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Exploring Heterosexist Bias and Oppressive Bullying in Anti-Bullying Prevention Programs

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EXPLORING HETEROSEXIST BIAS AND OPPRESSIVE BULLYING
IN ANTI-BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMS

By

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Bachelor of Arts in Psychology
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

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ABSTRACT

Children in the K-12 school environment who identify in the sexually underrepresented groups experience the effects of heterosexism, which is a manifestation of oppressive bullying. This work explores and analyzes the results of Anti-Bullying Prevention Pilot Program (ABPPP) which is a large-scale three-year evaluation. This study analyzed qualitative data (structured interviews) by utilizing a Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) and Mixed Methods approach to find the emergent theme of heterosexism. Grounded Theory was then used to code that information. This work found thick descriptions which illustrated the presence of heterosexist bias in the qualitative data. Thus, this writer proposes a model of liberation that works to deconstruct heterosexist bias in the implementation and operation of bullying prevention programs to then reconstruct an environment that supports sexually underrepresented groups. This work hopes to provide future research an impetus to explore the presence of heterosexism and to then study a possible relationship with the incidence of oppressive bullying.

Keywords: Bullying, oppression, heterosexism, schools, faculty, students, CQR, Grounded theory, Mixed Methods, thick descriptions

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Bullying is a problem that affects students in the K-12 school environment nationwide. According to the article “The 2009 National School Climate Survey: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth in Our Nation's Schools,” a survey that was conducted by Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, and Bartkiewicz that (2010) surveyed 7,000 students between the ages of 13 to 21. The study found that the student’s sexual orientation was the main motivating factor for the incidence of bullying. The frequency reported by the study is as follows: “8 out of 10 students report receiving verbal harassment, 4 out of 10 students report receiving physical harassment, 6 out of 10 students report feeling unsafe at school, and 1 out of 5 students report being victims of physical assault” (Kosciw et al., 2010). According to “LGB and Questioning Students in Schools: The Moderating Effects of Homophobic Bullying and School Climate on Negative Outcomes” by Birkett, Espelage, and Koenig (2009), a study that surveyed 7,000 middle school students showed the outcomes of homophobic bullying on LGBTQ students. The results of the study revealed that students who identified in the sexually underrepresented groups had an increased risk for bullying and subsequently, substance abuse (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009). The variety of risks that LGBTQ students are exposed to are discussed in “The health and health care of lesbian, gay, and bisexual adolescents” by Coker, Austin, and Schuster (2010) study which features the following statistics gleaned from their national study of middle school and high school students. Coker, Austin, and Schuster (2010) found that the stresses that LGBTQ students are

exposed to increases their risk for problems in the following areas: mental health, physical health, and substance abuse (Coker, Austin, & Schuster, 2010). Furthermore, the authors found that negative perceptions of members of the sexually underrepresented groups experience an increased risk for violence versus those who do not identify in the sexually underrepresented groups (Coker, Austin, & Schuster, 2010). These studies highlight a national problem that is multi-dimensional and outline the prevalence, risk, and outcomes of LGBTQ bullying.

Statement of the Problem

Bullying has emerged as a controversial topic and primary concern in recent years reflected by the increase in frequency and the escalation of bullying behaviors and related violence taking place across the world, as discussed in Peter K. Smith's (2004) "Bullying: Recent Developments" (Smith, 2004). Yet, in spite of the powerful magnifying lens used to examine the behaviors, there appears to be little consideration paid towards the underpinnings of the bullying. Therefore, it is necessary to expand the theoretical framework for conceptualizing bullying behaviors in the K-12 school environment.

Researchers Rigby and Pepler (2004) discuss in their work "Working to Prevent School Bullying: Key Issues" bullying as a "systematic abuse of power", which involves individuals whom lack influence as targets of those who have more power (Rigby, Smith & Pepler, 2004). As the adults and bullies wield that influence, they are the dominant group in that institution; they decide, create, and enforce policies and practices. In addition, these dominant groups are in each societal level who are somewhat guaranteed a level of protection from attack. Invariably, they are also guaranteed protection from retribution when their actions have knowingly or unknowingly removed the rights of

others who do not belong to the dominant group. According to Paul Horton's (2011) article "School Bullying and Social and Moral Orders" which hypothesized the following: "the demands of peer culture may also be at odds with that of the official culture of the school and these conflicting demands may be particularly gendered, class-based, racialized and so on" (Horton, 2011, p. 272). Thus, it is likely that the origins for oppressive bullying lie within the various oppressive environments of each school. Institutions such as a school can yield enormous power over children. A child's entire day is entrusted into the hands of teachers whom are supported by fellow faculty and administration. Shoko Yoneyama and Asao Naito (1999) suggested in a study titled "Problems with the Paradigm: The School as a Factor in Understanding Bullying (with special reference to Japan)" "that school bullying is possibly utilized as a tool to enforce conformity and that those who are bullied are the individuals who do not fit the prescribed norms of that environment" (Yoneyama & Naito, 1999). Schools are often separate, condensed microcosms unto themselves. Thus, bullying behaviors, which are oppressive in nature and origin, are a part of the school culture – schools inevitably become the environment in which oppression is manifested as bullying. In the article, "Identifying and Correctly Labeling Sexual Prejudice, Discrimination, and Oppression" by Shannon Dermer, Shannon Smith, and Korenna Barto (2010) it discusses how heterosexism and privilege are entwined in present society. The following example highlights this phenomenon: "Individuals with a heterosexual orientation (or lesbian, gay, and bisexual people who do not correct the assumption that they are heterosexual) reap the benefits of being part of a dominant group" (Dermer, Smith, & Barto, 2010, p. 326). Furthermore, the authors state that "Lesbians, gay men, and other sexual minorities must deal with

oppression based on their sexual minority status and the consequences of heterosexual privilege” (Dermer, Smith, & Barto, 2010, p. 326). This information is significant in that it not only identifies but also explains the nature of heterosexism and examines the bias that is attached to maintaining a heterosexual status in society. Thus, if the “acceptable” group is noted as the heterosexual group, then the sexually underrepresented group will not be afforded the same rights, privileges, or access as the dominant group (Dermer, Smith, & Barto, 2010).

The Anti-Bullying Prevention Pilot Program

The Anti-Bullying Prevention Pilot Program (ABPPP) was introduced to 11 schools within a large school district in a southwestern region of the USA with the aim to reduce and prevent incidences of bullying. The Operation Respect Curriculum is centered on creating a “respectful, safe and compassionate climate of learning where their academic, social and emotional development can take place free of bullying, ridicule and violence” (Operation Respect, 2005). The Welcoming Schools Program was specifically created to address bias-based bullying by including a comprehensive guide for teachers, students, and families. The Welcoming Schools website states that: “The guide is inclusive of all kinds of families and addresses multiple forms of bias-based bullying, especially in the lesson plans for students” (Welcoming Schools, 2012). Partnered together, it is the hope that the strengths of these two programs would help combat bullying in the school district in a Pacific Southwestern state. From reviewing the qualitative data (in the form of transcripts from structured interviews, it would seem that a large majority of the responses all appear to fall into a theme in which how the victim is different or perceived differently from their peers of the dominant group within their

school. This revelation begs the question as to how the faculty of the various schools implemented the Anti-Bullying Prevention Pilot Program, which is structured to combat these concerns.

Social Justice Perspective

Current literature and research studies appear only to focus on the phenomena of categorizing bullying behavior rather than the roots or correlational factors related to certain behavior. For example, in Smith's (2004) "Bullying: Recent Developments", he discusses the typology of bullying: victim, bully, bystander. In addition, Smith (2004) also examines the work of Salmivalli (1996) who explores the relationships between bullies, victims, and bystanders. However, Salmivalli (1996) makes a careful distinction between involved parties whom embolden bullying through direct and indirect behaviors and non-involved parties that simply are not present or available during the bullying event. Despite all of these comprehensive works that have taken place, none of these studies attempt to ascertain the nature of the conditions that make bullying possible and an acceptable behavior. Furthermore, many anti-bullying prevention programs are modeled after current literature viewpoints. For example, the anti-bullying prevention program created by Dawn Newman-Carlson, Arthur Horne, and Christi Bartolomucci (2000) titled "Bully Busters: A Teacher's Manual for Helping Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders" was devised with that typology frame of reference in mind. However, anti-bullying prevention programs like these can erroneously suggest and support that bullying is a one-dimensional occurrence (Carlson, Horne, & Bartolomucci, 2000). These viewpoints are not only limiting, but also do not serve the purpose of understanding the inception and perpetuation of oppressive behavior like bullying within schools. Schools are veritable

microcosms where children spend nearly six hours a day, immersed in the climate and culture of that environment. It is possible that that they are exposed to the policies and practices of the faculty and administration of that school. It is likely that administrators or faculties make decisions that are representative of their beliefs, assuming their intentions are pure. Yet, the administrators and faculties of school are apart of the dominant group. Hence, making decisions from the dominant group's point of view can create the correct conditions for institutional oppression to develop. Institutional Oppression; this term is defined as:

“...the systematic mistreatment of people within a social identity group, supported and enforced by the society and its institutions, solely based on the person's membership in the social identity group...Institutional Oppression creates a system of invisible barriers limiting people based on their membership in unfavored social identity groups. The barriers are only invisible to those 'seemingly' unaffected by it” (Cheney, LaFrance, Quinteros, 2006).

Heterosexism is an example of how institutionalized oppression can manifest in school environments. In the book *The Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination: Bias Based on Gender and Sexual Orientation* by Jean Lau Chin, Smith (2004) defines heterosexism as: “a systematic process of privilege toward heterosexuality relative to homosexuality based on the notion that heterosexuality is normal and ideal” (Smith, 2004, 154). As Rigby and Pepler (2004) highlighted in their work that bullying is a methodical exploitation of dominance. Thus, one can easily view the similarities between bullying and Institutional Oppression, as both involve the dominant group participating in the maltreatment of the minority group and this injurious behaviors are protected and accepted through social and or cultural norms, and even defunct policies and practices. Schools are charged with the duty to protect and educate the students and they often meet

this need by implementing anti-bullying prevention programs. Yet, the efficacy of these programs may be in question, as they tend to focus on categorizing behaviors rather than exploring and understanding their origins as well as the environment in which it is bred.

Importance of the Study

The importance of studying heterosexism in the K-12 academic setting cannot be underestimated, particularly as it is manifested in bullying behaviors (Renold, 2002). Bullying of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students has serious consequences (Coker, Austin, & Schuster, 2010). This study is important because it will provide an in-depth examination of heterosexism as it relates to bullying behaviors. The results of the study will be useful to professionals working the K-12 setting. For example, educators and school counselors who participate in the K-12 school environment may find this work impactful as it could become a resource when working with students who identify in sexually underrepresented groups. Also, other professionals in the counseling field will find this work meaningful as it may provide additional research and insight into the worldview of their clients who identify in sexually underrepresented groups.

Purpose of the Study

This thesis is an extension of a 3-year large-scale anti-bullying program evaluation (Smith, et al., 2012). The purpose of this thesis is to further explore one of the major themes from the evaluation study, that theme is heterosexism. Further exploration of heterosexist bias will allow this research to explore the manner in which heterosexist bias was expressed in the anti-bullying program. Utilizing Tashakkori and Newman's (2010) model of mixed methods, this thesis will draw inferences, which should be

considered for creation and operation of anti-bullying programming to combat heterosexual bias as it relates to oppressive bullying in the K-12 school environment.

Definitions of Terms:

1. *heterosexism*: as a systematic process of privilege toward heterosexuality relative to homosexuality based on the notion that heterosexuality is normal and ideal. (Smith, 2004, p. 154).
2. *oppression*: the exercise of power to disenfranchise, marginalize or unjustly ostracize particular individuals or groups. (Dermer, Smith, Barto, 2010, p. 326)
3. *privilege*: the benefits, advantages, and immunity from prejudice and discrimination afforded to agents. Privileged people gain power “because of the entitlements, advantages, and dominance conferred upon them by society. These privileges were granted solely as a birthright, not because of intelligence, ability, or personal merit” (Black & Stone, 2005, p. 243). (Dermer, Smith, Barto, 2010, p. 326)
4. *restorative justice*: “... a broad term used to describe a way of thinking, a philosophy or a ‘social movement to institutionalize peaceful approaches to harm, problem- solving and violations of legal and human rights’” (Duncan, 2011, p. 274).
5. *systematic oppression*: occurs through repeated integration of prejudice and discrimination into societal institutions (e.g. law, social policy, language, media) and through threats of violence, removal of rights, and exclusion from decision-making processes. (Dermer, Smith, Barto, 2010, p. 326)

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Current Literature Findings

The inception of many anti-bullying prevention programs is often developed with a categorical point-of-view and a social justice lens is absent. This apparent incongruence in curriculum and cause was observed by Susan Hanley Duncan (2011) whom discussed this in her work, “Restorative Justice and Bullying: A Missing Solution in the Anti-Bullying Laws”. When examining the phenomena of bullying, it is important to seek to understand the root cause of the event. Duncan (2011) states that: “One of the most pressing needs in any crime situation, but especially with bullying, is to move beyond the specifics of the bullying incident...to examine whether systemic changes need to be made to address the root causes of the conflict” (Duncan, 2011, p. 285). In Duncan’s (2011) work, she proposes that anti-bullying prevention programs require an element of restorative justice. Restorative Justice is understood as: “a broad term used to describe a way of thinking, a philosophy or a ‘social movement to institutionalize peaceful approaches to harm, problem-solving and violations of legal and human rights” (Duncan, 2011, p. 274). In addition, Brenda Morrison identifies a bond between restorative justice and bullying in her work, “School Bullying and Restorative Justice: Toward a Theoretical Understanding of the Role of Respect, Pride, and Shame”. For example, Morrison (2006) states: “bullying and restorative justice have a serendipitous fit; in that, bullying has been defined as the systematic abuse of power and restorative justice seeks to transform power imbalances that affect social relationships” (Morrison, 2006, p.372). This recognition alone is a vital part of confronting then possibly rectifying the harm caused by the

bullying behavior and could potentially aid those who are seeking to restore equality and balance where oppression and dominance have reigned. In the article “Program Effectiveness of a Restorative Whole-School Approach for Tackling School Bullying in Hong Kong” by Dennis S. W. Wong, Christopher H. K. Cheng, Raymond M. H. Ngan, and Stephen K. Ma (2011) discuss the successes of implementing principles of restorative justice combined with a school-wide approach to battle the issue of bullying. The authors state that “Taking restorative ideas and whole-school intervention tactics together, the RWsA calls for the involvement of all major parties in the school, notably teachers, bullies, victims, bystanders, and parents, to build up restorative circles and goals, a positive learning environment, and tackle risk factors that lead to bullying” (Wong, Cheng, Ngan, & Ma, 2011, p. 849). The RWsA approach is significant in that it proposes a solution to bullying by viewing it and solving it with a social justice frame of reference evidenced by the necessary inclusion of adults within the school. For example the literature states that the head administrator, a principal in most cases, must adopt an accommodating stance towards the implementation of RWsA to address bullying in their schools (Wong, et al., 2011, p. 857). Thus, if a principal were to have preconceived biases or notions regarding their students, their decision-making could negatively impact those students based on concepts and actions of privilege.

The Anti Bullying Prevention Pilot Program (ABPPP)

The Anti Bullying Prevention Pilot Program (ABPPP) a program was a combined anti-bullying effort of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Welcoming Schools and the Operation Respect. It was introduced to a school district in a southwestern state as a possible solution the incidence of bullying within Clark County, Nevada. This program

was implemented across 11 schools of differing demographics and grade levels. The Operation Respect aspect of the program was created utilizing the conflict-resolution material, which focus on creating an open dialogue to discuss bullying as well as creating a safe environment for students (*Operation Respect*, 2005). These materials were drawn from the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) and Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) (*Operation Respect*, 2005). The other half of the ABPPP is Welcoming Schools, which primarily focuses on family diversity, gender stereotyping, and LGBTQ issues in school-aged students (*Welcoming Schools*, 2012). Partnered together, these two programs appear to be a promising start to address the bullying problem in Clark County. However, the research team of ABPPP found that none of the 11 schools implemented any aspects of the Welcoming School program. One could conceivably suggest that the decision not implement a program that focuses on LGBTQ issues is example of a dominant group, which is the teachers and faculty, exercising their privilege, which in turns oppresses the student members of the LGBTQ group.

Social Justice in Bullying Research

The social justice point of view is a necessary element needed to begin the exploration and examination of bullying and its root causes. In the article, “Multicultural Competence, Social Justice, and Counseling Psychology: Expanding Our Roles”, the authors Elizabeth M. Vera and Suzette L. Speight (2003) reference a fellow author’s position on social justice: “A social justice perspective emphasizes societal concerns, including issues of equity, self-determination, interdependence, and social responsibility” (Bell, 1997). Although social justice can be viewed from a global perspective, it is important to understand that social justice primarily deals with how certain advantages

and disadvantages are distributed on an individual level (Miller, 1999). Therefore, it would seem beneficial to examine how one's own privilege and access, or lack thereof has influenced them in the personal and professional realms. Vera and Speight (2003) discuss that "social justice is at the heart of multiculturalism in that the existence of institutionalized racism, sexism, and homophobia is what accounts for the inequitable experiences of people of color, women, gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (among others) in the United States" (Vera & Speight, 2003, p.254). By limiting access to important programs that only seek to provide protection and education, these institutions that are charged with the duty to educate and protect, may in fact be perpetuating the oppressive behaviors of bullying. Finally, the aim to include social justice in this review is easily summed up by the following:

"The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which that distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure" (Bell, 1997, p.3)

In this study, social justice is considered to be the absent aspect that is needed in order to explore and examine the outcomes of ABPPP and, thus, determine how institutional oppression may have been involved. In order to begin the process of examining and exploring the origins of bullying, learning and understanding its definition is a crucial step. The PACER Center- Champions For Children With Disabilities created their own Bullying Prevention Initiative called The National Bullying Prevention Center. This resource defines bullying as:

"The behavior hurts or harms another person physically or emotionally, or the victim has difficulty defending themselves or stopping the bullying, 'imbalance of power', described as when the student with the bullying behavior has more

‘power’, either physically, socially, or emotionally, such as a higher social status, is physically larger or emotionally intimidating” (Pacer Center, 2012).

It is interesting to note that this program chose to include a definition that suggested a social justice perspective, even including elements of oppression, which emphasize the inequity of power between the individual that bullies and the person who is victimized in the process. According to Besag (1989) whom wrote “Bullies and Victims in Schools. A Guide to Understanding and Management”, the definition is Besag (1989) used is as follows:

“bullying is a behavior which can be defined as the repeated attack- physical, psychological, social, or verbal- by those in a position of power, which is formally or situationally defined, on those who are powerless to resist with the intention of causing distress for their own gain or gratification (Besag, 1989, p.4).

Much like the previous definition, this one speaks from a social justice standpoint. However, it highlights the individuals that experience elevated levels of power or influence, which are wielded over the victims who are not privy to such means. Furthermore, the assignment of power which Besag (1989) had said is “formally or situationally defined” echoes the structure of institutionalized oppression, where those of the dominant and or powerful group are placed there; this could appear as a position of authority in a school’s administrative office or the student whom is the “leader” of a friends. As one can see, there are many widely differing definitions of bullying. However, some are starting to see bullying as an aspect of the social justice condition.

Bullying as Oppression

Although the definition of bullying varies, and is ill defined at times, it would seem that many could draw a direct conclusion that the outcome of bullying is

victimization. The graphic below is the ABPPP Program Evaluation Executive Summary Model of Oppression in Bullying Behaviors. This model demonstrates the complex and cyclical nature of bullying when viewed from an intensified social justice lens.

Furthermore, the ABPPP Program Evaluation Executive Summary Model of Oppression in Bullying Behaviors proposes that oppressive beliefs result in bullying behaviors (indirect or direct), which then ultimately leads to the victimization of the individual enduring this trauma. For example, if the perpetrator of bullying believes that individuals of another race are sub-human, it is likely that he or she will treat those of that differing race in dehumanizing ways such as verbal, mental, physical, and sexual abuse. The individual experiencing this dehumanization can likely feel subjugated and victimized.

Unfortunately, given the power structure in place that allows the perpetrator to perform these deeds may also protect them from retribution as well. Thus, the person made to feel subjugated is exposed to a system uninterested or incapable of restoring balance to this dynamic.

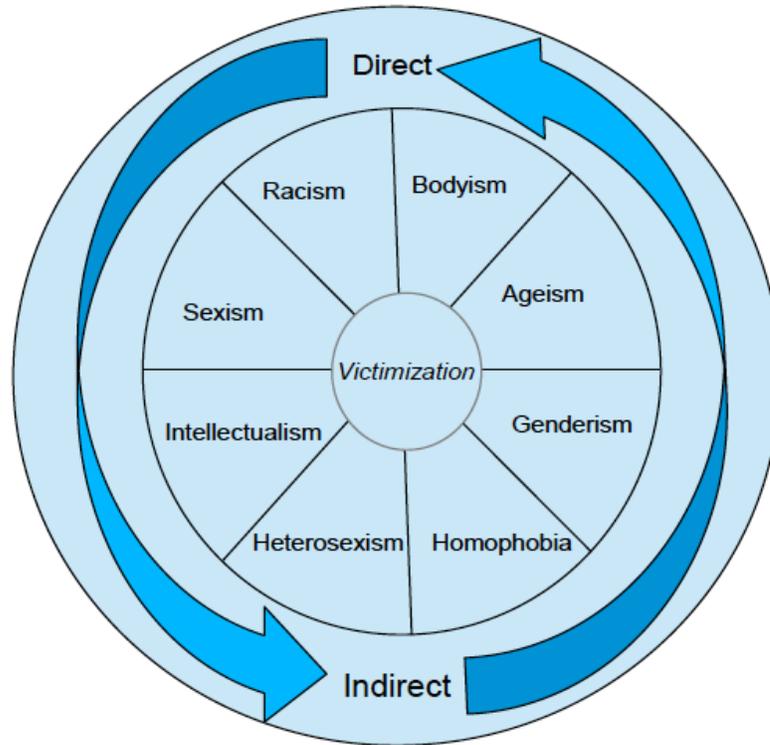


Figure 1: ABPPP Program Evaluation Executive Summary Model of Oppression in Bullying Behaviors.

According to “The Theory of Differential Oppression: A Developmental-Ecological Explanation of Adolescent Problem Behavior” by Beverly Kingston and Bob Regoli (2002), children are not equitable partners with adults, evidenced by the children’s limited scope of legal and social rights, they are not able to make decisions in their “social world” (Kingston & Regoli, 2002, p. 238). Therefore, if children are not granted the ability to make decisions about their own domains, they are likely to be heavily influenced by the decisions that adults make on their account. This theory is centered on four key principles:

“1.) Because children lack power due to their age, size, and lack of resources, they are easy targets for adult oppression. 2.) Adult oppression occurs in multiple social contexts and falls on a continuum ranging from benign neglect to malignant abuse. 3.) Oppression leads to adaptive reactions by children. The oppression of children produces at least four adaptations: passive acceptance; exercise of illegitimate coercive power; manipulation of one’s peers; and retaliation. 4.) Children’s adaptations to oppression create and reinforce adults’ view of children as inferior, subordinate beings and as troublemakers. This view enables adults to justify their role as oppressor and further reinforces children’s powerlessness” (Kingston & Regoli, 2002, p. 239).

These principles illustrate how problem behaviors that children perpetrate are the expected outcomes of the disparity of equality between adults and children, and thus how children are treated as a result of that disparity. Brofenbrenner (1979) discussed how children’s macro and micro level systems influence child development (Brofenbrenner, 1979). Therefore, Kingston and Regoli (2002) state that when power and influence is utilized to prevent children from gaining access to valued material and psychological resources is denying children participation in their own life (Kingston & Regoli, 2002, p. 238). Kingston and Regoli (2002) state that this power has the ability to inhibit children from evolving into adults with a sense of capability and self-reliance, which ultimately, all of these actions and inactions created by adults create an oppressive environment for children (Kingston & Regoli, 2002, p. 238). Consequently, it is vital for adults, those especially in the education system that may find themselves in positions of power over children, to examine how their own personal beliefs and biases influence their interactions with children.

Heterosexist Bias in Research

According to Wells and Crain (1994) in their work “Perpetuation Theory and the Long-Term Effects of School Desegregation,” students who are immersed in ethnically diverse

and amalgamated environments are less likely to harbor stereotypes as they grow older (Wells & Crain, 1994). Furthermore, students who both identify in the sexually underrepresented groups and attend schools that support sexual diversity report that they feel safe, which is a finding that is not reported by students who attend schools that do not demonstrate support sexual diversity (Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006). In a study by Dake, Price, and Telljohann (2003), these authors found that students who are bystanders that attempt to stop a bullying incident will lead to future success as they are able to stop the bullying incidents at a frequency of two out of three times (Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003). This is an impactful finding, as it shows that those who choose to stop the oppressive bullying of others will likely be successful in their attempts. The following studies show a link between the academic achievement of students who demonstrate acceptance of themselves and of their peers. According to the National Mental Health Information Center (2003), students who report feeling accepted at their school are found to be motivated students who are involved in learning, and demonstrate a commitment to school (Osterman, 2000). Conversely, Dake et al., (2003) found that students who are experiencing victimization as a result of bullying will likely perform poorly in schools. In the article “Presumed Innocence: (Hetero)sexual, Heterosexist and Homophobic Harassment Among Primary School Girls and Boys “ by E. Renold (2002), the author explores the relationship between heterosexism and the incidences of heterosexist bullying that were inflicted on the sexually underrepresented groups in the school studied. When discussing heterosexism’s existence and utility, the author states the following: “It is thus about maintaining dominant forms of heterosexuality” (Renold, 2002, p. 426). The study found that the heterosexist bullying is often expressed through

“verbal abuse, social exclusion, ridicule, and humiliation” (Renold, 2002); Adler & Adler, 1998). In the article “Leadership and Advocacy for LGBTQ Students, Staff, and Families in Schools: Academic, Career, and Interpersonal Success Strategies” By Shannon D. Smith and Stuart F. Chen-Hayes (2004), these authors discuss how the heterosexist bias of school faculty and staff can manifest in the school environment:

Many staff members (and also family members) believe that LGBTQ students simply do not exist in their school, and further deny the “possibility” that LGBTQ student may be one of their own. Such a rigid denial system precludes accepting that LGBTQ students are present in every school. This prevents staff from the opportunity to become effective allies. Other staff may hold negative beliefs about LGBTQ persons and sometimes act hostile and belligerent toward these students (Smith & Chen-Hayes, 2004).

Thus, according to Smith and Chen-Hayes (2004) heterosexist bias that is expressed either implicitly or explicitly by school staff and faculty can have a deleterious effect on LGBTQ students (Smith & Chen-Hayes, 2004). Current literature findings have explored the concepts and phenomena of heterosexism, bullying (and more specifically in the K-12 school environment), and oppression- individually. However, it would appear that at this point in time, there is a dearth of research on how heterosexist bias relates to oppressive bullying of sexually underrepresented groups within schools.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This study built upon a large scale three year evaluation of the ABPPP (Smith, et al., 2013) by further exploring the theme of Heterosexism. More specifically, how heterosexism was manifest in bullying behaviors. The methodology of this study utilizes the steps of Hill, Thompson, and Williams (1997) Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR), Newman's and Tashakkori's Mixed Methods (2010), and Corbin and Strauss (1990) Grounded Theory. The intended goal of the elaboration is to develop a comprehensive theory to present a model that gives bullying behaviors a theoretical basis.

Methods

Consensual Qualitative Research: Rationale and Appropriateness for This Study

In order to analyze the significance of the apparent lack of social justice within the implementation of ABPPP, it was important to utilize a model appropriate to extricate themes of social justice. The model that the graduate researchers selected was Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR), a model created by Clara E. Hill, Barbara J. Thompson, and Elizabeth Nutt Williams (1997). CQR draws its basis from a qualitative research background, as "qualitative methods offers a unique way to address some of these more complicated phenomenon...a primary feature of qualitative research is that it provides a vivid, dense, and full description in the natural language of the phenomenon under study (Eisner, 1991; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1994). As the analysis of the research continued, although social justice was not initially proposed as a hypothesis to guide the evaluation, it was agreed by the graduate researchers that the absent theme of social justice should be studied further. This process was echoed in the research conducted by Heppner, Kivligham, & Wampold, 1992) in which they discussed how

researchers with qualitative methods have the flexibility of studying concepts, themes, and relationships about the particular area of study, which may have not even been the primary area of interest during the data collection process. The consensual process is a requisite part of CQR, as “the assumption is that multiple perspectives increase our approximation of the ‘truth’ and are more likely to be free from researcher bias” (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Furthermore, Smith (2010) in the article “Therapist self-disclosure with adolescents: A consensual qualitative research study” discusses how CQR research involves constantly reassessing the data to confirm that analysis and outcomes remain continuous with the raw data set (Smith, 2010, p. 35).

Mixed Methods in Depth

In order to analyze the raw material, a mixed methods approach was selected as mixed methods research approach serves to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to better answer complex research questions. This approach allows researchers to take individual positions on a continuum between both qualitative and quantitative research. Another advantage to a mixed methods approach is that researchers are able to collect both narrative and numerical data, employ both structured and emergent designs, analyze their data both via statistical and content analysis, and make meta-inferences as answers to their research questions by integrating the inferences gleaned from their qualitative and quantitative findings (Tashakkori & Newman, 2010).

Mixed method research is often considered by some to be more effective, as its duality allows flexibility in answering some research questions, as some research questions are unable to be studied with just a singular research approach. Tashakkori and

Newman (2010) list seven components that are motives for implementing a mixed methods model:

1. Complementarity: Using both mixed methods for the purpose of integrating two expertly different but related answers to the research question, one gleaned from using a qualitative and the other from a quantitative approach.
2. Completeness: Using mixed methods in order to obtain a fuller understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The expectation is that such a more complete understanding will emerge if the inferences from qualitative and quantitative strands of a study are merged effectively (such an effective integration has been called “integrative efficacy” of mixed methods inferences).
3. Development: Mixed methods are conducted with the explicit (preplanned or emergent) purpose of obtaining research questions, sampling framework, or data sources of a second (e.g., a qualitative) strand of the study from the first strand (e.g. quantitative).
4. Expansion: Same as ‘developmental’ discussed above, but with the purpose of expanding the answers already obtained in a previous strand of a study.
5. Corroboration/Confirmation: Utilizing integrated methods in order to evaluate the credibility of inferences obtained from a (qualitative or quantitative) strand of a study. The research questions of the first strand are often exploratory, while the research questions of the second strand are often explanatory/confirmatory.
6. Compensation: Utilizing mixed methods with the express purpose of compensating the weaknesses of one approach (e.g., data correction errors/biases) with the strengths of the other.
7. Diversity: Conducting mixed methods with the hope/purpose of comparing and contrasting divergent pictures of the same phenomenon. (Tashakkori & Newman, 2010)

In this proposed study, the fully integrated mixed method design will be utilized.

According to Tashakkori and Newman (2010), this is considered a consummate design in mixed-methods studies as it permits the researcher to utilize both qualitative and quantitative approaches, and use the perceptions from one type of data/process to modify/enhance the other with- in and across stages of the study in a fluid process (Tashakkori & Newman, 2010). This study will utilize aspects from both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the mixed method design, as well as combining it with consensual qualitative research to analyze the data gained from the ABPPP. The decision

to utilize this process was extracted from the ABPPP Final Summary (2012), as it conveys “this approach to evaluate the research was chosen with the intent to maximize the effectiveness of each methodology by allowing each method to inform the other, and to provide a more holistic picture of the data” (Smith, et al., 2012, p. 5). However, it is important to note that the analysis of the data will include three branches of qualitative data and will utilize two branches of quantitative data. By pairing these branches of data, they begin to inform each other and inferences can then be drawn. Thus, the goal is to make many inferences that lead to the meta-inference, or theory portraying a need for a social justice perspective in order to understand the origins of bullying behaviors.

Results of the ABPPP Program Evaluation

Based on the quantitative data, the survey results shows that 74% of adults within the participating schools of ABPPP ranked “appearance” as a motivating factor for bullying; this percentage is the highest percentage of all themes measured (Smith, et al., 2012, p. 20). As many as 58% of student participants of ABPPP reported that “appearance” as an explanation of why students bully each other (Smith, et al., 2012, p. 20). Furthermore, the results of the survey showed that 40% of students perceive that student-to-student bullying can be related to the student’s sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual); similarly, the percentage of students who feel that bullying is related to the student’s race or ethnicity is the same (Smith, et al., 2012, p. 20). With the same themes of sexual orientation and race or ethnicity, adults participating in the ABPPP reported these themes as reasons for bullying at 24% and 33%, respectively (Smith, et al., 2012, p. 20). From these findings, a new direction was able to emerge and guide the graduate

researchers in further exploring the phenomena of heterosexism related to bullying by using mixed method design, and Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR).

Steps of CQR

The initial step of the CQR process includes taking the responses from the ABPPP structured interviews and surveys and they were divided into themes; which remains true to the process of CQR evidenced by: “responses to open-ended questions from questionnaires or interviews for each individual case are divided into domains...” (Hill et al., 1997, p. 523). Next, the team then created concise reports on each theme that was apparent in the materials. This step is reflective of what Hill, Thompson, and Williams (1997) had suggested as a vital step in CQR supported by “core ideas (i.e. abstracts or brief summaries) are constructed for all the material within each domain for each individual case” (Hill et al., 1997, p. 523). From then on, the graduate researchers completed a cross analysis. This process involved taking all of the themes that were developed into categories, which helped to explain the consistencies from the core ideas (Hill et al., 1997, p. 523).

After conducting research and collecting data at the pilot schools participating in the ABPPP program, the research team met a consensus about the data and the discrepancies present. After several meetings and thorough data analysis, the consensual conclusion was that the ABPPP implementation presented a lack of a social justice perspective. Openness to all findings and a discovery-oriented approach to the examination of bullying and the possible origins of these behaviors were fostered through the use of CQR (Smith, 2010, p. 36).

Thesis Methodology – Data Analysis I

This thesis will explore the major theme of heterosexism that emerged from the initial results of the ABPPP program evaluation (Smith et al., 2012). The purpose of exploring or expanding this theme is to build a model that hopes to address heterosexism as it is perpetuated in bullying behaviors. This model aims to provide a social justice framework for administration, faculty, and students to understand and address how heterosexism relates to bullying behaviors.

After conducting structured interviews with focus groups and administering surveys to all participants, the graduate research team found that not a single school implemented the Welcoming Schools component of the ABPPP (Smith et al., 2012). The Welcoming Schools project focuses on education and awareness of bullying related to LGBTQ students as well as embracing diverse families. According to the ORWS Executive Summary, 40% of students report that sexual orientation is a motivating factor in why students bully other students (Smith et al., 2012). In addition, in the aforementioned study, 24% of adults report that sexual orientation is the motivating factor in the incidence of student-to-student bullying (Smith et al., 2012). When confronted with the reality that not a single school had implemented this important piece of the anti-bullying prevention program, a program that is created to provide the LGBTQ students with resources to combat bullying- the graduate research team reached a consensus. They consensually agreed that the lack of the Welcoming Schools program speaks to an implicit bias. The absence of the Welcoming Schools portion is significant as it is representative of the administration and faculty of all 11 schools willfully and consciously choosing to deny their LGBTQ student body access to vital resources. Given the

following statistics reported by the Center for Disease Control (CDC): “Another survey of more than 7,000 seventh- and eighth-grade students from a large Midwestern county examined the effects of school climate and homophobic bullying on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning (LGBQ) youth and found that LGBQ youth were more likely than heterosexual youth to report high levels of bullying and substance use; Students who were questioning their sexual orientation reported more bullying, homophobic victimization, unexcused absences from school, drug use, feelings of depression, and suicidal behaviors than either heterosexual or LGB students” (Birkett, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009); is it possible that the administration and faculty chose not to implement Welcoming Schools as they feel believe there are no LGBTQ students in their schools? Or, is this exclusion an example of a heteronormative bias? The article, “Identifying and Correctly Labeling Sexual Prejudice, Discrimination, and Oppression” by Shannon B. Dermer, Shannon D. Smith, and Korenna K. Barto (2010), discuss the terms homophobia, heterosexism, and heteronormativity as the following: “The term heteronormativity has also been suggested to represent this idea. The advantage of using concepts such as heterosexism and heteronormativity, as opposed to homophobia, is that they acknowledge the collusion in antigay attitudes at all societal levels. These terms underscore the exclusion or invisibility of sexual minorities; the disadvantage is they fail to acknowledge overtly intolerant attitudes and behaviors” (Dermer, Smith, & Barto, 2010, p. 327).

The initial steps as defined by Hill et al. (1997) that were used by the graduate research team have been modified for use in this study, with specific focus in Data Analysis II. After collecting the data, some research questions were derived from the initial consensual analysis that took place. Some examples of those research questions

are: “Why wasn’t the Welcoming Schools materials implemented?” and “What oppressive dynamics (homophobia, heterosexism) were at play in the choice not to use these materials?”

By following the initial steps of Hill et al. (1997) “A Guide to Conducting Consensual Qualitative Research” the research team then condensed down to 3 members, which comprised of this researcher, a fellow graduate researcher, and the principal investigator. Furthermore, this new research team continued upon the work of the previous research team by collecting and analyzing the data from the ABPPP to refine the scope of the theme found by the research team. The graduate research team continued their analysis by reviewing the qualitative data (i.e. transcripts of structured interviews given to focus groups) and found that the exclusion of the Welcoming Schools program that reflects a heterosexist bias in the decisions made by the school administration.

The next step discussed by Hill et al. (1997) involves the developed domains or themes to be coded for further analysis. Then, the research team is able to review the coded data and argue to a consensus. During this step, the research team will construct core ideas within the cases presented and argue to consensus, cross analyze case domains and develop categories, examine patterns, then proceed to final steps.

Coding Domains

The consensual qualitative domains that are extricated from the ABPPP require coding procedure in order for the research team to interpret the data. The Open Coding (Corbin & Strauss 1990) procedure was sampled from Grounded Theory, as grounded theory much like CQR lends itself to analyzing and interpreting qualitative data (Hill et al., 1997). In the article “Grounded Theory Research,” Open Coding as discussed by

Corbin and Strauss (1990) states the following: “Its purpose is to give the analyst new insights by breaking through standard ways of thinking about or interpreting phenomena reflected in the data” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p.10). This is a necessary function for the research team as it opens the possibilities for a deeper analysis of the data. In addition, Corbin and Strauss (1990) state “In open coding, events/actions/interactions are compared with others for similarities and differences. They are also assigned conceptual labels. In this way, conceptually similar events/actions/interactions are grounded together to form categories and subcategories” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 10). Thus, the research team is able to not only extricate themes from the data, but organize it as well. Open Coding is also useful in that its processes allow the researcher team to make propogative questions and possible draw comparisons, which can lend itself to creating a higher level of specification with the formation of categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 10). Corbin and Strauss (1990) state, “Open coding and the use it makes of questioning and constant comparisons enables investigators to break through subjectivity and bias. Fracturing the data forces preconceived notions and ideas to be examined against the data themselves. A researcher may inadvertently place data in a category where they do not analytically belong, but by means of systematic comparisons, the errors will eventually be located and the data and concepts arranged in appropriate classifications (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 13).

This open coding procedure will be applied to the qualitative (transcripts) and quantitative (surveys) data set of the ABPPP with the particular aim to find evidence of heterosexism bias. Should the data become representative of those classifications, then they are exposed to a higher level of specificity and are then categorized by an individual

statement, or by the following interactions: student to student, student to adult, adult to student, or adult to adult. The open coding procedure will permit precise examples to be extracted from the data with the objective of becoming foundational evidentiary basis that heteronormative bias and heterosexist oppression is prevalent in the lack of implementation of LGBTQ anti-bullying programs.

After creating the categories of themes that were extracted from the data, then refining the data into subcategories, the research team utilized to Iris Young's (1990) "Five Faces of Oppression" for a set of criterion to analyze the dataset in order to find thick descriptions of heterosexism/homophobia. Young (1990) discussed that in order for oppression to be identified, it must meet the following criterion: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence (Young, 1990). However, Young (1990) points out that not all components of the criterion need to be met in order to qualify as oppression, nor does the criterion limit the type of ism (Young, 1990). The research team will follow Young's (1990) "Five Faces of Oppression" guidelines to apply the criteria as discussed as the following:

"I have arrived at the five faces of oppression- exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence- as the best way to avoid such exclusions and reductions. They function as criteria for determining whether individuals and groups are oppressed, rather than as a full theory of oppression. I believe that these criteria are objective. They provide a means of refuting some people's beliefs that their group is oppressed when it is not, as well as a means of persuading others that a group is oppressed when they doubt it. Each criterion can be operationalized; each can be applied through the assessment of observable behavior, status relationships, distributions, texts, and other cultural artifacts. I have no illusions that such assessments can be value-neutral. But these criteria can nevertheless serve as a means of evaluating claims that a group is oppressed, or adjudicating disputes about whether or how a group is oppressed...The presence of any of these five conditions is sufficient for calling a group oppressed" (Young, 1990, p. 69)

The aim of this process is to find examples of heterosexism / homophobia / heteronormative bias in the lack of the implementation of LGBTQ anti-bullying program in the ABPPP. After the research team has completed all the steps in the open coding procedure, the research team will then continue their analysis with the final steps of CQR.

Hill et al., (1997) describe final steps of CQR as: developing narrative account across cases, describe illustrative cases, write-up and present results, get feedback from participants and colleagues, rewrite results, and publish if possible. These final steps are included as they perform the following functions: help the reader to understand that the prevalence of oppression in schools (as identified in Data Analysis #1) and creates a link to the lack of inclusion of a social justice perspective in anti-bullying program implementation.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This section will present the results of the data analysis extricated from the qualitative and quantitative data. A focus of this data includes thick descriptions representative of heterosexism that were present in the apparent lack of implementation of the Welcoming Schools bullying prevention program. Thick descriptions can be defined as: “Thick description is described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a way of achieving a type of external validity. By describing a phenomenon in sufficient detail one can begin to evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, Holloway (1997) in “Basic Concepts of Qualitative Research” defines thick description as: “refers to the detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit the patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them in context” (Holloway, 1997). The rationale for utilizing thick descriptions is because it allows the research team the ability to draw conclusions about the possible relationships between events observed in the field. By following the coding process, the research team categorized the data by type of interaction: student-to-student, student-to- adult, adult-to-student, and adult-to-adult. The research team reviewed both the quantitative and qualitative data sets and organized the specific case examples into a chart. The following is the summary of the case examples that were extricated from the data:

Table 1: Summary of Case Examples

Criterion of Young (1990) Five Faces of Oppression	Example of Oppression HETEROSEXISM
EXPLOITATION	
MARGINALIZATION	
POWERLESSNESS	
CULTURAL IMPERIALISM	X
VIOLENCE	X

This chart provides a visual representation to supplement the thick descriptions that were chosen for this work. After the coding procedures were completed, the information is then analyzed through Young (1990) Five Faces of Oppression in order to determine if the data qualifies as heterosexism/homophobia by meeting any of the 5 criteria discussed by Young. The research team found that the ism's of heterosexism / homophobia were prevalent in the quantitative data set (surveys). Furthermore, the ism's presence appeared to be consistent and confirmed in the qualitative data set (interviews/comments). For example, heterosexism/homophobia was apparent in the quantitative data set of Data Analysis #1; the quantitative data showed that 40% of all students surveyed and 24% of all adults surveyed reported that a student's sexual orientation is the main motivation for the bullying that student experiences (Smith et al., 2012). This statistic that emerged from the surveys administered to students and adults were mirrored in the qualitative data. For example, one adult participant commented: "I am completely against bullying, but I also believe that anti- bullying propaganda can be targeted at people's beliefs against homosexuality. If I don't agree with people's choices, does that make me a bully? I don't go around correcting people who say, "Oh my God"

loosely even though I believe it's using God's name in vain. Yet, if I don't correct someone who says, 'that's so gay', I'm wrong?'" (Smith et al., 2012, p. 292). This quote is significant as it directly reflects how the adult in the school not only did not implement the Welcoming Schools bullying prevention materials, a program that has a specific aim towards correcting this use of this pejorative language; this person's apparent bias affects their decision to not correct others for using anti-gay slurs. In addition, the following excerpt is a transcription of an interview with elementary school administrators and represents adult-to-student interactions:

15:47 **Dr. Smith:** Related question so Operation Respect and Welcoming Schools were the two different organizations and it sounds like you used some from Operation Respect, did you use any on the Welcoming Schools? I now that one focus' on gender diversity sexual orientation and diverse families, and issues related to those. So, did you use any of that material?

16:05 **Kathy:** I think we have lessons on the table during April.

16:10 **Ms. Gray:** We did put some stuff down in April, but.

16:14 **Mr. Macias:** I think we kinda intermixed them.

16:15 **Ms. Klem:** Yah.

16:17 **Mr. Macias:** I think we just don't know which was which, I know we used the bullying one a lot.

16:20 **Mrs. Gray:** The Welcoming Schools was the one in the big white binder that we started to go through first. It did seem like it was geared more towards elementary schools. But I think we used it more as a resource than as the actual lesson plans

16:37 **Mr. Macias:** Lesson plans

16:38 **Mrs. Gray:** The lessons from Operations Respect just seemed more applicable to what we are dealing with at our school site (Smith et al., 2012, p. 327).

In addition, the following case example shows how high school teachers at one of the 11 schools were able to identify which students was experiencing bullying.

08:28 **Dr. Smith:** You mentioned cliques. In terms of cliques, are there certain, um, groups here that get bullied more than others and are there groups that are the bullies more than others?

08:37 **Skyler:** I would say yeah.

08:39 **Walter:** I'd have to say both.

08:40 **Skyler:** Mm-hmm. You've got your "powers," like your power struggles, just like, I guess, in the "real" world. You have your kids that are weak and then your kids that are strong. And it's not physically, it's just.

08:54 **Hector:** A real life bully who is built that way can sense the weakness. They can find their victims. And they hunt. They'll clique together. That's what that hallway was about. A bunch of guys that thought that pushing folks around was sort of cute and fun and powerful. And they can sense that.

09:17 **Walter:** I'd say as far as the bullied groups, kids that are homosexual or are struggling with their homosexuality, that tends to be a target group. Kids that aren't involved (Smith et al., 2012, p. 996).

These excerpts appear to be reflective of Young's (1990) criteria: Cultural

Imperialism as evidenced by:

"These three categories refer to structural and institutional relations that delimit people's material lives, including but not restricted to the resources they have access to and the concrete opportunities they have or do not have to develop and exercise their capacities. These kinds of oppression are a matter of concrete power in relation to others- of who benefits from whom, and who is dispensable. To experience cultural imperialism means to experience how the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one's own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one's group and mark it as the Other. Cultural imperialism involves the universalization of a dominant group's experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm... Often without noticing they do so, dominant groups project their own experience as representative of humanity as such" (Young, 1990, p. 67).

To illustrate, the actions or inactions of the administrators at this school begs the question: is it possible that they chose to not implement a LGBTQ bullying prevention program, as they perceive their school is devoid of LGBTQ students? If this is the case, then the dominant group (administration and faculty) is perpetuating the status quo by openly excluding a marginalized group by limiting their access to vital resources to combat LGBTQ targeted bullying.

The next excerpt is an example where students pressure LGBTQ students to conform to a heterosexist norm by using group violence and verbal antagonism as a tool

to promote conformity. It should be noted again that the Welcoming Schools bullying prevention program has a component that addresses how to teach students to combat such pressures exemplified by *Welcoming Schools* provides education regarding ways children are pressured to conform and strategies for change. (Smith et al., 2012, p. 12)

0:08:35 **Marisol:** They make fun of one of my friends, he just happens to be gay, and they kept on calling him really mean words and they got a mean, like, I don't remember how many people, but we got really mad and we all got into a fight and that lasted for, like, a couple months, and it wasn't fun at all, because they wouldn't leave him alone.

0:09:00 **Dr. Smith:** What kind of stuff, like, they were calling him names?

0:09:02 **Marisol:** Yeah, they were calling him names. They were like, "You fag! Why are you a fag?" It's like, leave him alone!

0:09:09 **Zoey:** Or asking them weird questions like, "Have you ever made out with a guy?" or "What made you turn gay?" and stuff like that, just doing it just to be rude.

0:14:06 **Cathy:** Now, you mentioned the student who was gay also, and you said that went on, that was real ugly for a couple months but then it sort of died out.

0:14:14 **Marisol:** Yeah.

0:14:15 **Cathy:** What made it die out?

0:14:17 **Marisol:** Like, we tend to...we started avoiding each other, like each other's groups, started avoiding them more, when [Jason] started making fun of [Danny]. Yeah, it got really bad.

0:14:32 **Zoey:** I think what made it stop is that people don't make such a big deal about it and [Danny] wasn't reacting on it anymore, like he used to sing during our assemblies and some people would be cheering him on and some people would just be negative and calling him out, "fag," you know, and stuff like that, and once [Danny] stopped doing those things and stopped making it noticeable that he was gay, people just stopped (Smith et al., 2012, p. 919).

According to the statement above, the students used aggressive and violent behavior towards a student they believed to be homosexual, citing his penchant for singing in public as the behavior that announced his sexuality. Once the student stopped singing in public, his peers stopped antagonizing him. This particular case example reflects the criteria of Group Violence in Young's (2009) work. For example:

“Group violence approaches legitimacy, moreover, in the sense that it is tolerated. Often, third parties find it unsurprising because it happens frequently and lies as a constant possibility at the horizon of the social imagination. Even when they are caught, those who perpetrate acts of group-directed violence or harassment often receive light or no punishment. To that extent society renders their acts acceptable” (Young, 1990, p. 68).

The student-to-student interaction above demonstrates how the heterosexist bias was present in that altercation and the outcome supported by the targeted classmate’s behavior changed to meet the heterosexist norm. When analyzing the criteria of Young’s (1990) criteria Group Violence, it is important to discuss the following: “I have argued that group-directed violence is institutionalized and systemic. To the degree that institutions and social practices encourage, tolerate, or enable the perpetration of violence against members of specific groups, those institutions and practices are unjust and should be reformed. Such reform may require the redistribution of resources or positions, but in large part can come only through a change in cultural images, stereotypes and the mundane reproduction of relations of dominance and aversion in the gestures of everyday life” (Young, 1990, p. 68).

The following case example shows how anti-gay slurs are not only prevalent in this particular high school, but also show how heterosexist bias is present in this school environment and its relationship with the bullying behaviors that took place.

0:04:08 **Dr. Smith:** What about, like, do they say about people’s sexual orientation or about being gay? Stuff like that?
0:04:13 **Sarah:** Eh...sometimes.
0:04:15 **Dr. Smith:** What do they say?
0:04:16 **Daniela:** “You’re gay.”
0:04:17 **Dr. Smith:** “You’re gay”? They call you gay...
0:04:22 **Sarah:** Yeah. And some less nice words for it.
0:04:24 **Dr. Smith:** Like what? (*pause*) Like meaner words? You can say it. Or you don’t want to? Okay.

0:04:35 **Cathy:** Are the people that kids call “gay” or meaner words, are they really gay—
0:04:43 **Joseph:** No.
0:04:46 **Cathy:** --or are people just saying, “You’re gay” in meaning, “you’re silly” or...
0:04:49 **Sarah:** Two of them are really gay.
0:04:50 **Cathy:** And some are really gay. (*Students: Yeah.*) But not everybody that’s called gay is necessarily gay.
0:04:52 **Students:** Yeah.
0:04:55 **Cathy:** Okay, I thought that was kind of a word just for some—that had a broader meaning, you know?
0:04:59 **Students:** Yeah.
0:05:01 **Sarah:** Another meaning for “you’re lame”...
0:05:05 **Dr. Smith:** So sometimes they use it as a pejorative but other times you say kids who are gay really do get picked on here?
0:05:12 **Sarah:** Yeah (Smith et al., 2012, p. 950).

The next example shows an excerpt from a structured interview with the teachers of a high school that was involved in the ABPPP and how they addressed the use of anti-gay slurs.

0:20:22 **Hank:** I think the big thing in probably all of our classrooms is just establishing what’s appropriate language and what isn’t. “This is gay,” “You’re a fag,” you know, stuff like that, just letting ‘em know right from the start what’s acceptable language and stuff like that is kind of— one of the bigger battles we fight here. Just getting ‘em to—it’s unacceptable, just kind of be tolerant. Use appropriate terms. “This is retarded.” You know, things like that.
0:20:49 **Hannah:** And is that something that you kind of bring up on your own, as far as, “Here’s what’s acceptable in this class, and here’s what’s unacceptable” as far as language goes, or do you wait until something happens and take that opportunity to address it?
0:21:02 **Flynn:** I think that happens individually—in individual classrooms, some will approach it at the beginning as a part of their curriculum and others will deal with it as the situation presents itself (Smith et al., 2012, p. 004)

The previous two case examples present both sides of the same issue. Both students and teachers at the same school are able to identify that the use of anti-gay slurs is apart of the bullying behaviors taking place at their school. The

aforementioned quote begs the question as to why anti-gay slurs are not apart of a school-wide rule, but rather left to the discretion of the individual teacher. The above thick descriptions highlight institutional heterosexism which is an aspect explored in Spaulding's work "Unconsciousness-Raising: Hidden dimensions of Heterosexism in Theory and Practice with Lesbians." Spaulding (1999) discusses institutional heterosexism as "a form of social control used to maintain heterosexual dominance" (Spaulding, 1999, p. 13). Furthermore, when reviewing the transcripts from this specific school, there is little information from the administration and teachers to suggest that this issue is being addressed by implementing a bullying prevention program that works to eliminate bullying based on identifying with a sexually underrepresented group.

Study Inferences

The aforementioned thick descriptions illustrate an implicit and explicit opposition for the sexually underrepresented groups in the schools. One major inference that can be drawn from this study is the need to deconstruct heterosexist bias in the K-12 setting. Thus, this author proposes a model of liberation that aims to deconstruct the heterosexist bias that limits the rights of those groups. The model is as follows:

Deconstruction

- Gain knowledge of bias in administrative procedures, adult-to-child interactions, and peer relations that support heteronormative bias.
- Gain knowledge of individual cultural heritage and personal beliefs that are supportive/representative of heteronormative bias.

- Gain understanding of how heteronormative influences (e.g. stereotyping) may affect the self-esteem and self-concept of individuals who identify with the LGBTQ group.

Reconstruction

- Explore how heteronormative oppressive beliefs/practices affect them personally/professionally.
- Examine their negative/positive reactions toward others of LGBTQ groups.
- Remove institutional barriers that prevent individuals of the LGBTQ group from reaching self-determination.
- Work on eliminating heteronormative biases, prejudices, & discriminatory contexts in administrative procedures, teaching, and peer relations through embracing and implementing LGBTQ advocacy education curricula.

This proposed model samples aspects from the work of Sue and Arredondo's (1992) "Multicultural Counseling Competencies and Standards: A Call to the Profession," a work that focuses on counselors increasing their multicultural competency. In addition, this proposed model also utilizes highlights of Flax's (1990) "Postmodernism and gender relations in feminist theory, In: Feminist Postmodernism," along with Ortner's and Whitehead's (1981) "The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality," and Papadelos' (2010) "From revolution to deconstruction exploring feminist theory and practice in Australia," all of which merged together created the basis for the goal of deconstructing heterosexist bias as proposed by this model (Sue & Arredondo, 1992; Flax, 1990; Papadelos, 2010). In addition, this model draws upon aspects of the work

conducted by Christi McGeorge and Thomas Stone Carlson (2011) “Deconstructing Heterosexism: Becoming an LGB Affirmative Heterosexual Couple and Family Therapist.” McGeorge and Carlson (2011) created questions to promote thoughtful self-reflection intended for therapists to work on eliminating their own heterosexist biases (McGeorge & Carlson, 2011).

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the theme heterosexism, and how the absence of the Welcoming Schools program was an example of such, and represented the oppression present in the bullying behaviors in schools. The aforementioned results that detected oppression in schools, which paired with the model above, proposes to address this problem.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Bullying is becoming a primary concern in the education setting for students, parents, and administration. Yet there is little consideration given towards the foundations of the bullying behaviors from a social justice perspective. Thus, by expanding the theoretical framework for conceptualizing bullying behaviors from a social justice perspective in the K- 12 school environment, the conceptualization of bullying behaviors will be broadened, and shed light on motivational factors related to bullying as well. Finally, the aim to include social justice in this review is easily summed up by the following:

“The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which that distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure” (Bell, 1997, p.3)

By reviewing the literature, there appears to be scant attention on the motivating factors of bullying. However there are articles that focus on the restoration of social justice as well as discussing the importance of including adults in the implementation process as evidenced by the RWsA approach which proposes a resolution to bullying by viewing it and solving it with a social justice frame of reference evidenced by the necessary inclusion of adults within the school...the literature states that the head administrator, a principal in most cases, must adopt an accommodating stance towards the implementation of RWsA to address bullying in their schools (Wong, et al., 2011, p. 857). In addition, the inclusion of a social justice perspective is critical when working to resolve bullying behaviors that are directed at members of a sexually underrepresented group, which Vera and Speight (2003) discuss as “social justice is at the heart of multiculturalism

in that the existence of institutionalized racism, sexism, and homophobia is what accounts for the inequitable experiences of people of color, women, gay, lesbian, and bisexual people (among others) in the United States” (Vera & Speight, 2003, p.254). This continued inequity is a root cause of the bullying behaviors observed in the larger and present study.

The methods the research team applied to this study were Hill et al. (1997) Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR), Newman and Tashakkori (2011) Mixed-Methods, and Corbin and Strauss (1990) Grounded Theory to collect, categorize, and code data, respectively. The deductions that were yielded from these processes became an evidentiary basis to create a model of liberation that addresses deconstructing heterosexist/heteronormative bias and removing the bias against the sexually underrepresented groups. The drive of this thesis was to explore and examine one of the major themes that were found in the larger evaluation study, which was the complete lack of implementation of a LGBTQ bullying prevention program. By examining the data further, it became apparent that the reported LGBTQ targeted bullying and absence of LGBTQ bullying prevention program was representative of the heterosexist/heteronormative bias.

Limitations of Present Study

When reviewing the present study, the research team examined the study for the presence of possible limitations. In the present study, the research team utilized data from a larger study and focused on one major theme of the data set to analyze: heterosexism. The specificity of that scope lent itself to the research team as it allowed them to facilitate the creation of the thick descriptions that were analyzed. However, this singular focus

and scope narrowed the view of the information. The next limitation found in the evaluation of the current study is that the data set, the criterion applied, and the interpretation of the data could have been exposed to researcher bias. The research team applied CQR in the collections and analysis of data. The CQR process requires that the research team meet a consensus on the themes of the data (Hill et al., 1997). Thus, the step may promote a level of researcher bias through the process of communicating ideas and sharing information by arguing to a consensus. Furthermore, another limitation that was discovered by the research included the limited geographical area of the data set involved. To illustrate, the research team analyzed a data set, which was collected from 11 schools, in one school district in the Pacific Southwest. This small sampling of an equally small geographical area is an area of concern, as it does not lend itself to generalizability. An additional limitation found in the evaluation of the present study relates to the model that was proposed by this writer. The proposed model of liberation that focuses on deconstructing heterosexist bias and reconstructing those beliefs to remove the bias against sexually underrepresented groups has not been tested for functionality or validity. The proposed model remains as a theory at this point in time. Lastly, a limitation of the present study includes that the results of this study and the specific analysis of the data set cannot be generalized to other studies that focus on the social justice aspects of bullying prevention programs.

Implications for Future Research Study

For future researchers who are seeking to conduct research studies that are focused on the social justice perspective in bullying behaviors may consider exploring the incidence of bullying and the prevalence of institutionalized oppression within the K-12

school environment. In addition, future researchers may choose to use the proposed model and test it for functionality and relevance of application. In addition, future research studies can work to create longitudinal, empirical studies that measure the effectiveness of the implementation of bullying prevention programs that have a social justice base. By conducting the aforementioned study, it is hoped that it may become a framework for future studies. Furthermore, future research studies or program evaluations can include test items that seek to measure the prevalence/incidence of oppression in schools, which can may provide structure bullying prevention programs to be reflexive to address the oppression in their school environment. Future studies can also operationalize the steps of the aforementioned model by allowing a facilitator trained in deconstructing oppressive biases to help teachers, administrators, and faculty work on examining their heterosexist bias. The inclusion of a social justice perspective in a bullying prevention program is necessary to address oppressive nature of bullying. Future research that works to capture these phenomena and then quantify it, then it is possible that the phenomena of oppression, in all its forms can be included to address the incidence of bullying behaviors.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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EDUCATION

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

M.S. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling – anticipated **2013**

Thesis: “Exploring Heterosexist Bias and Oppressive
Bullying in Anti-Bullying Prevention Programs”

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

B.A. in Psychology **2010**

RELATED EXPERIENCE

UNLV Telecounseling

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Intern - September 2012-June 2013

- Facilitate individual counseling sessions for individuals in rural northern Nevada via video conference.
- Complete thorough case documentation on a case load of 7 clients on a weekly basis.
- Participate in weekly staff/supervision meetings.

USVETS- Las Vegas

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Intern - June 2012-August 2012

- Facilitated individual and psycho-educational group sessions for at least 12 clients on a weekly basis.
- Helped coordinate services for homeless veterans.
- Participated in staff meetings and development.
- Initiated and developed stress management group for veterans on weekends.

Operation Respect/Welcoming Schools Bullying Prevention Pilot Program Evaluation

Graduate Researcher – May 2012- December 2012

Conduct structured interviews, administered surveys,
collected data, produced reports.

Dean Peterson Professional Development School, Las Vegas, Nevada

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Intern - January 2012-April 2012

- Worked with children ages 5-13 on developing anger management, appropriate social skills, self-regulation, self-esteem, and self-efficacy.
- Facilitated individual and group sessions for children ages 5-13 to promote cooperation, curiosity, confidence, and communication.
- Created group session itineraries that included helping children develop survival skills, interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, and conflict resolution skills.
- Documented clients' progress in case notes and communicated concerns and progress to School Counselor, Dollye James, M.Ed.
- Collaborated with fellow intern students to create fun, engaging, and interactive activities for our clients that also promoted development of important behavioral skills.

Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Program, Las Vegas, Nevada

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Intern - January 2012-April 2012

- Facilitated individual and psycho-educational group sessions for at least 15 clients on a weekly basis.
- Completed timely, thorough, and conscientious documentation through Nevada Health Information Provider Performance System (NHIPPS) that adhered to CARF and SAPTA guidelines.
- Participated in staff development trainings conducted by SAPTA auditors to strengthen and refine Motivational Interviewing skills as well as clinical notation.

Choices Group, Inc., Las Vegas, Nevada

Substance Abuse Counselor, CADC-Intern - August 2011- February 2012

- Worked full-time in Level II Intensive Outpatient Treatment with adult population, the highest level of care offered at the facility.
- Conducted 2 hour psycho-educational/psychotherapy group sessions daily for 8-15 clients for a total of 9 hours of group session every week.
- Provided weekly individual counseling sessions that focused on relapse prevention, recidivism, and establishing a healthy support system.

- Collaborated with community resources such as Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services, Baby Your Baby, and Urban League to help clients increase their access to resources.
- Maintained timely, complete, and thorough documentation on services provided to clients that adhered to SAPTA guidelines for a caseload of 30 clients.
- Performed weekly assessments for court-mandated clients through Drug Court, District Court, Justice Court, Dependency Court, and Nevada Parole & Probation.
- Maintained consistent communication with inter-departmental staff as well as Drug Court Coordinators and Judge Delaney, Judge Zimmerman, and Hearing Master Femiano to advocate for clients and effectively communicate progress and needs of clients.
- Communicated any client concerns to Department Supervisor and Internship Supervisor in a timely, efficient manner.
- Maintained constant communication with internal Mental Health Department to ensure client's mental health needs are addressed while in treatment for substance dependence/abuse.

Center for Behavioral Health, Las Vegas, Nevada
**Substance Abuse Counselor, CADC-Intern - August
 2010- August 2011**

- Performed alcohol and drug abuse individual counseling sessions on a monthly basis and maintained a caseload of 80-90 patients.
- Maintained patient records that are complete, comprehensive and well organized that adhered to CARF and SAPTA guidelines.
- Made appropriate referrals with community agencies to expand patient access to services.
- Provide interagency reports/documentation required for third party reimbursement, criminal justice proceedings, supplemental income assessments, emergency services, and other specialized treatment needs of patients.
- Perform substance abuse evaluations and individual sessions for court-mandated clients referred by Nevada Parole & Probation and out-of-state law enforcement agencies.
- Communicated with Clinical Director about patient's progress along with any/all violations of program policy & procedure.
- Responsible for providing training materials to ensure that the staff completes a minimum of 25 hours of training each year.

- Entrusted to maintain a log of all Diversion Control calls conducted in accordance to State and Federal Regulations as well as program policy.

MEMBERSHIPS

Chi Sigma Iota – Omega Alpha Chapter - Chapter President from 2012-2013

American Counseling Association - Member

Sigma Kappa Sorority – Theta Eta Chapter - Chapter President from 2008-2009