



# Exploring the Influence of Elementary School Teachers' Self-Concept on their Beliefs about Bullying

HEATHER A. WOODS, B.A. & SANDRA L. BOSACKI, PH.D.

BROCK UNIVERSITY

# Background

- ▶ Bullying prevention programs within Ontario have not been as effective as intended (Smith et al., 2004)
  - ▶ Research tends to focus on student beliefs and outcomes
- ▶ Theoretical Framework
  - ▶ Bronfenbrenner's (1974; 1976) Ecological Systems Theory
  - ▶ Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory

# Background

- ▶ Due to popular bullying myths, teachers may not view bullying as a serious issue
  - ▶ Boys will be boys
  - ▶ Normal part of growing up
  - ▶ Rite of passage (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008; Marini, Spear, & Bombay, 1999; O'Moore, 2000)
- ▶ Teachers often report overt forms of bullying as more severe, elicit more empathy, warranting of intervention as compared to covert forms of bullying (Byers, Caltabiano, & Caltabiano, 2011; Duy, 2013)

# Background

- ▶ Teacher Efficacy
  - ▶ Increased sense of efficacy related to stronger student-teacher relationships and more successful program implementation (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Emmer & Stough, 2001; Guskey, 1988)
  - ▶ **Varies by grade and experience** (Betoret, 2009; Coladarci, 1992; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; Yeo et al., 2010)
- ▶ Research regarding bullying and teacher efficacy shows mixed findings (Byers et al., 2011; Yoon, 2004)
  - ▶ Validity issues as efficacy measures do not specifically address bullying

# Background

## ▶ Self-Concept

- ▶ Previous research has focused on bullies and victims (e.g., Jenkins & Kilpatrick Demaray, 2012; Kaukiainen et al., 2002; O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001; Turner, Finkelhor, & Ormrod, 2010)

## ▶ Five self-concept factors (Stake, 1994)

- ▶ moral (e.g., loyal, trustworthy)
- ▶ likeable (e.g., easy to talk to)
- ▶ powerful (e.g., acts as a leader)
- ▶ task accomplishers (e.g., effectively complete tasks)
- ▶ vulnerable (e.g., easily embarrassed, self-conscious)

# Current Study

- ▶ How are teachers' self-concept and self-efficacy related to their beliefs about bullying (i.e., overt vs. covert), along with their intention to intervene in a bullying situation?
  - ▶ Do these beliefs vary by grade level being taught?
  - ▶ Do these beliefs vary by experience level?

# Methods

## ▶ Demographics

- ▶ 58 teachers (n = 49 women; n = 9 men) from Ontario, Canada.
- ▶ mean average age of 36.89 years (SD = 8.73, Range 22-54).
- ▶ 36.2 percent (n = 21) of participants teaching primary
- ▶ 27.6 percent (n = 16) teaching Junior
- ▶ 29.3 percent (n = 17) teaching intermediate
- ▶ 0-28 years of teaching experience (M = 10.27, SD = 6.99)
  - ▶ less than 10 years of experience (n = 28)
  - ▶ more than 10 years of experience (n = 22).

## ▶ **Teacher Efficacy**

- ▶ classroom management subscale of the Teachers Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001)
- ▶ Teachers' Bullying Prevention Efficacy Scale (TBPE; Woods, 2015)

## ▶ **Teacher self-concept**

- ▶ Six-Factor Self-Concept Scale (Stake, 1994)
  - ▶ Used 5 of the 6 factors: Power, Task Accomplishment, Vulnerability, Likeability, and

Morality.

## ▶ **Bullying vignettes**

- ▶ Yoon and Kerber's (2003) bullying vignettes (physical, relational, and verbal).
- ▶ Boulton et al., (2014) Cyberbullying Vignettes
  - ▶ Participants rated questions about the seriousness of the situation, how upset they would be with the perpetrator, and how likely they would be to intervene in the situation.

# Results

- ▶ Multiple regressions
  - ▶ TBPE, Likability, Task Accomplishment, Power, Vulnerability, and Morality predicting
    - ▶ Overt seriousness (overall ns; individual predictor: TBPE)
    - ▶ Covert seriousness (overall ns; individual predictor: TBPE, task accomplishment)
    - ▶ Overt empathy (ns)
    - ▶ Covert empathy (ns)
    - ▶ Overt likelihood of intervention (ns)
    - ▶ Covert likelihood of intervention (mod. Sig; individual predictor: Morality)
    - ▶ Overt confidence to intervene (overall sig; individual predictor: TBPE, power)
    - ▶ Covert confidence to intervene (overall sig; individual predictor: TBPE)

# Result

Teachers' Bullying Prevention Efficacy by Experience and Grade Level Taught

	F	$\eta^2$	Power
Grade Level Taught	.384	.018	.108
Experience	.087	.002	.060
Grade Level Taught*Experience	.041	.002	.056

# Results

## Bullying Beliefs by Experience and Grade Level Taught

		F	$\eta^2$	Power
Bullying	Seriousness	60.418**	.596	1.000
	Empathy	28.946**	.414	1.000
	Intervention	46.465**	.531	1.000
	Confidence	44.845**	.522	1.000
Bullying*Experience	Seriousness	.120	.003	.063
	Empathy	1.385	.033	.210
	Intervention	.203	.005	.072
	Confidence	8.158*	.166	.796
Bullying*Grade Taught	Seriousness	.610	.029	.145
	Empathy	.133	.011	.084
	Intervention	.199	.010	.079
	Confidence	.000	.000	.050
Bullying*Experience*Grade Taught	Seriousness	.646	.031	.151
	Empathy	.618	.029	.146
	Intervention	2.440	.106	.454
	Confidence	1.390	.063	.282

Note: \*denotes significance at  $\alpha = .05$ , \*\*denotes significance at  $\alpha = .001$

# Discussion

- ▶ The present study supports past research that found that teachers believed physical and verbal bullying to be the most severe, and warranting of intervention as compared to relational and cyber bullying (Boulton et al., 2014; Byers et al., 2006; Yoon, 2004; Yoon & Kerber, 2003)
- ▶ Teacher's confidence to intervene in overt bullying situations declined over time, while their confidence to intervene in covert bullying situations increased over time.
  - ▶ Perhaps losing touch as generational gap increases between student and teacher (Klassen & Chiu, 2010)
- ▶ As teachers' level of experience increased, their confidence to intervene in covert bullying situations also increased.
  - ▶ Gain confidence as they experience more similar situations over time ((Wolters & Daugherty, 2007; Yeo et al., 2008)

- ▶ Contrary to previous research, bullying prevention efficacy was found to be related to teachers' beliefs about the seriousness of overt and covert bullying, and their confidence to intervene (Byers et al., 2011)
  - ▶ May suggest that this new measure of teachers' sense of efficacy provided a more focused assessment of teachers' beliefs about their bullying prevention abilities.
- ▶ Power was related to their confidence to intervene in overt bullying situations but not covert bullying
  - ▶ Combination of teachers' bullying prevention efficacy and a high sense of power enables them to feel that they are equipped to address overt bullying
  - ▶ Perhaps this discrepancy is due to the visibility of the type of bullying; when bullying is more visible teachers are more likely to (Bauman and Del Rio, 2006; Boulton et al., 2014; Craig et al., 2000)

# Discussion

- ▶ Teachers who believe themselves to more trustworthy or loyal were more likely to intervene in covert forms of bullying
  - ▶ Understanding the negative effects of covert bullying may increase their perception that intervening would be the “right” thing to do (see Ahtola et al., 2012; Aziz et al., 2011; Bauman & Del Rio, 2010; Byers et al., 2011)

# Limitations and Future Directions

15

## ▶ Limitations

- ▶ Sample size
- ▶ Gender
- ▶ Focus on Ontario
- ▶ Self-selection bias

## ▶ Future research

- ▶ Continue to validate the Teachers' Bullying Prevention Efficacy Scale
- ▶ Look explore more complex relationships between self-concept, efficacy and bullying beliefs
- ▶ Explore potential focused training programs on bully types

# Acknowledgements

- ▶ A special thank you to the teachers and school boards who participated

**Thank you!**