RELATIONAL AGGRESSION:

K-12 SCHOOL COUNSELORS' PERCEIVED

PREPAREDNESS, ATTITUDES, AND INTERVENTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Odden Heide, Chasity Lynn, M.S., Department of Education, College of Human Development and Education, North Dakota State University, May 2009. Relational Aggression: K-12 School Counselors' Perceived Preparedness, Attitudes, and Interventions. Major Professor: Dr. Carol Buchholz.

The purpose of this concurrent mixed methods study was to explore school counselors' responses to relational aggression in schools. A convenience sample of K-12 school counselors (n = 370) who use the Internet was used. Participants were recruited by postings made to ASCA Scene and through advertisements by state counseling associations. Participants were screened to include school counselors who (1) had licensure/certification from the Department of Education as a school counselor, and (2) were currently employed as a licensed/credentialed school counselor as defined by the Department of Education. The *School Counselors' Responses to Aggression in Schools* survey instrument was designed for the present study to explore school counselors' perceived preparedness and attitudes towards, along with interventions for relational aggression in schools. Results indicated that when compared to overtly aggressive incidents, school counselors were less likely to define relationally aggressive incidents as aggression, rated relationally aggressive incidents as significantly less serious, and reported being significantly less likely to intervene in relationally aggressive incidents between students. Results indicated that gender was not a determinant in whether overt or participants defined relational aggression incidents as aggression. Most participants felt prepared to provide education about relational aggression to students, parents/guardians, and teachers/administrators. School counselors with prior education and/or training in both overt and relational aggression reported a significantly higher degree of perceived preparedness to provide education about

relational aggression to the various parties. Further, participants with prior training in both overt and relational aggression reported a significantly higher degree of perceived preparedness to intervene in relationally aggressive incidents between students. Participants reported similar interventions for relational and overt aggression, however exceptions were noted. Limitations of this study, recommendations for future research, and implications for school counselors and counselor educators are discussed.

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DEDICATION

For Bjorn: As the wind blows over the plains, so are you to me.

For My Wingmen: I will never leave you.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Issue

"I won't be your friend, unless..."

"They're spreading rumors about me..."

"They're giving me dirty looks..."

Relational aggression, an often covert and unseen form of aggression, has recently become the focus of popular and scholarly works (Burr, Ostrov, Jansen, Cullerton-Sen, & Crick, 2005; Crick, Casas, & Ku, 1999; Simmons, 2002; Wiseman, 2002). Popular literature aims to help parents guide their teens through the rumor spreading of adolescence, while researchers have observed the covert aggressive acts of preschool children (Crick et al., 1999; Wiseman, 2002). Evidence of relational aggression has been documented in children as young as three-years old, continuing into adult relationships (Crick et al., 1999). Social, academic, and psychological consequences for relationally aggressive behavior have been documented for both the victim, as well as the perpetrator. Consequences may include peer rejection, social avoidance and anxiety, and adjustment problems (Geiger, Zimmer-Gembeck, & Crick, 2004). Although a current hot topic, work on relational aggression is still early in development.

Since a large sum of a child's life is spent in educational settings, those who work in education should be well versed on the struggles their students may be facing. School counselors are often those at the frontlines in schools, those with training and experience to

identify students at-risk and who are hurting. At the present time, only one study in the literature could be found exploring how school counselors respond to relational aggression in schools (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Relational aggression is a relatively new area of research, especially in the field of counseling. Relationally aggressive behaviors have been documented, but little is known about the kinds of interventions school counselors are using or how prepared they feel to address it. Students who are victims or perpetrators of relational aggression may continue to suffer if school counselors feel unprepared or are inexperienced in addressing relational aggression.

Previous research on relational aggression has focused on the consequences of relational aggression for victims and perpetrators (Owens, Slee, & Shute, 2000; Prinstein, Boegers, & Vernberg, 2001), the relationship between relational aggression and perceived popularity (Rose, Swenson, & Waller, 2004), and cross-cultural evidence of relational aggression (Osterman et al., 1998; Toldos, 2005). Further, popular and scholarly literature has focused primarily on females' use of relational aggression (Casey-Cannon, Hayward, & Gowen, 2001; Crothers, Field, & Kolbert, 2005; Hadley, 2003; Owens et al., 2000).

In terms of school counselors and relational aggression, there are a number of deficiencies in the literature, including:

1. Whether school counselors define relational aggression as a form of aggression.
2. The likelihood of school counselors intervening in relationally aggressive situations.

3. School counselors' perceived preparedness to intervene in relationally aggressive situations.
4. Interventions school counselors are employing to address relational aggression.

Exploring deficiencies in the literature not only aids counselor educators, policy makers, and school counselors, but students as well. By identifying areas of need within the present school counselor population, counselor educators may move to include specific information on relational aggression within graduate coursework. Policy makers may revise school policies to include protocol for addressing relational aggression. School counselors may gain access to information about data-driven programs that help to combat relational aggression. Students would benefit from all of the above, by promoting safe school environments where students are free to learn and succeed.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present concurrent mixed methods study was to explore school counselors' responses to relational aggression in schools by converging both quantitative and qualitative data. The *School Counselors' Responses to Aggression in Schools* web-based survey was developed for the present study to assess K-12 school counselors' perceived preparedness, attitudes, and interventions for relational aggression in schools.

The following eight research questions were addressed by the present study:

1. Will school counselors define overtly aggressive incidents as *aggression* at a significantly higher proportion than the proportion of relationally aggressive incidents defined as *aggression*?

2. Will school counselors define relationally aggressive incidents as *aggression* at a significantly higher proportion when the victim is female compared to the proportion of incidents defined as *aggression* when the victim is male?
3. Will school counselors rate overt aggression incidents at a significantly higher *degree of severity* than the *degree of severity* for relational aggression incidents?
4. Will school counselors report a significantly higher *degree of likelihood of intervention* in overt aggression incidents between students than the *degree of likelihood of intervention* reported for relational aggression incidents between students?
5. What is the *degree of perceived preparedness* of school counselors to educate (a) students, (b) teachers/administrators, and (c) parents/guardians about relational aggression?
6. What interventions are school counselors using to address relational aggression and overt aggression?
7. To what *degree of importance* do school counselors feel it is for Counselor Education programs to specifically address and provide education about relational aggression to future school counselors?
8. Will school counselors with prior education and/or training report a significantly higher *degree of perceived preparedness* to intervene in relationally aggressive incidents between students than school counselors without prior education and/or training?

Significance of the Study

The present study is significant for three reasons. First, the results of this study will help to explore whether the unfortunate indifference that sometimes exists in response to relational aggression is also found in the school counselor population. Aggression, especially of relational nature, is often looked upon as a normative experience in childhood and adolescence, and the adults in a student's life may have less empathy for victims of relational aggression than victims of overt aggression (Craig, Henderson, & Murphy, 2000; Jeffrey, Miller, & Linn, 2001; Yoon, Barton, & Taiariol, 2004). Crick, Casas, and Nelson (2002) stated, "a certain degree of exposure to these behaviors is likely to be normative for most children…it is the children who are targeted at extreme levels that we are concerned about and whom we consider to be relationally victimized" (p. 98). School counselors should have the education and training to identify when situations are no longer normative.

Second, the study will help to identify education and/or training needs within the present school counseling population. School counselors should be well versed on the struggles their students may be facing, including relational aggression. This expectation is outlined in the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) Ethical Standards for School Counselors (American School Counselor Association, 2004). For example, school counselors are ethically obligated to provide for the academic, career, and personal/social needs of each student, ensuring maximum development of each student's potential (ASCA, 2004). Consequences of relational aggression have the ability to impact these areas of a student's life, which may hinder students from reaching their full potential.

Third, responses by participants will allow for further exploration of interventions and data-driven programs for relational aggression, which may reduce the occurrence and consequences of relational aggression.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

The delimitations and limitations of the study are:

1. The participants of the present study were limited to those school counselors who (a) are members of ASCA SCENE and who view the recruitment letter on the "Research Survey Requests" discussion forum and (b) members of state counseling associations who receive the recruitment letter through advertisements by state counseling associations. School counselors who did not view the recruitment letter through these methods were not informed of the study.
2. The present study utilized a concurrent nested mixed method research design, focusing predominately on quantitative data (Creswell, 2003).
3. The data collection period was confined to four weeks based on a review of web-based survey literature (Dollarhide & Lemberger, 2006; Mathai, 2002; Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006).
4. The present study was limited by the use of a nonprobability convenience sample and the subsequent inability to calculate a true response rate.
5. The use of a nonprobabilty convenience sample makes the study's findings unable to be generalized to the entire population of school counselors.

6. The use of a web-based survey limited by the availability of potential participants, equality of equality of computer literacy, and computer capabilities (Dillman, 2007).

Definition of Terms

The following provides definitions for terminology used throughout the present study: .

Bullying: Bullying as used in the present study, refers to aggressive behavior that (a) is intended to cause harm, (b) features a power differential, and (c) is repeated over time (Limber & Small, 2003).

Concurrent nested strategy: The concurrent nested strategy is a mixed methods research strategy (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, & Creswell, 2005). The concurrent nested strategy gathers both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously, with one method being predominant. According to Creswell (2003), "Given less priority, the method (quantitative or qualitative) is embedded, or nested, within the predominant method (qualitative or quantitative)" (p. 218). The embedded method serves to address information not attainable by the other. The data between the two methods are integrated during the data analysis phase.

Interventions: Interventions, as used in this study, collectively refers to those Delivery System components provided by professional school counselors, as outlined by the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005). Delivery system components include (a) school guidance curriculum, (b) individual student planning, (c) responsive services, and (d) system support.

Mixed methods research: The present study met minimum criteria to be labeled as a mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), a mixed methods research design "...focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone" (p. 5). The present study is predominately quantitative, employing minimal qualitative research in the form of open-ended survey items.

Overt aggression: The definition of overt aggression, for the purpose of the present study, collectively refers to verbal and physical acts of aggression (e.g., hitting or pushing others, calling others mean names, or initiating fights) (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996).

Relational aggression: The terminology differs between researchers when referring to relational aggression. Similar behaviors have also been called indirect aggression, social aggression, girl bullying, covert aggression, or girlfighting (Bjorkqvist, 2001; Brown 2003; Vail, 2002). For the purpose of the present study, only the term *relational aggression* will be used, referring to those behaviors in which the agent of harm is damaging relationships. According to Crick and colleagues' (Crick et al., 2002), "Relationally aggressive behaviors are those in which the perpetrator attempts to harm the victim through manipulation of relationships, threat of damage to them, or both" (p. 98).

School counselor: Licensed or credentialed by the Department of Education as a school counselor, working in a K-12 school setting.

Web-based survey: For this study, web-based survey will refer to surveys posted on the Internet, accessed through a hyperlink. It does *not* include surveys distributed via e-mail, which would be categorized as e-mail surveys (de Vaus, 2002).

Summary

In Chapter I, an overview of the efforts made thus far to explore relational aggression was provided. School counselors' beliefs, attitudes, and responsive services for relational aggression are virtually absent from the literature. The present study addresses this gap in the literature by constructing and assessing school counselors' responses to relational aggression through a web-based survey. Chapter II reviews the pertinent literature.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Relational Aggression

Description of Relational Aggression

Crick et al. (1999) described relational aggression as, "behaviors that harm others through damage (or the threat of damage) to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion" (p. 77). Relationally aggressive behaviors may include gossiping, making demands of the victim in order for them to remain within the peer group, or intentionally leaving peers out of activities (Crick et al., 2002; Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007).

This view of aggression has typically not been included in the traditional view of aggression, primarily overtly aggressive behaviors (Crick et al., 2002). Overt aggression is typically characterized as physical or verbal in nature (e.g., hitting, kicking, shoving, or name-calling). Rose, Swenson, and Waller (2004) used five items to describe overtly aggressive individuals in a peer nomination questionnaire, peers who (1) hit, kick, or punch others, (2) say mean things to others to insult them or put them down, (3) call others mean names (4) push and shove others around, and (5) tell others that they will beat them up unless they do what they want (Rose et al., 2004). Hence, the agent of harm for overt aggression is threatened or actual physical damage (Geiger et al., 2004).

Relational aggression on the other hand, is often covert, social, and emotional in nature (e.g., threatening friendships, social exclusion). However, direct examples of relational aggression do exist, such as placing demands or conditions on the victim in order

for them to remain within the peer group (e.g., "You can't be our friend unless...") (Crick et al., 2002). Rose et al. (2004) assessed relational aggression in the previously mentioned peer nomination instrument by peers who (1) try to make another classmate not like others by spreading rumors about them or by talking behind their backs, (2) get even by keeping a person from being in a group of friends, (3) ignore others or stop talking to them, (4) tell their friends they will stop liking them unless the friends do what they say, and (5) keep certain people from being in their group when it is time to do an activity. The agent of harm for relational aggression is damage or threat of damage to relationships (Geiger et al., 2004). So, while the distinction between the two constructs is inconclusive, acknowledging both allows for a more comprehensive view of aggression (Card, Stucky, Sawalani, & Little, 2008).

Developmental and Gender Aspects of Relational Aggression

The manifestation of relational aggression may vary by development or gender (Bonica, Arnold, Fisher, Zeljo, & Yershova, 2003; Burr et al., 2005). Archer and Coyne (2005) provided examples of relationally aggressive acts according to developmental stages for early childhood, middle childhood/pre-adolescence, and adulthood. An example of a relationally aggressive act in early childhood may be a child not receiving an invitation to a birthday party if their peer is angry with them. A pre-adolescent may be relationally aggressive in the form of spreading rumors or gossiping. Adult forms may vary according to the context (e.g., being in a workplace or within a dyadic relationship), for example flirting with another person to make a partner jealous or openly dismissing the opinions of co-workers (Archer & Coyne, 2005).

The impact of relational aggression may change according to the relevance of relationships at different points in development (Geiger et al., 2004). Early adolescence seems to be the apex of relational aggression, as developmental milestones during this period may contribute to the increased salience of relational aggression (Craig et al., 2000; Yoon et al., 2004). As children developmentally advance, their physical, cognitive, and emotional abilities change, influencing how they interact with one another (Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997). Further, some studies have examined the relationship between perceived popularity or sociometric status and relational aggression (Rose et al., 2004; Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, & Lagerspetz, 2000). When relational aggression serves some positive purpose for students (i.e., an increase in popularity or acceptance) it may make the task of persuading students to not engage in these behaviors more difficult.

There are discrepancies in the literature as to whether gender differences exist in the use of or victimization by relational aggression. Some studies indicated that females were more likely than males to engage in relational aggression (Bjorkqvist & Osterman, 1992; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995), while others found no gender differences (Hart, Nelson, Robinson, Olsen, McNeilly-Choque, Porter, & McKee, 1999). One's developmental stage appears to be a determinant in whether gender differences are found, along with the method of data collection (i.e., peer nomination scale, observations) (Crick et al., 2002). Despite the disparity in the literature, more victimized females are identified when acknowledging relationally aggressive behaviors than when only overtly aggressive behaviors are considered (Crick et al., 2002). Further, the consequences of relational aggression may be more serious for females (Crick et al., 2002). In a study of seventh- and eighth-grade students (n = 76), Paquette (1999) found female students to be significantly more likely

than male students to be able to recall a specific instance of social aggression. Female students may be able to recall these specific events because it interferes with their social goals of maintaining peer relationships (Paquette, 1999).

Etiology of Relational Aggression

The etiology of relational aggression has a limited database, however, family influence has been cited as a promising area of research (Yoon et al., 2004). Preliminary research suggests that children who utilize relationally aggressive tactics have familial commonalities (Geiger et al., 2004). Parent-child interactions may be precursors to relationally aggressive behaviors. For example, the parent-child relationships of relationally aggressive children feature high levels of jealousy and exclusivity, meaning the parent excludes interaction with the rest of the family when interacting with the child. Children then may develop the desire or perceived need to exercise control over their relationships (Geiger et al., 2004).

Theories also speculate why relational aggression may be more prevalent amongst females or at least perceived as more hurtful. Some theories point to a larger societal influence. Brown (2003) identified mixed-messages young girls receive from society, and the socialization of girls to place a high value on friendships. Therefore, *girlfighting* may be an adaptive response by girls to be mean in a *nice* way, an acceptable way according to American culture (Brown, 2003). Hadley (2004) stated, "As a result of these social representations of female aggression, girls learn to control their aggression by concealing, denying, and using alternative methods" (p. 343). Conway (2005) also suggested socialization practices may inhibit the emotional regulation of girls. Emotional regulation

was described as the process of matching emotional expression to contextual demands. Conway (2005) stated, "The socialization of emotional suppression and inhibition of anger in young girls may tax their attentional and behavioral resources for emotion regulation and lead to relationally aggressive outcomes" (p. 337). According to these theories, relational aggression may be a learned response by girls based on societal constraints.

Despite and because of this focus on females' use of relational aggression, research must consider both genders. Underwood, Galen, and Paquette (2001) discussed the challenges for understanding gender and aggression. The authors urged researchers to avoid gender stereotypes when researching relational aggression in order to conduct sound research. Further, relying on theories and methods of overt aggression research when studying relational aggression is irresponsible, as the study of relational aggression may require entirely different methods and constructs (Underwood et al., 2001).

Consequences of Relational Aggression

Preliminary studies suggest that adults in a child's life, such as teachers, may consider relational aggression to be a normative experience (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Yoon et al., 2004). However, Crick et al. (2002) suggested relationally aggressive behaviors, "...deprive children of opportunities to satisfy their social needs for closeness, acceptance, and friendship in peer relationships, social-psychological experiences that have been shown to be critical for children's developmental and well-being" (p. 98). Therefore, like other forms of aggression, relational aggression may be best understood on a continuum, as some relationally aggressive behaviors (i.e., gossiping, excluding, ignoring) are used at one point in time by most individuals (Geiger et al., 2004). However, the

behavior becomes aggression when there is an intent or actual delivery of harm or when it interferes with developmental tasks, such as maintaining peer relationships and friendships (Grotpeter & Crick, 1996).

Consequences for the victim. According to Crick et al. (2002), a student is relationally victimized when they are targeted at extreme levels, meaning they experience greater than average exposure to relationally aggressive behaviors when compared to their peer group. Owens et al. (2000) qualitatively explored adolescent girls' (n = 54) perceptions of the effects of indirect aggression through focus groups and pair interviews. Participants were read a vignette portraying a relational aggression incident and were then asked about the possible effects on and reactions by the victim. Owens et al. interpreted the findings as a sort of chain of responses by the victim. According to findings, victims may respond with feelings of confusion, attempt to cover up hurt feelings, experience psychological pain compounded by irrational self-talk, have a desire to escape the situation, and may even retaliate physically. Further, the relationally aggressive event may lead to bystanders to experience fear or paranoia that the same may happen to them.

Victims of relational aggression have also been shown to have high sensitivity to rejection by others (Geiger et al., 2004), have problems in future relationships (Geiger et al., 2004), participate in self-destructive strategies (Archer & Coyne, 2005), and experience emotional disturbances, such as depression and anxiety (Archer & Coyne, 2005).

Consequences for the perpetrator. Perpetrators of relational aggression intend to cause harm to their peers' relationships. Crick and Grotpeter (1995) explored the consequences of relational aggression for the perpetrator. In a study of third- through sixth-grade (n = 491) students, peer assessments of relational aggression and self-report scales of

social-psychological adjustment were administered. Results indicated that relationally aggressive children were significantly more disliked by their peers than other children. Further, relationally aggressive children are significantly more likely to experience social maladjustment (e.g., peer rejection) and to be members of controversial peers groups, meaning those groups of children who are highly disliked by some and highly liked by others (Crick et al., 2001). Perpetrators of relational aggression have also been documented to experience externalizing problems, such as impulsivity or internalizing problems, such as feelings of sadness or somatic complaints (Crick, 1997).

Perpetrators of relational aggression are more likely to exhibit symptoms of oppositional defiant and conduct disorders (Prinstein et al., 2001) and lack prosocial behaviors (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Prosocial behaviors were described as doing nice things for others. Crick (1996) explored the role of overt aggression, relational aggression, and prosocial behavior on future social adjustment of children. Children third- through sixth-grade (n = 245) completed peer nomination scales, which asked the participant to identify peers who were overtly or relationally aggressive, along with peers who demonstrated prosocial behaviors. Results indicated that relational aggression was a predictor of social adjustment for both boys and girls. However, *changes* in adjustment were noted only for girls, meaning peers increasingly rejected relationally aggressive girls throughout the school year.

It is important to note that some studies indicated relational aggression had a positive impact on perceived popularity, specifically in the middle school years. To obtain perceived popularity, students are asked to directly name who they think is popular or unpopular. LaFontana and Cillessen (2002) found that perceived popular peers were seen

as physically and relationally aggressive, while perceived unpopular peers were seen as victims of physical or relational aggression. Further, girls were more likely to associate popularity with negative behaviors, such as relational aggression.

Relational Aggression Interventions

As the above-mentioned studies illustrate, evidence and consequences of relational aggression exist in the literature. What has been less documented however, are intervention efforts. Herein lies a complex problem since the study of relational aggression is still relatively young. According to Geiger et al. (2004), caution should be exercised when developing and implementing interventions for relational aggression due to the limited scope of information about the prevalence, effects, and antecedents of relational aggression. Further, many of the existing interventions are based on the traditional scope of aggression, primarily overt forms of aggression. Therefore, the subsequent interventions discussed should be reviewed with this knowledge in mind.

Preliminary Intervention Work

Yoon et al. (2004) reviewed the developmental literature on relational aggression and provided three primary suggestions: (1) Relational aggression is associated with short- and long-term adjustment difficulties; (2) Relational aggression should be addressed according to a child's developmental position; and (3) Relational aggression is a manifestation of interactions between the individuals characteristics of students and their family, peer, and home environments. These implications suggest that relational aggression is not a one-dimensional, static problem, but rather a dynamic one with varying influences.

Yoon et al. (2004) provided two ways to address relational aggression according to these implications. First, educating teachers and school administrators may reduce relational aggression incidents. Teachers and school administrators are more likely to intervene in relationally aggressive situations when they know signs, symptoms, and how to respond appropriately. Second, implementing school-wide prevention or intervention strategies may reduce relational aggression. If the school climate indirectly condones relational aggression, then any intervention put in place would be ineffective. Therefore, it is important to assess the entire school context for potential areas of growth.

Rodkin and Hodges (2003) explored aggression and victimization from an ecological perspective. Specifically, they took a *peer ecology* perspective, which was described as, "that part of children's microsystem that involves children interacting with, influencing, and socializing one another" (Rodkin & Hodges, 2003, p. 385). According to this peer ecology perspective, four questions were posed for school professionals when determining how to best intervene in a bullying situation. The first two questions concern where bullies and victims fit within their peer ecologies. The last two questions explore how teachers and parents can impact bullying and victimization.

Yoon et al. (2004) and Rodkin and Hodges (2003) works' suggest interventions may be most effective when they are multi-leveled. This idea of multi-leveled interventions is also supported by the work of Olweus (1993) who called for involvement of teachers and parents in aggression interventions, and Orpinas and Horne (2006) who urged interventionists to not only focus on the victims, but the aggressor as well. Further, in order to increase effectiveness and be cognizant of the limitations of present interventions,

Geiger et al. (2004) suggested adding a relational aggression component to already established research-based interventions.

The following reviews interventions designed to take place at the following levels: (1) victim and perpetrator, (2) counselors, teachers, and administrators, (3) school-wide, and (4) parents/guardians, community, and beyond.

Victim and perpetrator. Geiger et al. (2004) offered preliminary interventions for victims and perpetrators of relational aggression. First, when developing interventions for victims or perpetrators, it is important to take age, gender, and past behavior into consideration (Geiger et al., 2004). All of these factors may influence the type of intervention that would be the most appropriate. Further, the importance of separate interventions for victims and perpetrators was also stressed, in order to reduce the likelihood of re-victimization (Geiger et al., 2004). Perpetrators of relational aggression may benefit from the development of social problem-solving skills, proactive attempts at social inclusion (i.e., engaging in school activities, clubs, or sports), social-skill development, and self-control strategies. Further, involving the parents/guardians of the child using relationally aggressive behaviors was also recommended. Victims, on the other hand, may benefit from improving feelings of self-worth or assertiveness training.

Counselors, teachers, and administrators. Suggestions for counselors, teachers, or other school administrators to prevent or intervene in relationally aggressive situations were provided. School counselors can conduct classroom guidance lessons to educate students about relational aggression and alternative behaviors (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007). Being mindful of the unique challenges that relational aggression poses, school counselors should document utilized interventions and assess the effectiveness of these interventions

(Geiger et al., 2004). By adding a relational aggression component to an established program or curriculum with documented validity, school counselors increase the likelihood that the intervention will be effective.

Further, school counselors are in a unique position to provide leadership in schools by educating teachers and school administrators about relational aggression. Teachers and pre-service teachers have been shown to view relational aggression as less serious than overt forms of aggression (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Craig et al., 2000). School counselors could initiate a campaign or awareness day, instructing teachers on how to manage relationally aggressive children and assist victims (Geiger et al., 2004). According to Yoon et al. (2004) teacher-training programs should accomplish the following: (1) augment the knowledge of relationally aggressive behaviors, (2) improve skills for identifying and assessing relationally aggressive behaviors in the classroom; and (3) produce attitudinal changes towards relational aggression prevention and intervention strategies.

School-wide. Rather than addressing parts of a social context, some researchers suggested addressing the larger school climate. Yoon et al. (2004) suggested that school-wide prevention and intervention programs should aim to address all aspects of the school community – teaching staff, administration, support staff, parents/guardians, and student body. Yoon et al. (2004) stated, "School-wide initiatives should include changes in school policies and procedures, staff development, bullying assessments, curriculum support, and programming initiatives" (p. 312).

Educational laws and policies may influence the prevalence of relational aggression in schools. Limber and Small (2003) reviewed state laws and policies addressing bullying in schools. Fifteen states were identified as having laws to address bullying in schools,

however the definitions of bullying amongst these laws primarily included overtly aggressive acts. The authors suggested that state legislators include a precise definition of bullying that is consistent with the definition used by researchers, and includes not only overt behaviors, but indirect (i.e., relational) as well (Limber & Small, 2003).

Parents/guardians, community, and beyond. The importance of educating parents/guardians and the community about relational aggression was addressed (Geiger et al., 2004). Rodkin and Hodges (2003) discussed how parents can impact bullying and victimization. For example, children are more likely to be victimized if their parents/guardians engage in behaviors that inhibit autonomy or practice intrusive parenting styles (Rodkin & Hodges, 2003). Therefore, educating parents/guardians about how their behaviors and interactions with their children may influence whether their child is victimized may help reduce the prevalence of relational victimization. Parents/guardians of relationally aggressive children can become involved in helping their children to develop appropriate social skills (Geiger et al., 2004).

Socialization practices have been discussed as a source of intervention. It may be beneficial for parents/guardians or communities to examine the gender norms they may be instilling in their children, as females with traditional feminine identities were found to be more likely to utilize relationally aggressive acts (Crothers et al., 2005). As previously discussed, Conway (2005) suggested the socialization of girls to suppress negative emotion may lead to the relationally aggressive behaviors. Therefore, a discussion with parents/guardians and the community about the messages girls receive regarding their emotional expression may be beneficial.

Researchers can offer their opinions and ideas about what interventions are the most effective, however students themselves may have some insight into intervention strategies. Espelage and Asidao (2001) interviewed middle school students about bullying and victimization. Participants were asked the question, "What will help decrease bullying behavior?" One student stated,

> I think that bullies need to raise their self-esteem. They need to learn to get along with kids at school in a positive manner and they need to learn to control their anger, mainly I think it comes from the family or some other problems that is in school and they just want to take it out on someone. I think that a mentor for them would also be a really good idea. Get them in positive activities and get them to know the people that they are bulling better so that they don't bully them as much. Possibly try to get them to be friends (Espelage & Asidao, 2001, p. 58).

Interestingly, these students reported similar interventions for victims, adding such things as assertiveness training or ways to improve self-esteem (Espelage & Asidao, 2001).

School Counselors and Relational Aggression

At the present time, only one study in the literature (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007) has directly addressed school counselors' responses to relational aggression in schools. Therefore, it may beneficial to start at the source, to examine the training and education school counselors are receiving, as well as professional organizations for school counselors.

School Counselor Education and Training

Many school counselors ascribe to graduating from Counselor Education programs that are accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). At the present time, there are 210 programs that are accredited by CACREP (www.cacrep.org). CACREP requires students to demonstrate knowledge in the following areas:

1. Social and Cultural Diversity,
2. Human Growth and Development,
3. Career Development,
4. Helping Relationships,
5. Group Work,
6. Assessment,
7. Research and Program Evaluation.

Knowledge about relational aggression is supported by the CACREP standards (CACREP, 2001). For example, school counselors must be able to understand students according to their developmental stage, which may influence the form and function of relational aggression. School counselors should be effective helpers, not only for struggling students, but also in collaborating with teachers, school administrators, and parents. Social skill development or assertiveness training may be an effective intervention for relational aggression, both of which may take place in a group format. School counselors must be able to assess their school climate for relational aggression Finally, school counselors must be able to evaluate whether their intervention efforts are effective.

The American School Counselor Association

In addition to school counselors' education and training, it is also relevant to discuss how a large professional organization has defined roles and responsibilities for school counselors. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) now has more than 24,000 professional members (www.schoolcounselor.org). According to the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005), there are four themes of school counselors' roles and responsibilities: (1) Leadership, (2) Advocacy, (3) Collaboration and teaming, and (4) Systemic change. Addressing relational aggression aligns with these four themes of school counselors' roles and responsibilities.

First, *Leadership* was described as, "school counselors become effective leaders by collaborating with other professionals in the school to influence system-wide changes and implement school reforms" (ASCA, 2005, p. 24). School counselors could educate other school professionals about relational aggression.

Second, *Advocacy* by school counselors was described as, "to work proactively with students to remove barriers to learning" (ASCA, 2005, p. 24). By providing interventions for relationally aggressive incidents between students, school counselors may remove a significant barrier to student learning.

Third, school counselors demonstrate *Collaboration and teaming,* by building, "effective teams by encouraging genuine collaboration among all school staff to work toward the common goals of equity, access, and academic success for every student" (ASCA, 2005, p. 25). School counselors may promote policy changes to directly address relational aggression, and perhaps work with school officials to establish appropriate consequences for perpetrators of relational aggression.

Finally, school counselors provide *Systemic change* by being "uniquely positioned to assess the school for systemic barriers to academic success" (ASCA, 2005, p. 25). School counselors are trained to conduct needs assessments, and by assessing for relational aggression within their schools, school counselors may better serve the needs of their particular school

The ASCA National Model also provides "Ethical Standards for School Counselors", describing school counselors' responsibilities to students, to parents/guardians, to colleagues and professional associates, to the school and community, to self, and to the profession. These ethical standards also relate to the addressing of relational aggression. For a complete list and description of the "Ethical Standards for School Counselors" see the ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs, Second Edition (ASCA, 2005).

School Counselors' Responses to Relational Aggression

At the present time, only one study in the literature was found directly assessing school counselors and their training, understanding, and responses to relational aggression (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007). Jacobsen and Bauman (2007) furthered research by Craig et al. (2000) and Bauman and Del Rio (2006) by modifying vignettes to be applicable to school counselors. Arizona school counselors (n = 183) were surveyed on their responses to three bullying scenarios (physical, verbal, relational). When comparing school counselors' responses to physical, verbal, and relational bullying, school counselors as a group rated physical bullying as the most serious form of aggression. Further, school counselors were more likely to intervene in physical or verbal bullying than relational

bullying. However, when school counselors were compared according to whether they had received anti-bullying training, those school counselors who had received anti-bullying training rated relational aggression more serious than school counselors who had not received anti-bullying training. Female school counselors were also more likely to rate relational aggression as more serious than male school counselors.

With only one study in the literature directly assessing school counselor's responses to relational aggression, it is not plausible to generalize these findings to the entire population of school counselors. However, two studies in the literature examined preservice teachers' attitudes towards bullying and victimization (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Craig et al., 2000) that may serve as a comparison. Bauman and Del Rio (2006) provided six vignettes (physical bullying, verbal bullying, and relational bullying) to undergraduate preservice teachers ($n = 82$). Participants were asked to rate the seriousness of the incident, the likelihood of intervention, the degree of empathy they felt towards the victim, and possible interventions they may employ. Results indicated that preservice teachers considered relational bullying to be the least serious of the three types of bullying. Further, they reported less empathy, were less likely to intervene, and reported less severe interventions for relational bullying than for physical or verbal bullying. According to these results, preservice teachers may have similar attitudes as school counselors towards relational aggression.

Summary

In Chapter II the pertinent literature on relational aggression was reviewed, including developmental and gender differences, etiology, and consequences. Preliminary

intervention efforts for relational aggression were explored. Applicable literature concerning school counselors was reviewed, including CACREP program requirements and ASCA membership. Based on the literature review, it is important to further explore school counselors' attitudes towards relational aggression (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007). Further, given the discrepancies in the literature regarding gender differences in relational aggression, exploring whether gender influences school counselors' attitudes towards relationally aggressive incidents is also of benefit. Chapter III will provide research methodology used in the present study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This mixed methods study gathered both quantitative and qualitative data through a web-based survey on school counselors' current beliefs and attitudes towards, and interventions for relational aggression in schools. The following contains all elements of the methodology utilized in the present study. Methodology is organized as follows: (1) research questions, (2) research hypotheses, (3) research design, (4) data collection, and (5) data analysis.

Research Questions

The present study addressed the following eight research questions:

1. Will school counselors define overtly aggressive incidents as *aggression* at a significantly higher proportion than the proportion of relationally aggressive incidents defined as *aggression*?
2. Will school counselors define relationally aggressive incidents as *aggression* at a significantly higher proportion when the victim is female compared to the proportion of incidents defined as *aggression* when the victim is male?
3. Will school counselors rate overt aggression incidents at a significantly higher *degree of severity* than the *degree of severity* for relational aggression incidents?
4. Will school counselors report a significantly higher *degree of likelihood of intervention* in overt aggression incidents between students than the *degree*

of likelihood of intervention reported for relational aggression incidents between students?

5. What is the *degree of perceived preparedness* of school counselors to educate (a) students, (b) teachers/administrators, and (c) parents/guardians about relational aggression?
6. What interventions are school counselors using to address relational aggression and overt aggression?
7. To what *degree of importance* do school counselors feel it is for Counselor Education programs to specifically address and provide education about relational aggression to future school counselors?
8. Will school counselors with prior education and/or training report a significantly higher *degree of perceived preparedness* to intervene in relationally aggressive incidents between students than school counselors without prior education and/or training?

Research Hypotheses

Based on a review of the literature, the following hypotheses were made:

1. School counselors will define overt aggression incidents as *aggression* at a significantly higher proportion than the proportion of relational aggression incidents defined as *aggression.*
2. School counselors will define female relational aggression incidents as *aggression* at a significantly higher proportion than the proportion of male relational aggression incidents defined as *aggression.*

3. School counselors will rate overt aggression incidents at a significantly higher *degree of severity* than the *degree of severity* for relational aggression incidents.
4. School counselors will report a significantly higher *degree of likelihood of intervention* for overt aggression incidents than the *degree of likelihood of intervention* for relational aggression incidents.
5. School counselors will report feeling "Unprepared" to educate (a) students, (b) teachers/administrators, and (c) parents/guardians about relational aggression.
6. School counselors will employ similar interventions for relational aggression and overt forms of aggression.
7. School counselors will report it is "Very important" for Counselor Education programs to specifically address and provide education about relational aggression to future school counselors.
8. School counselors with prior education and/or training will report a significantly higher *degree of perceived preparedness* to intervene in relational aggression incidents between students than school counselors without prior education and/or training.

Research Design

The present study utilized a mixed methods research design. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), mixed methods research collects and analyzes a combination of quantitative and qualitative data in an attempt to better understand the research problem.

The present study met mixed method criteria by utilizing minimal qualitative methodology in the form of open-ended survey items (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). A concurrent nested model was used, meaning both quantitative and qualitative data were collected at one point in time, with the quantitative method being predominant (Creswell, 2003). The survey predominately featured quantitative survey items; however three qualitative open-ended items were embedded within to answer additional research questions that could not be asked quantitatively (Research Questions 6 and 7). Figure 1 provides a visual illustration of a concurrent nested model.

Figure 1. *Mixed Methods Concurrent Nested Strategy.*

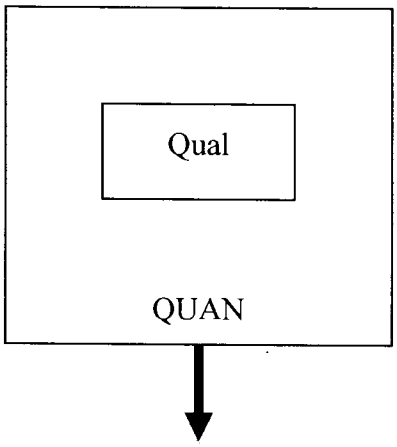

Figure 1 shows how the qualitative method is embedded within the quantitative method. The findings of both methods will provide a more comprehensive view of how school counselors respond to relational aggression in schools.

Participants

The population selected for the present study consisted of self-identified K-12 school counselors who used the Internet. A clearly defined sampling frame was impossible to define for the present study given the use of a networking site and advertisements by state counseling associations for distribution of the survey recruitment letter. Therefore, a nonprobability convenience sample was used.

Participants were screened by their responses to the first two survey items, indicating whether they (1) had licensure/certification from their state Department of Education as a school counselor and (2) were currently employed as a licensed/credentialed school counselor (Val Selm & Jankowski, 2006). Participants who did not meet these study criteria were not included within the final data set.

Participants were recruited using two methods (1) postings to ASCA Scene, a networking site sponsored by ASCA, and (2) advertisements by state counseling associations. First, According to the ASCA Scene homepage (http://schoolcounselor.collectivex.com) ASCA Scene is a social networking site for school counselors, counselor educators, and school counseling students. At the present time, there are approximately 4,600 members. Group members of ASCA Scene can participate in and post to different discussion forums organized by topic. The present study utilized the *Research Survey Requests* discussion group to inform potential participants of the survey. When a post is made to any discussion group, it is visible to all group members and included in a weekly e-mail blast to group members.

Second, attempts were made to contact state counseling association within all 50 states of the United States. State counseling associations were contacted by e-mail, using

an identical e-mail message asking for participation in the survey. State associations that replied and requested documentation of Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and/or advisor support were sent those documents as an e-mail attachment. States that agreed to participate were documented, along with state associations that declined or were unable to participate. States that agreed to disseminate the recruitment letter to their members included: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there were approximately 100,000 professional school counselors in the United States during the 2006-2007 academic school year (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2008). It was important to review the number of schools within the United States with computer and Internet access, assuming that participants may access the survey through computers at school. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, nearly 100% of public schools in the United States have Internet access (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005).

School counselors' use and the Internet. The issue of coverage is important to address when utilizing a web-based survey since access to the Internet is not universal (Schonlau, Fricker, & Elliott, 2002). Web-based surveys should only be used if a large proportion of the survey population has access to the Internet (Lazar & Preece, 1999). Therefore, studies exploring Internet use by school counselors have been reviewed (Carlson, Portman, & Bartlett, 2006; Owen, 1999; Van Horn & Myrick, 2001). Owen (1999) investigated the utilization of computers by Kentucky school counselors. Kentucky

school counselors (n = 92) responded to a 19-item survey gathering demographic information and experience, as well as availability and use of computers. Of the 92 school counselors who responded, only 2 reported no access to a computer. On a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Lacking all confidence*) to 7 (*Having total and complete confidence*), the mean level of confidence in using a computer was 4.86 (SD = 1.56). Further, there was a statistically significant difference in level of confidence between secondary and elementary level counselors, with counselors at the secondary level reporting greater confidence.

Carlson, Portman, and Bartlett (2006) surveyed school counselors in Colorado, Iowa, and New York (n = 381) regarding their comfort with and use of technology. Of the sample, 92.7% (n = 353) of school counselors were at least "somewhat comfortable" with computer usage. The studies by Owen (1999) and Carlson et al. (2006) explored the utilization of computers by school counselors for the purpose of service delivery. Therefore, these studies provide only a cautionary look at how school counselors may utilize computers for other purposes, such as responding to web-based surveys.

Recent studies have employed the use of the Internet when studying and distributing information to school counselors (Dollarhide & Lemberger, 2006; Mathai, 2002.). Dollarhide and Lemberger (2006) utilized various ASCA Listservs when surveying school counselors. Surveys were posted on ASCA Listservs, with two requests for participation, timed 10 days apart. The survey was open for a total of 30 days. Although inappropriate to calculate a response rate based on the nonprobability nature of the study, 210 school counselors responded to the survey.

Mathai (2002) also utilized a web-based survey for school counselors. The sample included self-identified school counselors who used the Internet. Targeted groups were members of counseling-related electronic mailing lists and state school counseling associations. Postings were made on the various electronic mailing lists and association e-mail newsletters to recruit participants. Interested individuals then contacted the researcher via e-mail and were added to a confidential electronic mailing list. The individuals added to this list served as the sample for the survey. This allowed the researcher to check for multiple submissions and to assess the number of interested individuals versus the individuals who actually completed the survey, determining a response rate based on the number of completed surveys. A total of 517 school counselors responded to the survey, with a response rate of 47%, meaning 1091 participants received the survey, and 517 participants were included in the final data set.

Protection of human subjects. The present study qualified for "Exempt Status" by the Institutional Review Board of North Dakota State University. Approval was obtained prior to study onset, on December 31, 2008.

Ethical standards set by the American Counselor Association (ACA, 2005) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2004) were followed in order to ensure protection of human subjects. Informed consent was obtained by providing the following information: (1) the purpose of the research, (2) a statement about risks associated with survey participation, (3) an explanation that participation is voluntary and participants are free to cease participation at any time, and (4) contact information of the primary investigator, co-investigator, and Institutional Review Board of North Dakota State University (Appendix A). Completion and submission of the survey implied informed

consent to use the data for research purposes. Participants indicated informed consent by clicking the "I'm finished. Store my answers." button at the end of the survey.

Instrumentation

Overview of Web-based Survey Use

The use of the Internet to collect survey information first began in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Schonlau et al., 2002). Since then, the use of the Internet as a tool for gathering data has increased. Dillman (2007) identified the following as contributions to the web-based survey revolution: (a) use of hotlinks (i.e., hyperlinks) as common practice; (b) increased skill and understanding of computer technology by consumers; (c) increased computer access, and (d) improved hardware and software capabilities. Not only are the technological capabilities of computers improving, but more individuals are gaining access to and understanding that technology as well.

Disadvantages of using web-based surveys have been identified in the literature. A significant disadvantage of utilizing web-based surveys is that no formal survey-process framework exists (Schonlau et al., 2002). Other limitations include difficulty attaining a random sample of participants (Schonlau et al., 2002; Truell, Bartlett, & Alexander, 2002), the subsequent inability to compute a response rate for convenience samples (Schonlau et al., 2002), computer access or literacy challenges (Schonlau et al., 2002), potential breaches of confidentiality (Duffy, 2002), self-selection by participants (Rea & Parker, 2005), and lack of interviewer involvement (Rea & Parker, 2005).

Advantages to using web-based surveys have also been identified. Advantages include a faster response rate than traditional mail-based surveys (Lazar & Preece, 1999;

Truell et al., 2002), lower cost (Lazar & Preece, 1999; Rea & Parker, 2005), lowered data entry time and less transcription error (Lazar & Preece, 1999; Schonlau et al., 2002), anonymity (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006), and convenience for the respondent (Van Selm & Jankowski, 2006).

Lazar and Preece (1999) highlighted the importance of following a methodology for successful implementation of a web-based survey. Therefore, the 12 steps of web-based survey methodology developed by Granello and Wheaton (2004) were followed. These steps guided the course of the present study, addressing all aspects of the research methodology from the population to survey development (Granello & Wheaton, 2004). Aspects of these 12 steps will be addressed throughout this chapter.

Instrument Development

The *School Counselors' Responses to Aggression in Schools* (Appendix B) survey was developed for the present study. The following describes the instrument development process as outlined by Lazar and Preece (1999): (1) Construct a preliminary paper survey; (2) Choose a web-based survey methodology for implementation; and (3) Adapt the paper survey into a web-based survey.

Developing a preliminary paper survey. First, a preliminary paper survey was developed according to the Tailored Design Method (TDM) as outlined by Dillman (2007). The TDM promotes respondent trust and perception of increased rewards and reduced costs through survey development procedures. The survey was developed following an extensive review of the literature, referencing established aggression measures (Craig et al., 2000; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Crick, 1996; Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007; Yoon & Kerber, 2003).

Permission was obtained from all applicable authors of previous survey instruments if their items were expanded and modified to be applicable for school counselors.

The survey used in this study was designed to

(a) assess school counselors' perceived preparedness to intervene in relationally aggressive situations between students,

(b) assess school counselors' perceived preparedness in educating about relational aggression to students, parents/guardians, or teachers,

(c) assess school counselors' likelihood of intervention in a relationally aggression situation, and

(d) explore the types of interventions school counselors would employ in overtly and relationally aggressive situations.

Perceived preparedness refers to those subjective feelings of preparedness to address a given variable. The survey predominately featured quantitative items; however, open-ended qualitative items were also included to address research questions that could not be asked in a quantitative format.

The survey instrument included demographic items (licensure/certification as school counselor by state Department of Education, current employment as licensed/credentialed school counselor, years of employment, level of education system employed, type of school employed, state of employment, master's degree in School Counseling/Counselor Education, graduation from CACREP accredited program, highest degree obtained, gender, age, ASCA membership), items about prior education and/or training (anti-bullying), items about overt aggression (prior education and/or training questions, perceived preparedness to intervene), and items about relational aggression

(prior education and/or training, school policies, severity of relational aggression, perceived preparedness to educate or intervene). In addition, the survey collected information about whether school counselors felt it was important to specifically address relational aggression in the education of future school counselors and what resources school counselors may find beneficial in learning more about relational aggression.

The survey instrument included 16 vignettes (Appendix C) portraying relational or overt aggression, featuring both male and female victims. Vignettes are described as, "short stories about hypothetical characters in specified circumstances, to whose situation the interviewee is invited to respond (Finch, 1987, p. 105). Hughes and Huby (2001) provided that vignettes have been used in social science research since the 1950s.

There are advantages and disadvantages to using vignettes in survey research. First, advantages of vignettes include the ability to have all participants respond to the same stimulus (Hughes & Huby, 2001), participants are not required to possess detailed knowledge of the topic (Hughes & Huby, 2001), and the posing of hypothetical situations happening to third parties distances participants, making responding less personally threatening (Finch, 1987). Vignettes also allow the researcher to control for variables such as age or gender by systematically varying these variables within the characters, enabling the researcher to identify which variable triggers a certain response (Finch, 1987). Barter and Reynold (1999) summarized the advantages of vignette use stating, "Vignettes provide a valuable technique for exploring people's perceptions, beliefs and meanings about specific situations" (p. 4).

Disadvantages of using vignettes include the need for construction of vignettes in which the story line and characters are believable and accurately represent the phenomenon

being studied (Finch, 1987; Wilks, 2004), difficulties with interpretation of responses (Finch, 1987; Wilks, 2004), and vignettes not being as effective as observation (Wilson & While, 1998). The present study took these advantages and disadvantages into account when creating vignettes for the survey.

The vignettes were constructed referencing three sources: (1) previously developed instruments found in the literature that measured overt aggression or relational aggression (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Craig et al., 2000; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Crick, 1996; Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007; Yoon & Kerber, 2003), (2) elements of relational aggression according to the definition provided by Crick et al. (1999), "damage (or threat of damage) to feelings of acceptance, friendship or group inclusion" (p. 77), and (3) elements of overt aggression, collectively referring to verbal and physical acts of aggression (e.g., hitting or pushing others, calling others mean names, or initiating fights) (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996).

Both overt and relational aggression elements were included within the vignettes based on a review of the literature and to allow for a comparison to be made between responses to the two types of aggression (Crick & Bigbee, 1998; Grotpeter & Crick, 1996; Prinstein et al., 2001). The decision was made to include both male and female victims in the vignettes through a review of the literature and by a recommendation of a leading researcher in the field, Dr. Nicki Crick at the University of Minnesota (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Crick & Bigbee, 1998; personal communication, April 23, 2008). Varying the type of aggression and gender allowed for comparison, as well as a more comprehensive view of how school counselors may respond to aggression.

A limitation of the survey instrument is that gender of the aggressor was not controlled for within vignettes. The decision to not control for gender of aggressor was

made based on a review of the literature. The literature is mixed as to whether cross-sex or same-sex aggression is more prevalent (Rodkin & Berger, 2008). Further, developmental changes in the targets of aggression have also been documented (Pepler & Craig, 2000). Therefore, gender of the aggressor was not specified within the vignettes.

The survey instrument included 16 vignettes that varied according to (a) the type of aggression depicted (relational, overt) and (b) the gender of the victim (male, female). The fully-crossed design resulted in four unique types of vignettes, with four vignettes of each type (male overt victim, male relational victim, female overt victim, female relational victim). All vignettes featured scenarios in which the school counselor did not witness the aggression, but rather learns of the aggression through various sources (e.g., parent phone calls, classroom needs assessments, student reports). This decision was made based on the nature of a school counselor's role within a school, which makes them unlikely to directly witness acts of aggression. Further, perpetrators are unlikely to self-report and relational aggression is often covert in nature (Cole, Cornell, & Sheras, 2006).

Each vignette was followed by three quantitative items asking participants whether they would define the incident as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*), and two 4-point Likert scale items asking participants to rate the degree of severity of the incident ranging from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 5 (*Very serious*), and the degree of likelihood of intervention for the incident ranging from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 5 (*Very likely*).

Choosing a methodology for web-based survey implementation. Second, Dillman (2007) provided 14 principles for constructing web-surveys that were followed during the survey development. These principles addressed issues such as question format and order, use of technology accessible to most operating systems, and limiting survey access to just

those people in the sample. The methodology developed by Granello and Wheaton (2004), as previously described, was also followed during survey development.

Turning the paper survey into a web-based survey. Third, the paper survey was turned into a web-based survey by the Group Decision Center at North Dakota State University. Several sources were referenced during the process of turning the paper survey into a web-based survey (Dillman, 2007; Granello & Wheaton, 2004; Lazar & Preece, 1999). Examples of important considerations during this process included ensuring the survey was accessible from all common browsers (Lazar & Preece, 1999), keeping the layout simple (Granello & Wheaton, 2004), providing specific instructions to participants as how to complete a particular question (e.g., clicking a drop-down menu or clicking all that apply) (Lazar & Preece, 1999).

Reliability of the Survey Instrument

A measure of internal consistency across the entire survey instrument was not appropriate due to each item of the survey measuring a different construct (i.e., definition as aggression, degree of severity, degree of likelihood of intervention).

A coefficient alpha was calculated for each Likert-scale item (degree of severity, degree of likelihood of intervention) following the vignettes for each aggression type to determine internal consistency (Creswell, 2005). The degree of severity question was scored on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*). Reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .82 for the eight overt aggression vignettes. Reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .88 for the eight relational aggression vignettes. The results of the reliability analysis indicate that

degree of severity scale for both overt and relational aggression vignettes have sufficient homogeneity.

The degree of likelihood of intervention question was scored on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*). Reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .83 for the eight overt aggression vignettes. Reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .87 for the eight relational aggression vignettes. The results of the reliability analysis indicate that degree of likelihood of intervention scale for both overt and relational aggression vignettes have sufficient homogeneity.

A limitation of the present study is that the reliability of the dichotomous item, definition as aggression (*No*, *Yes*) following each vignette, was not tested.

Validity of the Survey Instrument

A limitation of the present survey is the subjective quality and limited scope of the validity that was obtained. A pilot study of two preliminary versions (including vignettes, not including vignettes) of the survey instrument was conducted with a school counselor and a professor in the field of education. The testers were asked to provide feedback regarding survey length, clarity of questions, and content of vignettes. Based on their input, the decision was made to utilize the version of the survey that included the overt and relational aggression vignettes.

Content validity of the vignettes was established by a review of two experts in the study of relational aggression. According to Huck (2000), content validity refers to "...the degree to which the various items collectively cover the material that the instrument is

supposed to cover" (p. 101). Dr. Nicki Crick at the University of Minnesota, Director of the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota and Dr. Denise Lajimodiere from North Dakota State University reviewed and provided feedback on the survey vignettes. Based on their feedback, the vignettes were controlled for gender by adding a pairwise gendered vignette. Further, to serve as a comparison, overt aggression vignettes were also added to the survey.

Data Collection

The survey opened at 12:00 a.m. on January 28, 2009 and closed at 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, February 25, 2009. The survey was open for a total of 28 days.

Two methods were utilized in disseminating information about survey participation to potential respondents (1) postings to ASCA Scene, a networking site sponsored by ASCA, and (2) advertisements by state counseling associations. Potential participants received the recruitment letter through these varying means and accessed the survey through a hyperlink provided in the recruitment letter. For ease of interpretation, separate schedules are provided according to whether intended for ASCA Scene or state counseling associations.

First, the following is the schedule that was utilized for contacting potential participants through ASCA Scene:

1. First contact - The first contact recruitment letter (Appendix D) posted on ASCA Scene within the "Research Survey Requests" discussion forum as a new topic on the first day of data collection, January 28, 2009. This topic was also included within a weekly e-mail blast sent to all members of ASCA Scene, highlighting new discussion made within that week.

2. Second contact - The second contact recruitment letter (Appendix E) was posted on ASCA Scene, within the "Research Survey Requests" discussion forum one week into the survey window, February 4, 2009. This topic was included within a weekly e-mail blast sent to all members of ASCA Scene.
3. Third contact – The third contact recruitment letter (Appendix F) was posted on ASCA Scene, within the "Research Survey Requests" discussion forum three days prior to the survey closing, February 16, 2009. This topic was included within a weekly e-mail blast sent to all members of ASCA Scene.
4. Fourth contact – The fourth contact recruitment letter (Appendix G) was posted on ASCA Scene within the "Research Survey Requests" discussion forum, informing of the survey extension. The decision was made three days prior to the original survey closing to extend the data collection period for one week, taking the number of responses into account, as well as acknowledging the Federal holiday that took place during the data collection period. This topic was included within a weekly e-mail blast sent to all members of ASCA Scene.
5. Fifth contact - The fifth contact (Appendix H), a note of appreciation, was posted to ASCA Scene, within the "Research Survey Requests" discussion forum, thanking participants for contribution to the survey at the end of the data collection period.

There were five total contacts made through ASCA Scene to potential participants.

Second, the schedule for contacting state associations was altered from that of the ASCA Scene schedule due to the inability to communicate directly with potential participants. Rather, communication was through representatives of the state associations.

Therefore, contacts were reduced in order to ensure that all associations contacted members equally. The following is the schedule for contacting participants through state counseling associations:

1. First contact - State school counseling and counseling associations were contacted via e-mail to participate in the study two weeks before the survey opened, January 9-11, 2009. State counseling associations were contacted by e-mail, using an identical e-mail message (Appendix I), asking for participation in the survey. State associations that requested documentation of IRB approval and/or advisor support were sent those documents as an e-mail attachment. Associations that agreed to participate were sent the first contact recruitment letter (Appendix D) as an e-mail attachment. State associations dispersed the recruitment letter in varying methods, such as posting to association websites, including within association newsletters, or e-mailing to membership electronic mailing lists.

   All state associations were instructed to use the same recruitment letter and to not alter it in any way. However, it is important to acknowledge that it cannot be definitively confirmed how or whether states disseminated the information. Further, state associations used the recruitment letter according to their necessary timeline to distribute to members (i.e., those that needed to post to a web-page were given the recruitment letter immediately to ensure time to post, while those that sent the recruitment letter out via listserv were sent the letter three days prior to the survey opening to ensure participants would not attempt to complete the survey prior before study initiation).

State associations that had not responded to the initial e-mail were contacted a second time one-week later, requesting survey participation. State counseling associations that replied to the second contact were sent the recruitment letter immediately given that the survey was open for participation.

2. Second contact - A second contact (Appendix J) was made to state associations informing of the survey extension. The decision was made three days prior to the original survey closing to extend the data collection period for one week, taking the number of responses into account, as well as acknowledging the Federal holiday that took place during the data collection period. Contact was again made to all state associations (both those who had previously agreed to participate, as well as those who had not yet responded to requests) to inform of the survey extension. A request was made for state associations to inform their members of the survey extension.
3. Third contact - A third contact (Appendix H), a note of appreciation, was sent via e-mail to participating associations at the end of the data collection period.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was returned in coded format due to the electronic nature of the survey, reducing the likelihood of transcription error and was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Open-ended qualitative survey items were post-coded to allow for frequency counts (de Vaus, 2002). A total of 370 completed surveys were used in the data analysis. The data analysis employed both descriptive and inferential statistics. The following describes data analysis procedures:

1. Univariate descriptive statistics were calculated for demographic variables to provide information about study participants.
2. For Research Question 1, frequencies and percentages were tabulated to indicate which vignettes were defined as aggression for each of the 16 vignettes. A Pearson Chi-square analysis was then conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the proportion of collapsed overt aggression vignettes defined as aggression and the proportion of collapsed relational aggression vignettes defined as aggression.
3. For Research Question 2, frequencies and percentages were tabulated to indicate which vignettes were defined as aggression for each of the 16 vignettes. A Pearson Chi-square analysis was conducted for each pairwise vignette (varied by gender) to determine if there was a significant difference between the proportion of female and male relational vignettes defined as aggression.

   Subsequent Pearson Chi-square analyses were then conducted on the pairwise overt aggression vignettes and on collapsed aggression vignettes to further explore the relationship between gender and definition as aggression.
4. For Research Question 3, an independent *t*-test was conducted to assess whether there was a significant difference between the mean degree of severity for overt vignettes and the mean degree of severity for relational aggression vignettes.
5. For Research Question 4, an independent *t*-test was used to assess whether there was a significant difference in mean degree of likelihood of intervention for overt aggression vignettes and mean degree of likelihood of intervention for relational aggression vignettes.

6. For Research Question 5, frequencies and percentages, as well as measures of central tendency (mode, median, mean) were calculated for the degree of perceived preparedness to educate about relational aggression item for (1) students, (2) teachers/administrators, and (3) parents/guardians. A subsequent one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of prior education and/or training on the degree of perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression.
7. For Research Question 6, open-ended qualitative data were quantified (Creswell, 2003). All data were examined and a coding scheme was developed based on the responses provided by participants (de Vaus, 2002). Frequency counts were obtained by counting the number of times the codes occurred in the data. The quantified data allowed for a comparison between the interventions provided for overt aggression and relational aggression.
8. For Research Question 7, frequencies and percentages, as well as measures of central tendency (mode, median, and mean) were calculated for the degree of importance for counselor education programs to specifically address and educate future school counselors about relational aggression item. Further, qualitative open-ended data were quantified according to the same process described in Research Question 6.
9. For Research Question 8, a one-way within subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of prior education and/or training on the degree of perceived preparedness to intervene in relationally aggressive situations between students. Based on responses to survey items 29 (overt aggression training) and 33 (relational

aggression training) respondents were grouped according to training (1 = *No Prior Training*, 2 = *Overt Aggression Only*, 3 = *Relational Aggression Only*, and 4 = *Both Overt and Relational Aggression.*

10. Descriptive statistics were calculated for survey items exploring sources of overt aggression and relational aggression training, incidences of relational aggression in schools and the subsequent severity ratings of relational aggression within schools, school policies on relational aggression, and desired relational aggression resources.

The results of this data-analysis are presented in Chapter IV.

Summary

The *School Counselors' Responses to Aggression in Schools* web-based survey was developed to (a) assess school counselors' perceived preparedness to intervene in relationally aggressive situations between students, (b) assess school counselors' perceived preparedness to educate students, teachers/administrators, and parents/guardians about relational aggression, (c) assess school counselors' likelihood of providing interventions for relationally aggressive situations, and (d) explore the types of interventions school counselors would employ in overtly and relationally aggressive situations.

The survey was developed based on an extensive review of the literature, referencing existing measures of aggression (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Craig et al., 2000; Crick, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007; Yoon & Kerber, 2003). Web-based survey methodology was employed while surveying self-identified K-12 school counselors who use the Internet (Dillman, 2007; Granello & Wheaton, 2004; Lazar & Preece, 1999). Participants were recruited by postings made to ASCA Scene and through

advertisements by state counseling associations. Participants were included within the final data set if they (1) had licensure/certification as a school counselor by their state Department of Education, (2) were currently employed as licensed/credentialed school counselor, and (3) clicked they "I'm finished. Store my answers." button at the end of the survey. The survey was open for a total of 28 days.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This mixed methods study collected data on school counselors' responses to aggression in schools. A total of 370 participants were included within the final data set. To be included in the final data set, participants needed to (1) be licensed/certified as a school counselor by their state Department of Education, (2) be currently employed as a licensed/credentialed school counselor as defined by their state Department of Education, and (3) must have indicated informed consent by clicking the "I'm finished. Store my answers." button at the end of the survey. A rudimentary response rate of 80.3% was calculated by dividing the total number of surveys completed by eligible participants (n = 370) by the total number of time eligible participants access the survey (n = 461) (Val Selm & Jankowski, 2006).

This chapter reports the survey findings, beginning with demographic information about the study participants. Next, results are presented for each research question and hypothesis.

Demographics

A descriptive analysis of general demographic information about participants was conducted. Survey Questions 1 and 2 served as screening questions. If respondents answered "No" to either of these screening questions, the data from those participants were not included in the final data set. Therefore, 100% (n = 370) of respondents included in the final data set had (1) licensure/certification as a school counselor from their state of

Department of Education, and (2) were currently employed as a licensed/credentialed school counselor as defined by their state Department of Education.

Survey Question 3 asked about the number of years the participant had worked as a licensed/credentialed school counselor. Table 1 illustrates years of employment.

Table 1. *Frequencies and Percentages of Years Worked as a School Counselor*

Group	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1-5 years	127	34.3	34.3
6-10 years	90	24.3	58.6
11-15 years	67	18.1	76.8
16-20 years	42	11.4	88.1
21-25 years	27	7.3	95.4
More than 26 years	17	4.6	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table 1 shows 58.6% (n = 217) of participants work as a licensed/credentialed school counselor for less than 10 years, with most participants (n = 127, 34.4%) in the survey reporting between 1-5 years of employment, followed by 6-10 years of employment (n = 90, 24.3%), 11-15 years (n = 67, 18.1%), 16-20 years (n = 42, 11.4%), 21-25 years (n = 27, 7.3%) and more than 26 years of experience (n = 17, 4.6%).

Survey Question 4 inquired about level of the education system where participants were employed. Participants were given the option of choosing all that apply, therefore the total number of responses is greater than the total number of participants (n = 370). Frequencies and percentages were tabulated according to the total number of responses for this item (n = 494). Table 2 illustrates level of education system.

Table 2. *Frequencies and Percentages of Education Levels*

Group	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Elementary (K-5)	196	39.7	39.7
Middle School (6-8)	166	33.6	73.3
High School (9-12)	132	26.7	100.0
Total	494	100.0	

Table 2 shows that distribution across the three education levels was fairly even, with 39.7% (n = 196) of participants being at the elementary level, followed by middle (n = 166, 33.6%), and high school (n = 132, 26.7%) levels.

Survey Question 5 looked at the type of school where participants were employed. Table 3 shows frequencies and percentages of school type.

Table 3. *Frequencies and Percentages of Type of School*

Group	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Public	345	93.2	93.2
Private	10	2.7	95.9
Charter	6	1.6	97.6
Other	9	2.4	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table 3 shows the highest number of responses came from the public school system (n = 345, 93.2%), with private (n = 10, 2.7%), charter (n = 6, 1.6%), and other types of schools (n = 9, 2.4%) following. Other types of schools listed included: BOCES, vocational, BIA, alternative, Deaf School, Montessori program, university, and residential.

Survey Question 6 inquired about state of employment. Twenty-eight states were represented in the survey. Table 4 illustrates state of employment. See Appendix K for Figure 2 of states represented in the sample.

Table 4. *Frequencies and Percentages of State of Employment*

State	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Alabama	49	13.2	13.2
Alaska	3	.8	14.0
Arkansas	49	13.2	27.2
Georgia	3	.8	28.0
Illinois	1	.3	28.3
Iowa	13	3.5	31.8
Kansas	1	.3	32.1
Louisiana	27	7.3	39.4

Table 4. (continued)

Maryland	26	7.0	46.4
Michigan	4	1.1	47.5
Mississippi	1	.3	47.8
Missouri	2	.5	48.3
Montana	6	1.6	49.9
Nebraska	1	.3	50.2
New Hampshire	8	2.2	52.4
New York	87	23.5	75.9
North Carolina	45	12.2	88.1
North Dakota	27	7.3	95.4
Ohio	1	.3	95.7
Pennsylvania	2	.5	96.2
South Carolina	1	.3	96.5
Tennessee	2	.5	97.0
Utah	5	1.4	98.4
Virginia	1	.3	98.8
Wyoming	2	.5	99.2
Missing	3	.8	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table 4 shows the greatest number of participants were located in New York (n = 87, 23.5 %), Alabama (n = 49, 13.2 %), and Arkansas (n = 49, 13.2 %). Several states had only one respondent (Illinois, Kansas, Mississippi, Nebraska, Ohio, South Caroline, Virginia). No responses were obtained from the following states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Survey Question 7 asked participants to indicate whether they had obtained a master's degree in either School Counseling or Counselor Education. Table 5 illustrates master's degree in School Counseling or Counselor Education.

Table 5. *Frequencies and Percentages of Master's Degree*

Group	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
No	11	3.0	3.0
Yes	356	96.2	99.2
Missing	3	.8	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table 5 shows 96.2% (n = 356) of participants had obtained a master's degree in School Counseling or Counselor Education, followed by those participants who had not (n = 11, 3.0%).

If participants indicated they had obtained a master's degree in School Counseling or Counselor Education, they were then prompted to indicate whether their program was accredited by CACREP. Table 6 illustrates those participants who graduated from a CACREP program.

Table 6. *Frequencies and Percentages of CACREP Program*

Group	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
No	69	18.6	19.5
Yes	284	76.8	100.0
Missing	17	4.6	
Total	370	100.0	

Table 6 shows 76.8% (n = 284) of participants indicated they had graduated from a CACREP accredited program, with a smaller frequency of participants indicating they had not graduated from a CACREP accredited program (n = 69, 19.5%). Participants were not given an "Unsure" option for this item. This may have contributed to the missing responses (n = 17, 4.6%), if participants were unsure of CACREP accreditation.

Survey Question 8 asked participants to indicate their highest degree of education obtained. Table 7 illustrates highest degree of education obtained by participants.

Table 7. *Frequencies and Percentages of Highest Degree of Education Obtained*

Group	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Doctorate	13	3.5	3.5
Specialist	30	8.1	11.6
Master's	306	82.7	94.3
Bachelor's	2	.5	94.8
Other	16	4.3	99.9
Missing	3	.8	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table 7 shows the most frequent response was that of a master's degree (n = 306, 83.4%), followed by Specialist (n = 28, 7.6%), Doctorate (n = 12, 3.3%), Bachelor's (n = 2, .5%), and Other (n = 19, 5.2%) degrees. Other highest degrees listed by respondents included: DBL master's, Ed. S., master's plus 48 hours, CAS, Professional Diploma, CAGS, Med & LPC, Post Master's Certificate, 2 Master's Degrees, Master's plus 30, ABD, two master's, AA, Professional Diploma after Master's.

Survey Question 9 inquired about gender of participant. Table 8 provides frequencies and percentages of participants' gender.

Table 8. *Frequencies and Percentages of Gender of Participants*

Group	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Female	323	87.3	87.3
Male	42	11.4	98.7
Prefer not to answer	2	.5	99.2
Missing	3	.8	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table 8 shows the majority of participants were female (n = 323, 88%), followed by male (n = 42, 11.4%), and those that preferred not to identify gender (n = 2, 0.5%).

Survey Question 10 asked participants to indicate their age. Table 9 illustrates age of participants.

Table 9. *Frequencies and Percentages of Age of Participants*

Age	Frequency	Percent age	Cumulative Percentage
24	2	.5	.5
25	4	1.1	1.6
26	7	1.9	3.5
27	9	2.4	5.9
28	8	2.2	8.1
29	8	2.2	10.3
30	10	2.7	13.0
31	13	3.5	16.5
32	9	2.4	18.9
33	10	2.7	21.6
34	15	4.1	25.7
35	7	1.9	27.6
36	7	1.9	29.5
37	16	4.3	33.8
38	7	1.9	35.7
39	9	2.4	38.1
40	5	1.4	39.5
41	12	3.2	42.7
42	7	1.9	44.6
43	3	.8	45.4
44	8	2.2	47.6
45	11	3.0	50.6
46	8	2.2	52.8
47	14	3.8	56.6
48	8	2.2	58.8
49	8	2.2	61.0
50	15	4.1	65.1
51	12	3.2	68.3
52	13	3.5	71.8
53	6	1.6	73.4
54	9	2.4	75.8
55	8	2.2	78.0
56	11	3.0	81.0
57	9	2.4	83.4
58	12	3.2	86.6
59	9	2.4	89.0
60	7	1.9	90.9
61	9	2.4	93.3
62	3	.8	94.1
63	3	.8	94.9
64	5	1.4	96.3
65	4	1.4	97.7
67	1	.3	98.0
Missing	8	2.2	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table 9 shows the age of respondents ranged from 24 to 67 years of age. The mean age reported was 44.3 years, median was 45 years, and mode was 37 years.

Survey Question 11 inquired about membership to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). Table 10 shows frequencies and percentages of ASCA membership.

Table 10. *Frequencies and Percentages of ASCA Membership*

Group	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
No	155	41.9	41.9
Yes	212	57.3	99.2
Missing	3	.8	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

As Table 10 shows, 57.3% (n = 212) of participants indicated they were members of ASCA, with the remaining participants indicating they were not members of ASCA (n = 155, 41.9%).

Survey Question 12 asked participants to indicate whether they had received prior education and/or training on anti-bullying. Table 11 illustrates frequency of anti-bullying education and/or training.

Table 11. *Frequencies and Percentages of Anti-bullying Education and/or Training*

Group	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
No	35	9.5	9.5
Yes	332	89.7	99.2
Missing	3	.8	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table 11 shows 90.5% (n = 332) of participants had received prior education and/or training on anti-bullying, followed by those respondents who indicated they had not received anti-bullying education and/or training (n = 35, 9.5%).

Further, participants were asked to indicate the source(s) of the education and/or training on anti-bullying. There were 926 responses to this item. Table 12 provides frequencies and percentages of source(s) of anti-bullying education and/or training.

Table 12. *Frequencies and Percentages of Source(s) of Anti-bullying Education and/or Training*

Group	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Graduate coursework	96	10.4	10.4
Workshop	265	28.6	39.0
Conference	247	26.7	65.7
In-Service	184	19.9	85.6
Text books	105	11.3	96.9
Other	29	3.1	100.0
Total	926	100.0	

Table 12 shows that workshops (n = 265, 28.6%) and conferences (n = 247, 26.7 %) were the most frequent responses. Other sources of anti-bullying education and/or training provided by participants included: published research, internet searches, professional publications, Montana Behavior Institute, videos, Committee for Children, Second Step/Steps to Respect Train the Trainer, professional magazines, dispute settlement center, master's paper research, books about bullying, school system, Olweus program, and personal research.

Survey questions 29 and 33 asked participants to indicate whether they had received education and/or training in overt aggression and relational aggression. Based on responses to these survey items, participants were grouped into four groups (*No Training, Overt Aggression Only, Relational Aggression Only, Both Overt and Relational Aggression*). Table 13 illustrates frequencies and percentages of participants with prior education and/or training.

Table 13. *Frequencies and Percentages of Prior Education and/or Training*

Education and/or Training Group	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
No Training	52	14.1	14.1
Overt Aggression Only	45	12.2	26.3
Relational Aggression Only	13	3.5	29.8
Both Overt and Relational Aggression	259	70.0	99.8
Missing	1	0.3	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table 13 shows that 70% (n = 259) of participants had prior education and/or training in both overt and relational aggression, followed by participants with no prior training (n = 52, 14.1%), only overt aggression training (n = 45, 12.2%), and only relational aggression training (n = 13, 3.5%).

Relational Aggression and Schools

Survey Question 31 asked participants to indicate whether they had witnessed incidences or heard reports of relational aggression within their schools. Table 14 shows frequencies and percentages of relational aggression in schools.

Table 14. *Frequencies and Percentages of Relational Aggression in Schools*

Aggression in Schools	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
No	6	1.6	1.6
Yes	364	98.4	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table 14 shows 98.4% (n = 364) of participants indicated, "Yes", they had seen incidences or heard reports of relational aggression in their schools.

Further, respondents were asked to rate how severe of a problem they thought relational aggression was within their school in Survey Question 31.a. Tables 15 illustrates

problem ratings of relational aggression in schools. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*No problem*) to 5 (*Severe problem*).

Table 15. *Frequencies and Percentages of Problem of Relational Aggression in Schools*

Problem	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
No problem	1	.3	.3
Mild problem	106	28.6	28.9
Moderate problem	211	57.0	85.9
Severe problem	39	10.5	96.4
Missing	13	3.5	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

As Table 15 shows, 59.5% (n = 213) of participants reported relational aggression was a "Moderate problem" within their school. A mean problem rating of 2.81 (SD = .62) was found.

Survey Question 32 asked participants to indicate whether their school had policies to address relational aggression that were similar to policies for overt aggression. Table 16 illustrates school policies to address relational aggression.

Table 16. *Frequencies and Percentages of School Policies to Address Relational Aggression*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
No	128	34.6	34.6
Yes	172	46.5	81.1
Unsure	69	18.6	99.7
Missing	1	.3	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table 16 shows most participants (n = 172, 46.5%) indicated, "Yes", their schools did have policies in place to address relational aggression. However, over half of respondents indicated, "No", their school did not have policies in place to address

relational aggression (n = 128, 34.6%) or that they were "Unsure" (n = 69, 18.6%) whether such policies were in place within their schools.

Survey Questions 29.a. and 33.a. asked participants to identify the source(s) of education and/or training on overt aggression and relational aggression. Tables 17 and 18 illustrate source(s) of education and/or training on overt aggression and relational aggression. Participants were permitted to choose all applicable sources.

Table 17. *Source(s) of Overt Aggression Education and/or Training*

Source	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Graduate coursework	99	12.3	12.3
Workshop	231	28.8	41.1
Conference	215	26.9	68.0
In-service	145	18.1	86.1
Textbooks	90	11.2	97.3
Other	22	2.7	100.0
Total	802	100.0	

Table 18. *Source(s) of Relational Aggression Education and/or Training*

Source	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Graduate coursework	92	14.1	14.1
Workshop	204	31.3	45.4
Conference	194	30.0	75.4
In-service	125	19.2	19.2
Other	36	5.5	100.0
Total	651	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Tables 17 and 18 show the most frequently cited source of education and/or training on overt aggression and relational aggression was workshops (overt aggression n = 231, 28.8%, relational aggression n = 204, 31.3%).

Survey Question 39 asked participants to identify what relational aggression resources would be beneficial for them as school counselors. Participants were permitted to choose all that apply. There were 1405 responses to this item. Table 19 illustrates desired relational aggression resources.

Table 19. *Frequencies and Percentages of Relational Aggression Resources*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Graduate course	102	7.3	7.3
Workshop or conference training	301	21.4	28.7
Research-based school curriculum	187	13.3	42.0
Speaker	181	13.0	55.0
Classroom guidance lessons	259	18.4	73.4
Books	163	11.6	85.0
Video VHS/DVD	203	14.4	99.4
Other	9	.6	100.0
Total	1405	100.0	

Table 19 shows the largest responses were for workshops/conference trainings (n = 301, 21.4%), classroom guidance lessons (n = 259, 18.4%), and Video VHS/DVD (n = 203, 14.4%).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following presents results for each of the eight research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question 1

Will school counselors define overtly aggressive incidents as aggression at a significantly higher proportion than the proportion of relationally aggressive incidents defined as aggression?

Four vignettes were constructed for each type of aggression (overt, relational). To control for gender, each vignette was used twice, with the only difference being gender of the victim. This resulted in 16 fully-crossed vignettes. Survey questions 13.a. through 28.a. were asked following each vignette to explore the first research question. An independent samples Chi-square analysis was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in the proportion of overt aggression incidents defined as aggression compared to the proportion of relational aggression incidents defined as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*). The vignettes were collapsed across gender, however a breakdown of results for each vignette is provided in Appendix L. Table 20 shows the results of the independent samples Chi-square analysis.

Table 20. *Chi-square Analysis, Frequencies, and Percentages of Definition as Aggression by Aggression Type*

Aggression Type	No Aggression Frequency (%)	Yes Aggression Frequency (%)	Total
Overt Aggression			
Observed Count	131 (4.5%)	2793 (95.5 %)	2924
Expected Count	576.5	2347.5	2924.0
Relational Aggression			
Observed Count	1021 (35.0 %)	1898 (65.0%)	2919
Expected Count	575.5	2343.5	2919.0
Total			
Observed Count	1152 (19.7 %)	4691 (80.3 %)	5843
Expected Count	1152.0	4691.0	5843.0

Of the responses to overt aggression incidents, 95.5% (n = 2793) of participants indicated, "Yes", they would define the incident as aggression. Of the responses to relational aggression incidents, 65.0% (n = 1898) of participants indicated, "Yes", they would define the incident as aggression. The Pearson Chi-square analysis determined there was a significant difference between proportion of overt aggression incidents defined as

aggression and the proportion of relational aggression incidents defined as aggression [χ^2 (1, N =5843) = 858.341, p = .001].

Based on the results obtained from the Pearson Chi-square analysis, Research Hypothesis 1 (*School counselors will define overt aggression incidents as aggression at a significantly higher proportion than relational aggression incidents)* was supported.

Research Question 2

Will school counselors define relationally aggressive incidents as aggression at a significantly higher proportion when the victim is female compared to the proportion of incidents defined as aggression when the victim is male?

Four vignettes were constructed for each type of aggression (overt, relational), with each having a male and female version in which only the gender of the victim was changed.

An independent samples Chi-square analysis was used to explore the relationship between gender (male, female) and whether participants defined an incident as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*) for all vignettes. Individual results by vignette are reported in Appendix M. Table 21 provides an overview of frequencies and percentages of definition as aggression for each of the 16 paired vignettes.

Table 21. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Paired Vignettes by Gender*

Vignette Number	Aggression Type	Gender	No Aggression Frequency	(%)	Yes Aggression Frequency	(%)
1	Overt	Male	64	(17.3%)	304	(82.2%)
16	Overt	Female	55	(14.9%)	310	(83.8%)
7	Overt	Male	1	(.3%)	363	(98.1%)
3	Overt	Female	1	(.3%)	367	(99.2%)

Table 21. (continued)

5	Overt	Male	4	(1.1%)	359	(97.0%)
8	Overt	Female	1	(.3%)	364	(98.4%)
14	Overt	Male	3	(.8%)	363	(98.1%)
15	Overt	Female	2	(.5%)	363	(98.1%)
13	Relational	Male	213	(57.6%)	149	(40.3%)
2	Relational	Female	221	(59.7%)	143	(38.6)
4	Relational	Male	141	(38.1%)	224	(60.5%)
9	Relational	Female	124	(33.5%)	242	(65.4%)
11	Relational	Male	68	(18.4%)	298	(80.5%)
6	Relational	Female	50	(13.5%)	316	(85.4%)
12	Relational	Male	104	(28.1%)	262	(70.8%)
10	Relational	Female	100	(27.0%)	264	(71.4%)

Relational aggression vignettes. A Pearson Chi-square analysis was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the proportion of male and female relational aggression incidents that were defined as aggression by participants, collapsing across all relational aggression vignettes. Table 22 shows the results of the Pearson Chi-square analysis.

Table 22. *Chi-square Analysis, Frequencies, and Percentages of Definition as Aggression by Gender for Collapsed Relational Aggression Vignettes*

Gender	No Aggression Frequency (%)	Yes Aggression Frequency (%)	Total
Male			
Observed Count	526 (36.1 %)	933 (63.9 %)	1459
Expected Count	510.3	948.7	1459.0
Female			
Observed Count	495 (33.9 %)	965 (66.1 %)	1460
Expected Count	510.7	949.3	1460.0
Total			
Observed Count	1021 (35.0 %)	1898 (65.0 %)	2919
Expected	1021.0	1898.0	2919.0

Table 22 shows 63.9% (n = 933) of participants indicated, "Yes", they would define male versions of relational aggression vignettes as aggression. Similar results were found for the female versions of relational aggression vignettes, with most participants (n = 965, 66.1%) indicating, "Yes", they would define the incident as aggression.

The Pearson Chi-square analysis determined there was not a significant difference between the proportion of male relational aggression incidents defined as aggression and the proportion of female relational aggression incidents defined as aggression [χ^2 (1, N =2919) = 1.480, p = .224]. Overall, 65.0% of respondents indicated, "Yes", they would define both male and female versions of relational aggression vignettes as aggression.

Based on the results obtained from the Pearson chi-square analysis, Research Hypothesis 2 (*School counselors will define female relational aggression incidents as aggression at a significantly higher proportion than the proportion of male relational aggression incidents defined as aggression)* was not supported.

To put these results into context, subsequent Pearson Chi-square analyses were conducted for paired overt aggression vignettes and for all collapsed vignettes. Those results are presented as follows.

Overt aggression vignettes. An independent Chi-square analysis was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the proportion of male overt aggression incidents defined as aggression and the proportion of female overt aggression incidents defined as aggression. Data were collapsed across all overt aggression vignettes. Table 23 shows the results of the Chi-square analysis.

Table 23. *Chi-square Analysis, Frequencies, and Percentages of Definition as Aggression by Gender for Collapsed Overt Aggression Vignettes*

Gender	No Aggression Frequency (%)	Yes Aggression Frequency (%)	Total
Male			
Observed Count	72 (4.9 %)	1389 (95.1 %)	1461
Expected Count	65.5	1395.5	1461.0
Female			
Observed Count	59 (4.0 %)	1404 (96.0 %)	1463
Expected Count	65.5	1397.5	1463.0
Total			
Observed Count	131 (4.5 %)	2793 (99.3 %)	2924
Expected	131.0	2793.0	2924.0

Table 23 shows of the responses to male versions of overt aggression vignettes, most participants (n = 1389, 95.1 %) indicated, "Yes", they would define the incidents as aggression. Similar results were found for the female versions of overt aggression vignettes, with most participants (n =1404, 96.0 %) indicating, "Yes", they would define the incidents as aggression.

The Pearson Chi-square analysis determined there was no significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents defined as aggression [χ^2 (1, N =2924) = 1.369, p = .242]. Overall, 99.3% of respondents indicated, "Yes", they would define both male and female versions of overt aggression vignettes as aggression.

Collapsed overt and relational aggression vignettes. All overt aggression vignettes and relational aggression vignettes were collapsed to further explore Research Question 2. A Pearson Chi-square analysis was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the proportion of male incidents defined as aggression and the proportion of female incidents defined as aggression across both types of aggression (overt, relational). Table 24 shows the results of the Pearson Chi-square analysis.

Table 24. *Chi-square Analysis, Frequencies, and Percentages of Definition as Aggression by Gender for Collapsed Vignettes*

Gender	No Aggression Frequency (%)	Yes Aggression Frequency (%)	Total
Male			
Observed Count	598 (20.5 %)	2322 (79.5 %)	2920
Expected Count	575.7	2333.3	2920.0
Female			
Observed Count	554 (19.0 %)	2369 (81.0 %)	2923
Expected Count	576.3	2346.7	2923.0
Total			
Observed Count	1152 (19.7 %)	4691 (80.3 %)	5843
Expected	1152.0	4691.0	5843.0

The Pearson Chi-square analysis determined there was not a significant difference between the proportion of collapsed male incidents defined as aggression and the proportion of collapsed female incidents defined as aggression [χ^2 (1, N =5843) = 2.150, p = .143]. Overall, 80.3% of both male and female incidents were defined as aggression.

The results of Pearson Chi-square analyses indicated that there was not a significant difference between female and male incidents defined as aggression for relational aggression incidents, overt aggression incidents, and collapsed aggression incidents.

Research Question 3

Will school counselors rate overt aggression incidents at a significantly higher degree of severity than the degree of severity for relational aggression incidents?

For Research Question 3, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean degree of severity for overt aggression incidents to the mean degree of severity for relational aggression incidents. Incidents were collapsed across gender. Table 25 shows the means and standard deviations of degree of severity by aggression type. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table 25. *Means and Standard Deviations (SD) for Degree of Severity of Incident by Aggression Type*

Aggression Type	Mean	*n*	SD
Overt Aggression	3.39	2926	.74
Relational Aggression	2.37	2928	.80

Table 25 shows participants indicated a mean degree of severity rating of 3.39 (n = 2926) for overt aggression incidents. Participants indicated a mean degree of severity rating of 2.37 (n = 2928) for relational aggression incidents.

Before proceeding with further analysis, the researcher tested the Assumption of Homogeneity of Variance. Using the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, it was determined that this assumption was not violated. An independent samples t-test was performed comparing the mean degree of severity for overt aggression incidents (M = 3.39, SD = .74) with that of degree of severity for relational aggression incidents (M = 2.37, SD = .80). The alpha level was .05. When determining the significance level, the researcher used the results from Equal Variances Assumed. The results indicated there was a significant difference between the two samples, [t (5852) = 50.94, p = .001].

Based on the results obtained from the independent samples t-test, Research Hypothesis 3 (*School counselors will rate overt forms of aggression at a significantly higher degree of severity than the degree of severity for relational forms of aggression)* was supported.

Research Question 4

Will school counselors report a significantly higher degree of likelihood of intervention in overt aggression incidents between students than the degree of likelihood of intervention reported for relational aggression incidents between students?

For Research Question 4, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted comparing mean degree of likelihood of intervention for overt aggression incidents and mean degree of likelihood of intervention for relational aggression incidents. Situations were collapsed across gender. Table 26 shows the means and standard deviations of likelihood of intervention by aggression type. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table 26. *Means and Standard Deviations (SD) for Degree of Likelihood of Intervention by Aggression Type*

Type of Aggression	Mean	*n*	SD
Overt Aggression	3.69	2926	.51
Relational Aggression	2.94	2923	.80

Before proceeding with further analysis, the researcher tested the Assumption of Homogeneity of Variance. Using the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, it was determined that this assumption was violated. An independent samples *t*-test was performed comparing the mean degree of likelihood of intervention for overt aggression incidents ($M = 3.39$, $SD = .74$) with that of degree of likelihood of intervention for relational aggression incidents ($M = 2.37$, $SD = .80$). The alpha level was .05. When determining the significance level, the researcher used the results from Equal Variances Not Assumed. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between the two samples, [$t\ (4943.47) = 42.40$, $p = .001$].

Based on the results obtained from the Independent Samples *t*-test, Research Hypothesis 4 (*School counselors will report a significantly higher degree of likelihood of intervention for overt aggression incidents than the degree of likelihood of intervention for relational aggression incidents*) was supported.

Research Question 5

What is the degree of perceived preparedness of school counselors to educate (a) students, (b) teachers/administrators, and (c) parents/guardians about relational aggression?

Descriptive and inferential statistics were calculated for the degree of perceived preparedness to educate (a) students, (b) teachers/administrators, and (c) parents/guardians about relational aggression for Research Question 5. Based on these results, a subsequent one-way within subjects ANOVA was conducted to explore the effect of prior education and/or training on the degree of perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression to the three groups. Respondents were grouped according to prior training (1 = *No Training*, 2 = *Overt Aggression Only*, 3 = *Relational Aggression Only*, and 4 = *Both Overt and Relational Aggression*).

Perceived preparedness to educate students about relational aggression. Table 27 shows frequencies and percentages of degree of perceived preparedness to educate students about relational aggression. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unprepared*) to 4 (*Very prepared*).

Table 27. *Frequencies and Percentages of Perceived Degree of Preparedness to Provide Education about Relational Aggression to Students*

Degree of Perceived Preparedness	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Very unprepared	13	3.5	3.5
Unprepared	71	19.2	22.7
Prepared	158	42.7	65.4
Very Prepared	127	34.3	99.7
Missing	1	.3	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table 27 shows the most frequent response (n = 158, 42.7 %) was that of feeling "Prepared" to educate students about relational aggression.

Table 28 provides means and standard deviations of degree of perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression to students by prior training.

Table 28. *Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of Perceived Preparedness to Provide Education about Relational Aggression to Students by Prior Training*

Education and/or Training Group	Mean	*n*	SD
No Training	2.33	52	.71
Overt Aggression Only	2.31	45	.79
Relational Aggression Only	2.92	13	.49
Both Overt and Relational Aggression	3.38	258	.66

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for degree of perceived preparedness differences among four training groups. The alpha level was 0.05. This test was found to be statistically significant across the four groups, F (3, 364) = 56.89, p = .001. Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means using a Tukey HSD test. Results of the ANOVA are reported in Table 29.

Table 29. *ANOVA Results of Degree of Perceived Preparedness to Provide Education about Relational Aggression to Students by Prior Training*

Source	DF	SS	*M*	F Ratio	P
Between groups	3	79.01	26.34	56.88	.001
Within groups	364	168.54	.46		
Total	367	247.55			

Tukey post-hoc comparisons of the four groups indicated the "No Training" group (M = 2.33) reported a significantly lower degree of perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression to students than the "Relational Aggression Only" training group (M = 2.92) and the "Both Overt and Relational Aggression" training group (M = 3.38), p. = .001. Also, the "Overt Aggression Only" group (M = 2.31) reported a

significantly lower degree of perceived preparedness than the "Relational Aggression Only" training group (M = 2.92) and the "Both Overt and Relational Aggression" training group (M = 3.38), p = .001.

Perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression to teachers/administrators. Table 30 shows frequencies and percentages of degree of perceived preparedness to educate teachers/administrators about relational aggression.

Table 30. *Frequencies and Percentages of Perceived Degree of Preparedness to Provide Education about Relational Aggression to Teachers/Administrators*

Perceived Preparedness	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Very Unprepared	33	8.9	8.9
Unprepared	95	25.7	34.6
Prepared	137	37.0	71.6
Very Prepared	104	28.1	99.7
Missing	1	.3	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table 30 shows most participants (n = 137, 37.0%) reported feeling "Prepared" to educate teachers/administrators about relational aggression.

Table 31 provides means and standard deviations of degree perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression to teachers/administrators by prior training.

Table 31. *Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of Perceived Preparedness to Provide Education about Relational Aggression to Teachers/Administrators by Prior Training*

Education and/or Training Group	Mean	*n*	SD
No Training	2.04	52	.79
Overt Aggression Only	2.04	45	.79
Relational Aggression Only	2.54	13	.78
Both Overt and Relational Aggression	3.16	258	.80

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for degree of perceived preparedness differences among four training groups. The alpha level was 0.05. This test was found to be statistically significant across the four groups, F (3, 364) = 47.0, p = .001. Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means using a Tukey HSD test. Results of the ANOVA are reported in Table 32.

Table 32. *ANOVA Results of Degree of Perceived Preparedness to Provide Education about Relational Aggression to Teachers/Administrators by Prior Training*

Source	DF	SS	M	F Ratio	P
Between groups	3	89.94	29.98	47.0	.001
Within groups	364	232.23	.64		
Total	367	322.17			

Tukey post-hoc comparisons of the four groups indicated the "Both Overt and Relational Aggression" training group (M = 3.16) reported a significantly higher degree of perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression to teachers/administrators than the "No Training" group (M = 2.04), the "Overt Aggression Only" training group (M = 2.04), and the "Relational Aggression Only" training group (M = 2.54), p = .001. Other comparisons were not significant at $p < .05$.

Perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression to parents/guardians. Table 33 shows frequencies and percentages of degree of perceived preparedness to educate parents/guardians about relational aggression.

Table 33. *Frequencies and Percentages of Perceived Degree of Preparedness to Provide Education about Relational Aggression to Parents/Guardians*

Degree of Perceived Preparedness	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Very unprepared	26	7.0	7.0
Unprepared	90	24.3	31.3
Prepared	147	39.7	71.0
Very Prepared	104	28.1	99.1

Table 33. (continued)

Missing	3	.8	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table 33 shows most participants (n = 147, 39.7%) reported feeling "Prepared" to educate parents/guardians about relational aggression.

Table 34 provides means and standard deviations of degree of perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression to parents/guardians by prior training.

Table 34. *Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of Perceived Preparedness to Provide Education about Relational Aggression to Parents/Guardians by Prior Training*

Education and/or Training Group	Mean	*n*	SD
No Training	2.13	52	.77
Overt Aggression Only	2.13	45	.76
Relational Aggression Only	2.67	12	.65
Both Overt and Relational Aggression	3.19	257	.78

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for degree of perceived preparedness differences among four training groups. The alpha level was 0.05. This test was found to be statistically significant across the four groups, F (3, 362) = 44.99, p = .001. Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means using a Tukey HSD test. Results of the ANOVA are reported in Table 35.

Table 35. *ANOVA Results of Degree of Perceived Preparedness to Provide Education about Relational Aggression to Parents/Guardians by Prior Training*

Source	DF	SS	M	F Ratio	P
Between groups	3	79.86	26.62	44.99	.001
Within groups	362	214.20	.60		
Total	365	294.10			

Tukey post-hoc comparisons of the four groups indicated the "Both Overt and Relational Aggression" training group (M = 3.19) reported a significantly higher degree of perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression to parents/guardians than the "No Training" group (M = 2.13) and the "Overt Aggression Only" training group (M = 2.13), p = .001. Other comparisons were not significant at $p < .05$.

Based on the information obtained by the frequencies and percentages of degree of perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression, Research Hypothesis 5 (*School counselors will report feeling "Unprepared" to educate (a) students, (b) teachers/administrators, and (c) parents/guardians" about relational aggression)* was not supported. The subsequent one-way ANOVA provided additional information about the effects of prior training on perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression.

Research Question 6

What interventions are school counselors using to address relational aggression and overt aggression?

Research Question 6 utilized qualitative methods to explore what interventions school counselors are using to address relational and overt aggression in schools. Participants were asked to describe interventions they would use to intervene in overtly or relationally aggressive situations between students. Open-ended qualitative data were quantified as described in Chapter III. First, all data from participants were examined and interventions were identified. Codes, representing the interventions, were then developed

based on responses given by participants. The number of times a code occurred in the data was counted, obtaining frequency counts (Creswell, 2003). Table 36 provides a description of the codes used to quantify the data.

Table 36. *Open-ended Item Codes for Relational and Overt Aggression Interventions by School Counselors*

Code	
01	Classroom Instruction
02	Parent Workshops
03	School-wide Interventions
04	Consultation
05	Individual Counseling
51	Individual Counseling for Victim
52	Individual Counseling for Aggressor
06	Group Counseling
07	Referrals
08	Peer Facilitation/Peer Mediation
09	Mediation/Conflict Resolution
10	Discipline Referral/Referral to Administration
11	One-time Meeting with School Counselor
12	Crisis Response
13	Staff Education

Table 36 provides the codes used to quantify the data. The *Classroom Instruction* code included responses that called for classroom guidance lessons. For example one participant stated, "We have had classroom guidance on types of bullying behavior." The *Parent Workshops* code included responses that called for educating parents about bullying or aggression, one participant providing, "parent education." The *School-wide Interventions* code included responses such as, "outside speaker to address problem school wide." The *Consultation* code included responses such as, "parent consultation if appropriate" or "consult with principal, teachers, parents regarding situation."

Individual Counseling responses were general, such as "initially individual counseling with the parties"; however, some participants specified whether the individual

counseling was intended for the victim or aggressor. The *Individual Counseling for the Victim* code included responses such as, "individual counseling for the victim"; while the *Individual Counseling for the Aggressor* code included responses such as, "counseling for the aggressor." One participant stated, "possibly a small lunch group", an example of the *Group Counseling* code.

Responses that fell into the *Referrals* code include examples such as, "bring the student before our Student Support Team" or "students could possibly be referred to outside counseling." The *Peer Facilitation* code included responses that specifically called for peer involvement such as, "peer mediation". The *Counselor Mediation* code included responses that called for mediation by the counselor, such as, "mediation between students to confront the issue if necessary." *Discipline Referral/Referral to Administration* included responses such as, "report to administration for discipline." The *One-time Meeting with School Counselor* code included responses that called for one-time meetings immediately after an incident with the school counselor and did not specifically use the word *counseling,* such as "conference with students separately." The *Crisis Response* code included responses that described an immediate intervention between students, such as, "calling their names and emphatically telling them to stop." Finally the *Teacher Education* code included responses that called for educating staff about aggression, such as, "teacher awareness". Table 37 provides frequencies of interventions for relational aggression and overt aggression.

Table 37. *Responses to Open-ended Items – Frequencies of Relational Aggression Interventions and Overt Aggression Interventions*

Code		Overt Aggression Frequency	Relational Aggression Frequency
01	Classroom Guidance	33	60
02	Parent Workshops	1	5

Table 37. (continued)

03	School-wide Intervention	10	8
04	Consultation	105	108
05	Individual Counseling	89	84
51	For Victim	36	23
52	For Aggressor	36	15
06	Group Counseling	41	71
07	Referrals	10	3
08	Peer Facilitation	15	21
09	Counselor Mediation	124	106
10	Discipline Referral/ Referral to Administration	119	51
11	One-time Meeting	99	74
12	Crisis Response	52	4
13	Teacher Education	2	3

Table 37 shows 33 participants reported they would intervene in overt aggression incidents with *Classroom Guidance*, while 60 participants reported the same for relational aggression. Conducting *Parent Workshops* was a relatively infrequent response with one participant reporting this for overt aggression and five participants for relational aggression. Ten participants reported they would use *School-wide Interventions* for overt aggression, eight participants said the same for relational aggression.

Consultation was frequently cited with 105 participants reporting they would consult in overt aggression incidents and 108 participants for relational aggression incidents. Comparable frequencies were also seen for *Individual Counseling* with 89 participants indicating they would use this for overt aggression, and 84 participants for relational aggression. A number of participants further specified whether individual counseling would be intended for the victim or aggression. Thirty-six participants indicated they would provide *Individual Counseling for the Victim* for overt aggression, and 23 participants cited the same for relational aggression. Thirty-six participants indicated they

would provide *Individual Counseling for the Aggressor* for overt aggression, and 15 participants indicated the same for relational aggression incidents.

A larger discrepancy was seen in frequency of *Group Counseling* for the two types of aggression, with 41 participants reporting they would use this intervention for overt aggression and 71 participants indicating they would utilize group counseling for relational aggression. Ten participants indicated they would utilize *Referrals* for overt aggression, 3 participants said the same of relational aggression.

Participants indicated a preference for counselor mediation over peer mediation for both overt and relational aggression. Results indicated that 15 participants indicated they would utilize *Peer Facilitation* for overt aggression, 21 participants indicated the same for relational aggression. A greater number of participants indicated they would use *Counselor Mediation*, 124 participants for overt aggression and 106 participants for relational aggression.

A larger number of participants, 119, reported they would utilize *Discipline Referral/Referral to Administration* for overt aggression than relational aggression, with 51 responses. A comparable number of participants indicated they would utilize a *One-time Meeting with the School Counselor* for overt aggression incidents (n =99) and relational aggression incidents (n = 74). A greater discrepancy was found between those participants who provided a *Crisis Response,* 52 participants for overt aggression and 4 participants for relational aggression. Finally, *Teacher Education* was indicated as an intervention by 2 participants for overt aggression and 3 participants for relational aggression.

Based on results, Research Hypothesis 6 (*School counselors will employ similar interventions for relational aggression and overt forms of aggression*) was largely

supported. However, four discrepancies between frequencies were noted for *Classroom Guidance, Group Counseling, Discipline Referral/Referral to Administration*, and *Crisis Response* interventions. Inferential statistics were not calculated for this item, which is a limitation of the data analysis.

Research Question 7

To what degree of importance do school counselors feel it is for Counselor Education programs to specifically address and provide education about relational aggression to future school counselors?

Descriptive and inferential statistics were calculated for Research Question 7. Table 38 provides frequencies and percentages for degree of importance to include information about relational aggression in counselor education programs. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unimportant*) to 4 (*Very important*).

Table 38. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Importance to Provide Education about Relational Aggression in Counselor Education Programs*

Degree of Importance	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Very unimportant	5	1.4	1.4
Unimportant	7	1.9	3.3
Important	55	14.9	18.2
Very important	300	81.1	99.3
Missing	3	.8	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table 38 shows 81.1% (n = 300) of participants indicated it was "Very important" to include education about relational aggression in Counselor Education programs. A mean degree of importance of 3.77 (SD = .55) was found.

Further, participants were asked to include any additional comments they had about educating future school counselors about relational aggression. This open-ended item

received 165 responses. These qualitative open-ended responses were quantified by post-coding the data and obtaining frequency counts (de Vaus, 2002). First, all data were examined. Codes were then developed based on responses by participants. Responses fell into one of five themes. The number of times a theme occurred in the data was then counted. Table 39 provides a description of the five themes that emerged. Table 40 provides frequency counts of the five themes.

Table 39. *Open-ended Item Themes for Educating Future School Counselors about Relational Aggression in Counselor Education Programs*

Theme	Description
General Counselor Education	General suggestions for changes to counselor education programs, not specifically addressing relational aggression
Cyber/Technology and RA	Referencing the changing venues for relational aggression (i.e., cell phones, Facebook, e-mail)
Educating Other Adults	Highlighting importance of educating other personnel within the school system about relational aggression (i.e. teachers, administrators, parents/guardians)
Spread of Relational Aggression in Schools	Citing the frequency of relational aggression in schools and the importance inclusion in Counselor Education programs
Curriculum/Workshops	Call for specific interventions/resources

Table 40. *Frequencies of Themes - Educating Future School Counselors about Relational Aggression in Counselor Education Programs*

Themes	Frequency
General Counselor Education	20
Cyber/Technology and RA	7
Educating Other Adults	15
Spread of RA in Schools	87
Curriculum/Workshops	25
Total	165

Table 40 shows 11 participants provided *General Counselor Education* statements, not directly related to relational aggression. For example, one participant provided, "For me personally I feel it is very helpful to keep up with current trends in counseling, literature, journals, etc. This should be stressed in education future counselors."

Of the responses, 87 participants provided statements about the *Spread of Relational Aggression in Schools.* These statements concurred with the idea that relational aggression should be included within counselor education programs, along with citing the immense number of relational aggression incidents they see within their schools. For example, one participant stated, "This is probably the most used aggression in schools. Students are not likely to get in trouble because teachers and adults view it as petty. Therefore, the student who is being picked on is left to feel like a tattletale and the aggressor just keeps emotionally abusing others."

This leads to another form of response, citing the importance of educating teachers, school administrators, and other adults about relational aggression. Fifteen participants indicated that *Educating Other Adults*, was also important, such as, "It's important to train counselors, however in conjunction I think administrators and teachers need to be trained so they will realize that this is just as harmful, if not more, so than overt aggression. Counselors can't fight this battle alone."

Seven participants cited the relationship between *Cyber/Technology and Relational Aggression*, such as, "Relational aggression is our number one problem at this school. It is happening through verbal communication, through the internet, text messaging, cell phones, bebo, myspace, facebook, in the hallways, in the classroom and on the school bus..." Further, 25 respondents made reference to or called for specific

Curriculum/Workshops for relational aggression, for example, "It is imperative that future counselors be given not only a thorough understanding of the background of relational aggression, but also the tools necessary to actually address the issue in their school."

Based on these results, Research Hypothesis 7 (*School counselors will report it is "Very important" for Counselor Education programs to specifically address and provide education about relational aggression to future school counselors)* was supported.

Research Question 8

Will school counselors with prior education and/or training report a significantly higher degree of perceived preparedness to intervene in relationally aggressive incidents between students than school counselors without prior education and/or training?

A one-way between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean degree of perceived preparedness to intervene in relationally aggressive incidents between students based on prior education and/or training (1 = *No Prior Training*, 2 = *Overt Aggression Only*, 3 = *Relational Aggression Only*, and 4 = *Both Overt and Relational Aggression)* for Research Question 8. Table 41 provides frequencies and percentages of prior education and/or training. Table 42 provides means and standard deviations of perceived degree of preparedness by education and/or training.

Table 41. *Frequencies and Percentages of Prior Education and/or Training*

Education and/or Training Group	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
No Training	52	14.1	14.1
Overt Aggression Only	45	12.2	26.3
Relational Aggression Only	13	3.5	29.8
Both Overt and Relational Aggression	259	70.0	99.8
Missing	1	0.3	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table 42. *Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of Degree of Perceived Preparedness to Intervene in Relationally Aggressive Incidents Between Students by Prior Education and/or Training*

Education and/or Training Group	Mean	*n*	SD
No Training	2.65	52	.65
Overt Aggression Only	2.53	45	.79
Relational Aggression Only	2.92	13	.64
Both Overt and Relational Aggression	3.39	258	.66

A one-way ANOVA was used to test for degree of perceived preparedness differences among four training groups. The alpha level was 0.05. This test was found to be statistically significant across the four groups, F (3, 364) = 33.13, p = .001. Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means using a Tukey HSD test. Results of the ANOVA are reported in Table 43.

Table 43. *ANOVA Results of Degree of Perceived Preparedness to Intervene in Relationally Aggressive Incidents Between Students by Prior Education and/or Training*

Source	DF	SS	*M*	F Ratio	P
Between groups	3	45.085	15.028	33.127	.001
Within groups	64	165.133	.454		
Total	67	210.217			

Tukey post-hoc comparisons of the four groups indicated the "No Training" group (M = 2.65) reported a significantly lower degree of perceived preparedness to intervene in relationally aggressive incidents between students than the "Both Overt and Relational Aggression" training group (M = 3.39), p. = .001. Also, the "Overt Aggression Only" group (M = 2.53) reported a significantly lower degree of perceived preparedness than the "Both Overt and Relational Aggression" training group (M = 3.39), p = .001. Comparisons between the "Relational Aggression Only" training group (M = 2.92) and the other three

groups were not significant at $p < .05$. This is not surprising given the small number (n = 13) of participants who had only relational aggression training.

Based on the results of the ANOVA, Research Hypothesis 8 (*School counselors with prior education and/or training will report a significantly higher degree of perceived preparedness to intervene in relational aggression incidents between students than school counselors without prior education and/or training*) was supported.

Summary

This chapter presents the data collected from this study's survey. The final data set included responses from 370 participants. Descriptive analyses of demographic items are included. Eight research questions are presented including data and analyses for each question. A summary and a discussion of these results are included in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes a discussion of (1) the purpose of the study, (2) an overview of the methodology, (3) discussion of results, (4) limitations of the current study, (5) recommendations for future research, (6) implications for school counselors and counselor educators, and (7) conclusion.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this concurrent mixed methods study was to explore school counselors' responses to relational aggression in schools by converging both quantitative and qualitative data. The *School Counselors' Responses to Aggression in Schools* web-based survey was developed for the present study to assess K-12 school counselors' perceived preparedness, attitudes, and interventions for relational aggression in schools.

Methodology Overview

The population for the present study consisted of K-12 school counselors who use the Internet. A clear sampling frame was impossible to define. Therefore, a nonprobability convenience sample was used. Participants were screened to determine if they (1) were licensed/credentialed by their state Department of Education as a school counselor, and (2) were currently employed as a licensed/credentialed school counselor.

The present study utilized a web-based survey to explore school counselors' responses to aggression in schools. The *School Counselors' Responses to Aggression in Schools* survey instrument was developed for the present study following an extensive

review of the literature, and referencing established survey questionnaires (Craig et al., 2000; Crick, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007; Yoon & Kerber, 2003).

Participants were recruited by postings made to ASCA Scene, a networking site sponsored by ASCA, and through advertisements by state counseling associations. Two separate contact schedules were developed for the two recruitment methods. The survey was open for a total of 28 days. Out of the 461 eligible participants who began the survey, 370 participants were included in the final data set for a rudimentary response rate of 80.3%. The number of responses for the present survey is comparable to others utilizing web-based methodology to survey school counselors, with responses ranging from 183 to 517 (Dollarhide & Lemberger, 2006; Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007; Mathai, 2002).

Discussion of Results

Demographics

The demographics of the present sample are similar other studies that utilized a web-based survey for school counselors (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007; Mathai, 2002). All participants (n = 370) included within the final data set were licensed/credentialed by their state Department of Education, and were currently employed as a licensed/certified school counselor. Of the 370 participants, 34.4% (n = 127) of participants had 1-5 years of experience. Participants represented all levels of the K-12 school system with 39.7% (n = 196) of participants working in elementary schools, 33.6% (n = 166) working in middle schools, and 26.7% (n = 132) working in high schools. It is important to note that

participants were permitted to select as many schools as applied to their particular situation in order to be inclusive to those counselors who may be serving more than one school.

Most participants (n = 345, 93.2%) worked in a public school setting and the largest numbers of participants were from New York (n = 87, 23.5%), Alabama (n = 49, 13.2%) and Arkansas (n = 49, 13.2%). Several states were not represented within the sample. Most participants (n = 356, 96.2%) had obtained a master's degree in School Counseling or Counselor Education. Likewise, 76.8% (n = 284) of participants graduated from a CACREP-accredited program, and 82.7% (n = 306) cited a master's degree as their highest degree of education completed. The median age of participants was 45 years old. Just over half of participants (n = 212, 57.3%) were members of ASCA.

Of the 370 participants, 87.3% (n = 323) were female, 11.4% (n = 42) were male, and .5% (n = 2) preferred not to indicate gender. The gender distribution of this study's sample is reflective of the school counseling profession, with approximately 80.3% of all school counselors in the United States being female, males accounting for 19.7% of all school counselors in the United States (Bank, Delamont, & Marshall, 2007).

Previous Training

Of the 370 participants, 89.7% (n = 223) of participants had prior education and/or training in anti-bullying, while 9.5% (n = 35) indicated they had not received previous education and/or training in anti-bullying. These results are similar to those of Jacobsen and Bauman (2007) who found that 74.3% (n = 136) of their sample had received prior training in anti-bullying.

Workshops (n = 265, 28.6%) were the most frequently cited source of prior training on anti-bullying, followed by conferences (n = 247, 26.7%), and in-services (n = 184, 19.9%). It was somewhat surprising to see that graduate coursework was the least cited (n = 96, 10.4%) source of training on anti-bullying. Jacobsen and Bauman (2007) found similar experiences within their sample, with only 4% (n = 6) of respondents receiving anti-bullying training/education through graduate coursework.

Of the 370 participants, 70% (n = 259) had prior education and/or training in both overt and relational aggression. Most participants received prior training in overt aggression and relational aggression from workshops (overt aggression n = 231, 28.8%; relational aggression n = 204, 31.3%) and conferences (overt aggression n = 215, 26.9%; relational aggression n = 194, 30.0%). Again, graduate coursework was the least cited source of education and/or training for both overt aggression (n = 99, 12.3%) and relational aggression (n = 92, 14.1%).

Research Question 1

Will school counselors define overtly aggressive incidents as aggression at a significantly higher proportion than the proportion of relationally aggressive incidents defined as aggression?

The hypothesis that overt aggression incidents would be defined as aggression at a significantly higher proportion than relational aggression incidents was supported. Of the responses to overt aggression incidents, 95.5 % (n = 2793) of participants indicated, "Yes", they would define the incident as aggression. Of the responses to relational aggression incidents, 65.0% (n = 1898) of participants indicated, "Yes", they would define the incident

as aggression. The Pearson Chi-square analysis determined there was a significant difference between proportion of overt aggression incidents defined as aggression and the proportion of relational aggression incidents defined as aggression [χ^2 (1, N =5843) = 858.341, p = .001].

All 16 of the vignettes depicted aggressive behavior, however participants defined overt aggression vignettes as aggression at a significantly higher proportion than relational aggression vignettes. Further, in terms of percentages, the consensus of whether an incident was defined as aggression was much more varied for relational aggression than overt aggression, meaning there seemed to be a greater consensus as to which behaviors constituted aggression for overt aggression. With research in relational aggression still in its infancy, these results are not surprising. Similar results were found in a study of preservice teachers who were more likely to define acts of physical or verbal bullying as *bullying* than social exclusion (Craig et al., 2000).

According to Crick (1996), by focusing solely on overt forms of aggression, the full spectrum of aggressive behaviors children and adolescents encounter is not being addressed. Given that all 16 vignettes represented aggressive behavior, the results indicate that school counselors may not look at aggression comprehensively. An obvious explanation for this is that school counselors may lack effective education and/or training to identify relationally aggressive behaviors. Training in relational aggression is far from universal, so it is possible school counselors are not aware of the serious consequences of relational aggression (e.g., Crick, 1997; Geiger et al., 2004). Further, Orpinas and Horne (2006) suggested it is important for adults to re-examine how they define aggression and the behaviors that encompass it.

Research Question 2

Will school counselors define relationally aggressive incidents as aggression at a significantly higher proportion when the victim is female compared to the proportion of incidents defined as aggression when the victim is male?

It was hypothesized that female versions of relational aggression vignettes would be defined as aggression at a significantly higher proportion than male versions of relational aggression vignettes. Results from the Pearson Chi-square analysis did not support this hypothesis. There was no significant difference between the proportion of female relational aggression incidents defined as aggression and the proportion of male relational aggression incidents defined as aggression. Further, there was no significant difference in the proportion of female overt aggression incidents defined as aggression and the proportion of male overt aggression incidents defined as aggression, or for collapsed aggression incidents.

It was expected that because of the focus primarily on female's use of relational aggression within the popular and scholarly literature, participants would more readily identify relational aggression when there was a female victim. Finding the opposite was encouraging, indicating that school counselors may not view gender as a determinant in whether an incident is defined as aggression. It also reinforces the necessity for future research on relational aggression to be inclusive to both genders, given that little is known about the relationally aggressive behaviors of males. Further, relational aggression resources intended specifically for males should be developed.

It is important to note that these findings should be interpreted with caution due to survey limitations. Participants may have identified that the same vignettes were being

used for both genders. Further, the order of vignettes was not randomized and did not differ between surveys; these factors may have influenced results.

Research Question 3

Will school counselors rate overt aggression incidents at a significantly higher degree of severity than the degree of severity for relational aggression incidents?

The hypothesis that participants would rate overt aggression incidents as significantly more severe than relational aggression incidents was supported. The mean degree of severity for overt aggression incidents was 3.39 (SD = .74), and the mean degree of severity for relational aggression incidents was 2.37 (SD = .80). The results of an independent samples *t*-test indicated there was a significant difference between the two means, [t (5852) = 50.94, p = .001]. Further, like the definition as aggression item, there was much greater variability in degree of severity ratings for the relational aggression vignettes than the overt aggression vignettes.

These findings are similar to Jacobsen and Bauman's (2007) results with Arizona school counselors, who also found relational bullying situations to be rated as the least severe when compared physical and verbal bullying situations. Similar results were also found in studies with pre-service teachers (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Yoon & Kerber, 2003). Like other adults, school counselors may look at relational aggression as a normative experience during childhood and adolescence (Yoon et al., 2004). Behaviors seen as normative and part of growing may not be seen as a serious concern. However, consequences of relational aggression are just as severe for relational aggression as they are for overt aggression (Crick et al., 2002). Given that 70% (n = 258) of participants had

education and/or training in both relational and overt aggression, this raises concerns about the effectiveness of existing training.

Research Question 4

Will school counselors report a significantly higher degree of likelihood of intervention in overt aggression incidents between students than the degree of likelihood of intervention reported for relational aggression incidents between students?

The mean degree of likelihood of intervention for overt aggression incidents was 3.39 (SD = .74) and the mean degree of likelihood of intervention for relational aggression incidents was 2.37 (SD = .80). The results of an independent *t*-test indicate there was a significant difference between the two means, [t (4943.47) = 42.40, p = .001]. The hypothesis that school counselors will report a significantly higher degree of likelihood of intervention for overt aggression incidents than relational aggression incidents was supported. Again, the variability in degree of likelihood of intervention for relationally aggressive vignettes was noted.

Similar results were found in prior studies. Social exclusion, a relationally aggressive behavior, was less likely than both verbal and physical bullying to elicit intervention in a study of prospective teachers by Craig et al. (2000). Further, Jacobsen and Bauman (2007) found school counselors to be more likely to intervene in and provide stronger interventions for verbal bullying than relational bullying.

There are several possible explanations for these results. First, training in and education about overt aggression has a much greater history than relational aggression (Geiger et al., 2004). Therefore, school counselors may not have protocol developed for

how to address relational aggression, which is supported by the finding that only 46.5% (n = 172) of schools had policies in place to address relational aggression. Developing policies to address relational aggression poses even further challenges. For example, the prosocial opposite of hitting, is *not* hitting. However, the prosocial opposite of excluding other people is *including* them, a definite challenge for school counselors and school policy makers. As one participant stated, "We can't make kids be friends with one another."

Further, victims of overt aggression are more readily identified and proof of the aggression is often times visible (i.e., bruises), whereas existence of relational aggression is largely hearsay and difficult to detect, which may influence school counselors willingness to provide an intervention. The clinical implications of these results are significant in that students who are impacted by relational aggression may be less likely to receive support from school counselors than victims of overt aggression, when the consequences of relational victimization are just as serious (Crick et al., 2002).

Research Question 5

What is the degree of perceived preparedness of school counselors to educate (a) students, (b) teachers/administrators, and (c) parents/guardians about relational aggression?

It was hypothesized that participants would report feeling "Unprepared" to provide education about relational aggression to students, teachers/administrators, and parents/guardians. However, the results indicated that 42.7% (n = 158) of participants reported feeling "Prepared" to educate students about relational aggression, 37% (n = 137) felt "Prepared" to educate teachers/administrators about relational aggression, and 39.7%

(n = 147) felt "Prepared" to educate parents/guardians about relational aggression. These findings were surprising, and did not support the research hypothesis. Therefore, subsequent one-way ANOVA's were calculated to explore the relationship between prior education and/or training and the degree of perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression to the three groups.

The results of the one-way ANOVA's indicated that participants with both overt and relational aggression training reported a significantly higher degree of perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression to students than those counselors with no prior training or only overt aggression training. Further, those participants with training in only relational aggression reported a significantly higher degree of perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression to *students* than participants without prior training or only overt aggression training. These results suggest having a combination of the two types of training, or at least having training in relational aggression, helps school counselors feel more prepared to provide education about it to students.

Results indicated that participants with both overt and relational aggression training reported a significantly higher degree of perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression to *teachers/administrators* than counselors with no prior training, overt aggression training only, and relational aggression training only.

Finally, in terms of providing education about relational aggression to parents/guardians, those participants with both overt and relational aggression training reported a significantly higher degree of perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression to *parents/guardians* than counselors with no prior training or training

in only overt aggression. Again, the combination of the two types of training was indicated to be the most effective in increasing feelings of preparedness.

The important finding here was that school counselors with a combination of the two types of training consistently reported the highest degree of perceived preparedness to provide education about relational aggression to the three groups. As was previously mentioned, this is not surprising given that these participants would have obtained a more comprehensive view of aggression. Another expected finding was that school counselors with no prior training or training only overt aggression reported feeling "Unprepared" to provide education about relational aggression across all three parties. These individuals would have had the least amount of formal knowledge about relational aggression. This highlights the importance of school counselors obtaining training in both forms of aggression. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution since perceived preparedness to provide education does not necessarily mean the education provided is accurate or effective. Future studies should explore this relationship.

Research Question 6

What interventions are school counselors using to address relational aggression and overt aggression?

It was hypothesized that school counselors would employ similar interventions for overt and relational aggression. This hypothesis was largely supported based on frequency counts of interventions provided by participants. However, a few exceptions between the two types of aggression were noted.

Interestingly, many of the interventions provided by participants corresponded with those Delivery System components outlined in the ASCA National Model (2005), and those few interventions discussed in the literature (Bauman, 2008; Geiger et al., 2004). The ASCA National Model (2005) was developed to assist school counselors in implementing a comprehensive school counseling program within their schools, and the Delivery System portion of the model is the most relevant when discussing how school counselors can impact the prevalence of relational aggression in schools. Delivery System components include (1) Guidance Curriculum, (2) Student Planning, (3) Responsive Services, and (4) Systems Support.

The "Guidance Curriculum" component of the ASCA National Model encompasses "Classroom Instruction" (i.e., guidance lessons in the classroom), "Parent Workshops" (i.e., workshops or informational meetings for parents or guardians to reflect the school guidance curriculum), and "School-wide Interventions" (i.e., programs provided to the entire student population) (ASCA, 2005), most of which were mentioned by participants. It was encouraging to find that 60 participants cited *Classroom Guidance* lessons as a method of intervention. Classroom guidance lessons can provide students information about relational aggression and alternative behaviors (Geiger et al., 2004). However, it was disappointing to see that more participants did not indicate they would educate other adults in a child's life about relational aggression, such as teachers, administrators, or parents/guardians. Providing education to these individuals was cited as a promising place to start in intervention efforts against relational aggression (Bauman, 2008; Geiger et al., 2004).

"Responsive Services" are those activities that are designed to meet students' immediate needs and concerns. These activities include "Consultation" (i.e., student advocacy activities by school counselors, consulting with parents or guardians, teachers, other educators, and the community), "Individual and Small-Group Counseling" (i.e., short-term counseling for difficulties in relationships, personal concerns, or normal developmental tasks), "Referrals" (i.e., referrals to outside resources such as mental health agencies or other social and community services), "Peer Facilitation" (i.e., peer mediation, tutors, mentors) (ASCA, 2005). *Individual Counseling* in general, as well as specified for victims and aggressors, was a frequent intervention for both overt and relational aggression. Working with students affected by aggression may help counter the negative consequences associated with relational aggression (Crick et al., 2002). It was encouraging to see that for both overt and relational aggression, peer facilitation/mediation was an infrequent intervention considering the mixed findings on the effectiveness of this type of intervention (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007).

Some responsive services provided by participants should be exercised with caution. For example, 71 participants cited *Group Counseling* as an intervention for relational aggression. According to Geiger et al. (2004), group work has been shown to be inappropriate for aggressive children, as deviant experiences may be shared and indirectly encouraged. Further, 106 participants provided *Counselor Meditation* as an intervention for relational aggression, again posing a potential risk re-victimization (Geiger et al., 2004).

Utilizing *Discipline Referrals/Referral to Administration* was cited more frequently for overt aggression (n = 119) than relational aggression (n = 51). While discipline may not be the answer on how to stop the use of relational aggression, school counselors and

administrators should be mindful about the message this is sending to students who may interpret it as adults viewing relational aggression as less serious than overt forms of aggression.

It is important to note that some of the responses provided by participants did not specifically align with the Delivery System components of the ASCA National Model. These included responses that fell under the *Counselor Mediation* code (i.e., meeting with students involved in incident together), the *Discipline Referral/Referral to Administration* code (i.e., referrals to principal for behavior consequences), the *One-time Meeting with School Counselor* code (i.e., meetings with school counselor that do not meet *counseling* criteria), and the *Crisis Response* code (i.e., an immediate intervention to intervene in a conflict situation).

Research Question 7

To what degree of importance do school counselors feel it is for Counselor Education programs to specifically address and provide education about relational aggression to future school counselors?

The hypothesis that participants would report it being "Very Important" for Counselor Education programs to provide education about relational aggression to future school counselors was supported. This is not surprising given the amount of recent attention that has been given to relational aggression. Similar opinions are echoed in the literature (Bauman, 2008).

The concern raised by these findings coincides with the small percentage of participants who received training on relational aggression within their graduate

coursework, the same being true for training in anti-bullying and overt aggression. Further, 98.4% (n = 364) of participants indicated they had seen incidences or heard reports of relational aggression within their schools, and 57% (n = 211) cited relational aggression as at least a moderate problem within their schools. If school counselors are seeing relational aggression within their schools and identifying it as a problem, graduate coursework for school counselors should include information about relational aggression. As one participant stated, "It will be used more than any other skill you will be taught".

A large number of participants in this sample reported seeking out education and/or training in relational aggression from other sources aside from graduate coursework, a strength of the present sample. A component of the ASCA National Model (2005) Delivery System is "Professional Development" which includes in-service training, professional association memberships, and post-graduate education. Therefore, it is an integral part of a comprehensive school counseling program for school counselors to seek out the supplemental education and/or training they may need, such as in relational aggression, once they are working in the field.

Research Question 8

Will school counselors with prior education and/or training report a significantly higher degree of perceived preparedness to intervene in relationally aggressive incidents between students than school counselors without prior education and/or training?

It was hypothesized that school counselors with prior education and/or training would report a significantly higher degree of perceived preparedness to intervene in relationally aggressive incidents between students than school counselors without prior

training. The results of the one-way ANOVA supported this hypothesis, [F (3, 364) = 33.13, p = .001]. Follow-up Tukey post-hoc comparisons of the four groups identified significant differences. Participants with both overt and relational aggression education and/or training reported a significantly higher degree of perceived preparedness to intervene than those participants with no prior training. This makes sense given this combination of training would have provided a comprehensive view of aggression.

Surprisingly, having only relational aggression training did not yield any significant differences between the other three training groups. This raises questions about the effectiveness of the relational aggression training school counselors are receiving. Certainly there is some element of not knowing all of the nuances of a particular issue until you have had some form of education about it, and school counselors with training on relational aggression may be more aware of the complexity of the situation and the difficulty in intervening in relationally aggressive situations. However, caution should be exercised when interpreting these findings due to the small number of participants with only relational aggression training.

Limitations of the Current Study

The limitations of the present study can be categorized according to (1) sample, (2) web-based survey methodology, and (3) survey.

1. *The sample of the present study presents limitations.*
    a. The study utilized a non-probability convenience sample, which allowed for participants to self-select to participate in the study. Participants may have

been motivated or influenced by the topic of the study to participate, which may have influenced the results.

b. The diversity of the sample was limited to school counselors who use the Internet, and those individuals who received the recruitment letter through advertisements by state counseling associations or who viewed the recruitment letter posted on ASCA Scene.

c. There were a greater number of female respondents than male respondents.

d. The decision to use state counseling associations as a method of recruiting potential participants was made late in study development, therefore sufficient time was not allowed to make contact with all 50 states counseling associations.

2. *There are limitations associated with the use of web-based survey methodology.*

a. The sample is only representative of those school counselors who use the Internet.

b. Internet access, technology, and understanding of that technology are not universal.

c. An unanticipated confound of the present study was in how the recruitment letter would be delivered to potential participants once in the hands of state counseling associations. The state associations that agreed to distribute the recruitment letter to their members did so in varying ways. For example, some state associations posted the recruitment letter on their website, while others sent out an e-mail to their membership electronic mailing list. Further, the state associations distributed the recruitment letters at varying

points in time, which may have limited the responses from certain states, not allowing participants as much time to complete the survey.

d. It was the intent of this researcher to terminate participation when participants did not meet screening criteria (i.e., licensed/credentialed by state Department of Education, currently employed as a school counselor), according to responses to the first two survey items. However, due to a technical difficulty, these respondents were not dismissed from the survey and were allowed to continue. Fortunately, it was possible to screen out responses by these participants based on their responses to the first two survey items and their responses were not included within the final data set.

e. In the recruitment letters, the term "bullying" should be removed from the description of the study, as the survey looks more at aggressive behaviors in general.

3. *There are limitations with the survey instrument used in this study.*

   a. An operational definition of "intervention" was not provided for participants, which may have resulted in participants being unsure as to the type of information that should be included to answer the question.

   b. The survey was lengthy and took a considerable amount of time (20-30 minutes) to complete, which may have contributed to number of participants who dropped out of the survey (n = 121).

   c. The validity procedures used to assess the survey items were subjective.

   d. No inter-rater reliability was established for the codes assigned to the open-ended qualitative responses.

e. The term "aggression" was used in the title of the survey, which may have influenced participants' responses to the definition as aggression item following each vignette.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. *All state counseling associations should be included in future studies.* The use of state counseling associations to disseminate information about survey participation was an effective means of participate recruitment. Future studies should establish contact with all 50 states to get a more comprehensive view of how school counselors around the country are responding to relational aggression.
2. *Revisions should be made to survey instrument.* The following are suggested revisions:
    a. Include an operational definition of "intervention" for participants to clarify that the survey is seeking information about those Delivery Service components provided by school counselors, as outlined by the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005).
    b. Randomize the order of vignettes between surveys to control for order effect (Dillman, 2007).
    c. Conduct a full-scale pilot study to gather further feedback on survey structure and item clarity.
    d. Include a survey item asking participants where they learned about the survey, which allows for exploration of the effectiveness survey recruitment

through postings to networking sites, such as ASCA Scene, or advertisements through state counseling associations.

e. Control for gender of the aggressor in vignettes to explore whether this has an effect on definition as aggression, degree of severity, or degree of likelihood of intervention ratings.

f. Include two separate open-ended qualitative survey items for participants to describe interventions they would use for (a) aggressors and (b) victims to explore possible difference between delivery services.

g. By revising the present survey, future research may explore whether interventions vary according to development by asking participants how they may intervene at different age or grade levels (i.e., elementary, middle, or high school) (Geiger et al., 2004).

h. Take additional steps to establish the reliability and validity of the survey instrument, such as inter-rater reliability for the open-ended qualitative items or conducting a confirmatory factor analysis of the dichotomous survey items (Huck, 2000).

i. Include items about the relationship between technology and relational aggression to explore the interventions school counselors are using to address these unique and quickly-evolving aspects of relational aggression (Bauman, 2008).

Implications for School Counselors and Counselor Educators

1. *Graduate coursework in Counselor Education programs should include education on relational aggression.* Responses by participants to open-ended qualitative survey items highlight the need for Counselor Education programs to specifically address and educate future school counselors about relational aggression. By providing this information during graduate education, Counselor Education programs are ensuring that all school counselors are provided with a comprehensive view of aggression that includes relationally aggressive behaviors. Further, including information about relational aggression in Counselor Education programs aligns with CACREP standards (CACREP, 2001) and the ASCA National Model (ASCA, 2005).
2. *Counselor Education programs should provide education and encourage their students to determine the effectiveness of their delivery service methods when they are practicing.* Literature on interventions for relational aggression and their effectiveness if very limited at this time. School counselors should be informed on how to evaluate the interventions they are utilizing for relational aggression, as they may need to be tailored according to age, gender, and past behaviors of students (Geiger et al., 2004).
3. *School counselors should familiarize themselves with the consequences of relational aggression for victims and aggressors.* School counselors need to be aware of the academic, personal/social, and career needs of their students, all three areas that may be affected by relational aggression. These expectations are outlined in the ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (ASCA, 2004).

4. *School counselors should aim to have training in both overt and relational aggression.* Results indicated that school counselors with this combination of training had the highest degree of perceived preparedness to not only provide education about relational aggression to various parties, but also to intervene in relationally aggressive incidents between students.
5. *School counselors should reference all Delivery System components of the ASCA National Model (2005) when developing interventions for relational aggression.* The ASCA National Model (2005) serves as a template for school counselors to comprehensively address any problem within a school, providing multi-faceted interventions (Geiger et al., 2004).

Conclusion

Recent popular and scholarly literature has focused on relational aggression, its consequences, etiology, developmental and gender differences, and preliminary interventions. How school counselors respond to relational aggression in schools is minimally discussed in the literature (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007). School counselors are at the frontlines in education, being trained to identify and assist students that are involved in aggressive situations. Therefore, it is imperative to assess school counselors' perceived preparedness, attitudes, and interventions for relational aggression in schools.

School counselors have professional and ethical responsibilities to their students to provide for their academic, personal/social, and career needs, all of which may be impacted by relational aggression. By strengthening school counselors' understanding of relational

aggression and effective interventions to address it, they are able to provide an environment in which students are free to learn and succeed.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

North Dakota State University
1301 12th Avenue North. Fargo, ND 58102

School Counselors' Responses to Aggression in Schools

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey exploring how school counselors are responding to aggression in schools. Your assistance will help to promote a safe school environment that fosters student learning and success.

School counselors who (1) are currently employed as a school counselor, and (2) have licensure/certification as a school counselor from their State Department of Education are eligible to participate. School counselors who do not meet these criteria are not eligible to participate at this time.

Should you have any difficulties in responding to the survey, please e-mail me at: coddenheide@gmail.com.

The use of the Internet as a mode for data collection brings minimal risks to participant confidentiality. Risk to confidentiality using the Internet is inherent in normal use of web technology with the risk that information may be intercepted and read by a third party. However data collected will remain confidential, with access only permitted to the primary and co-investigators. No individual data will be reported in this study and no link will be made between your identity and responses. If you have concerns regarding the rights of human participants, please contact the primary investigator, Dr. Carol Buchholz at (701) 231-7103 or the Institutional Review Board of North Dakota State University at (701) 231-8908.

Completion and submission of the survey implies informed consent to use the data for research purposes. If you would like a copy of the research findings upon completion of this study, please contact me by e-mail (coddenheide@gmail.com).

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Next, click the START button on the right to go to the first question of the survey. **START**

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT: SCHOOL COUNSELORS' RESPONSES TO AGGRESSION IN SCHOOLS

First, I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself.

1. Do you have licensure/certification as a school counselor from your state Department of Education?

"Click Here"
1 – No
2 – Yes

2. Are you currently employed as a licensed/credentialed school counselor as defined by your state's Department of Education?

"Click Here"
1 - No
2 - Yes

If No, Thank you for your interest in participating in this survey exploring how school counselors are responding to aggression in schools. At this time only currently employed licensed/credentialed school counselors are eligible to respond. If you would like to request the results from the survey, please send an email to Chasity at: coddenheide@gmail.com.

3. How many years (including the current school year) have you worked as a licensed/credentialed school counselor?

"Click Here"
1-5 years
6-10 years
11-15 years

16-20 years

21-25 years

More than 26 years

4. At what level(s) of the K-12 education system are you employed?
(Click all that apply)

"Click Here"

1 – Elementary (K-5)

2 – Middle School (6-8)

3 – High School (9-12)

5. At what type of school are you employed?
(Click all that apply)

"Click Here"

1 – Public

2 – Private

3 – Charter

4 – Other (please specify)

6. Please select the state where you are employed.

"Click Here"

AL

Ak

AZ...

7. Have you obtained a master's degree in either School Counseling or Counselor Education?

"Click Here"

1 – No

2 – Yes

(7.a.) If Yes, was your program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)?

"Click Here"

1 – No

2 – Yes

8. What is the highest degree of education you have obtained?
(*Click in the box to begin typing*)

"Click Here"

1 – Doctorate

2 – Specialist

3 – Master's

4 – Bachelor's

5 – Other (please specify)

[ ]

9. What is your gender?

"Click Here"

1 – Female

2 – Male

3 – Prefer not to answer

10. What is your age?

[ ]

11. Are you currently a member of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA)?

"Click Here"

1 – No

2 – Yes

12. Have you received education and/or training on anti-bullying?

"Click Here"

1 – No

2 – Yes

(12.a.) If Yes, where did you receive the education and/or training on anti-bullying?
(Click on all that apply or add further examples by clicking in the text box)

- ☐ Graduate coursework
- ☐ Workshop
- ☐ Conference
- ☐ In-Service
- ☐ Text books
- ☐ Other, please specify

Next, please read the following **16** vignettes carefully. There will be a series of three questions following each vignette.

13. A male student comes into your office reporting that peers have called him mean names in the hallway. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature from this student.

(13.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"
1 – No
2 – Yes

(13.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Not at all serious
2 – Somewhat serious
3 – Serious

4 – Very Serious

(13.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor, to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Very Unlikely
2 – Unlikely
3 – Likely
4 – Very Likely

14. A female student comes into your office reporting that her friend intentionally did not invite her to a weekend gathering. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature from this student.

(14.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"
1 – No
2 – Yes

(14.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Not at all serious
2 – Somewhat serious
3 – Serious
4 – Very Serious

(14.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor, to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Very Unlikely

2 – Unlikely

3 – Likely

4 – Very Likely

15. A female student comes into your office reporting that she is afraid of a peer who constantly shoves her in the locker room. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature from this student.

(15.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"

1 – No

2 - Yes

(15.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"

1 – Not at all serious

2 – Somewhat serious

3 – Serious

4 – Very Serious

(15.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor, to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"

1 – Very Unlikely

2 – Unlikely

3 – Likely

4 – Very Likely

16. Through a classroom needs assessment survey, a male student self-identified as having been frequently ignored or given the silent treatment by his peers. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature about this student.

(16.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"
1 – No
2 – Yes

(16.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Not at all serious
2 – Somewhat serious
3 – Serious
4 – Very Serious

(16.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor, to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Very Unlikely
2 – Unlikely
3 – Likely
4 – Very Likely

17. Through a classroom needs assessment survey, a male student is identified as having been hit, kicked, or shoved around by others. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature about this student.

(17.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"
1 – No
2 - Yes

(17.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Not at all serious
2 – Somewhat serious

3 – Serious

4 – Very Serious

(17.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"

1 – Very Unlikely

2 – Unlikely

3 – Likely

4 – Very Likely

18. A parent/guardian calls you with concerns regarding their female student. Their student reports her peers at school are spreading rumors and gossiping about her. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature about this student.

(18.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"

1 – No

2 – Yes

(18.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"

1 – Not at all serious

2 – Somewhat serious

3 – Serious

4 – Very Serious

(18.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor, to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"

1 – Very Unlikely

2 – Unlikely

3 – Likely

4 – Very Likely

19. A male student comes into your office reporting that he is afraid of a peer who constantly shoves him in the locker room. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature from this student.

(19.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"
1 – No
2 - Yes

(19.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Not at all serious
2 – Somewhat serious
3 – Serious
4 – Very Serious

(19.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor, to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Very Unlikely
2 – Unlikely
3 – Likely
4 – Very Likely

20. Through a classroom needs assessment survey, a female student is identified as having been hit, kicked, or shoved around by others. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature about this student.

(20.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"
1 – No
2 – Yes

(20.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Not at all serious
2 – Somewhat serious
3 – Serious
4 – Very Serious

(20.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor, to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Very Unlikely
2 – Unlikely
3 – Likely
4 – Very Likely

21. Through a classroom needs assessment survey, a female student self-identified as having been frequently ignored or given the silent treatment by her peers. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature about this student.

(21.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"
1 – No
2 – Yes

(21.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Not at all serious
2 – Somewhat serious
3 – Serious
4 – Very Serious

(21.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor, to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Very Unlikely
2 – Unlikely
3 – Likely
4 – Very Likely

22. A female student comes into your office reporting that a peer is making statements such as, "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore." This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature from this student.

(22.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"
1 – No
2 – Yes

(22.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Not at all serious
2 – Somewhat serious
3 – Serious
4 – Very Serious

(22.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor, to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Very Unlikely
2 – Unlikely
3 – Likely
4 – Very Likely

23. A parent/guardian calls you with concerns regarding their male student. Their student reports that his peers at school are spreading rumors and gossiping about him. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature about this student.

(23.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"
1 – No
2 – Yes

(23.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Not at all serious
2 – Somewhat serious
3 – Serious
4 – Very Serious

(23.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor, to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Very Unlikely
2 – Unlikely
3 – Likely
4 – Very Likely

24. A male student comes into your office reporting that a peer is making statements such as, "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore." This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature from this student.

(24.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"
1 – No
2 – Yes

(24.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Not at all serious

2 – Somewhat serious

3 – Serious

4 – Very Serious

(24.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor, to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"

1 – Very Unlikely

2 – Unlikely

3 – Likely

4 – Very Likely

25. A male student comes into your office reporting that his friend intentionally did not invite him to a weekend gathering. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature from this student.

(25.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"

1 – No

2 – Yes

(25.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"

1 – Not at all serious

2 – Somewhat serious

3 – Serious

4 – Very Serious

(25.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor, to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"

1 – Very Unlikely

2 – Unlikely

3 – Likely

4 – Very Likely

26. A parent/guardian calls with concerns about their male student. Their student reports being threatened physically by other students.
This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature about this student.

(26.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"
1 – No
2 – Yes

(26.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Not at all serious
2 – Somewhat serious
3 – Serious
4 – Very Serious

(26.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor, to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Very Unlikely
2 – Unlikely
3 – Likely
4 – Very Likely

27. A parent/guardian calls with concerns about their female student. Their student reports being threatened physically by other students. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature about this student.

(27.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"

1 – No

2 – Yes

(27.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"

1 – Not at all serious

2 – Somewhat serious

3 – Serious

4 – Very Serious

(27.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor, to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"

1 – Very Unlikely

2 – Unlikely

3 – Likely

4 – Very Likely

28. A female student comes into your office reporting that peers in the hallway have called her mean names. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature from this student.

(28.a.) Would you define this incident as aggression?

"Click Here"

1 – No

2 – Yes

(28.b.) In your opinion, on a scale from 1 to 4, how serious is this incident?

"Click Here"

1 – Not at all serious

2 – Somewhat serious

3 – Serious

4 – Very Serious

(28.c.) On a scale from 1 to 4, how likely would you be, as a school counselor, to intervene in this incident?

"Click Here"
1 – Very Unlikely
2 – Unlikely
3 – Likely
4 – Very Likely

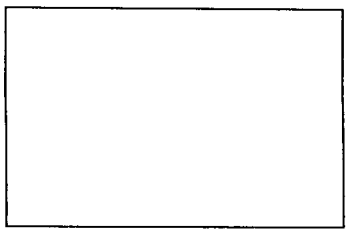
Overt aggression collectively refers to verbal and physical acts of aggression, such as hitting or pushing, calling others mean names, or initiating fights (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995).

29. Based on the definition above, have you received education and/or training on overt aggression?

"Click Here"
1 – No
2 – Yes

(29.a.) If Yes, where did you receive the education and/or training on overt aggression? *(Click on all that apply or add further examples by clicking in the text box)*

☐ Graduate coursework
☐ Workshop
☐ Conference
☐ In-Service
☐ Text books
☐ Other, please specify



30. Based on the definition above, how prepared, on a scale of 1 to 4, do you feel **intervening** in overtly aggressive incidents between students?

"Click Here"
1 – Very unprepared
2 – Unprepared
3 – Prepared
4 – Very prepared

(30.a.) In the text box below, please describe interventions you would use to intervene in overtly aggressive situations between students.
(Click in text box to begin typing)

Finally, I would like to ask you some questions about relational aggression.

Relational aggression has been defined as, "behaviors that harm others through damage (or the threat of damage) to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion" (Crick, Casas, & Ku, 1999, p.77). Relational aggression features behaviors such as gossiping, making demands of the victim in order for them to remain within the peer group, or intentionally leaving peers out of activities (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007; Crick, Casas, & Nelson, 2002).

31. Based on the above definition, have you seen incidences or heard reports of relational aggression in your school?

"Click Here"

1 – No
2 – Yes

(31.a.) If Yes, how much of a problem would you say relational aggression is in your school?

"Click Here"
1 – No problem
2 – Mild problem
3 – Moderate problem
4 – Severe problem

32. Based on the above definition, does your school have policies in place to address relational aggression? For example, are the consequences for relational aggression similar to those for physical or verbal aggression?

"Click Here"
1 – No
2 – Yes
3 – Unsure

33. Based on the above definition, have you received education and/or training on relational aggression?
(Click on blank to reveal choices)

"Click Here"
1 – No
2 – Yes

(33.a.) If Yes, where did you receive the education or training on relational aggression?
(Click on all that apply or add further examples by clicking in the text box)

☐ Graduate coursework
☐ Workshop
☐ Conference

☐ In-service

☐ Other, please specify *(Click in text box to begin typing)*

34. How prepared do you feel providing education about relational aggression to **students**?

"Click Here"
1 – Very unprepared
2 – Unprepared
3 – Prepared
4 – Very Prepared

35. How prepared do you feel providing education about relational aggression to **teachers or administrators**?

"Click Here"
1 – Very unprepared
2 – Unprepared
3 – Prepared
4 – Very Prepared

36. How prepared do you feel providing education about relational aggression to **parents/guardians**?

"Click Here"
1 – Very unprepared
2 – Unprepared

3 – Prepared

4 – Very Prepared

37. How prepared do you feel **intervening** in relationally aggressive incidents between students?

"Click Here"

1 – Very unprepared

2 – Unprepared

3 – Prepared

4 – Very prepared

(37.a.) In the text box below, please describe interventions you would use to intervene in relationally aggressive situations between students. *(Click in text box to begin typing)*

38. How important, on a scale of 1 to 4, is it for counselor education programs to specifically address and educate future school counselors about relational aggression? *(Click on blank to reveal choices)*

"Click Here"

1 – Very unimportant

2 – Unimportant

3 – Important

4 – Very important

Please include any additional comments you may have about educating future school counselors about relational aggression in the space provided below.

(Click in text box to begin typing)

Comments:

39. As a school counselor what resources concerning relational aggression would be beneficial for you?

(Click on all that apply or add further examples by clicking in the text box)

- Graduate course
- Workshop or conference training
- Research-based school curriculum
- Speaker
- Classroom guidance lessons
- Books
- Video VHS/DVD
- Other, please specify
- *(Click in text box to begin typing)*

APPENDIX C

SURVEY VIGNETTES

Overt Aggression Vignettes

Vignettes 1 and 16	Vignettes 7 and 3
A male/female student comes into your office reporting that peers have called him/her mean names in the hallway. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing from this student.	A male/female student comes into your office reporting that he/she is afraid of a peer who constantly shoves him/her in the locker room. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing from this student.
Vignettes 5 and 8	Vignettes 14 and 15
Through a classroom needs assessment survey, a male/female student is identified as having been hit, kicked, or shoved around by others. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing about this student.	A parent calls with concerns about their male/female student. Their student reports being threatened physically by other students. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing from this student.

Relational Aggression Vignettes

Vignettes 13 and 2	Vignettes 4 and 9
A male/female student comes into your office reporting that his/her friend intentionally did not invite him/her to a weekend gathering. This is not the first time this student has reported something of this nature to you.	Through a classroom needs assessment survey, a male/female student self-identified as having been frequently ignored or given the silent treatment by his/her peers. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing about this student.
Vignettes 11 and 6	Vignettes 12 and 10
A parent calls you with concerns regarding their male/female student. Their student reports his/her peers at school are spreading rumors and gossiping about him/her. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing from this student.	A male/female student comes into your office reporting that a peer is making statements such as, "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore." This is not the first time this student has reported something of this nature to you.

APPENDIX D

FIRST CONTACT RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear School Counselors,

I am a graduate student in the Counselor Education program at North Dakota State University. I am writing to request your participation in a study exploring how practicing school counselors are responding to aggression in schools. Your response is vital to this research endeavor and will help to promote a safe school environment that fosters student learning and success.

School counselors who (1) are currently employed as a school counselor, and (2) have licensure/certification as a school counselor from their State Department of Education are eligible to participate. School counselors who do not meet these criteria are not eligible to participate at this time.

Your responses are requested by **February 18, 2009**. A follow-up reminder will be posted one week from the date of this message.

The use of the Internet as a mode for data collection brings minimal risks to participant confidentiality. Risk to confidentiality using the Internet is inherent in normal use of web technology with the risk that information may be intercepted and read by a third party. However data collected will remain confidential, with access only permitted to the primary and co-investigators. No individual data will be reported in this study and no link will be made between your identity and responses. If you have concerns regarding the rights of human participants, please contact the primary investigator, Dr. Carol Buchholz at (701) 231-7103 or the Institutional Review Board of North Dakota State University at (701) 231-8908.

Completion and submission of the survey implies informed consent to use the data for research purposes. If you would like a copy of the research findings upon completion of this study, please contact me by email (coddenheide@gmail.com).

If you agree to participate in the valuable study, please visit the following address to complete the questionnaire. Participation is voluntary and will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. You are free to exit the survey at any time. However, your responses will not be recorded until the "I'm finished. Store my answers." button is clicked at the bottom of the page.

Survey Link:
http://thinktank.groupsystems.com/opinio/s?s=4687

Thank you in advance for your willingness to contribute to research in the counseling field.

Sincerely,

Chasity Odden Heide
Graduate Student, Counselor Education Program
North Dakota State University

APPENDIX E

SECOND CONTACT RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear School Counselors:

I am a graduate student in the Counselor Education program at North Dakota State University. I am writing to request your participation in a study exploring how practicing school counselors are responding to aggression in schools. Your response is vital to this research endeavor and will help to promote a safe school environment that fosters student learning and success.

School counselors who (1) are currently employed as a school counselor, and (2) have licensure/certification as a school counselor from their State Department of Education are eligible to participate. School counselors who do not meet these criteria are not eligible to participate at this time.

Your responses are requested by **February 18, 2009**. A reminder message will be posted three days before the completion of the period of study.

The use of the Internet as a mode for data collection brings risks to participant confidentiality. Risk to confidentiality using the Internet is inherent in normal use of web technology with the risk that information may be intercepted and read by a third party. However data collected will remain confidential, with access only permitted to the primary and co-investigators. No individual data will be reported in this study and no link will be made between your identity and responses. If you have concerns regarding the rights of human participants, please contact the primary investigator, Dr. Carol Buchholz at (701) 231-7103 or the Institutional Review Board of North Dakota State University at (701) 231-8908.

Completion and submission of the survey implies informed consent to use the data for research purposes. If you would like a copy of the research findings upon completion of this study, please contact me by e-mail (coddenheide@gmail.com).

If you agree to participate in the valuable study, please visit the following address to complete the questionnaire. Participation is voluntary and will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. You are free to exit the survey at any time. However, your responses will not be recorded until the "I'm finished. Store my answers." button is clicked at the bottom of the page.

Survey Link:
http://thinktank.groupsystems.com/opinio/s?s=4687

Thank you in advance for your willingness to contribute to research in the counseling field.

Sincerely,

Chasity Odden Heide
Student, Graduate Counselor Education Program
North Dakota State University

APPENDIX F

THIRD CONTACT RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear School Counselors:

I am a graduate student in the Counselor Education program at North Dakota State University. I am writing to request your participation in a study exploring how practicing school counselors are responding to aggression in schools. Your response is vital to this research endeavor and will help to promote a safe school environment that fosters student learning and success.

School counselors who (1) are currently employed as a school counselor, and (2) have licensure/certification as a school counselor from their State Department of Education are eligible to participate. School counselors who do not meet these criteria are not eligible to participate at this time.

Your responses are requested three days from now, by **February 18, 2009.**

The use of the Internet as a mode for data collection brings risks to participant confidentiality. Risk to confidentiality using the Internet is inherent in normal use of web technology with the risk that information may be intercepted and read by a third party. However data collected will remain confidential, with access only permitted to the primary and co-investigators. No individual data will be reported in this study and no link will be made between your identity and responses. If you have concerns regarding the rights of human participants, please contact the primary investigator, Dr. Carol Buchholz at (701) 231-7103 or the Institutional Review Board of North Dakota State University at (701) 231-8908.

Completion and submission of the survey implies informed consent to use the data for research purposes. If you would like a copy of the research findings upon completion of this study, please contact me by e-mail (coddenheide@gmail.com).

If you agree to participate in the valuable study, please visit the following address to complete the questionnaire. Participation is voluntary and will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. You are free to exit the survey at any time. However, your responses will not be recorded until the "I'm finished. Store my answers." button is clicked at the bottom of the page.

Survey Link:
http://thinktank.groupsystems.com/opinio/s?s=4687

Thank you in advance for your willingness to contribute to research in the counseling field.

Sincerely,

Chasity Odden Heide
Student, Graduate Counselor Education Program
North Dakota State University

APPENDIX G

FOURTH CONTACT RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear School Counselors:

I am a graduate student in the Counselor Education program at North Dakota State University. I am writing to request your participation in a study exploring how practicing school counselors are responding to aggression in schools. Your response is vital to this research endeavor and will help to promote a safe school environment that fosters student learning and success.

School counselors who (1) are currently employed as a school counselor, and (2) have licensure/certification as a school counselor from their State Department of Education are eligible to participate. School counselors who do not meet these criteria are not eligible to participate at this time.

The time for participation has been extended, the new final date being **February 25, 2009.**

The use of the Internet as a mode for data collection brings risks to participant confidentiality. Risk to confidentiality using the Internet is inherent in normal use of web technology with the risk that information may be intercepted and read by a third party. However data collected will remain confidential, with access only permitted to the primary and co-investigators. No individual data will be reported in this study and no link will be made between your identity and responses. If you have concerns regarding the rights of human participants, please contact the primary investigator, Dr. Carol Buchholz at (701) 231-7103 or the Institutional Review Board of North Dakota State University at (701) 231-8908.

Completion and submission of the survey implies informed consent to use the data for research purposes. If you would like a copy of the research findings upon completion of this study, please contact me by e-mail (coddenheide@gmail.com).

If you agree to participate in the valuable study, please visit the following address to complete the questionnaire. Participation is voluntary and will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. You are free to exit the survey at any time. However, your responses will not be recorded until the "I'm finished. Store my answers." button is clicked at the bottom of the page.

Survey Link:
http://thinktank.groupsystems.com/opinio/s?s=4687

Thank you in advance for your willingness to contribute to research in the counseling field.

Sincerely,

Chasity Odden Heide
Student, Graduate Counselor Education Program
North Dakota State University

APPENDIX H

FIFTH CONTACT NOTE OF APPRECIATION

Dear School Counselors:

With the closing of the "School Counselors' Responses to Aggression in Schools" survey last week, I wanted to take the time to sincerely *thank you* for all who participated in the survey. The preliminary results are already looking very exciting and I'm looking forward to disseminating the findings to school counselors in a timely manner.

Again, thank you for your contribution and support of my research.

Sincerely,

Chasity Odden Heide

Graduate Student, Counselor Education
North Dakota State University

APPENDIX I

STATE COUNSELING ASSOCIATION FIRST CONTACT E-MAIL MESSAGE

My name is Chasity Odden Heide and I am a graduate student at North Dakota State University in the Counselor Education program. I am working on an upcoming research project exploring how school counselors respond to aggression in schools. I would like to include [State] school counselors in my sample. I am utilizing an online method of data collection, posting a link to web-survey for interested school counselors to complete. I am seeking information on whether it would be possible to post a survey recruitment message on your state association's electronic mailing list or within a newsletter.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Chasity Odden Heide
Graduate Student, Counselor Education

APPENDIX J

STATE COUNSELING ASSOCIATION SECOND CONTACT E-MAIL MESSAGE

The "School Counselors' Responses to Aggression in Schools" survey has now been extended until February 25, 2009. This allows individuals an additional week to participate in this important survey. Your state's participation in this study provides a better picture as to how school counselors nationwide are responding to aggression.

I have attached the recruitment letter for your use if needed.

I sincerely appreciate your support and willingness to contribute to my research. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at coddenheide@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Chasity Odden Heide
Graduate Student, Counselor Education
North Dakota State University

APPENDIX K

STATES REPRESENTED IN THE SAMPLE

Figure K2. *States Represented in the Sample.*

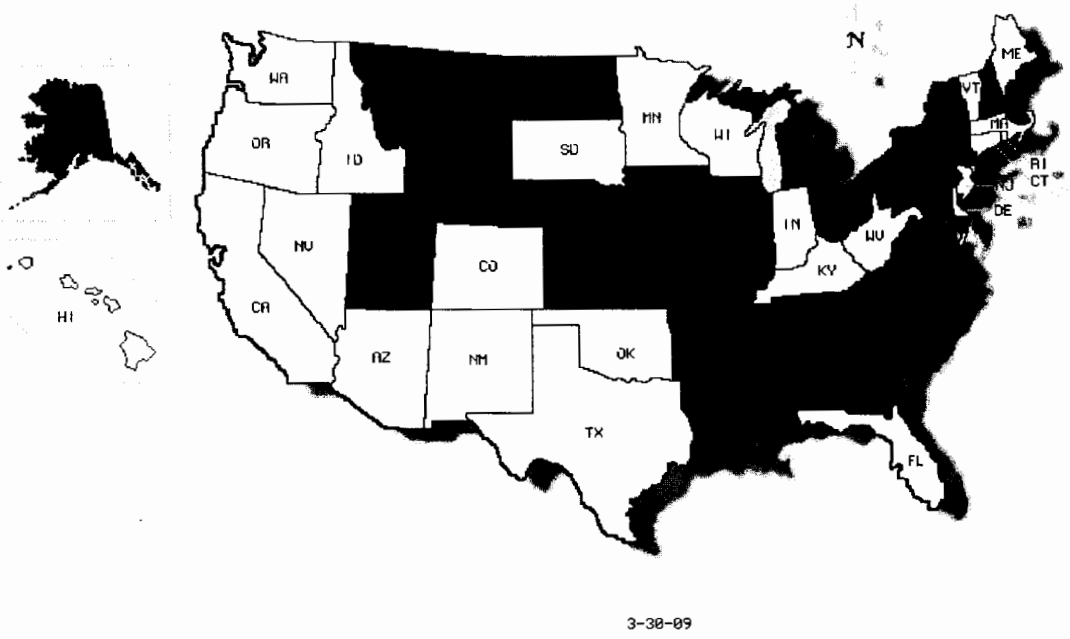


Figure K2 depicts the states represented by participants in the present study. Shaded states were represented in the sample. The map was developed by "Map-Maker Utility (http://monarch.tamu.edu/~maps2/us.htm).

APPENDIX L

DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS BY VIGNETTE

The following provides data analysis results by vignette. Results will be provided for whether participants defined the incident as aggression (1 = *No,* 2 = *Yes*), the degree of severity for each incident on a Likert scale ranging from of 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*), and finally the degree of likelihood of intervention on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Vignette 1

A male student comes into your office reporting that peers have called him mean names in the hallway. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing from this student.

Vignette 1 (Survey Question 13) is classified as overt aggression, featuring a male victim. Table L1 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 1 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L1. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 1*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	64	17.3	17.3
Yes	304	82.2	99.5
Missing	2	.5	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L1 shows 82.2% (*n* =304) of participants indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Table L2 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 1. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L2. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 1*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Severity			
Not at all serious	4	1.1	1.1
Somewhat serious	215	58.1	59.2
Serious	134	36.2	95.4
Very Serious	16	4.3	99.7
Missing	1	.3	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L2 shows a severity rating of "Somewhat serious" was the most frequent response (n = 215, 58.1%), with a mean degree of severity rating of 2.44 (SD = .60).

Table L3 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 1. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L3. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 1*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention			
Very unlikely	2	.5	.5
Unlikely	11	3.0	3.5
Likely	219	59.2	62.7
Very Likely	137	37.0	99.7
Missing	1	.3	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L3 shows most participants (n = 219, 59.2%) indicated they would be "Likely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention rating of 3.33 (SD = .56).

Vignette 2

A female student comes into your office reporting that her friend intentionally did not invite her to a weekend gathering. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature from this student.

Vignette 2 (Survey Question 14) is classified as relational aggression, featuring a female victim. Table L4 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 2 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L4. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 2*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	221	59.7	59.7
Yes	143	38.6	98.3
Missing	6	1.6	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L4 shows 59.7% (n = 221) of participants indicated, "No", they would not define this incident as aggression.

Table L5 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 2. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L5. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 2*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Severity			
Not at all serious	118	31.9	31.9
Somewhat serious	222	60.0	91.9
Serious	25	6.8	98.7
Very Serious	3	.8	99.5
Missing	2	.5	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L5 shows a severity rating of "Somewhat serious" was the most frequent response (n = 222, 60.0%), with a mean degree of severity of 1.76 (SD = .61).

Table L6 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 2. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L6. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 2*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention			
Very unlikely	71	19.2	19.2
Unlikely	154	41.6	60.8
Likely	123	33.2	94.0
Very Likely	20	5.4	99.4
Missing	2	.5	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L6 shows most participants (n = 154, 41.6%) indicated they would be "Unlikely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention of 2.25 (SD = .83).

Vignette 3

A female student comes into your office reporting that she is afraid of a peer who constantly shoves him/her in the locker room. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing from this student.

Vignette 3 (Survey Question 15) is classified as overt aggression, featuring a female victim. Table L7 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 3 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L7. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 3*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	1	.3	.3
Yes	367	99.2	99.5
Missing	2	.5	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L7 shows most participants (n = 367, 99.2%) indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Table L8 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 3. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L8. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 3*

Item	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Severity			
Not at all serious	0	0.0	0.0
Somewhat serious	10	2.7	2.7
Serious	111	30.0	32.7
Very Serious	246	66.5	99.2
Missing	3	.8	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L8 shows 67.0% (n = 246) of participants rated this incident as "Very serious", with a mean degree of severity of 3.64 (SD = .53).

Table L9 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 3. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L9. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 3*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention			
Very unlikely	2	.5	.5
Unlikely	0	0.0	.5

Table L9. (continued)

Likely	53	14.3	14.8
Very Likely	368	84.6	99.4
Missing	2	.5	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L9 shows 85.1% (n = 313) of participants indicated they would be "Very likely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention of 3.84 (SD = 4.10).

Vignette 4

Through a classroom needs assessment survey, a male student self-identified as having been frequently ignored or given the silent treatment by his peers. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing about this student.

Vignette 4 (Survey Question 16) is classified as relational aggression, featuring a male victim. Table L10 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 4 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L10. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 4*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	141	38.1	38.1
Yes	224	60.5	98.6
Missing	5	1.4	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L10 shows 60.5% (n = 224) of participants indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Table L11 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 4. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L11. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 4*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Severity			
Not at all serious	22	5.9	5.9
Somewhat serious	191	51.6	57.5
Serious	124	33.5	91.0
Very Serious	27	7.3	98.3
Missing	6	1.6	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L11 shows a severity rating of "Somewhat serious" was the most frequent response (n = 191, 51.6%), with a mean degree of severity of 2.43 (SD = .72).

Table L12 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 4. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L12. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 4*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention			
Very unlikely	9	2.4	2.4
Unlikely	47	12.7	15.1
Likely	225	60.8	75.9
Very Likely	83	22.4	98.3
Missing	6	1.6	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L12 shows most participants (n = 225, 60.8%) indicated they would be "Likely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention rating of 3.05 (SD = .67).

Vignette 5

Through a classroom needs assessment survey, a male student is identified as having been hit, kicked, or shoved around by others. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing about this student.

Vignette 5 (Survey Question 17) is classified as overt aggression, featuring a male victim. Table L13 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 5 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L13. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 5*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	4	1.1	1.1
Yes	359	97.0	98.1
Missing	7	1.9	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L13 shows most participants (n = 359, 97.0%) indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Table L14 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 5. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L14. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 5*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Severity			
Not at all serious	0	0.0	0.0
Somewhat serious	3	.8	.8
Serious	61	16.5	17.3
Very Serious	299	80.8	98.1
Missing	7	1.9	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L14 shows 80.8% (n = 299) of participants rated this incident as "Very serious", with a mean degree of severity of 3.82 (SD = .41).

Table L15 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 5. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L15. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 5*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention			
Very unlikely	1	.3	.3
Unlikely	4	1.1	1.4
Likely	36	9.7	11.1
Very Likely	324	87.6	98.7
Missing	5	1.4	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L15 shows most participants (n = 324, 87.6%) indicated they would be "Very likely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention of 3.87 (SD = .39).

Vignette 6

A parent calls you with concerns regarding their female student. Their student reports her peers at school are spreading rumors and gossiping about her. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing from this student.

Vignette 6 (Survey Question 18) is classified as relational aggression, featuring a female victim. Table L16 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 6 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L16. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 6*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	50	13.5	13.5
Yes	316	85.4	98.9
Missing	4	1.1	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L16 shows most participants (n = 316, 85.4%) indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Table L17 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 6. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L17. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 6*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Severity			
Not at all serious	4	1.1	1.1
Somewhat serious	104	28.1	29.2
Serious	183	49.5	78.7
Very Serious	76	20.5	99.2
Missing	3	.8	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L17 shows a severity rating of "Serious" was the most frequent response (n = 183, 49.9%), with a mean degree of severity of 2.90 (SD = .73).

Table L18 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 6. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L18. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 6*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention			
Very unlikely	2	.5	.5
Unlikely	7	1.9	2.4
Likely	179	48.4	50.8

Table L18. (continued)

	Very Likely	178	48.1	98.9
	Missing	4	1.1	100.0
Total		370	100.0	

Table L18 shows most participants (n = 179, 48.9%) indicated they would be "Likely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention of 3.46 (SD = .57).

Vignette 7

A male student comes into your office reporting that he is afraid of a peer who constantly shoves him/her in the locker room. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing from this student.

Vignette 7 (Survey Question 19) is classified as overt aggression, featuring a male victim. Table L19 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 7 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L19. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 7*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	1	.3	.3
Yes	363	98.1	98.4
Missing	6	1.6	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L19 shows most participants (n = 363, 98.1%) indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Table L20 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 7. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L20. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 7*

Item	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Severity			
Not at all serious	1	.3	.3
Somewhat serious	13	3.5	3.8
Serious	119	32.2	36.0
Very Serious	232	62.7	98.7
Missing	5	1.4	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L20 shows a severity rating of "Very serious" was the most frequent response (n = 232, 62.7%), with a mean degree of severity of 3.59 (SD = .57).

Table L21 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 7. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L21. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 7*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention			
Very unlikely	0	0.0	0.0
Unlikely	3	.8	.8
Likely	73	19.7	20.5
Very Likely	289	78.1	98.6
Missing	5	1.4	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L21 shows most participants (n = 289, 78.1%) indicated they would be "Very likely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention of 3.78 (SD = .43).

Vignette 8

Through a classroom needs assessment survey, a female student is identified as having been hit, kicked, or shoved around by others. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing about this student.

Vignette 8 (Survey Question 20) is classified as overt aggression, featuring a female victim. Table L22 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 8 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L22. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 8*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	1	.3	.3
Yes	364	98.4	98.7
Missing	5	1.4	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L22 shows most participants (n = 364, 98.4%) indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Table L23 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 8. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L23. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 8*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Severity			
Not at all serious	0	0.0	0.0
Somewhat serious	2	.5	.5
Serious	85	23.0	23.5
Very Serious	279	75.4	98.9
Missing	4	1.1	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L23 shows a severity rating of "Very serious" was the most frequent response (n = 279, 75.4%), with a mean *degree of severity* of 3.76 (SD = .44).

Table L24 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 8. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L24. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 8.*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention			
Very unlikely	0	0.0	0.0
Unlikely	4	1.1	1.1
Likely	55	14.9	16.0
Very Likely	306	82.7	98.7
Missing	5	1.4	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L24 shows most participants (n = 306, 82.7%) indicated they would be "Very likely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention of 3.83 (SD = .41).

Vignette 9

Through a classroom needs assessment survey, a female student self-identified as having been frequently ignored or given the silent treatment by her peers. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing about this student.

Vignette 9 (Survey Question 21) is classified as relational aggression, featuring a female victim. Table L25 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 9 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L25. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 9*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	124	33.5	33.5
Yes	242	65.4	98.9
Missing	4	1.1	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L25 shows most participants (n = 242, 65.4%) indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Table L26 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 9. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L26. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 9*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Severity			
Not at all serious	24	6.5	6.5
Somewhat serious	162	43.8	50.3
Serious	152	41.1	91.4
Very Serious	27	7.3	98.7
Missing	5	1.4	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L26 shows a severity rating of "Somewhat serious" was the most frequent response (n = 162, 44.4%), with a mean degree of severity of 2.50 (SD = .73).

Table L27 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 9. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L27. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 9*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention			
Very unlikely	9	2.4	2.4
Unlikely	50	13.5	15.9

Table L27. (continued)

Likely	218	58.9	74.8
Very Likely	88	23.8	98.6
Missing	5	1.4	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L27 shows most participants (n = 218, 59.7%) indicated they would be "Likely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention of 3.05 (SD = .69).

Vignette 10

A female student comes into your office reporting that a peer is making statements such as, "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore." This is not the first time this student has reported something of this nature to you.

Vignette 10 (Survey Question 22) is classified as relational aggression, featuring a female victim. Table L28 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 10 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L28. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 10*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	100	27.0	27.0
Yes	264	71.4	98.4
Missing	6	1.6	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L28 shows most participants (n = 264, 71.4%) indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Table L29 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 10. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L29. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 10*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Severity			
Not at all serious	31	8.4	8.4
Somewhat serious	199	53.8	62.2
Serious	111	30.0	92.2
Very Serious	25	6.8	99.0
Table L29. (continued)			
Missing	4	1.1	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L29 shows a severity rating of "Somewhat serious" was the most frequent response (n =199, 54.4%), with a mean degree of severity of 2.36 (SD = .73).

Table L30 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 10. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L30. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 10*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention			
Very unlikely	10	2.7	2.7
Unlikely	45	12.2	14.9
Likely	229	61.9	76.8
Very Likely	80	21.6	98.4
Missing	6	1.6	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L30 shows most participants (n = 229, 62.9%) indicated they would be "Likely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention of 3.04 (SD = .67).

Vignette 11

A parent calls you with concerns regarding their male student. Their student reports his peers at school are spreading rumors and gossiping about him. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing from this student.

Vignette 11 (Survey Question 23) is classified as relational aggression, featuring a male victim. Table L31 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 11 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L31. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 11*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	68	18.4	18.4
Yes	298	80.5	98.9
Missing	4	1.1	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L31 shows 80.5% ($n = 298$) of participants indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Table L32 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 11. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L32. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 11*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Severity			
Not at all serious	9	2.4	2.4
Somewhat serious	127	34.3	36.7
Serious	179	48.4	85.1
Very Serious	51	13.8	98.9
Missing	2	1.1	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L32 shows a severity rating of "Serious" was the most frequent response (n = 179, 48.9%), with a mean degree of severity of 2.74 (SD = .72).

Table L33 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 11. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L33. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 11*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention			
Very unlikely	2	.5	.5
Unlikely	18	4.9	5.4
Likely	220	59.5	64.9
Very Likely	125	33.8	98.7
Missing	5	1.4	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L33 shows 60.3% (n = 220) of participants indicated they would be "Likely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention of 3.28 (SD = .58).

Vignette 12

A male student comes into your office reporting that a peer is making statements such as, "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore." This is not the first time this student has reported something of this nature to you.

Vignette 12 (Survey Question 24) is classified as relational aggression, featuring a male victim. Table L34 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 12 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L34. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 12*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	104	28.1	28.1
Yes	262	70.8	98.9
Missing	4	1.1	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L34 shows 70.8% (n = 262) of participants indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Table L35 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 12. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L35. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 12*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Severity			
Not at all serious	30	8.1	8.1
Somewhat serious	188	50.8	58.9
Serious	123	33.2	92.1
Very Serious	28	7.6	99.7
Missing	1	.3	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L35 shows a severity rating of "Somewhat serious" was the most frequent response (n = 188, 50.9%), with a mean degree of severity of 2.40 (SD = .75).

Table L36 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 12. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L36. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 12*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention			
Very unlikely	14	3.8	3.8
Unlikely	49	13.2	17.0
Likely	219	59.2	76.2

Table L36. (continued)

Very Likely	86	23.2	99.4
Missing	2	.5	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L36 shows 59.5% (n = 219) of participants indicated they would be "Likely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention of 3.02 (SD = .72).

Vignette 13

A male student comes into your office reporting that his friend intentionally did not invite him to a weekend gathering. This is not the first time this student has reported something of this nature to you.

Vignette 13 (Survey Question 25) is classified as relational aggression, featuring a male victim. Table L37 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 13 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L37. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 13*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	213	57.6	57.6
Yes	149	40.3	97.9
Missing	8	2.2	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L37 shows most participants (n = 213, 57.6%) indicated, "No", they would not define this incident as aggression.

Table L38 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 13. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L38. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 13*

Item		Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Severity				
	Not at all serious	111	30.0	30.0
	Somewhat serious	201	54.3	84.3
	Serious	48	13.0	97.2
	Very Serious	3	.8	98.1
	Missing	7	1.9	100.0
Total		370	100.0	

Table L38 shows a severity rating of "Somewhat serious" was the most frequent response (n = 201, 55.4%), with a mean degree of severity of 1.84 (SD = .67).

Table L39 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 13. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L39. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 13*

Item		Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention				
	Very unlikely	55	14.9	14.9
	Unlikely	146	39.5	54.4
	Likely	137	37.0	91.4
	Very Likely	25	6.8	98.2
	Missing	7	1.9	100.0
Total		370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L39 shows 40.2% (n = 146) of participants indicated they would be "Unlikely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention of 2.36 (SD = .82).

Vignette 14

A parent calls with concerns about their male student. Their student reports being threatened physically by other students. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing from this student.

Vignette 14 (Survey Question 26) is classified as overt aggression, featuring a male victim. Table L40 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 14 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L40. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 14*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	3	.8	.8
Yes	363	98.1	98.9
Missing	4	1.1	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L40 shows 98.1% (n = 363) of participants indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Table L41 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 14. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L41. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 14*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Severity			
Not at all serious	0	0.0	0.0
Somewhat serious	12	3.2	3.2
Serious	113	30.5	33.7
Very Serious	240	64.9	98.6
Missing	5	1.4	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L41 shows a severity rating of "Very serious" was the most frequent response (n = 240, 65.8%), with a mean degree of severity of 3.62 (SD = .55).

Table L42 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 14. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L42. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 14*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention			
Very unlikely	0	0.0	0.0
Unlikely	2	.5	.5
Likely	76	20.5	21.0
Very Likely	285	77.0	98.0
Missing	7	1.9	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L42 shows most participants (n = 285, 78.5%) indicated they would be "Very likely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention of 3.78 (SD = .43).

Vignette 15

A parent calls with concerns about their female student. Their student reports being threatened physically by other students. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing from this student.

Vignette 15 (Survey Question 27) is classified as overt aggression, featuring a female victim. Table L43 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 15 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L43. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 15*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	2	.5	.5
Yes	363	98.1	98.6

Table L43. (continued)

Missing	5	1.4	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Table L43 shows 98.1% (n = 363) of participants indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Table L44 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 15. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L44. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 15*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Severity			
Not at all serious	0	0.0	0.0
Somewhat serious	13	3.5	3.5
Serious	106	28.6	32.1
Very Serious	245	66.2	98.3
Missing	6	1.6	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L44 shows a severity rating of "Very serious" was the most frequent response (n = 245, 67.3%), with a mean degree of severity of 3.64 (SD = .55).

Table L45 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 15. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L45. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 15*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention			
Very unlikely	0	0.0	0.0
Unlikely	1	.3	.3
Likely	75	20.3	20.6
Very Likely	289	78.1	98.7
Missing	5	1.4	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L45 shows most participants (n = 289, 79.2%) indicated they would be "Very likely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention of 3.79 (SD = .42).

Vignette 16

A female student comes into your office reporting that peers have called her mean names in the hallway. This is not the first time you have heard this sort of thing from this student.

Vignette 16 (Survey Question 28) is classified as overt aggression, featuring a female victim. Table L46 shows frequencies and percentages of participants defining Vignette 16 as aggression (1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes*).

Table L46. *Frequencies and Percentages of Definition as Aggression for Vignette 16*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Aggression			
No	55	14.9	14.9
Yes	310	83.8	98.7
Missing	5	1.4	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L46 shows 83.8% (n = 310) of participants, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression

Table L47 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of severity ratings for Vignette 16. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Not at all serious*) to 4 (*Very serious*).

Table L47. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Severity for Vignette 16*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Severity			
Not at all serious	6	1.6	1.6
Somewhat serious	154	41.6	43.2
Serious	172	46.5	89.7

	Very Serious	35	9.5	99.2
	Missing	3	.8	100.0
Total		370	100.0	

Table L47 shows a severity rating of "Serious" was the most frequent response (n = 172, 46.9%), with a mean degree of severity of 2.64 (SD = .67).

Table L48 shows the frequencies and percentages of degree of likelihood of intervention ratings for Vignette 16. Likert ratings ranged from 1 (*Very unlikely*) to 4 (*Very likely*).

Table L48. *Frequencies and Percentages of Degree of Likelihood of Intervention for Vignette 16*

Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Likelihood of Intervention			
Very unlikely	1	.3	.3
Unlikely	19	5.1	5.4
Likely	230	62.2	67.6
Very Likely	116	31.4	99.0
Missing	4	1.1	100.0
Total	370	100.0	

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table L48 shows 62.8% (n = 230) of participants indicated they would be "Likely" to intervene in this incident, with a mean degree of likelihood of intervention of 3.26 (SD = .56).

APPENDIX M

RESULTS OF CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS FOR VIGNETTES BY GENDER

Four vignettes were created for each type of aggression (overt, relational), with each having a male and female version in which only the gender of the victim was changed. The following reports results for each pairwise vignette. Results are reported for both overt and relational vignettes.

Overt Aggression Vignettes

Vignettes 1 and 16

A male/female student comes into your office reporting that peers have called him/her mean names in the hallway. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature from this student.

Vignettes 1 and 16 were classified as overt aggression, controlling for gender with a male victim (Vignette 1, Survey Question 13) and female victim (Vignette 16, Survey Question 28). A Pearson Chi-square analysis was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents that were defined as aggression by participants. Table M1 shows the results of the Pearson Chi-square analysis.

Table M1. *Chi-square Analysis, Frequencies, and Percentages of Definition as Aggression by Gender for Vignettes 1 and 16*

Gender		No Aggression Frequency (%)	Yes Aggression Frequency (%)	Total
Male				
	Observed Count	64 (17.4 %)	304 (82.6 %)	368
	Expected Count	59.7	308.3	368.0
Female				
	Observed Count	55 (15.1 %)	310 (84.9 %)	365
	Expected Count	59.3	305.7	365.0
Total				
	Observed Count	119 (16.2 %)	614 (83.8 %)	733
	Expected	119.0	614.0	733.0

Table MI shows of the responses to the male vignette (Vignette 1), 82.6% (n = 304) indicated, "Yes", they would define the incident as aggression. Likewise for responses to the female version of the vignette (Vignette 16), with 84.9% (n = 310) indicating, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

The Pearson Chi-square analysis determined that there was no significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents defined as aggression [χ^2 (1, N = 733) = .727, p = .394]. Overall, 83.8 % of respondents indicated they would define this incident as aggression.

Vignettes 7 and 3

A male/female student comes into your office reporting that he/she is afraid of a peer who constantly shoves him/her in the locker room. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature from this student.

Vignettes 7 and 3 were classified as overt aggression, controlling for gender with a male victim (Vignette 7, Survey Question 19) and female victim (Vignette 3, Survey Question 15). A Pearson Chi-square analysis was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents that were defined as aggression by participants. Table M2 shows the results of the Pearson Chi-square analysis.

Table M2. *Chi-square Analysis, Frequencies, and Percentages of Definition as Aggression by Gender for Vignettes 7 and 3*

Gender	No Aggression Frequency (%)	Yes Aggression Frequency (%)	Total
Male			
Observed Count	1 (.3 %)	363 (99.7 %)	364

Table M2. (continued)

Expected Count	59.7	308.3	364.0
Female			
Observed Count	1 (15.1 %)	367 (99.7 %)	368
Expected Count	1.0	367.0	368.0
Total			
Observed Count	2 (.3 %)	730 (99.7 %)	732
Expected	2.0	730.0	732.0

Table M2 shows of the responses to the male vignette (Vignette 7), 99.7% ($n = 363$) indicated, "Yes", they would define the incident as aggression. Likewise for responses to the female version of the vignette (Vignette 3), with 99.7% ($n = 376$) indicating, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

The Pearson Chi-square analysis determined that there was no significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents defined as aggression [χ^2 (1, N =732) = .000, $p = .748$]. Overall, 99.7 % of respondents indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Vignettes 5 and 8

Through a classroom needs assessment survey, a male/female student is identified as having been hit, kicked, or shoved around by others. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature about this student.

Vignettes 5 and 8 were classified as overt aggression, controlling for gender with a male victim (Vignette 5, Survey Question 17) and female victim (Vignette 8, Survey Question 20). A Pearson Chi-square analysis was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents that were

defined as aggression by participants. Table M3 shows the results of the Pearson Chi-square analysis.

Table M3. *Chi-square Analysis, Frequencies, and Percentages of Definition as Aggression by Gender for Vignettes 5 and 8*

Gender	No Aggression Frequency (%)	Yes Aggression Frequency (%)	Total
Male			
Observed Count	4 (1.1 %)	359 (98.9 %)	363
Expected Count	2.5	308.3	363.0
Female			
Observed Count	1 (.3 %)	364 (99.7 %)	365
Expected Count	1.0	367.0	365.0
Total			
Observed Count	5 (.7 %)	723 (99.3 %)	728
Expected	5.0	723.0	728.0

Table M3 shows of the responses to the male vignette (Vignette 5), 98.9% (n = 359) indicated, "Yes", they would define the incident as aggression. Likewise for responses to the female version of the vignette (Vignette 8), with 99.7% (n = 364) of participants indicating, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

The Pearson Chi-square analysis determined that there was no significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents defined as aggression [χ^2 (1, N = 728) = 1.829, p = .176]. Overall, 99.3 % of respondents indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Vignettes 14 and 15

A parent/guardian calls with concerns about their male/female student. Their student reports being threatened physically by other students. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature about this student.

Vignettes 14 and 15 were classified as overt aggression, controlling for gender with a male victim (Vignette 14, Survey Question 26) and female victim (Vignette 15, Survey Question 27). A Pearson Chi-square analysis was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents that were defined as aggression by participants. Table M4 shows the results of the Pearson Chi-square analysis.

Table M4. *Chi-square Analysis, Frequencies, and Percentages of Definition as Aggression by Gender for Vignettes 14 and 15*

Gender	No Aggression Frequency (%)	Yes Aggression Frequency (%)	Total
Male			
Observed Count	3 (.8 %)	363 (99.2 %)	366
Expected Count	2.5	363.5	366.0
Female			
Observed Count	2 (.5 %)	363 (99.5 %)	365
Expected Count	2.5	362.5	365.0
Total			
Observed Count	5 (.7 %)	726 (99.3 %)	731
Expected	5.0	726.0	731.0

Table M4 shows of the responses to the male vignette (Vignette 14), 99.2% (n = 363) of participants indicated, "Yes", they would define the incident as aggression. Likewise for responses to the female version of the vignette (Vignette 15), with 99.5% (n = 363) indicating, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

The Pearson Chi-square analysis determined that there was no significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents defined as aggression [χ^2 (1, N =731) = .199, p = .656]. Overall, 99.3 % of respondents indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Relational Aggression Vignettes

Vignettes 13 and 2

A male/female student comes into your office reporting that his/her friend intentionally did not invite him/her to a weekend gathering. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature from this student.

Vignettes 13 and 2 were classified as relational aggression, controlling for gender with a male victim (Vignette 13, Survey Question 15) and female victim (Vignette 2, Survey Question 14). A Pearson Chi-square analysis was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents that were defined as aggression by participants. Table M5 shows the results of the Pearson Chi-square analysis.

Table M5. *Chi-square Analysis, Frequencies, and Percentages of Definition as Aggression by Gender for Vignettes 13 and 2*

Gender	No Aggression Frequency (%)	Yes Aggression Frequency (%)	Total
Male			
Observed Count	213 (58.8 %)	149 (41.2 %)	362
Expected Count	216.4	145.6	362.0
Female			
Observed Count	211 (60.7%)	143 (39.3 %)	364
Expected Count	2.5	362.5	364.0
Total			
Observed Count	434 (59.8 %)	292 (40.2 %)	726
Expected	5.0	726.0	726.0

Table M5 shows of the responses to the male vignette (Vignette 13), 58.8% (n = 213) indicated, "No", they would not define the incident as aggression. Likewise for responses to the female version of the vignette (Vignette 2), with 60.7% (n = 211) of participants indicating, "No", they would define this incident as aggression.

The Pearson Chi-square analysis determined that there was no significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents defined as aggression [χ^2 (1, N =726) = .265, p = .607]. Overall, 59.8% of respondents indicated, "No", they would not define this incident as aggression.

Vignettes 4 and 9

Through a classroom needs assessment survey, a male/female student self-identified as having been frequently ignored or given the silent treatment by his/her peers. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature about this student.

Vignettes 4 and 9 were classified as relational aggression, controlling for gender with a male victim (Vignette 4, Survey Question 16) and female victim (Vignette 9, Survey Question 21). A Pearson Chi-square analysis was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents that were defined as aggression by participants. Table M6 shows the results of the Pearson Chi-square analysis.

Table M6. *Chi-square Analysis, Frequencies, and Percentages of Definition as Aggression by Gender for Vignettes 4 and 9*

Gender	No Aggression Frequency (%)	Yes Aggression Frequency (%)	Total
Male			
Observed Count	141 (38.6 %)	242 (61.4 %)	365
Expected Count	132.3	232.7	365.0
Female			
Observed Count	124 (33.9 %)	242 (66.1 %)	366
Expected Count	132.7	233.3	366.0
Total			
Observed Count	265 (36.3 %)	466 (63.7 %)	731
Expected	265.0	466.0	731.0

Table M6 shows of the responses to the male vignette (Vignette 4), 61.4% (n = 363) of participants indicated, "Yes", they would define the incident as aggression. Likewise for responses to the female version of the vignette (Vignette 9), with 66.1% (n = 242) indicating, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

The Pearson Chi-square analysis determined that there was no significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents defined as aggression [χ^2 (1, N = 731) = 1.784, p = .182]. Overall, 63.7 % respondents indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Vignettes 11 and 6

A parent/guardian calls you with concerns regarding their male/female student. Their student reports that his/her peers at school are spreading rumors and gossiping about him/her. This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature about this student.

Vignettes 11 and 6 were classified as relational aggression, controlling for gender with a male victim (Vignette 11, Survey Question 26) and female victim (Vignette 6, Survey Question 27). A Pearson Chi-square analysis was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents that were defined as aggression by participants. Table M7 shows the results of the Pearson Chi-square analysis.

Table M7. *Chi-square Analysis, Frequencies, and Percentages of Definition as Aggression by Gender for Vignettes 11 and 6*

Gender	No Aggression Frequency (%)	Yes Aggression Frequency (%)	Total
Male			
Observed Count	68 (18.6 %)	298 (81.4 %)	366

Table M7. (continued)

	Expected Count	59.0	307.0	366.0
Female				
	Observed Count	50 (13.7 %)	316 (86.3 %)	366
	Expected Count	59.0	307.0	366.0
Total				
	Observed Count	118 (16.1 %)	614 (83.9 %)	732
	Expected	118.0	614.0	732

Table M7 shows of the responses to the male vignette (Vignette 5), 99.2% (n = 363) of participants indicated, "Yes", they would define the incident as aggression. Likewise for responses to the female version of the vignette (Vignette Eight), with 99.5% (n = 363) of participants indicating, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

The Pearson Chi-square analysis determined that there was no significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents defined as aggression [χ^2 (1, N = 732) = 3.273, p = .070]. Overall, 83.9.3 % respondents indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

Vignettes 12 and 10

A male/female student comes into your office reporting that a peer is making statements such as, "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore." This is not the first time you have heard something of this nature from this student.

Vignettes 12 and 10 were classified as relational aggression, controlling for gender with a male victim (Vignette 12, Survey Question 24) and female victim (Vignette 10, Survey Question 22). A Pearson Chi-square analysis was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents that were

defined as aggression by participants. Table M8 shows the results of the Pearson Chi-square analysis.

Table M8. *Chi-square Analysis, Frequencies, and Percentages of Definition as Aggression by Gender for Vignettes 12 and 10*

Gender	No Aggression Frequency (%)	Yes Aggression Frequency (%)	Total
Male			
Observed Count	104 (28.4 %)	262 (71.6 %)	366
Expected Count	102.3	263.7	366.0
Female			
Observed Count	100 (27.5%)	264 (72.5 %)	364
Expected Count	2.5	362.5	364.0
Total			
Observed Count	204 (27.9 %)	526 (72.1 %)	730
Expected	204.0	526.0	730

Table M8 shows of the responses to the male vignette (Vignette 12), 71.6% (n = 262) of participants indicated, "Yes", they would define the incident as aggression. Likewise for responses to the female version of the vignette (Vignette 10), with 72.5% (n = 262) indicating, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.

The Pearson Chi-square analysis determined that there was no significant difference between the proportion of male and female incidents defined as aggression [χ^2 (1, N = 730) = .081, p = .777]. Overall, 72.1% respondents indicated, "Yes", they would define this incident as aggression.