Multi-racial/ethnic ❒ Biracial/ethnic ❒ Prefer not to answer ❒ Other: _____

Please identify the anti-bullying strategies that are used at your school (circle):

School-Wide						
1. Resources for teachers: information about bullying behaviors is disseminated	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Rarely**	**Never**
2. Increased supervision by school staff in unstructured settings (hallways/cafeterias/recess)	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Rarely**	**Never**
3. Providing disciplinary consequences for bullies	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Rarely**	**Never**
4. Providing information/resources for students about how to respond when bullying behaviors are observed for bystanders	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Rarely**	**Never**
5. Providing school conferences/assemblies on bullying	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Rarely**	**Never**
Classroom						
6. Implement curriculum based programs	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Rarely**	**Never**
7. Classroom management specific to bullying (e.g., when a student bullies or is observed to bully, there are predetermined consequences)	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Rarely**	**Never**
8. Social Skills Curriculum for students	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Rarely**	**Never**
9. Provide individual teacher consultation related to bullying	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Rarely**	**Never**
10. Post classroom rules specific to bullying	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Rarely**	**Never**
Small Group						
11. Small group interventions for bullies	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Rarely**	**Never**
12. Peer mediation	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Annually**	**Rarely**	**Never**

1. Peer mentors	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Rarely	Never
2. Small group interventions for victims	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Rarely	Never
Individual						
3. Individual interventions for bullies	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Rarely	Never
4. Individual interventions for victims	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Rarely	Never
5. Bully courts	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Rarely	Never
6. Using videos /computer games	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Rarely	Never
7. Role plays	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Rarely	Never
8. Other:	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually	Rarely	Never

At this school, we involve parents in school anti-bullying strategies by providing (circle):

9. Informational brochures or handouts on ways parents can help their children who are victimized, bullied or who witness bullying.	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually
10. Parent meetings (scheduled school events when parents are able to listen to speakers, obtain more resources, and ask questions related to school bullying and bullying interventions).	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually
11. Provide information to parents about school efforts and curriculum to reduce bullying.	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually
12. Schools provide instruction to students on how to prevent bullying.	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually
13. Provide parents with information about how they can be involved in the school's anti-bullying programs.	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually
14. Additional Anti-bullying strategies used at this school:	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually

Definition of bullying

Bullying occurs when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending him or herself. Usually, bullying happens repeatedly and is not isolated to a single incident. There are many different types of bullying, but the most common forms of bullying are:

- **Verbal bullying**: Using mean teasing or making verbal threats
- **Relational bullying**: Gossiping or refusing to let others join one's group
- **Physical bullying**: Intentionally punching, hitting, pushing, shoving
- **Cyber bullying**: Using technology such as cell phones or computers to send threatening, vulgar, or humiliating messages

Directions: Please read the following statements below and select an answer for each statement. There are no correct or incorrect answers and your response is based on your opinion. Please refer to the above definition and examples of bullying when answering the following questions below.

1.	**Please identify how often victims of verbal bullying (i.e., teasing, or making verbal threats) are referred to you: (prevalence of verbal**	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Not at all**	**Unsure**
2.	**Please identify how often parents report to you that their child has been a victim of verbal bullying (i.e., teasing, or making verbal threats)? prevalence of verbal bullying at this school:**	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Not at all**	**Unsure**
3.	**Please identify how often victims of relational bullying (i.e., gossiping and intentional excluding) are referred to you:**	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Not at all**	**Unsure**
4.	**Please identify how often parents report to you that their child has been a victim of relational bullying (i.e., gossiping and intentional excluding):**	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Not at all**	**Unsure**
5.	**Please identify how often victims of physical bullying (i.e., hitting, kicking, or pushing) are referred to you:**	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Not at all**	**Unsure**
6.	**Please identify how often parents report to you that their child has been a victim of physical bullying (i.e., hitting, kicking, or pushing):**	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Not at all**	**Unsure**
7.	**Please identify how often victims of cyber bullying (i.e., using technology to send vulgar or humiliating messages) have been referred to you:**	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Not at all**	**Unsure**
8.	**Please identify how often parents report to you that their child has been a victim of cyber bullying (i.e., using technology to send vulgar or humiliating messages):**	**Daily**	**Weekly**	**Monthly**	**Not at all**	**Unsure**

Thank you for your participation in the Parental Involvement In School Anti-bullying Interventions Study.