January 2017

A Phenomenolgical Study Of Bullying Experienced By Graduate Students And Faculty Through The Lens Of Power

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A PHENOMENOLGICAL STUDY OF BULLYING EXPERIENCED BY GRADUATE
STUDENTS AND FACULTY THROUGH THE LENS OF POWER

by

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Teaching & Learning: Higher Education

Grand Forks, North Dakota

December
2017

This dissertation, submitted by Anne Bodensteiner in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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This dissertation is being submitted by the appointed advisory committee as having met all of the requirements of the School of Graduate Studies at the University of North Dakota and is hereby approved.

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Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

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Title   A Phenomenological Study of Bullying Experienced by Graduate Students
             and Faculty Through the Lens of Power

Department   Teaching and Learning

Degree   Doctor of Philosophy

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my sincere gratitude for my faculty advisor, Dr. Myrna Olson and committee members: Dr. Joshua Hunter, Dr. Carolyn Ozaki, and Dr. Kathy Smart. Dr. Olson, it is difficult to find the words for the support, encouragement, and gentle learning environment you provided for the completion of my dissertation and degree. You have been there as a solid system for advice in coursework and how to approach this research from a learning perspective.

Dr. Smart, thank you for introducing me to the world of technology in higher education and being an incredibly kind faculty member. I will forever remember my first course and am currently modeling some of my teaching on your facilitation techniques. Dr. Ozaki, thank you for the initial introduction to scholarly writing. Your support in my writing as strengthened my confidence as a researcher and I will always value your structure in writing. Dr. Hunter, thank you for the consistent, gentle support in developing a thorough framework in qualitative research. I have enjoyed learning from you and hold a special place in my heart for this type of research and a great appreciation for doing it properly.

The support I have had in this process is humbling. My family and friends who have been there, encouraging me, strengthening my self-confidence, and helping me finish the dissertation are incredibly amazing people. For my husband, Gregory, who calmly held my hand and believed in me when I did not, I cannot thank you enough for

your support over the last few years. Words to express this level of gratitude do not come easily and I am grateful every day for your love and support – thank you!

To my sister, Elise, who filled my soul with encouragement on the hardest days and looked up to me. Thank you for your love, support, and positivity. I would like to thank my parents, Terry and Helena, who encouraged me to pursue the Ph.D. Your support as listening ears and talking through my study with great interest has always been a source of encouragement and has given me determination to finish my degree. I want to also thank my sister, Catherine, and brother Matthew for your continued love and support during this process. I always know you are pulling for me. My family has been there for me with support that I am beyond grateful and fortunate to have experienced. I love you more than words can say.

It would remiss for me not to recognize Gregory's family. Thank you for supporting Gregory and myself, and believing in me. For my friends and specifically, Renee and Chelsea, who have walked beside me for the last four years with an amazing sense of encouragement to push through. Thank you for sharing in the exciting times, hard times, and helping me endlessly finish my dissertation.

To those who shared their stories.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of graduate students and faculty members who experienced bullying as a result of their role in higher education. Phenomenological exploration of this topic involved interviews with 14 participants; seven graduate students and seven faculty members. Power as described by Foucault (1994) was used as theoretical framework for this research. Findings from the study revealed institutions of higher education exploit power through differentiation, institutionalization, instrumental modes, types of objectives, and rationalization. Age, gender, life experiences, and positional rank were differentials found between the subject and aggressor. Institutionalization was expressed through the policies and procedures ingrained within higher education. Participants revealed role authority and being bound to rules were often protective of bullies, making it difficult to bring a complaint forward. Bullies sought different types of objectives by increasing leverage in their current position and protecting themselves from potential threats. Yelling, defamation, and isolation were ways the bullying behaviors occurred, and were rationalized as personality differences or inability to address the behavior. Victims experienced life-changing impacts, ultimately resulting in deteriorated mental and physical health, requiring the use of anti-anxiety medications and in extreme cases, forced victims to leave academia permanently. Creating a system with support that offers victim protection and authority to implement changes is important to addressing this issue in higher education.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Power: the manifestation of complex human interactions in which people become subjects; where their subjectivity separates them from others, subsequently changing the objectivity of their relationships (Foucault, 1994). Within this, the subject lacks freedom or control of the relationship and the outcomes pressured upon them. Power is exercised through a variety of modes with the support of structures or rules, privileges, and rationalization of the behavior (Foucault, 1994). Experiences with the undertow of power are present in many examples; in higher education institutions with academic rigor, power becomes an integral part of everyday life for students and faculty members.

Power is cited as an essential component of bullying. Bullying occurs when someone with perceived or actual power over the victim repeatedly uses verbal attacks with damaging words, name calling, or verbal threats; physically attacks the victim or; uses intentional isolation or exclusion from groups or experiences (Chapell, et al., 2006). Bullying requires the structure of power to be effective; power alone does not constitute bullying behavior. When power is present, the opportunity exists to exploit that relationship in an abusive manner. Victims who have experienced damaging power dynamics often experience bullying as defined above.

Interestingly, organizational structures in higher education create space that perpetuates bullying and power relations, and as some victims note, these structures

encourage the behavior (Foucault, 1994; Simpson and Cohen, 2004). As Simpson and Cohen (2004) discuss, the structure and procedures inherent in higher education can conceal the behavior or justify excessive oversight or work demands. Power is a key component of bullying and the dynamics between these two phenomena are intricately interwoven (Chapell, et al., 2006). Current literature suggests power and bullying are experienced by graduate students and faculty members, yet few qualitative studies have been conducted exploring the stories of the victims (Chapell, et al. 2006; Hollis, 2015; Martin, Goodboy, & Johnson, 2015; Nelson, 2001; Simpson & Cohen, 2004; Twale & Deluca, 2008). Impacts of bullying are being explored quantitatively, yet are unsuccessful at drawing out stories of the experience.

Academic success, overall health and well-being are affected by bullying behaviors (Hollis, 2015; Nelson, 2001; Martin, Goodboy, & Johnson, 2015; Mukhtar et al., 2010). Rapport between a student and the professor can have a significant impact on the student's motivation, how the student perceives their learning, and ultimately their grades (Wilson, Ryan, & Pugh, 2010). This issue has rarely been addressed in higher education, which means few bullies are held accountable for their actions (Sedivy-Benton, Strohschen, Cavazos, & Boden-McGill, 2014). Given the high demands for student success and fewer resources being reserved for higher education, addressing this issue may positively impact students' experiences, reduce mental health problems, and help students achieve academic success.

Victims of bullying suffer detrimental health effects, academic failure, and often life-long impacts from these experiences (Hollis, 2015; Nelson, 2001; Martin, Goodboy, & Johnson, 2015; Mukhtar et al., 2010). Traditionally, bullying has been explored in

elementary schools, the workplace, and more recently in higher education. Intervention

strategies addressing this problem have garnered responsiveness in elementary schools

and in other workplace settings (Smith, 2014; Thompson, Arora, & Sharp, 2002);

nonetheless, little has been done to address bullying in higher education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of bullied victims

in higher education, specifically graduate students and faculty members. Their stories

provide depth to a phenomenon being established in quantitative literature.

Phenomenological, qualitative inquiry will be used to determine factors associated with

the bullying experiences including how the bullying relationship was established, the

impact of the experience, and how this behavior could be prevented from occurring in the

future. From these stories, a new level of understanding and exposure will guide

recommendations for averting these behaviors in the future. Throughout the study, the

"subject" or "victim" refers to the person or persons under the control of another. This will

be defined in detail in the section below "Power as a Theoretical Framework".

Research Questions

The guiding question for this qualitative study was: "What are the lived

experiences of bullying victims in higher education?" Within this context, further

exploration occurred around how those experiences impacted participants' academic

career and their life outside of higher education, as well as their perception on how

bullying could have been prevented. More specifically, this study examined how faculty

members and graduate students experienced power relations within their role at the

university. These concepts were used as a guide for the semi-structured interview questions.

Researcher's Interest in the Study

The researcher's personal experience, student stories, and previous research in the area created the initial interest in this study. Former exposure to faculty incivility piqued the researcher's interest in this topic. Over the course of a semester, the researcher experienced a faculty member who responded to student questions with retaliation, wherein this person expressed the problem was related to the students' inability to do the work rather than addressing the concerns of the student. Furthermore, this faculty member physically avoided specific students, while welcoming other students to her office. Some students perceived a bias in final grades and felt the instructor gave well-liked students higher scores on assignments.

Reflecting on this experience, the researcher shares there was a significant impact on her motivation, confidence, and overall reflection of the entire graduate program because of the interactions with this professor. Within this reflection period, the researcher internally struggled with what contributed to this understanding and the fear established in this learning environment. Throughout that reflection it became evident that the power this faculty member had in the researcher's ability to progress through the graduate program, trust in her own ability, and ask questions for learning, was flourishing at the core of this experience. Therefore, the researcher's personal experience has been a guiding light to explore the impact of bullying and subsequently power in higher education. The researcher wants to bring student stories to the surface, in the hope this behavior does not go unnoticed in the future.

Additional interest in this topic was sparked by working in higher education. As a staff member, the researcher heard student stories of aggressive, manipulative behavior perpetuated by faculty members and the devastating impact of those experiences on the student. Furthermore, the researcher has family members who were exposed to faculty bullying and were the subject of power in their faculty positions, resulting in threats to their job status, questions about staying with the institution, and deleterious effects on their health. Based on personal experiences and stories of students, friends and family, this study was established to examine the concepts of power and bullying in higher education.

Current quantitative research in this area is showcasing the magnitude of bullying in higher education and beginning to offer insights into the impact of the bullying behavior. However, limited research has explored this topic through a qualitative lens and no research to date has been conducted gathering student stories of faculty bullying and few have shared how faculty members experience power dynamics. Stories shared by the victims can demonstrate the extent of the damaging impact from bullying on their personal and/or professional lives. Further insights from the victims will start the discussion on preventing these behaviors in higher education.

Power as a Theoretical Framework

The concept of power is consistently reiterated throughout the research on bullying and is the core of the bullying relationship. Power is expressed in human interactions through a complex system and matrix of behaviors. Power is exercised when the subject lacks freedom in the relationship and subjects are those who are "subject to" the control of another individual (Foucault, p. 331). Within the context of bullying and

higher education, students and faculty members find themselves in a structure that supports distinctive power dynamics. Interwoven within the literature on bullying is the consistent pattern of power between the victim and the bully. Power is one of the underlying requirements for bullying and is the lens through which this study is framed. Michel Foucault (1994) represents the conceptualization of power in different aspects of the human experience and his concepts are used as the theoretical framework for this study.

Power is not a linear experience and encompasses varied constructs that Foucault (1994) describes as "power relations, relationships of communication, and objective capacities" (p.337). Within the relationship these three features are often used congruently to reach the desired effect. Objective capacities defer to the tasks of labor or work tasks; whereas, communication is used to derive power through the exploitation of information shared between people. Power relations are displayed with signals and through activities that allow the power relationship to unfold for example in training exercises and moments of domination (Foucault, 1994).

Power may not be exerted in an immediate sense. It is often the manifestation of repeated behaviors and actions over time; thus, establishing a relationship of power, that, if challenged, the aggressor must defend their stance and break down the challenge (Foucault, 1994). The structure of Institutions present concerns in the power relationship, as the institution has direct regulations in which one individual may have extensive privileges, lending the ability to extend power over another human.

Power Relations

The exercise of power relations is established through five means: "the system of differentiations, the types of objectives, instrumental modes, forms of institutionalization, and the degrees of rationalization" (Foucault, 1994, p. 344). These conditions are all present within the institution of higher education. Systems of differentiations are viewed as status differences or variances in financial status, among other things (Foucault, 1994). In higher education, these differences can be established between lower ranking faculty members and administration or tenured faculty members. Students may experience status differences with their adviser, other faculty instructors, or in student jobs directly tied to their academic programs.

Objective types explain the accumulation of wealth, ranking, and the privileges therein allowing the aggressor to act on their subject (Foucault, 1994). Institutions with academic rigor (heavy research and publication requirements or graduate programs) might establish this through promotion and tenure, and for students the privilege exists by their boss or instructor to deny their education, advancement of their degree, or awarding of passing grades. On the other hand, the instrumental modes are the means by which the behavior is conducted; through communication, rules, or extensive oversight.

Forms of institutionalization are the structures, functions, and traditional hierarchy developed by a group of people (Foucault, 1994). Historical considerations of the functionality through which higher education exists are based on the well-established dominant hierarchy. Twale and DeLuca (2008) share in their findings that this structure has contributed to the power relations established amongst students and faculty. The rationalization of power is explored through the conceptual means of cost analysis. As an

example, it may be more fiscally prudent to rationalize the behavior of a bully than

address the behavior. Consideration of fiscal cost with resources, time, and potential

lawsuit costs might contribute to the rationalization of behavior as opposed to addressing

the concerns. The degree to which it is rationalized is often established based on the cost

whether that be financial or the cost of defeating resistance (Foucault, 1994).

Strategy.

Strategy, "defined by the choice of winning solutions", exists as the deployment

behaviors to meet a certain objective or end (Foucault, 1994, p. 346). It takes into account

the expected actions of people involved and how the aggressor chooses to bring the

victim to a place of defeat or giving up. Strategies encompass the means of objects,

language, and control that are necessary to be above the other in the struggle. "It reaches

its final term either in a type of action that reduces the other to total impotence (in which

case victory over the adversary replaces the exercise of power) or by a confrontation with

those whom one governs and their transformation into adversaries" (Foucault, 1994, p.

347). The combination of strategies in the power dynamic are used by the aggressor to

create an outcome. In this study, exploration occurred around the strategy as well as the

perceived desired outcome of the strategies employed.

Statement of the Problem

Despite recent research indicating the prevalence of bullying in higher education,

there is limited research on the stories of the impact of bullying, the experience of how

the bullying occurs, and what could have been done to mitigate the behavior. Bullying

has significant impacts on the victim; including, but not limited to deficits in mental

wellbeing, academic failure, and detachment from the academic program (Hollis, 2015;

Nelson, 2001; Martin, Goodboy, & Johnson, 2015; Mukhtar et al., 2010).

Phenomenological research explores how the experience unfolded and descriptions of the

impact of the experience on the individual involved. This study examines these impacts

through the words, language, and views of the participants.

Significance of the Study

Exploring and understanding the undercurrents of bullying through the concepts

of power, provides victims the opportunity to share their stories without repercussions.

Their voices will be instrumental in the development of policies to prevent and address

the exercise of power in higher education. To date, there are no qualitative studies

addressing student experiences in higher education and very few examine higher

education bullying in the context of the workplace. This study has the potential to expose

a system perpetuating dangerous relationships that negatively impact the overall mission

of the university.

Definitions

Bullying: Occurs when someone with perceived or actual power over the victim

repeatedly; uses verbal attacks with damaging words, name calling, or verbal threats;

physically attacks the victim or; uses intentional isolation or exclusion from groups or

experiences (Chapell, et al., 2006).

Victim or subject: Someone who perceives their experience to be in alignment of

the bullying definition.

Study Delimitations

1. Participants must have been at least 18 years of age or older.

2. Participants must have been or are currently a victim of bullying. Bullying is defined as above for the parameters in this study.

3. Participants must have experienced the bullying as a graduate student and as a result of their role as a graduate student, or as a faculty member and as a result of their position with the university.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I provided an introduction to the study as well as included an overview of the context of bullying in relation to higher education and the connection to the theoretical framework of power. Within this chapter power was described as the theoretical framework, as was the conceptual development of the study from the researcher's perspective. A description of the problem, the purpose of the research, and the significance of the study were described in Chapter I. Additionally, definitions, study delimitations, and the research questions were outlined.

Chapter II includes the analysis of literature related to bullying and power in higher education. Specifically, literature related to graduate students and faculty bullying were explored to identify gaps in the research and what impacts have previously been studied. Both quantitative and qualitative studies were included in the literature review.

Chapter III contains detailed information about phenomenology, the design of this study, and how analysis of the data was conducted. A biographical sketch of the participants and how they were recruited is outlined in this chapter. Finally, the researcher's biases and trustworthiness are discussed.

Chapter IV is the presentation of the findings from the research. Findings align with the power paradigms described by Foucault (1994) and also include the impact of

the experiences as well as recommendations for addressing bullying behaviors. Specific quotations from the participants are used to establish connections of their experience to the theoretical framework.

Chapter V contains the discussion of the findings in context to the published literature. The researcher's analysis of the connections to the phenomenon and essence of the experiences are found in this chapter. Interpretation of the research findings in a holistic approach are described in Chapter V.

Chapter VI is a summary of the research study and overview of the findings. Limitations of the study, along with recommendations for future research are described in this chapter.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Power relations are endemic in higher education, as these institutions encompass the five areas of power outlined in Foucault (1994) and align with the definitions of bullying. Implications of bullying alter a victims' academic motivation and performance, as well as their health. Graduate students are further impacted as these effects influence their persistence and graduation rates. Universities' cultural organization offers a complex system that can perpetuate the incidences of bullying and deter administrators from responding to the abuse (Twale & DeLuca, 2008; Arguinis, Nesler, Quigley, Suk-Jae-Lee, & Tedeschi, 1996; Nelson, 2001; Martin, Goodboy, & Johnson, 2015).

College students and faculty members are in a system where dramatic power differences exist, and a reliance is held on other faculty or administrators to accomplish their goals, succeed academically, or progress toward promotion (Arguinis, et.al, 1996). University systems propagate an environment where bullying is easy and reporting the behaviors can leave the victims in danger of retaliation. Additionally, these behaviors are rationalized by not just the aggressor but also the victims. Literature in this topic is explored on the connection of bullying to higher education, prevalence of bullying, and how those experiences unfolded.

Bullying and Power

Bullying can occur when power dynamics are abused. Terms such as aggression, incivility, abuse, and harassment are often used to describe behaviors similar to bullying;

however, there are specific characteristics that distinguish bullying from other behaviors. Bullying takes on different forms and can include physical, verbal, relational, cyber, or any combination (Brank, Hoetger, & Hazen, 2012). Although there are slight differences in the literature on the definition of bullying, there are typically three features that differentiate bullying from other forms of interactions. Bullying includes behaviors that are intentional, repeated over time, and result from a difference in power dynamics between the aggressor and the victim (Chapell et al., 2006). In their study, Chapell et al. (2006) used the following definition for bullying in the university setting by coaches, instructors, or other staff members:

> As a student you are being bullied when someone who is more powerful than you repeatedly tries to hurt you by: (1) attacking you verbally, using harmful words, names, or threats, (2) attacking you physically, (3) intentionally isolating you or excluding you from a social group (p. 636).

Power plays an integral part of understanding bullying and provides a framework to explore bullying behaviors. Instrumental modes of power can be explored as ways in which bullying occurs. Physical bullying affects the physical person and includes behaviors such as shoving, pushing, or hitting. Relational or social bullying integrates actions of exclusion, rumor spreading, and purposefully leaving individuals out of friendships (Brank et al., 2012; Chapell et al., 2006). Teasing, name calling, and other aggressive spoken words are used to define verbal bullying (the most commonly reported form of bullying) while physical bullying is reported the least (Chapell et al., 2006).

Bullying and Power in the Context of the University

Power relationships occur uniquely between individuals; nonetheless, these relationships contain similarities. Bullying within the definition used for this research implicitly includes the term "power" as an essential component. Power is not established by a single event and instead is perpetuated in complex systems, through language, established with rules, and the determination of the bully to break the subject down in the struggle (Foucault, 1994). Bullies use the higher education system to establish dominance and reach their objective from the relationship.

Twale and DeLuca (2008) provide a conceptual framework regarding the underlying mechanisms that give bulling growth in academia amongst faculty members. Within their framework, power, incivility, limited resources, politics, and rewards are all noted as contributing to the problem (Twale & DeLuca, 2008). Over the years the role of faculty has remained relatively the same and has placed high demands on those seeking tenure and promotion.

Organizational structure.

Structure and hierarchy create shifts in power (Foucault, 1994). As the higher education system developed, it enveloped paternalistic values, which created significant power discrepancies between students and faculty (Twale & DeLuca, 2008). Hierarchical structures within the system have played a role in reporting and addressing bullying behavior. Hierarchy and deeply rooted structure enable power relations to unfold (Foucault, 1994). Research institutions delineate structure with promotion and tenure for their faculty members (Twale & Deluca, 2008; Nelson & Lambert, 2001). Similarly, institutional structure allows the instructors to hold a high degree of control over the

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student without systems in place for either faculty or students to safely share grievances without retaliation from those above them in the system. Additionally, these systems differentiate newer faculty from tenured faculty as well as students from faculty (Foucault, 1994).

Oftentimes individuals lower in the structure are discouraged from bringing forward complaints, as administrators may not want to interfere or deal with potential appeals (Nelson & Lambert, 2001). As a result, rationalization of the behavior often occurs which contributes to the perpetuation of power and allows it to gain momentum (Foucault, 1994). Nelson and Lambert (2001) conducted an ethnography related to academic incivility in higher education by investigating formal grievance documents by faculty members who were victims and perpetrators. Part of the investigation explored the basis of academic freedom as a means to justify bullying, including the four pillars of academic freedom: the right to instruct based on their professional judgment and discipline, the right to research, the right to publish research, and the right to speak.

Much of the literature describing the university structure and bullying is associated with worksite bullying. Hollis (2015) analyzed 401 responses to their survey from 175 different four-year universities. This study examined administration in higher education settings, including: athletics, academic affairs, student affairs, human resources, development, admissions/financial aid, information technology, and executive ranks. Much like Nelson and Lambert's (2001) findings, faculty and staff remarked that faculty members are often given immunity, calling it academic freedom (Hollis, 2015). Academic freedom is one of the avenues used to rationalize the behaviors of power and differential privileges (Foucault, 1994).

Tenure and academic freedom have been utilized as excuses to abuse power given to tenured faculty members. Subsequently, this excuse promotes the bullying behaviors, as these actions are not often contested or are refuted with the notion of academic freedom. Nelson and Lambert (2001) also describe the boundaries of academic freedom as a defense against claims of harassment, particularly the right to speak and criticize the government or administration. Both the structure of academic institutions and the rationalization of the harassment allow power to be an effective force (Foucault, 1994).

Rationalization is further perpetuated when problematic behavior is connected to the overlapping roles of administrators and faculty. Without specific defined roles, it is easier for the faculty administrators to brush off complaints as a way to avoid the burden of addressing issues. Higher education also draws on a high need for autonomy amongst faculty and often values self-interest, which creates an environment that normalizes bullying (Nelson & Lambert, 2001). These systems and rules allow bullying (instrumental modes) to occur and emphasize the impact of the institutionalization on power and higher education (Foucault, 1994).

Rigid structures can create challenges in addressing bullying behavior. Due to the often siloed nature of higher education, behaviors may go undetected or unchallenged because people across the system (who may be aware of these reports) are not openly communicating with one another. Therefore, the complexity of the case is not known and the administration lacks the courage to address faculty grievances. In many cases it exemplifies how bullying is rationalized, the impact of the institutional structure, and the mode of behavior. Hollis (2015) points out that when dealing with bullying reports, human resource departments often refer back to the administrative leadership.

Unfortunately, when the top leaders exude bullying characteristics, the reports often go unchallenged and are disregarded.

On the other hand, lack of structure can also be problematic. One study exploring the lived experiences of bullying of women faculty members in higher education, revealed the victims felt the system did not provide accountability to address the bullying (Sedivy-Benton et al., 2014). In these cases, the lack of structure within the organization did not provide safety for the victims. Thus, compounding the degree in which institutionalization perpetuates power and diminishes the freedom of the subject (Foucault, 1994).

Furthermore, victims often feel blamed, and thus further excluded from participation in meetings and voting on items that affect the entire department. The rationalization and instrumental modes, as explored by Foucault (1994), show the functionality of power and how it appears in higher education. Researchers in this phenomenological study drew six themes from their interviews: "positionality, differences, jealousy, clandestine decision-making, accountability/leadership, and blame the victim" (Sedivy-Benton et al., 2014, p. 37-38). Positionality, clandestine decision-making, and accountability/leadership were directly associated with the structure, organizational, and hierarchical functioning of higher education.

Cultural expectations of bullying in higher education.

All groups, including institutions of higher education, are entrenched in a culture. Often, understanding the unspoken norms of a group is required as a means to find success (Twale & DeLuca, 2008). The rules that govern the culture can be used as ways to differentiate privilege, increase the desire for objectives, and rationalize the behavior

(Foucault, 1994). Universities have long been accompanied by a hierarchical system with clear delineation of who has power and who does not. To those on the outside looking in, academics portray respectable, cooperative faculty who are experts in their fields. However, from the inside, one experiences the unspoken culture of self-interest and trying to find where they fit within the power hierarchy (Twale & DeLuca, 2008).

In their investigation, Nelson and Lambert (2001) reported on ways bullying was shielded within the system. This shield is influenced by the segregated nature in which work is completed and also the culture of the institution. One ethics committee report disclosed a senior faculty member stated his actions were part of the experience and the "cherished cut and thrust" of academic life (Nelson & Lambert, 2001, p. 93). Researchers related this to a concept of using words in a sporting match of academics. In addition to the concept of shielding, a pattern of exists in the context of higher education. Nelson and Lambert (2001) utilized the neutralization theory to explain their conceptual framework.

For some faculty, bullying is seen as a rite of passage or part of the culture of higher education; therefore, it may be reported less frequently and complaints are taken less seriously when reported (Young-Jones, Fursa, Byrket, & Sly, 2015). Bullying behaviors are seen as normal and also expected in the college environment. In fact, one new faculty member described her experiences with bullying as something she thought was typical or a rite of passage for new faculty (Sedivy-Benton et al., 2014). Instructors who were bullied in their college careers may take that mentality forward in their teaching careers and continue the cycle of abuse. In addition, financial resources in higher education are more competitive. As the competition grows stronger, there is greater opportunity for bullying (Sinkonnen, Puhakka, & Merilainen, 2014). Faculty

members noted the atmosphere in higher education supports competition that encourages bullying amongst the faculty members (Hollis, 2015).

Cultural domination in institutions of higher education provide a safe haven for bullying and power to coexist. Power relations and the components, as expressed by Foucault (1994), are embedded within the historical and current college atmosphere. Tenure and promotion are forms of institutionalization that present a level of differentiation between faculty members. These degrees of hierarchy influence faculty relationships and are also a key to understanding how students become subjects to power in this system. In addition, the process of tenure and promotion may be viewed as an objective that accentuates the desire to exert power over a student or other faculty member. Bullying is rationalized by a variety of means including: accepting behaviors as a natural part of academic life, avoiding a disruption in social relationships, and minimizing resources used to address the issue.

Negating responsibility.

Within the power structure, rationalization is one way bullying behaviors are justified or allowed to continue. Rationalizing thoughts may occur as a result of the institutionalization or structure currently in place. Large social organizations, such as colleges and universities, often have siloed and segregated activities, departments, and faculty where bullying can be hidden from outside influences (Nelson & Lambert, 2001). Nelson and Lambert (2001) describe a culture of normalization to the bullying behaviors that include "aligning actions, vocabularies of motives, disclaimers, accounts, and ways to neutralize the actions" (p. 85). Even if a perpetrator takes part in these bullying behaviors, many are never subjected to formal consequences for their behavior. The lack

of disciplinary action in higher education supports the bullying behavior and further silences those who are victimized. Also, unique to the field of higher education, is the high level of education. Being highly educated can certainly work to the bully's advantage, as they are able to articulate, fight, and manipulate their way out of the allegations brought against them (Nelson & Lambert, 2001).

Many people accused of bullying claimed they could not be labeled as such they did not hold an administrative position when the bullying occurred (Nelson & Lambert, 2001). By asserting the definition of bullying determines who is able to be bullied by whom, they attempt to negate responsibility for their actions. An additional tactic used by the accused was the denial that injury occurred. With a lack of physical injury, the accused determined their behavior did not have a lasting impact on the victims. In other cases, those accused of bullying interjected they were bullied more than they conducted the bullying. Using the grievance procedure, the accused would claim the allegations ruined their career and at the same time diminished their accomplishments. Some bullies have claimed they are the victims of political correctness and felt they were trying to uphold the values of the university.

Overall, the higher education system perpetuates bullying in unique ways because of the segregated nature of business, lack of follow through by administration, the implications of academic culture, and the prevailing hierarchical structure. Although the outward precedence of the university is to encourage civility, community engagement, and scholarship, there is a hidden culture that encourages the opposite.

Prevalence of Bullying

Higher education is situated in a system of established rules, hierarchy, and structure that align with power (Foucault, 1994). Not only does the structure establish power, there are distinct differences between individuals in the system that can perpetuate power; thus, allowing bullying behaviors to be present. Within the constructs of higher education, adult bullying occurs in different contexts of relationships, including: student to student, faculty and staff to faculty and staff, student to faculty/staff, and faculty/staff to student. Faculty and staff bullying amongst themselves is discussed in the workplace bullying literature and manifests differently than bullying of students.

Prevalence of Bullying for Graduate Students

One of the differentiating components that exists between graduate students and faculty members or supervisors in graduate assistantships is that graduate students experience bullying while completing their degrees. Very few studies have been completed with graduate students as the population of interest. Sinkkonen et al. (2014) explored different factors related to bullying including level of study (master's or undergraduate) by electronically sending a questionnaire to students at a Finnish University. More Master's level students (6.2%) indicated they were bullied than Bachelor's level students (4.2%), suggesting a distinguishable difference between students in higher level programs and those in entry level degrees.

Students reported higher levels of bullying after their fourth year of undergraduate studies and significantly more graduate students report bullying than their undergraduate counterparts (Sinkkonen et al., 2014). Graduate students in professional programs have high rates of bullying within their programs of study, particularly medical students. One

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study reported 29% of medical students were being bullied in some form by faculty or staff members in the last six months of their studies (Mukhtar et al., 2010).

Martin et al. (2015), surveyed 272 students in graduate programs to determine the impact of bullying on students' feelings toward their program, dissatisfaction in education, and their intentions to remain or leave their program of study. Of those students, 79.4% of participants indicated bullying had occurred in their department by the faculty members. Students who experienced bullying were more likely to leave their program unfinished.

While Martin et al. (2015) reviewed responses from the general graduate student population, Mukhtar et al. (2010) looked specifically at graduate students attending medical school in Pakistan. A total of 106 medical students responded to the survey that asked questions related to bullying experiences while in medical school and by whom. Their study revealed more bullying occurred by fellow students than their instructors; however, 26% felt they were verbally abused by professors/instructors, 4.2% reporting being physically abused by professors, and 9% felt instructors left them out or ignored them (Mukhtar et al., 2010).

The reviewed studies indicate bullying continues to be a problem in higher education. Most often, students report their bullies to be other students. However, the high percentage of students who witnessed bullying by faculty and staff gives cause for concern in this matter, even though the rates of those experiences are far less than those who reported witnessing the bullying. Levels of bullying around the world showcase the prevalence of the problem and give rise to the need for addressing the issue.

Prevalence of Bullying in the University Workplace

Given the nature of higher education and the alignment with power, it is not surprising that faculty members and staff have reported and shared their experiences of bullying. Hollis (2015) conducted an online survey that was sent to 3,200 university and college employees across the United States. The study explored the relationship of bullying dynamics in the higher education workplace, and found 62% of respondents had been bullied or witnessed bullying within the past 18 months, and 31% reported leaving previous positions or planning to leave their current position because of the workplace environment. A unique component in this study was the inquiry into the responsiveness of the institutions to reports of bullying. Most respondents (28%) said the organization did nothing to address the concerns, and 19% said organization supported the bully. In other cases (5%), respondents reported the victim was terminated from his/her position. Most of the victims had been bullied for more than two years and 27% saying it had been for more than three years.

In addition, Hollis (2015) explored the financial consequences of bullying in higher education. Hollis (2015) recruited administrators in four-year institutions to complete a survey related to workplace bullying in higher education. Of those responding, 22% spent eight hours a week avoiding their bullies with an average of respondents spending 3.9 hours each week avoiding bullies. With the time wasted avoiding certain people and turnover related to the bullying, Hollis (2015) estimated the fiscal loss in a medium private university at $4,684,999 every year. To date, no research has examined the financial impact of bullying on graduate students.

Gender and Bullying

Results in the literature consistently demonstrate bullying occurs on college campuses. However, inconsistencies in the data are found in relation to gender. Gender can be an established difference that creates a power difference (Foucault, 1994). Mixed results have been found related to gender and the rates of bullying. Throughout their lifetime about 8.5% of men and 4.2% of women report being a victim of bullying in the United States (Hoertel, Strat, Lavaud, & Limosin, 2012). In most instances both men and women report being victims of bullying on some level and in some cases, women more than men and vice versa. However, in recent literature the rates of bullying have not conclusively been one gender.

Simpson and Cohen (2004) set out to explore differences in bullying between genders in higher education related to paid staff experiences. Specifically, they researched gender differences in terms of the forms and effects of bullying, perceptions of bullying, and the incidence of bullying within the organizational structure. Their study was two-fold; in the first round, they conducted a survey to gain information regarding perceptions, frequency, and type of bullying at a particular university in the United Kingdom. Interviews were conducted in the second phase of the research process. Results from their survey found more women (28.5%) were victims of bullying than men (19.8%) and more women (67.5%) had witnessed bullying than men (29.4%) (Simpson & Cohen, 2004). Similarly, victims of bullying at the Finnish University were primarily women (72%) compared to men; nonetheless, results were not statistically significant (Sinkkonen et al., 2014).

The researchers also received text responses to questions that revealed male participants viewed bullying as a particular management style, and for some, a necessary way to manage (Simpson & Cohen, 2004). Women were more likely to experience bullying by verbal abuse, humiliation, intimidation, having their decisions overruled, experiencing information being withheld, and excessive monitoring of their work. However, more men reported unfair criticism, malicious lies, intimidation, having excessive targets set, revoked responsibilities at work, and having their leave requests refused (Simpson & Cohen, 2004).

Like Simpson and Cohen (2004), Sedivy-Benton et al. (2014) conducted a phenomenological study revealing the experiences of women in higher education who have been bullied. Researchers extensively interviewed three faculty participants for their study. These women expressed similar frustrations as noted in Simpson and Cohen (2004) in being excluded in decision making processes, being humiliated, discussed in private by coworkers, and being intimated. Their stories did not reveal whether their male or female colleagues were involved in the bullying, yet they shared examples about both genders bullying others (Sedivy-Benton et al., 2014).

Additional differences exist in how men and women respond to being victimized by bullies. Men experienced more instances of nausea or sickness, depression, and loss of appetite, while females reported more headaches, anxiety, and memory loss (Simpson & Cohen, 2004). Adult men, in general, were more likely to quit an education program without a backup, have more driving infractions, and complete illegal acts (Hoertel et al., 2012). Women on the other hand, report leaving home in the middle of the night, quitting their employment without a backup, and stealing. In the study conducted by Sedivy-

Benton et al. (2014), female instructors tried a variety of techniques to deal with the aggression. Victims would document the behavior, avoid their bullies, and some chose to leave their department or institution for other employment. Most often, they would avoid the negative situations and seek environments of positivity (Sedivy-Benton et al., 2014).

While men and women both experience bullying, the literature does not provide consistent measures of gender bias and overall rates of victimization between genders. More often the differences have been shown in the types of bullying conducted and experienced by each gender. Men are more often the victims of verbal and physical forms of traditional bullying, whereas women find themselves being victimized by relational and passive aggressive bullying. In addition, reactions to the aggressions are different for men and women.

Characteristics of Bullies

Understanding victimization is one component of this issue, and it is equally important to understand the bullies. Looking at both areas builds a stronger understanding of the complexity of the bullying phenomenon. Specifically addressing the bullies can provide additional insight on the differences, types of objectives, and potential rationalization of their behaviors (Foucault, 1994). Several research studies have looked at characteristics of bullies and potential predictors of their behavior. Theories relating to the roots of bullying behavior include personality and mental health disorders, among others.

As previously noted, both genders experience bullying; however, gender appears as a factor component in bully characteristics. Research has shown men more frequently report being bullies than women in their lifetime, and the odds of being a bully were

significantly higher for men than women (Hoertel et al., 2012; Chapell et al., 2004). Hoertel et al. (2012) specifically addressed gender effects in bullying of adults in the United States. Interestingly, both men and women who had a college education were significantly less likely to be bullies.

Hoertel et al. (2012) also discovered male bullies were more likely to have antisocial personalities compared to female bullies including: major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, and panic disorders. On the other hand, women experienced more internalizing spectrum disorders. This discovery may suggest males are more often bullies and have more psychological disorders that contribute to behavior concerns. It is also theorized men are more often bullies in situations that may include the environment, such as that of higher education, power systems, and ability to control situations based on the context of their surroundings.

Vaughn et al. (2010) further confirms men are more likely to be perpetrators than females. Researchers purposely looked at demographic differences, psychiatric disorders, and substance abuse factors with components of bullying behavior. Similar to previous studies, men were more likely to have a lifetime history of bullying than females. In addition, significant correlations were found between lifetime bullies and antisocial behavior disorders (Vaughn et al., 2010).

As illustrated by Vaughn et al. (2010) and Hoertel et al. (2012), in addition to gender differences, many bullies also report having some kind of mental health disorder. Piotrowski and King (2016) developed a conceptual framework related to adult bullying in higher education. Within this framework, they discuss the concept of "Adult Bully Syndrome", in which personality traits are explored as indicators of bullying behavior

(Piotrowski, 2015; Piotrowski & King, 2016). Piotrowski (2015) concluded adults who are bullies often have a variety of psychosocial personality disorders including: "controlling, callous, manipulative, self-centered, Machiavellian, coercive, ruthless, and domineering" (p. 2).

Machiavellianism is a term used to describe specific personality characteristics and is often noted in the literature related to adult bullying (Piotrowski, 2015; Pilch & Turska, 2015; Linton & Power, 2013). Machiavellianism refers to cynical personalities that center around the individual's personal ego and lacking social morals. Linton and Power (2013) researched traits of bullies and victims as they relate to the adults in the workplace. Findings from their study revealed victims and bullies share similar personality characteristics including narcissism and Machiavellianism. In fact, researchers noted "the majority of bully-typifying traits (Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychoticism, and the aggression measures) were associated with being a victim" (Linton & Power, 2013, p.741).

Pilch and Turska (2015) also explored workplace bullying and characteristics of Machiavellianism in conjunction with organizational structure. Interestingly, the more hierarchy perceived in the organization the more bullying was reported, even after researchers controlled for Machiavellianism. As higher education systems perpetuate hierarchy, Pilch and Turska (2015) demonstrated organizational structure can explain more patterns of bullying than individual personality characteristics in the workplace. Their research provides compelling data to support the need for additional research on bullying in the context of higher education.

Effects of Bullying on Victims

Bullying can have lasting impacts on the victims. Children and adolescents who have experienced bullying often carry effects into their adulthood (Adams & Lawrence, 2011; Goodboy et al., 2016; Holt et al., 2014; Sigurdson, Wallander, & Sund, 2014). Much like those who are bullies, it is not surprising that victims also have mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. In addition, academic success is negatively impacted by bullying as is the desire to remain in a program or for a faculty member to stay working at an institution.

Mental Health and Bullying

As mental health disorders are associated with bullying behaviors, it is not surprising that those who are bullied experience higher rates of mental health disturbances. Holt et al. (2014) found college students with previous bullying experiences were more likely than non-bullied counterparts to have depression and anxiety symptoms.

College students experiencing physical, verbal, or relational bullying had significantly poorer perceptions of their physical, psychological, and social health (Chen & Huang, 2016). Chen and Huang (2016) explored the effects of past and current bullying on college students' perceptions of health indicators. Even after controlling for depression symptoms, bullying before college as well as during college was significantly associated with lower perceptions of health while in college.

Hopelessness was more often experienced by male victims than female victims and for those experiencing physical bullying (Siyahhan et al., 2012). In addition, bullies who engaged in these behaviors every week had significantly higher rates of hopelessness as non-bullies. Similarly, graduate students felt less meaning, competence, and impact in

their studies when they were punished, excluded, or belittled by faculty members (Martin et al., 2015). Furthermore, graduate students' intention to leave their program was positively correlated with these factors and they did not feel they could make a difference in their program of study.

The impact of bullying on mental health has been documented repeatedly throughout the literature. Students who were bullied in their youth, demonstrated effects of those experiences into college and had lasting impressions on their mental health, ability to make friends, and perceptions of overall good health. Graduate students felt more compelled to leave their programs without finishing and felt they were unable to make lasting meaning from their program of study.

Academic Motivation and Achievement

Changes in mental health can have additional impacts on college students. It is not surprising students who are bullied are experiencing higher rates of mental health disorders and also struggle achieving the same level of academic success as other students.

Examining why academic performance is lower for those who are bullied may be related to the level of motivation students feel for their coursework. College students who are bullied have significantly lower academic motivation than those who are not currently being bullied; in addition, they have significantly lower autonomy, and feelings of competence (Young-Jones et al., 2015). Reduced academic motivation was found in those who experienced verbal bullying or physical bullying and for those with a history of past bullying compared to their peers who had not experienced bullying (Young-Jones et al., 2015).

Although not directly tied with motivation, graduate students were more likely to leave their program, feel less competent, and express higher rates of dissent for their graduate program when bullied (Martin et al., 2015). Graduate students exposed to managerial bullying by faculty members may feel less meaningfulness, competence, and impact of their work. When all four forms of bullying ("belittlement, punishment, managerial misconduct, and exclusion" (p.447)) were present, students reported higher levels of negative feelings about the faculty members. Most often students responded to bullying in negative ways by talking badly about the professor and did not address it with the aggressor specifically (Martin et al., 2015).

Similar to the Martin et al. (2015) study, Aguinis et al. (1996) found graduate students to perceive the quality of the faculty member lower when they experienced coercive behaviors. In fact, over 68% of the variance in the relationship between the student and instructor was explained by power differences. Graduate students were less likely to invite those faculty members to serve on committees and rated their instructors as having lower credibility.

With higher levels of mental health issues and lower academic motivation, it is expected students would achieve at lower levels than students who are not bullied. These effects should be regarded by administrators in higher education. Students who are unable to perform at the level expected when entering college are unlikely to continue. As demonstrated by the experiences in youth, it is highly possible that bullying conducted in college will have lasting impressions on the victims with potential to alter their mental health in future years.

Bullying Experiences

As with the different types of bullying, there are many ways in which bullying occurs. Foucault (1994) discusses the behaviors as it relates to the instrumental modes. For some it is an open aggression, while others experience it online or in private settings. The following stories share the experiences of bullying in higher education from both the victim and bully perspectives.

Simpson and Cohen (2004) interviewed employees in higher education and many described scenarios in which excessive work demands were made and high levels of criticism were expressed during their work day. In some instances, there is a dual effect in higher education of being a staff member and a student. Mary, a Ph.D. student, found herself in this situation in that the head of her department, where she worked as a staff member, was also her mentor and Ph.D. supervisor. Her mentor/supervisor became a bully who gave her inappropriate levels of work, denied her promotion, and verbally abused her (Simpson and Cohen, 2004). In addition, he required her to publish papers in his name and hand over her grant resources or he would threaten to never give her anything.

Mary's story exposes the representation of power in higher education. With the pursuit of publication (type of objective) her bully required her to do additional work, denied her promotion and attacked her verbally (instrumental modes) (Foucault, 1994). The levels of differentiation were two-fold in her work life and academically, giving additional levels of power over her financially and denying her freedom in moving upward without completing the demands.

Other faculty members in higher education expressed similar frustrations with the system and bullying by other faculty members (Sedivy-Benton et al., 2014). One participant described an attack by a fellow faculty member: "He'd pick up items from my desk and play with them… one time he threw a calendar at me" (Sedivy-Benton et al., 2014, p. 38). Participants in this study also described instances of jealousy, exclusion, and lack of follow through on the institution to protect junior faculty from abuse. Victims felt blame for the behaviors of their colleagues.

The division of power was instrumental in the stories shared by Simpson and Cohen (2004) and Sedivy-Benton et al. (2014). They demonstrate the lack of control subordinates feel in a system where little seemed to be done in response to their reports. As one of the participants expressed, she felt bullying was occurring because of the power differences and that the bullies did it with the mindset that they owned the individuals. In these cases, the victims felt the university failed to do anything, because they supported the culture of strong management and that it was a way for management to deal with work situations.

It seems the structure and nature of higher education provides a system in which dealing with the bullying is difficult. Bullies in higher education are quick to turn the table on their accusers, denying the allegations, and claiming grievances against others (Nelson and Lambert, 2001). As bullying is often hidden and causes emotional damage, bullies deny any actual harm has been done. While tenure provides a safe place for faculty to explore topics, it also acts as a safe haven for those who commit bullying acts (Nelson and Lambert, 2001).

Prevention and Intervention Strategies

Consistently throughout the literature on bullying in higher education there is a significant gap in the prevention, intervention, and protection from bullying (Sedivy-Benton et al., 2015; Hollis, 2015; Twale & DeLuca, 2008). Students as well as faculty members who experience bullying are often left to fend for themselves and as indicated in the literature end up leaving programs of study or the institution in which they teach/work (Sedivy-Benton et al., 2015; Martin et al., 2015). To date, no empirical research has been done studying prevention and intervention strategies at the college level for students or faculty and staff.

Despite the lack of empirical data, several researchers have provided recommendations to address the issue. Hollis (2015) suggests administration take a stand against the bullies and not allow the behaviors to continue by requiring the highest leaders to intervene when problems arise. In addition, she recommends the 360 degree evaluations of administration and allowing transparency when dealing with grievances. Sedivy-Benton et al. (2015) further establishes the importance for administration to become aware of the issue and support the empowerment of disenfranchised faculty. The lack of prevention and intervention strategies in higher education exemplify the necessity of continued research and support for administration to address these issues within a system perpetuating the problem.

Summary

The intentional repeated behaviors of bullying deeply impact the victims who are targeted. Across all ages and situations in life there are stories of bullying and the impacts of these actions on overall health, wellbeing, and success. Bullying, in the context of this

study, does not exist without established power. Power relations and the key pieces of differentiation, types of objectives, behavioral modes, hierarchy and structure, and how the behaviors are rationalized are embedded in the culture of higher education (Foucault, 1994). Higher education provides a unique environment where the behaviors go unchallenged and the victims fear heavy repercussions for reporting the behaviors. For institutions to achieve faster graduation rates and retention of students, exploring ways to stop bullying would be hugely beneficial.

Despite initial research indicating bullying occurs in academic institutions, little has been done to rectify the situation and limited research exists in this context. Little has been done to address, educate, and prevent bullying in higher education and there is no explicit information on retention and graduation rates. One way to begin looking at these issues is by conducting more qualitative research to delve into the problem with those most closely impacted. It is recommended future research look closely at the impact of retention and graduation rates, reducing bullying, and providing more qualitative research to examine the effects on a personal level.

Universities need to keep abreast on this topic and find ways to encourage people to speak out about the behaviors. In addition, there should be methods in place to accurately evaluate and determine repercussions for the bullies as well as safeguards put in place to prevent retaliation for those filing grievances. It is time to prevent the long-lasting implications of behaviors that can be prevented, discouraged, or removed from our education system.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to explore bullying in higher education through the lived experiences of graduate students and faculty members. Power is an essential component to the bullying experience and served as the theoretical framework for this study. Despite recent research indicating the prevalence of bullying in higher education, limited studies have examined the stories of the victims. Investigation in this topic using a qualitative approach is indispensable to uncover the underlying nature of bullying, factors facilitating the development of this relationship, and insights into how to combat this problem. Based on the gap in the literature related to qualitative research, a phenomenological study was conducted.

Design of the Study

Insufficient qualitative literature on this topic inspired additional questions to better understand the experience of bullying through the lens of power in higher education. Graduate students and faculty members were chosen as participants in this study. In order to grasp the experiences of power and bullying relationships this study explored the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of bullying victims in higher education?

2. How do those experiences impact participants' academic career and their life outside of higher education?

3. What were the participants' perceptions about how bullying could have been prevented?

4. How did faculty members and graduate students experience power relations through their role in the university?

Phenomenology as the Methodological Approach

Husserl (1964) explores the necessity of investigating experiences as the experience presents itself. It is the breaking down of the experience as consciousness rather than objective fact. Phenomenology is a research methodology that explores the understanding of truth as it appears to the individual in that time. Experiences contain cognitive and objective elements. Phenomenology examines the perception of what the objective and cognitive elements mean to the individual (Husserl, 1964). Within the context of this research, this methodology was chosen to establish the cognitive experience of bullying, what objectively created this experience, and the impact of this experience on the victim. This research study derives the essence of bullying on the human spirit, contained within the theoretical framework of power.

Phenomenology provides the opportunity to return to the basic understanding of the phenomenon and how it appears to the person in that moment (Moustakas, 1994). These stories seek to understand the knowledge or truth of bullying as described by the participant (Husserl, 2008). The notion of intersubjectivity is important to phenomenology because it is the idea that the researcher can see the experience as the participant sees it (Duranti, 2010). Seeing the truth from another perspective lends to a shared understanding of the experience.

Within this study, the researcher examines the "how" from what has previously been determined in the current literature (Husserl, 1964). Exploring the essence of power and bullying as it came to be for the victims provides a level of understanding in this area that had not yet been evaluated. This study examined the reality of the experience through the perception of the subject and creating knowledge of their expressed meaning. The essence is derived through analysis of knowledge and the concepts involved in the experience (Husserl, 2008).

Exploring personal bias is an important part of addressing validity concerns in qualitative research (Maxwell, 2013). Removing all researcher bias is impractical; however, addressing the bias at the beginning of the research process allows the researcher to establish, upfront, how her personal beliefs about the topic could interfere with the interpretation of results. Phenomenological research often refers to this concept as bracketing and more specifically in phenomenological research, Epoché (Crotty, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). Establishing the responsibility and necessity of the researcher to "bracket" their perceptions of the phenomena to not bias results.

Transcendental phenomenology uses Epoché, bracketing, and specific reduction techniques to derive essence and meaning (Moustakas, 1994). Husserl (1964) describes the exploration of transcending the phenomena from subjective to objective as a way of seeing truth and establishing new knowledge. "Epoché is a Greek word meaning to refrain from judgement, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). Epoché allows the researcher to enter an interview and be present with the participant's experience and requires removing predicated judgement during the interview. Epoché allows the phenomenon to exist

without judgement; where the exploration exists in how that phenomenon is experienced; thus, requiring bracketing. By bracketing the exploration is on the phenomenon itself and how it comes into existence for the participant (Smith, 2013).

Phenomenological reduction is the first stage of analysis of the experience and begins by establishing datum derived by the participant and their view (Husserl, 1964). Theoretically exploring the phenomenon of bullying through the lens of power further develops the objective nature of the experience. The five paradigms of power described by Foucault (1994) are objects of cognition and are also used to develop constructs from the stories. Reduction in phenomenology brings analysis from a subjective truth to an objective truth; in this study, the theoretical framework of power supports the transition to objective (Husserl, 1964).

Edmund Husserl developed the concepts of phenomenology, validity, and reduction for this type of qualitative study. From his work, several researchers have established perspectives and approaches to substantiate Husserl's procedures, including Clark Moustakas (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas (1994) was used as the guiding framework for the development and analysis of this research study.

Approaching this study through a phenomenological lens brings participant stories to the center of focus as it explores the phenomena of bullying in higher education. Phenomenology uses the participant's point of view to describe individual understanding of unique experiences (Crotty, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). Understanding the victims' perceptions of the bullying experience and how power related to that experience was the purpose of this study, making it well suited for a phenomenological approach.

Data Collection and Procedure

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of bullying in higher education of graduate students and faculty members within the context of power. Transcendental phenomenological procedures were applied and utilized to guide the data collection of this study as outlined by Moustakas (1994). Approval from the University of North Dakota's (UND), Institutional Review Board (IRB) was received prior to data collection for this study. To garner rich data, extensive and multiple phases of interviews were the primary source of data collection.

Participant Selection and Recruitment

Snowball sampling was used as the primary recruitment method for this study. This method allowed for recruiting potential participants who met the study criteria from individuals who were familiar with the potential participants. (Glesne, 2011). Snowball sampling provided the opportunity to recruit participants who have experienced bullying in higher education, as a subordinate. Purposefully recruiting participants who were able to provide information relevant to the study questions was advantageous and necessary in this research (Maxwell, 2013).

Key informants, those likely to know of potential participants, were contacted through email or social media regarding the purpose of the study and criteria for participation. Key informants were selected by the researcher from her personal network of family, friends, or professional colleagues. Language used for the emails and social media posts are shown in Appendix B. Additionally, posts containing study information were created for social media messages. Potential participants were sent an email containing the purpose of the study and details of the study. Once an individual indicated

interest in participating, a copy of the IRB approved consent form was sent electronically. In some instances, potential participants did not meet the study criteria; therefore, they were not interviewed for the study.

Recruiting participants began with personal conversations with family, friends and professional colleagues of the research. Through these discussions several recruitment emails were sent to individuals who requested additional information on the research. In situations where the informant was familiar with potential participants, the informant forwarded the email details within their network. Six emails were sent as a result of personal conversations and three participants were directly recruited from these conversations.

Email letters were sent to 25 individuals known to the researcher from her formal university account. Informants were chosen to receive the email recruitment letter as a result of knowing the researcher and being connected to higher education because of their previous or current graduate student status or faculty member status. Informants were asked if they would share the email and research study information within their network of those who may qualify to participate. Four informants forwarded the information directly to people who might qualify and within a broader network. These email recruitment letters generated six participants. One individual reached out to the researcher and was willing to participate, yet he had not been bullied himself and; therefore, was not interviewed as a participant. One individual responded to the email and declined participation; two others responded with interest in participating and were never scheduled because they did not follow up to schedule an interview time.

Social media was also used to generate recruitment. Facebook and LinkedIn were the two platforms utilized in the recruitment efforts; both platforms had personal messages and broad public posts that included the same language. Facebook posts and personal messages were posted and sent through the researcher's personal Facebook page. Language for the posts remained the same for each post and can be found in Appendix B. The broad public posts of the recruitment language were sent by the researcher 13 times and those posts were shared 32 times by other Facebook users over the course of four months.

Individual messages containing the original public post were sent to 32 unique individuals. In addition, one Facebook friend individually shared the recruitment post in a personal message to 21 people. Ten individuals responded to the Facebook posts and three were not eligible due to their role within the university, as they were staff during the time the bullying occurred. A total of four individuals were recruited for participation in the study from Facebook. Two people responded to the Facebook posts that were not interviewed due to scheduling conflicts.

LinkedIn was used in a similar manner to Facebook. Three public posts were created and sent through the researcher's personal LinkedIn account and used the same language that was noted for the Facebook post. In addition, seven individual messages were sent to informants within the researcher's personal network. Public posts generated 174 views of the study recruitment and one individual was directly recruited through LinkedIn.

Additionally, at the end of the interview participants were asked if they knew of anyone who may be eligible and willing to participate in the study. This method generated zero participants.

Data Collection

Husserl (1964) established that phenomenology is the inquiry to the cognitive experience. Several rounds of interviews were used as the primary data source for this study and were used to inquire about the essence of bullying in higher education. Interviews were selected to develop rich, descriptive data from the participants (Creswell, 2014; Maxwell, 2013). Having two to three rounds of interviews provided additional development of the participants experience as well as opportunities for validity (Maxwell, 2013). Questions during the interview were designed to develop rich descriptions and provide additional opportunities for probing questions: "What three words would you use to describe this experience? What was your sense of the culture in this institution? In as much detail as possible, how would you describe that moment?"

In addition, memos were created during the interviews and during the transcription phase. These memos captured non-verbal language and body language that emphasized the participant's statement. Examples of memos created during the interviews include: participant held up a glass of beer in a symbolic toast, participant scrunched up her face in disgust, participant gestures with her hand and mimics slamming her hand on the table.

Memos and interviews are essential for understanding the experiences of the victims and to generate the essence of what was experienced. The use of multiple phases of interviews and memos allowed the researcher to develop more objective meaning from

a single story that alone is subjective (Husserl, 1964). Through phenomenological reduction, the researcher examines the datum to derive meaning if experiences share similar components from a variety of sources (Husserl, 1964).

Interview procedure.

Once a participant agreed to participate in the study, a mutually agreed time and location (either in person or through Skype) were arranged. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 participants. A limited number of questions were developed prior to first round interviews to allow the interviewer to adjust based on the information shared by the participant and dig deeper in specific areas. Roulston (2010) was used as a guide to develop open-ended questions. Appendix C displays a sample list of questions used in the research interviews.

Prior to the interview participants were given an electronic copy of the IRB consent form. Consent language is documented in Appendix A. At the onset of the interview the consent form was read aloud to the participants and verbal consent was recorded during the Skype interview. Participants interviewed in person were given a paper copy of the consent form and they signed a paper copy of the document. Signed documents and recordings will be kept in a private safe or in private cloud database for three years following the close of the study.

Epoché practices were performed by the interviewer prior to the start of the interview in which an examination of bias, personal perspective, and prior knowledge were noted and an effort was made to approach the incoming interview with a fresh new mind. As described by Moustakas (1994) approaching the interview to "learn to see what stands before our eyes" (p. 33). In preparation for each interview, the researcher reflected

on the research questions for the study, reviewed the interview questions, and practiced

deep breathing mindfulness prior to beginning the interview for two to three minutes.

Interviews lasted between 30-90 minutes and were conducted via Skype or in

person. Memos were created during the interviews to document non-verbal responses

such as physical body movement, tone of voice, or facial expressions. Additional

information related to the environment was collected and noted by the interviewer

(Creswell, 2014). Pseudonyms were given to each participant to protect anonymity.

Second round interviews were completed with five participants for deeper clarity

and understanding of concepts shared during the first round. One participant was

interviewed in a third round. Second and third round interview questions were developed

following the initial round of interviews. These questions were created to further explore

areas less established during the first round and focused heavily on the participant's

personal description of power. Examples of second round questions include: What comes

to mind when I say the word power? In your first interview you mentioned 'unspoken

rules' tell me more about that and what you mean when you say that.

Recording complications during two initial interviews required the interviews to

be conducted a second time. In both instances participants noted that they had time to

reflect on the questions and this altered some of the original thoughts of their experience.

In total, 22 interviews were completed; transcriptions and analysis were completed on 20

interviews (as two of the original interviews were unrecorded due to complications with

equipment).

Participants

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of graduate

students and faculty members who were bullied because of their role in the university.

Participant recruitment used snowball sampling and generated 14 participants. Each

participant experienced bullying as a result of being in a graduate program or as a faculty

member; their bullies were individuals with authority. It is not uncommon for a student to

also have a teaching position or a faculty member to be a student; however, none of the

participants had experiences related to a dual role nor did their bullying occur outside of

the university.

Students may have experienced bullying in their role as a graduate assistant by

their supervisor, their role as a student by a faculty member overseeing their program, or

by an advisor who had significant sustained contact throughout their graduate program.

Faculty members interviewed in this research study were bullied by senior faculty

members or their direct supervisor. Three of these faculty members had also experienced

bullying in separate instances during their graduate program and shared them as two

unique experiences at different points in their educational career.

Seven graduate students were interviewed and included both men and women.

Additionally, three of the faculty members who were interviewed also shared experiences

of bullying in their graduate programs. For these three participants, their experiences as

students did not occur simultaneously with their faculty experiences; therefore, the

bullying that occurred during their graduate program was described uniquely from the

faculty experience. Doctoral and master degree programs were represented in the

interviews at the time. These participants were located throughout the country from the

west coast, the central-Midwest, and the east coast. Their degrees varied from biological and chemical sciences, to educational foundations, and higher education.

Seven faculty members were interviewed and had positions located throughout the United States from the western states, Midwest, and East coast. All but one had experienced bullying within their junior faculty years. Multiple areas of discipline were represented and not disclosed to protect anonymity of the participants. Three of the faculty members had experienced bullying in their graduate programs as well; one had similar bullying occur at two different institutions.

Biographical Sketch of Participants

April is a middle aged, Caucasian graduate student who was in a doctoral program during the time of the bullying. She started her doctoral program with years of work experience behind her and was excited to be working with the advisor who was assigned to her because of his reputation in the field. April was the subject of power from her advisor who used strong language and dismissive actions to discredit her work. Her program ended without the award of the Ph.D.

Sue is in her thirties and was in a master's degree program at the time of the bullying. Her tuition, employment, housing, and food were part of the graduate assistantship she held during her studies. Through her graduate assistantship she was the subject of power from her supervisor. Sue described her supervisor as dismissive, verbally abusive, and discredited her to other colleagues without her knowledge. She was able to graduate with her degree; yet, the experience impacted her beyond those years.

Doug is a young, Caucasian male in a science based, doctoral program. Similar to Sue, his tuition, employment, housing, and food were granted through the graduate

assistantship he was assigned in the beginning of his program. He was also the victim of bullying from his direct supervisor. During the interview he explained that his supervisor would lie about situations, ignore him completely, and verbally abuse him during meetings. He was terminated from his position, lost funding, housing, and tuition. Upon investigation into the situation, his tuition was later paid for an entire year and additional funding was granted to him for a new assistantship position.

Beth is a middle aged, Caucasian woman who was enrolled in a doctoral program. At the time of the experience her employment was contingent upon completion of her Ph.D. She felt the behaviors of her advisor were bullying as her advisor would never respond to inquiries about the status of her degree; in addition, she felt powerless to address the behavior. She was unable to finish her degree within the required timeframe and was terminated from her position; she awaits the awarding of her degree.

Rachel is in her late twenties and was enrolled in a science based doctoral degree at the time of the bullying experience. She went from her master's degree directly to the Ph.D. program. Equipment promised for her research amplified her excitement for working with her assigned advisor. Rachel felt her advisor used bullying behaviors such as defamatory language, stealing her work from research projects, and requiring excessive amounts of work for her degree. She finished her degree and is currently working outside of higher education.

Daisy is a mother in her late twenties, who came into her master's degree as a non-traditional student. During her program she became pregnant with her second child and was determined to complete the degree before the baby arrived. One faculty member with consistent contact with Daisy was described as always watching Daisy and

consistently encouraging her to quit the program. Daisy was awarded the Master's degree.

Fran was in her thirties and enrolled simultaneously in two master's degree programs. She was nearing completion of her first graduate program when she enrolled in an online master's degree program. Using her first graduate school experience as a guide, she realized the online program did not represent a healthy environment. In particular, Fran described her advisor as requiring excessive amounts of work, being coercive, and holding graduation as a threat to complete heavy research demands. In both instances she was awarded her degree.

Mike is a young father in his thirties and has been in academia for some time. He has been in faculty positions at two distinct universities and in both instances experienced bullying by senior faculty members. He described significant feelings of isolation by senior faculty members and being talked about in private meetings without his knowledge. There was one senior faculty member who instigated the bullying; however, there were several people in this group that contributed to the experience. In his former position he left without tenure; however, he is now a tenured faculty member at a different institution.

Lisa has been in higher education for many years; at the time of the bullying she was the senior most member of her department. Her direct supervisor was described as the bully and would demand Lisa to provide information about projects even if the knowledge was not available to her and her supervisor would raise her voice during confrontations. Funding for her position was contingent upon grant resources. She

ultimately left her position when grant funding was closed and immediately began working at a new institution; the competitor of her former university.

Kim is a middle aged, Caucasian faculty member. Her career began in a clinical setting and after watching years of abuse in her field she was determined to make a difference by becoming a mentor and teacher. Kim shared that her field is known for being abusive to younger members and one senior faculty member instigated the bullying experiences. Similar to Mike, there was a group of people that contributed to the experience, but one person in particular would consistently discuss Kim behind her back, isolate her, and find ways to reduce Kim's access to resources in the department. She remains a faculty member.

Emma was a Caucasian faculty member in her thirties and eagerly committed to her first faculty position. During her doctoral program, she was sexually harassed by her advisor and then experienced the abuse of power in her new faculty role. She was a non-traditional student who entered her Ph.D. program with five years of working experience. When she started her tenure-track faculty position, she described being targeted by the chair of the department who would follow up on all of her projects, demand she work over the semester break, and verbally attack Emma in her office. She graduated with her doctoral degree; yet, left her faculty position and has never returned to academia.

Ava was 65 when she completed her Ph.D. and is currently a faculty member. She experienced bullying both as a student and faculty member. Her doctoral program was started after a very successful first career and she was able to graduate within four years. As a student, she shared experiences of bullying behavior by a faculty member; in her

faculty position she was targeted by her supervisor. Her faculty position ended and she continues to teach distance courses part time.

Olive is a young female who experienced bullying as a faculty member and as a doctoral student. As a faculty member, her tenure and promotion track was uniquely and directly tied to three components of her position. Her direct supervisor in this position was described as the bully and become physically upset and use abusive language during confrontations with Olive. She enrolled in the doctoral program because she was granted full funding and the program had a highly respected reputation. During her doctoral program the bullying was described as isolation from her advisor and the dean of the department. In both instances, she left without tenure and before completing the Ph.D.

<div align="center">**Analysis of Data**</div>

Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim following the interviews. Upon completion of the transcriptions, a copy of the final interview text was sent to the participant for clarification and review. Six participants responded to transcription data with changes or approval of the interview. Interview transcriptions were loaded into Atlas.ti for analysis. While the researcher was transcribing the interviews, additional notes were taken on emerging interest areas from the interview and noted for the analysis phase. Sample photos of the researcher's notes and various thought analysis can be found in Appendix D. Maxwell (2013) shares that the first steps of qualitative analysis begin with reading the transcripts and writing memos associated with initial ideas about categories and themes. These notes were used to create codes for the first reading of the transcripts.

A modification of the Van Kaam phenomenological analysis as described by Moustakas (1994) was used to analyze the transcripts. Transcripts were read word for word and horizontalization was developed by coding each moment that was unique to the participants' experiences. Analysis drew 36 unique codes that were funneled to fit under the five paradigms of power, impacts of the experience, and recommendations for addressing bullying in higher education. Within those 36 codes, 1216 moments were captured as relevant to that code. Multiple codes may have been assigned to a particular moment. During the next phase of analysis, the codes were analyzed using Atlas.ti where the researcher read through the codes and moments to interpret the presentation of findings. Table 1 lists the codes and the number of moments that were assigned to each code.

Table 1. List of codes

Code	Number of moments in this code
Participation in study	2
Complexity	3
Connecting the dots	6
Bully crew	6
Age	6
Disbelief	9
Multiple social roles	10
Improvement	10
Threat	10
Boundaries	11
3 words	12
Recommendations	13
Gender	13

Code	Number of moments in this code
Difficulty in pinpointing	13
Positive expectations	14
Peak	16
Stealing students work	17
Rulebook/unspoken rules	20
Differentiation	21
The victim	23
Isolation	23
Abusive expectations	24
Inception	24
Power	26
Victim control	26
Outsiders	35
The bully	37
Types of objectives	40
Rationalization	55
Outcomes	64
Experience	74
Support	77
Retaliation/victim response	101
Institutionalization	104
Impact	117
Behaviors/instrumental modes	154

The interpretation of findings from the original 1216 moments resulted in several iterations before the researcher determined the presentation of data. Originally, the researcher developed six themes with 16 subthemes. Upon further investigation and

reviewing the guiding research questions for this study, the researcher settled on exploring the data through the theoretical framework of power, the impacts of the experiences, and what participants described as potential solutions to addressing bullying in higher education. Final analysis of the data was presented under the five paradigms of power (differentiation, types of objectives, instrumental modes, institutionalization, and rationalization) with subthemes totaling 24 categories. Appendix D contains a photo of the researcher's notes relating to the development of these categories.

Following analysis of the first-round interviews, second and third interviews were conducted for continued understanding of the experience. Questions for the second and third round interviews were developed based on the analysis of the transcribed first round. The researcher determined more information should be gathered on the participants' perceptions of power. Questions were asked for them to describe or define power in their own words. Additionally, during the analysis of their first interview, the researcher made notes on stories that needed more depth or clarity. For example, Rachel described unspoken rules and the researcher asked: "My curiosity is stemming from your perspective of the rules and the unwritten rules in higher education. Can you talk more about these?" One graduate student participated in three separate interviews. This participant required additional time to share the situations that contributed to their experience.

Trustworthiness

Validity measures in qualitative research are essential to establishing credibility of the research design and study (Glesne, 2011). These measures are relied upon in the research community to demonstrate that the data obtained during a study are trustworthy.

There are multiple ways to address validity in a qualitative study; however, not every technique is required for an individual study (Maxwell, 2013). In this study, the following strategies of validity are discussed: researcher bias, reactivity, triangulation, rich data, and member checks (Maxwell, 2013).

Researcher Bias

Researcher bias can influence the types of questions asked in the interview, the responses of the participants, and analysis of the data. Acknowledging bias helps reduce its influence in these areas and make explicit attempts to mitigate influence on the research (Moustakas, 1994). The primary researcher acknowledges the following biases, beliefs, and theories about the study: individuals have been subjected to significant mistreatment in the higher education system; the mistreatment has impacted their academic career, wellbeing, and professional career; and the victims felt powerless to address the issue.

Measures were taken to prevent leading the participant to answer by asking open ended questions or statements: "Tell me more about that", "You mentioned _____ earlier, can you describe that in more detail", "Thinking about the moment you mentioned earlier, can you elaborate on the setting, language used, or anything else notable about that experience?" Additional measures are described below in relation to reflexivity.

Recruitment and delimitations for this study required participants to self-identify as being bullied based on the definition of bullying, which may have influenced certain aspects of validity. This alone lead some participants to explain specific stories or relate to the experience based on that definition. Despite a deliberate attempt to avoid leading questions, the researcher acknowledges there were questions that may have lead

participants to a specific conclusion. Corrections to these questions were addressed after transcriptions and the researcher made note of situations that prompted these questions to avoid repeating this in subsequent interviews.

Reactivity

The researcher's presence may have interfered or biased responses in the interview (Creswell, 2014). Similar to personal bias, understanding how the participant may be affected by the presence of the researcher is another validity threat that cannot be eliminated; yet, must be considered (Maxwell, 2013). It is important to note in one particular interview the researcher acknowledged her response to a statement made by the participant as "too involved." In this moment, the researcher reacted with shaking her head and saying, "that is so horrible, I know I'm not supposed to be involved, and what you are describing is so frustrating." It is possible the response by the researcher influenced the remainder of statements made by that participant.

Stories and experiences shared by the participants were difficult to hear and the researcher found it challenging and important to avoid her own judgements on the stories. Based on the researcher's bias's and personal interest in the study there were certain situations that the researcher identified before the interviews as being emotionally triggering: sexual abuse, defamation, and lack of control as a student. The researcher kept a note near the computer to "be present" as a reminder to avoid judgment statements related to the participants experience or become involved in the story with personal comments rather than exploratory questions. Reflexivity was difficult to balance as rapport building is important in the interview process and displaying empathy for their experience without unnecessary influence on their subsequent statements.

Triangulation

Several techniques were used to validate this qualitative study including triangulation. Triangulation is a strategy used to increase trustworthiness in qualitative studies by using a variety of sources for data collection (Maxwell, 2005; Creswell, 2014). For this study, interviews, memos, and notes from the interviews were the primary data sources.

Rich Data

Qualitative research requires in depth collection of data to ascertain meaning. With interview research, it is necessary to conduct intensive interviews over multiple sessions, and memo observations from the interviews (Maxwell, 2013). A total of 20 interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed; interviews lasted between 30-90 minutes and were video-recorded or conducted in person. Video interviews and in-person interviews allowed the researcher to create notes about body language or emotional responses such as crying in her memos.

Member Checks

Clarification from participants was also used to increase validity in this study and member checking was conducted during analysis (Creswell, 2014). Conducting member checks was important to avoid interpreting data incorrectly (Maxwell, 2013). Participants were sent transcripts of their interviews for clarity. Six participants responded to the transcriptions with corrections, approval, or changes.

<div align="center">

Summary

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Chapter III contains information related to the methodology chosen to conduct this research study, participant selection, how data was collected, and how data was

analyzed. Specific details on the recruitment of the participants and their biographical sketches were included in this chapter. Additional information on validity techniques used in this study were addressed.

In Chapter IV the findings from this study are presented. Findings are shared in respect to the theoretical framework of power, the impact of the experiences, and the participants thoughts of mitigating these behaviors in the future. Following Chapter IV, these findings are discussed in relation to the current literature and the researcher's established meaning and essence from the findings are presented.

Chapter VI contains an overview of the study, the findings, limitations, and implications for future research. A succinct summary is presented of the research and what the future may bring in this topic area.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of bullied victims in higher education, specifically the experiences of graduate students and faculty members. Power is included in the definition of bullying and has been established as a key component to bullying relationships. To date, limited qualitative research exists on this topic and no research has been conducted on the alignment of bullying and power in higher education.

For this study, a phenomenological approach was used to determine factors associated with the bullying experiences including: how the bullying relationship was established, the impact of the experience, and how this behavior could be prevented from occurring in the future. From these stories, a new level of understanding and exposure guides recommendations for averting these behaviors.

The guiding question for this study was: "What are the lived experiences of bullying victims in higher education?" Within this context, further exploration occurred around how those experiences impacted participants' academic career and their life outside of higher education, as well as their perception on how bullying could have been prevented.

Findings from the data collection phase of this study are described here in Chapter IV. Quotations taken directly from the interview transcriptions are used to support the

alignment of bullying within the framework of power. Findings from this study are strategically presented in context to the paradigm of power outlined by Foucault (1994) with additional insights on the implications experienced by the abuse of power in higher education.

The five constructs of power described by Foucault (1994) and how these constructs aligned with the participant's story are presented in the following order: differentiation, institutionalization, types of objectives, instrumental modes, and rationalization. Outside of the power paradigm, the impact of the bullying experiences and perceptions of how to reduce bullying are explored. Under the seven major areas, there are 18 sections that support the alignment of bullying and power in the context of higher education. These themes and categories are as follows:

Differentiation: How the participants described the differences between themselves and the aggressor. Categories within differentiation were: nontraditional status and positional rank within the institution.

Institutionalization: Specific components were repetitively shared about the structure of higher education and how it perpetuated the bullying behaviors. Included in this category were findings on role authority and bureaucratic processes established in the university.

Types of Objectives: Participants shared their perceptions of what was being gained by exploiting power in the relationship. Descriptions about leverage and thoughts around imposter syndrome are presented as types of objectives from this study.

Instrumental Modes: Behaviors, types of language, and strategies employed by the bullies are outlined in the instrumental modes. Many of the participants shared

feelings that it didn't matter how well or how poorly they performed, they would not be successful in that department. Additional categories included surveillance of the subject's work, isolation, and communication through verbal and physical means.

Rationalization: Participants spoke of the reasoning of their experience and how that altered the ability to change the situation. Rationalization is explored through these areas: it's just who they [the bullies] are, blaming the victim for the experience, there is nothing we [administration] can do, and how the victim rationalized the behavior.

Impact: Many subjects shared the impact of the experience on their career or personal development. Sections discussed within the impact are related to self-doubt and mental and physical health.

Recommendations: Participants were asked to share their thoughts on how bullying could be mitigated in higher education. Often systems of support and accountability were described and are discussed below.

The Power Paradigm in Higher Education

Foucault (1994) delineates power and the manifestation of how power materializes in the human experience. Subjects are the recipients of power dynamics; wherein power dynamics are expressed through differentiation, instrumental modes, rationalization, institutionalization, and types of objectives (Foucault, 1994). Encompassing these components is how the subject falls within the constructs of power - its relations, communication, and objective capacities (Foucault, 1994). Participants in this study were subjects of power in the system of higher education and each held unique experiences, yet the connection to power was evident.

Differentiation

Differentiation explores the uniqueness of the subject and the aggressor (Foucault, 1994). Participants in this study held traditional forms of differentiation; nonetheless, subtleties were expressed. Participants shared the following differentiating features: age, gender, faculty rank, positional role, and life experience. Foucault (1994) describes "the systems of differentiations that permits one to act upon the action of others" as cultural differences, differences in knowledge, or positions (p. 344). In this study graduate students described themselves as nontraditional with feelings they did not fit into their aggressor's ideals of who is a graduate student and who is not. Differences were described by both graduate students and faculty member participants in regard to positional rank within the university. Below is the presentation of how being nontraditional and positional status contributed to the bullying environment.

Nontraditional. "I didn't fit the mold."

Graduate students in this study felt nontraditional upon entrance into their programs; age, gender, life experience, and past work experience created separation from others in their cohort and from their instructors. Underlying comments made to the participants accentuated their understanding that they were not welcome, did not belong, or did not possess the necessary skills to be where they were. For example, when asked what her sense of why she was targeted by a particular faculty member, Ava expressed: "The bullying had to do with age and not sexual harassment. Because I was female, because I was older, and because I didn't fit the Ph.D. mold."

Ava felt that having started her graduate school late in life and after having a successful first career faculty members were not interested in working with her; that her

former experiences were not valued. Having experience in the field was not perceived to be valued in the participant's graduate program, particularly when a faculty member went straight through from a bachelor's degree, to a master's, and onto the doctoral degree.

Not belonging to scholarly studies prior to entering the graduate school was shared in conjunction with work experience. Privilege to go through each degree without the requirement of gaining outside income was a privilege not offered to all. Without the financial leverage and immersion in the world of academia, students were not accepted by their advisors. Similar to Ava, April had entered graduate school with previous work experience and was also working full time in her field of study. April voiced how life trajectory created dissonance and ability to belong to academia.

> Even his life experience was so totally diverse from mine. He never actually taught; he went through school, he finished his first degree, went on to his second degree, and then did his third degree. There were no breaks, he became an academic all along the way, which to me is somewhat of a privileged position.

Age and life experience were common descriptors of being a non-traditional student. Daisy described how pregnancy and age affected her relationship with a faculty member:

> I was an older student, not old, but older than the others. I already had one son and pregnant with my middle child. I think the set up was that I was more of a peer to the professors, at least to one of them... She had the attitude that I shouldn't be in school while I was pregnant, bottom line is she had a bias.

Both men and women participated in this study, yet women expressed gender as a component to their experience. April felt being a strong woman set her apart from her advisor and shared: "… maybe that's the issue. It's the strong feminist women that he

doesn't like, and doesn't fit the Modus operandi…" Other female graduate students felt

that they were excluded from experiences because of their gender. Rachel shared similar

feelings of frustration being a female in her graduate program. She felt opportunities to

meet with established researchers in her field were given to males and not females.

During conferences where she was a presenter, attending, and participating in research

with her advisor she felt that the female students were not included in meetings or

interviews with other scientists. When prompted to explain in more detail she stated: "it

was never a problem with male graduate students to meet new people. He never would

take the female graduate students."

Rachel and April felt a strong negative bias from their male advisors and being

excluded from events. On the other hand, Emma felt an inappropriate favoritism from her

male advisor that was grounded in sexual harassment.

There was very strong sexual harassment, but it was in a way that, this sounds

horrible, but because it was in a way that was favoritism towards me. He showed

me favoritism by making sure I always had funding available, by providing

opportunities to present at conferences, and by making sure that my research was

seen in the college. It felt different, yet it was still really unacceptable and there

were times where he tried to kiss me, he attempted to do things like touch me in

inappropriate ways.

Being uniquely different than others in the graduate program set participants apart

from their classmates. Their age, gender, or life experiences created bias and as a result of

their differences they became targets. How those experiences unfolded are described in

the methods in which the power was expressed: instrumental modes.

Positional rank.

Differentiating systems found in this study included difference in titles (student, faculty, and senior faculty), authority (supervisors and advisors), and ranking in the professional circle (publications, professional networks, and name recognition in the field). Beth, who consistently felt ignored by her advisor, had a great sense of fear in addressing the topic with other faculty members or the graduate school and shared:

> I just constantly felt vulnerable and the words that always come and that stuck in my mind were: 'I'm at their mercy, don't make anybody mad.' I don't know if that's a dramatic way to say that but that's how I felt.

Beth described this feeling in context with thoughts about being a student and that her advisor had the ability to delay graduation if she made him upset during the process. She felt uncertain who she could talk to on her committee to get advice on her dissertation when her advisor was not responding. There was confusion on who had the authority or permission to talk to her and she commented: "…not knowing the protocol and who do we go through and I just felt vulnerable through the whole thing and it kept me holding my tongue."

As Beth felt uncertain who she could talk to in the department and what would happen if she did confront her advisor with her concerns, others felt that even when concerns were shared, that because of their position, their bully was protected. Sue, along with all the other graduate students in the department, met with administration to discuss the actions of Sue's supervisor. Other students had noticed inappropriate communication and requirements given to Sue and they also felt victimized by this person. Sue had brought up concerns previously; however, they went unaddressed and it took the entire

group of graduate students to have action taken. Sue explained her thoughts about the reasons for the behaviors not being addressed previously "I know that the department tends to close ranks around the people they have working for them whether they are good or not."

Authoritative rank within the university was not the only position that differentiated students from faculty. Emma and April experienced the power of connections outside of the institution in their graduate school experience. Changing advisors was often suggested to students to get better support or to separate themselves from their current situation. Both of these graduate students felt that changing advisors would be damaging in their career. Emma shared why she decided not to change advisors:

> …not only had he been the department chair, not only was he the director of our professional organization, and he had connections all over the world. If I had ruffled feathers it would be 'you're never getting a job in this field type of thing'.

Not only did the positional rank make it difficult for the subject to respond to the behaviors, it was also difficult for outsiders to step in. April had spent time preparing for her dissertation proposal and was excited to present her study to her graduate committee and she described going into this experience: "I was excited about it and had all of my survey questions, my research questions, my IRB, everything was ready to go. I'm explaining it and I'm really excited about it…" During this meeting, her advisor stopped her in the middle of her presentation and slammed his hand down on the table and said "this is why you are not a doctoral student, you are dismissed." April was summoned out of the proposal meeting while her committee discussed her work. Upon returning to the

room where ultimately, her committee did not pass her proposal forward, she described that moment: "…. it was so bizarre and it's like you present this piece of who you are and you've worked really hard to get there. Then, all of a sudden, you don't get approval from the person you need to get approval from, who has all of the power to make or break the situation." When asked about what the experience was like observing her other committee members during this meeting she described the power her advisor had on everyone in the room:

> Nobody wanted to go against him, because he had the ultimate power. He had the ultimate decision making and everyone else, from my point of view, caved. They were not prepared to stand up and go against him. They were not prepared because they, as well, had something to lose because of his position within the university, his position locally, nationally, and internationally. He was, I guess you could use the word omnipotent; he was this sort of super god and nobody would against him.

Defining power from the differential of positional power was present for faculty members as well. Tenure and promotion were often tied within the stories of bullying for faculty members. When John sought advice from a colleague in his department about the bullying he was repeatedly reminded that it was because of his rank that he was being bullied. John described one of those moments: "[I was told] you know when you get tenured and promoted it's going to stop because the one thing she isn't, is dumb, so she will find someone else and then just rest assured she will move on."

Similarly, Mike described the day he received tenure and promotion, and how the experience changed along with his perceptions of the experience.

…this person had so much power over me that the perspective on that person flipped that day, about what they do and what they say… For me it feels that their ability to control your life and the uncertainty over how they will do that, it's just terrifying. They just have so much power, so much power to influence your level of anxiety. That power translates into anxiousness and that's the only way I can describe it.

Differentiation can take on different forms. In this study the continued reference to being a nontraditional student, having a positional rank of authority in the institution, and having a well-known status within the career field were contributing differentials related to higher education. Participants expressed the pressure of these differences in their ability to control the outcomes with statements like: "it [changing advisors] would be career suicide", "they had all the power", "I didn't know or understand the rules in the chain of command."

Institutionalization

Forms of institutionalization are the structures, functions, and traditional hierarchy developed by a group of people (Foucault, 1994). Findings from this study address institutionalization with respect to authority in higher education and the rules that are established in the university structure. Often, participants struggled with navigating the chain of command and establishing what support was available based on their role in the institution. Rules and processes were described by participants to support some individuals and not others.

Role authority.

Layers of authority affected the process for challenging bullies. Participants experienced clear roles within the structure. When exploring systems or ways to mitigate the behavior, participants were told to talk to another department or felt that they were pushed off because it was not something that could be addressed by the person with whom they were directly communicating. Often, barriers were presented to navigating the system and once the problem was brought up, the bully received additional support.

Doug had been working as a graduate assistantship position during his doctoral program. Early on in his position, everything was going well, until he started to notice inappropriate behaviors with his supervisor: yelling, lying, repeatedly telling him stories that she demanded he not share with anyone else, including personal information about an affair she was having with another university employee. The relationship continued to be strained and Doug had escalated his concerns to two others higher in the chain of command. Despite having brought concerns above his supervisor, he was not provided with constructive support:

> She [the assistant director] almost explicitly told me that she was not going to try
>
> to support me, that she would support me professionally as much as she could, but
>
> that her job was to manage my supervisor.

Role boundaries were not clearly expressed until students reached out for additional expertise. Following the initial proposal of her dissertation that was rejected by her committee, April returned to her dissertation and spent the following summer developing the proposal based on the feedback from her committee. At this point her advisor had moved to a different city and she lost regular communication with him.

During the summer, she worked extensively with a committee member on her proposal and described the process:

> They [the committee] offered me this 'opportunity' to work all summer and rewrite my proposal from scratch. So, here's an opportunity and I'm going to do this. I worked all summer with one of my committee members, because he [my advisor] wouldn't work with me anymore, even though he was my chair.

April was feeling abandoned by her advisor and sought support from another faculty member on her committee. She shared how this member was bound by roles: "I'd [April] like to talk to you about this part of my dissertation and she said, 'no you have to go through your chair.' I'm like, oh, somebody has (surprise) established some hierarchical rule that I need to follow…"

> Doug experienced individual role boundaries and in addition also found that departments had specific lines of authority. When seeking information and support after he was terminated from his graduate assistantship position, Doug was sent from one department to another without resolution.

> I didn't know who would be ok to talk to me or want to talk to me about it. I didn't know what the institutional pathway would be to getting an issue addressed. A lot of it was hearsay, like my advisor would say, 'well I think you should get a lawyer' and I was like 'well that's easy for you to say but I'm a college student, I can't afford a lawyer' and he would say 'I think there is a student lawyer maybe you should talk to him.' I would go to the student lawyer and he would say, 'oh I only represent undergraduate students, because their student government pays me, but the graduate school doesn't, so I can't represent

you.' It was such a shock, because I was so used to a very clear chain of command. All of a sudden, I was outside the circle and all I could do was go off of my best guess of who I should talk to."

Similarly, there was no continuity and follow through. Graduate students expressed going to the graduate school and sharing their complaints. It was uncertain if the complaints resulted in the behavior being addressed or if there was no authority to implement recommendations. April went to the graduate school to discuss her experience with her advisor and her concerns of not receiving the proper support or advisement and described this experience:

My experience was a one off - there was nobody doing the string analysis to say, oh there's April, there's this person, this person and we have a problem here. There wasn't anybody there connecting the dots. I wasn't aware of that; nobody validated that experience.

John shared a similar sentiment with positions of authority in his faculty appointment: "The problem was that I had four different deans while I was there throughout the entire process; you never have continuity of understanding… I never felt like there was a consistent bullying process in place or consistency of messages."

For other students, there was only one person involved in their program; therefore, limiting exposure to other support personnel. Daisy shared how her bully was the only individual in charge of the program: "she was the only person over that, there weren't other professors, there were not any other faculty members." During the time of her graduate program, Daisy mentioned that the department was in turmoil and the chair

was in treatment for medical concerns and very few people were there to help support students.

Fran had a unique perspective on her graduate school experience. She was simultaneously enrolled in two master's degree; one near completion and the second one starting near to the time she was finishing her first. After completing her first master's degree she had a solid understanding of the requirements for this degree and what she felt, was a great experience. She was able to compare the two degree programs and felt in her second program the advisor was manipulative and coercive. This inappropriate feeling was felt in conjunction with having little contact with any other faculty members in the department. Fran felt a similar level of isolation that was shared by Daisy in her graduate program:

> Unfortunately, he was not only my advisor for the thesis… but I had to see him two to three times a week. I had to see him at group soup, group supervision, where we all plugged in and talked about cases, and he proctored the discussion. I had private visits with him online, where he supervised my thesis. It was a very close and sustained contact, and it was a nightmare.

Rule bound. Bureaucratic processes.

Similar to departments and individuals being regulated by specific roles, the policies and procedures in higher education instigated additional tension. Tenure and promotion, developing documentation, and following pre-established policies were part of the bureaucratic process in higher education found in this study. Participants often felt within this system the policies formed black and white rules that must be followed and protected those of authority.

April was advised by a friend to share her proposal experience with a particular person in the graduate school. When April reached out about her situation, she was faced with the fact her advisor had completed the documentation necessary and followed the procedure; therefore, preventing her story from being heard and accepted by the university.

> I said this is my experience, this is what I'm telling you. She said 'yes, but the file says this, he has this documentation and that documentation.' She was extremely rule bound. That was frustrating, yet I went and spoke to the Dean. It was interesting because she was also one of the people who has gone to the same dean about her concerns regarding his behaviors with grad students and how inappropriate it was. Here I am showing her evidence of what the experience was like and she still wouldn't listen to me, because it didn't fit the rule box that she had.

When Lisa asked for a second opinion on her performance evaluation, she was given a similar response that April received: "She [the bully's supervisor] looked at it and said, yeah, well she followed the procedure and there's nothing I can do, because she followed the procedure." Policies implemented in this fashion perpetuated the norm that nothing could be done or would be done. John would consistently share his concerns about the behavior of the bullying faculty member to the chair or the dean of the department and was advised to not bring his complaints forward to avoid meddling in his tenure and promotion process: "because it's part of that bureaucratic process until I get tenure, and we're just going to eat it, and I don't know if I can handle another year of that."

Comments related to the process and rules in place were accompanied by the unwritten and unspoken rule book that was expected to be followed, yet not explicitly shared. As a student, April felt excluded from important information to guide the indoctrination into academia: "We're academics and we have the playbook and we're not going to show you the pages of the playbook, because we want you figure out what the pages of the playbook are."

Rachel and Fran both learned as students they had no right or ownership of their work. Fran had worked diligently preparing slides for a conference presentation both she and her advisor were attending. She shared her advisor had taken all of her slides from her research project and presented them at an earlier session without giving her credit for her work. Since he presented these findings before her presentation, Fran had to frantically recreate some of her work and she shared: "well, there are no rules to taking a student's work, there's no punishment for taking your students work, there's not even a rule against it."

Rachel shared a similar situation with the potential publication of her thesis. Rachel had felt her advisor had inappropriate expectations for her thesis study and wanted her to do excessive work that was expected past her graduation date. She had felt excited about the possibility of being published in her field and showcasing her work. During a conversation with her advisor Rachel inquired about being the first author on potential publications from her research and she was answered with: "Oh, I don't know about that, I mean this is intellectual property and it's my property." Both Fran and Rachel were dismayed their work could go uncredited or be delivered as someone else's work.

The list.

Tied within the bureaucratic processes established in higher education and the

unspoken rules, lies the procedure that must be followed to draft a grievance. Participants

repeatedly shared the painstaking process of documenting every incidence that occurred

leading to the complaint. *The list* was one of the few ways the victims felt they could

support their story and they were told this was required. When April talked with the

graduate support system they discussed her plan of action:

> We went through what I needed to do; I need to provide documentation, I need to
>
> write a letter to the Dean of Graduate Studies. I need to cite all of the problems I
>
> had along the way, how I didn't get the proper attention and support, coaching,
>
> and mentoring from my advisor.

Despite having outside people (including those in authority) comment on the treatment

they were receiving, it did not meet the requirements for intervention. John shared a

particular meeting in which he and another junior faculty member had spent months

preparing a proposal that they presented at the meeting. During this meeting, John started

discussing the recommendations he had created and within minutes his bully started to

berate and belittle his ideas. He described this meeting:

> Not one minute into it she turns to all of the colleagues and says: 'Well this is
>
> such a flawed proposal, I don't know why you would bring this forward.' The
>
> other two people [in the bully crew] just proceeded to rip into us – 'who do you
>
> think you are, bringing this forward?' The new Dean was in there and they were
>
> just ripping into us, personally and professionally, ripping into us. It was just
>
> comment after comment and I was just sitting there wondering 'does anyone want

to help the two non-tenured, probationary faculty members who have spent the

last four months researching and creating this?' It was silence and I look at the

dean and she's just looking down, allowing this and for 30 minutes I sat in that

room and just got verbally undressed.

John described how colleagues noticed the behavior and the impact on the process:

At the end of meetings people would come up and say, 'what the hell?' I would

open my computer and type: February 6 this is what she said in a meeting… and

just made my spreadsheet of the shitty things she said and did to me.

The list and documentation was often not enough to get support for the

harassment. Lisa had been in her position for several years and typically received positive

feedback during her performance evaluation. After "the worst evaluation she had

received in her life", Lisa shared her list and documentation with human resources and

essentially made no impact on the situation. She stated: "I continued to try to hold my

ground, I wrote a 12 to 15-page response to the review to talk about all the different times

that the review was false."

In a similar fashion, Olive created a formal grievance that would never be

officially filed by human resources. Following an episode where Olive's supervisor was

"screaming" at her and physical shaking so violently with anger she was spilling coffee

onto the floor, Olive decided to write a formal grievance and meet with human resources.

Like others in this study, she had been advised to develop the list of things that had

occurred as justification for the grievance: "I had typed everything up, I sent it to HR, and

I requested a meeting." Despite having the grievance filed with the list of concerns, the

human resources department did not file the complaint and Olive remembered her meeting:

> when I got there, I was asked well do you wish to file this. The HR person said I really don't think that should go in her file we need all of you to be adults and approach this. We can certainly give you a direction as far as how to handle these different items but really hesitant.

When intervention seemed promising, Mike shared the documentation with the chair of his department and through the Ombudsman on campus. Despite this process, the ombudsman had little authority to enforce their recommendation and the behaviors continued. Mike described the documentations process:

> I shared with that person [ombudsman] the original emails and I had been keeping written documentation of the closed-door meetings, the times that they would begin and end, and the nature of the conversations as they would come and go.

Role authority and the bureaucratic processes ingrained in higher education perpetuate the differentials and strengthened the power of the bully. When describing other colleagues who had also been bullied, participants thought the other victims had given up because the system would not support their claims. The process was tedious and deemed too intensive for the slight opportunity that it would create change.

Types of Objectives

Institutionalization and pressure to perform with increasingly limited resources pushed bullies to gain something from their subject. Objective types suggest the purpose, value, and benefit of employing behaviors to achieve a certain end. In some cases, the accumulation of wealth, ranking, and privileges create momentum for the abuse

(Foucault, 1994). Participants shared perspectives on why they felt the bully targeted people, and some felt it gave the aggressor additional leverage, or that it prevented the aggressor from discovery that they were not qualified for the job.

Leverage.

Leverage the bully held internally and externally was elevated with additional publications in their name, utilization of a student's presentation, and being the gatekeeper of who is in the club and who is not. Bullies sought external leverage by taking students' work as their own. Rachel and Fran felt because of the differentials of positional rank (student to advisor), they were not granted proper credit for their work. Rachel was told she had no authority to take credit for her work and that it belonged to the advisor. Her description of the experience was as follows:

> I've had a long-time to work on this, so he would take my slides and wouldn't give me credit for them. He would present them in front of an audience as his own and accept compliments on them. They [audience members] actually went so far as to say, 'so this is your professor stealing your work.' I went in to talk with someone and they said well technically it all belongs to him and you don't have any rights and the credit belongs to him…

When Rachel was asked what she thought the benefits were for her bully she stated:

> Status within a community, sometimes your job title, renown in the field; like I have these many papers and my status is this. My advisor looked good on paper; he had a lot of authority. It's nothing you do specifically; you look good on paper so 'I'm king shit on turd hill.'

Fran spent time speculating on why her advisor had such high expectations of her and what he was gaining by pressuring her to complete a thesis above what would normally be expected of a master's level student.

> The level of writing, the level of research, the level of everything, to me it felt almost more like a Ph.D. What I figured out was that he was trying to get us to write papers that he could publish under his name, because he has that pressure to be producing. I called him one day and said, 'can I be the first author on this study if it actually gets published?' It was his reaction to that, that was very negative and that's when I realized he intends to take all the glory for doing this; it's all about him getting a paper.

Lisa felt her work, expertise, and role were used to leverage her direct supervisor. Her extensive experience in the department made Lisa feel that her supervisor requested her do additional roles outside her assigned position to make the supervisor look less incompetent. Lisa had been called upon to mentor new employees in the department and frequently asked to create content for her supervisor without credit. After this became a repeated occurrence Lisa, shared: "I was very tired of giving things without being acknowledged, or recognized, or appreciated; I didn't go the extra mile with her."

Status within the profession would be shifted, with the bully advancing while the subject was undermined. In this fashion bullies prevailed by diminishing those around them. Additional privileges were perceived by Kim, who said: "to be able to humiliate someone, gives them power." Ava also expressed her thoughts about the authority of faculty over a student "…if he could fail somebody that made him more powerful and I think he is just an evil man."

Imposter syndrome.

Leveraging more authority, privileges, or rank within the profession was concurrent with the feeling bullies were threatened or incompetent in their role. In several instances participants shared where the aggression against them was used to cover up inadequacies of the bully. Objectively, the bully would try to remove the threat or diminish the impact of that threat to their career, authority, or confidence.

Early on, Rachel shared she would approach her concerns directly with her advisor and her direct style was viewed as inappropriate by her advisor. In one situation, equipment in the lab was inoperable due to misuse by other students. Rachel informed her advisor about the issues and that if the use of the equipment continued in that manner it would completely inhibit the use of it for a long time. Rachel admits her email may have come across as strong. Her advisor would tell her she was not allowed to share her frustrations and that it hurts people's feelings. She felt her advisor interpreted the email as making him and others look incompetent. Rachel shared she felt he had a need to feel in control of others and situations: "Well, ego, ego was a big thing. He had to appear like he had control of the situation at all times and the truth of it is, is that he's not very smart." Appearing in control was his way to establish authority and rank in the field. It was an attempt to amplify the differential between the subject and bully.

Perceived competence and being recognized by others as an expert in their work was an objective obtained by tarnishing the reputation of subjects who were becoming established in their position. Ava stated: "I think people who bully, it's either evil intent or it's because they aren't confident enough in themselves." The threat of appearing less than the subject was intolerable, resulting in balancing the scales by targeting the subject

for the desired effect, that Kim described as: "to appear more talented, smarter, or more resourceful." Lisa expressed similar sentiment by sharing:

> To cover up the fact that she was inadequate in the position. I really felt that she
> was not prepared to take on this position at all. It was an attempt to hide her
> inadequacies and using other people, hopefully on her part, to her advantage.

As new faculty members being targeted by established faculty, both Emma and John discussed the realization that they had become a threat to the aggressor. They understood their efforts were being construed as diminishing the senior faculty. Early on in her faculty position, Emma was being 'followed up' on by the chair of the department. When Emma would have meetings with people on campus, her chair would call and ask the department if Emma was making mistakes. Emma felt her bully was establishing a final authority and place at the institution during her last years in the field.

> I'm going to cut that person down in an effort to make my final years look more
> impressive here at the institution.' There was a sense of this fear that she would be
> found out. It was almost like she had impostor syndrome; her impostor syndrome
> was a performance of bullying. Her fear was secretly that she didn't belong; that
> she came from first generation background that her parents were farmers, yet she
> had achieved all these things and secretly still felt 25 years after that she didn't
> belong.

John was known for being a strong instructor and well-liked by the students in his courses; whereas, his bully was not. Similar, to Emma's experience, John shared the impact of his bully's final years: "She wasn't as good as she let everybody to believe that

she was. She was nearing the end of retirement and she was getting close to that; her job was her everything."

Objectives were not always implicit, and it was felt that at some point the subject presented a threat to the bully. In one altercation with her bully, Daisy confronted her faculty member and said, "I told her I thought she felt threatened." There was a breach of authority or role misalignment that would create the distinct change in behavior to abusive. Mike described not being able to pinpoint the exact reasons for being targeted:

> The best that we could tell was there was always some sort of perceived slight toward this senior faculty member that served as a catalyst for eternity and there was no sense of ever getting redemption. She tends to call all of us arrogant or at least a couple of us and we talked to faculty members who have left the department and they had the same word used to describe them as well. If anyone is the target of this, it's because they were arrogant.

When participants were asked what their sense of why the bully performed these behaviors, a common response was to increase their rank within the university or the professional field and to appear highly competent. The actions of the bully were perceived to help gain leverage in their positions and garner higher status that allowed them to impose more control on others. In some cases, the types of objectives were concrete, like publication or promotion, and in others the objectives were more difficult to pinpoint.

Instrumental Modes

Instrumental modes are the ways in which power is expressed and exerted on the subject (Foucault, 1994). During this study, participants were asked for details on any

moments with their bully that were particularly memorable. Responses to that question provided insight into how the bully achieved or utilized their power to gain control. Instrumental modes were a substantial finding from this study.

"It didn't matter what I did or did not do."

Participants felt the aggressor had chosen them to be targeted. They felt they were treated unfairly regardless if they were exemplary in their classes or career. As a graduate student, Rachel describes the process of "getting the bad beaten out of you" in preparation for oral examinations:

> Oh, it means that no matter what you do, you are going to be harshly critiqued. You are going to walk out of that room thinking you are not going to pass; it doesn't matter how good you do. I even aced the questions and at some point, I got mocked by one of the professors a little bit because of my enthusiasm.

During her proposal process, April was dismissed from the room, then brought back in. She was given the opportunity to rewrite her proposal and present a new study at a later time. Despite having spent the summer rewriting and preparing for a second proposal, she did not pass the proposal stage and stated: "He had made his decision that I was never going to get my doctorate and he was going to do everything in his power to make sure that never happened."

Faculty experienced similar treatment. John and another junior faculty member spent months preparing a curriculum change proposal that was presented during a department meeting. Within the first few minutes, the proposal was attacked and did not pass forward. "She said, 'Well this is such a flawed proposal, I don't know why you

would bring this forward.' The other two people [part of the bully crew] proceeded to rip into us: 'Who do you think you are bringing this to the committee?''

Realizing she was the target of unfair harassment, Emma noted this as a crossroads in her career and specifically the point of no return with that university. "That moment was the turning point for me, because I realized it didn't matter how good of a faculty member I was or bad I was. Regardless, I was going to be targeted unfairly for just being who I was." This turning point occurred when Emma was being asked to physically be in the office during the semester break, despite working internationally on a grant she had been awarded. Trying to gain more clarity on her department chair's request, Emma asked the provost about expectations for working during the semester break and the response was that faculty members were not required to be on campus during that time. Other faculty members in her department were not asked to be in the office during the break and it became clear these requirements were deliberately aimed at her. After six months of being in her position, she began applying to other universities.

In each situation, it was clear there was no way out of the circumstance but to end the relationship with the university. Potential bullies were not able to obtain their objective with these individuals and became determined to see them leave; or the threat of the subject's work needed to be eliminated to support the bully. Subjects often felt powerless and that they just had to take it for fear of making the situation worse.

Evaluative processes.

Using the institutional formal processes of evaluation, subjects were targeted by supervisors through evaluations. Despite having received high grades throughout her doctoral program, April received feedback from her advisor indicating she was a poor

writer. For her, these comments were not in line with feedback from her comprehensive exams or from previous instructors. "I got feedback from him that I didn't write well and it wasn't good enough. It was totally not the image I got from other faculty." Lisa received "Not only the most poorly written review, but the worst review of my life" from her supervisor. After being in the position for years, it was shocking for Lisa to receive this evaluation.

Similarly, Olive had been given positive responses in her first year of her doctoral program and advanced beyond normal procedures to start teaching sooner than other graduate students. During the middle of the semester, she was called into a meeting with the dean of the school and told she was not meeting expectations. Expectations were often not clear or discussed with students prior to getting formal warnings of their performance. Olive recalled the conversation: "During that conversation she indicated to me that everyone was very disappointed with my progress; that I was focusing way too much that semester on teaching and that I was making absolutely no progress as far as a researcher." The semester had passed without any contact with her advisor about her progress, nor had the expectations of her research been described to her during that semester.

Throughout the tenure process, evaluation occurs uniquely within the institution. Mike described how the process was used by his bully to damage his progress.

> You would get a review letter of your progress through the tenure process and on the letters that myself and others who were targets of this behavior, the letter was written not in a supportive way; rather let's find all of your weaknesses and highlight anything we can find that is negative about you.

Olive described a similar experience during her yearly tenure review evaluation. Her first-year review went well and during the second year she was asked to teach a class in which she felt set up to fail; instructing a class she was not comfortable teaching. During the year two review the entire conversation was focused on the one class she taught and did not include other duties. Her bully, who was also her supervisor, controlled the conversation: "she basically took the whole floor and had written my review but only included the comments from the student evaluations of that one class."

The evaluative process provided a formal way for bullies to target subjects and prevent their career progress or graduation. Often performance reviews did not indicate concerns during the first year and then shifted abruptly, and for some without warning. Some faculty members decided to look for new jobs and students concluded they would not graduate from that program.

Surveillance.

Participants described being heavily scrutinized for any actions; their bully always following up on them. Daisy described being monitored: "I was under a microscope with her. Anything I did, she would call a meeting and she called me out on everything. It was not the same as other students' experiences, because other students even commented on it." Doug also felt in his position he wasn't comfortable making any decisions because "I knew I was under the microscope," thus preventing him from being effective in his position.

Within her first few months Emma noticed the extensive oversight from the department chair. "I would say the pervasiveness was mostly in that surveillance; I never felt unwatched. In my office, I was always being watched, if I was in a meeting with a

faculty member, I was being watched." Surveillance was obvious and subtle; directly watching Emma in her office through the glass near the door, following up with contacts within the university and asking if she was making any mistakes, and showing up at volunteer events Emma attended.

Emma was physically being watched and followed up on from interactions with other departments. On the other hand, in her online programs, Fran felt the effect of surveillance in a unique way. "He [advisor] just hounded all of us mercilessly with constant text and phone calls. Really breathing down our backs; it felt so inappropriate." Fran described her advisor as being inappropriate in the consistency of contacts and also the requirements he gave her for graduation.

Being in the lines of sight created anxiety, fear, and distrust. Subjects felt unable to adequately perform their work or have private conversations. When projects were completed the foreboding meeting and anticipation of how the bully would respond, contributed to the deterioration of their graduate program or career.

Isolation.

One of the common instrumental modes was to isolate the victim; prevent them from communicating with others and established a group of people who contributed to the inappropriate behaviors. Lisa described watching the department split into different groups: "The office wound up splitting into certain factions; those that were responsive to the manager and then others of us who were not in the know, not in the cool kid's club."

Mike also noticed some people in the department would be called out for achievements by the bully and her crew; whereas, the subjects were often left out of communication and specifically not acknowledged for their accomplishments. Neglecting

the subjects was an attempt to isolate them. Mike shared a similar reaction to observing different treatment in the department:

> Within the first couple of years I noticed faculty members would have achievements and they would be announced widely within the department and an email would go out that someone had a publication or won a grant of some sort. It became really apparent who was in and who wasn't and who was being targeted.

Isolation occurred in other ways. Physically being shut out as well as being left out of decisions. Kim shared how the environment impacted her work:

> There are a lot of shut doors around here, a lot of people not talking, a lot of decreased trust, a lot of passing someone in the hallway and not knowing what you should say or not say is definitely the environment I work in.

Closed door meetings were frequent in Mike's department. The nature of the meetings left targeted subjects to feel excluded and that the conversations held at that time were about their specific performance.

> There were a lot of meetings at an office that was adjacent to mine where they would start with loud conversation and then they would go to a much more whisper conversations and close the door. Then they would open the doors and have loud voice conversations and the bully would steam past my office without ever acknowledging me.

In addition to experiencing the close door office meetings, Mike described a similar sense of avoidance in cordial greetings. Targeted individuals in his department were not offered simple salutations: "The other part that was a clue would be the total lack of greetings.

There would be loud greetings of other faculty members in the hallways and it would be either nothing, or a very terse hi."

Likewise, Emma described being isolated in a culture of silence:

> The culture of silence was also reinstituted by her surveillance; making sure I'm not calling anyone, making sure I'm not sending emails to anyone, making sure she knew who was in my office at all times. If the meeting was with a faculty member that also had a duel appointment with administration, she needed to know why I was meeting with them and what that conversation was about.

Students and faculty alike felt alienated from peers and groups. Within that isolation they were often left out of decisions or excluded from groups. Lisa felt "being taken out of the loop for decisions" as did Doug who "felt very cast out and I realized that I did not know who to turn to." Beth felt avoided as a graduate student trying to get information from her advisor. After multiple attempts of connecting about her dissertation, she never heard back: "he was very difficult to reach, and he would never return phone calls or email."

In addition to feeling abandoned by her advisor, April was further isolated in whom she could garner support on her dissertation topic. When she approached one of her committee members about her dissertation she was told they were unable to discuss it and she needed to talk with her advisor. April described a lack of understanding of the reason:

> It doesn't make sense to me; if you're on my committee and supposed to be supporting me and I want to talk to you about where it's going and what I'm doing, why can't I talk out loud with you about that. Why does there have to be a

central locus of control of power over information and everything has to go

through him and then he'll decide who can talk to me?

Isolation, a technique deployed by differing means includes; physical avoidance,

deliberate exclusion from conversations, and overlooking of the subject's achievements.

In each case it substantiated the feeling of not belonging and understanding the subjects

were not wanted. Isolation often amplified the impact of the other modes of behavior

because there was a lack of support.

Communication, language, and body position.

Isolation could be considered a mode through which communication is

intentionally denied to others. Additionally, communication in its style, manner, and

timing were described by the participants during interactions with their bully. Dismissal

from meetings was one method used to prevent the passing of vital information.

Terminology such as "dismissal" was threatening because it held different meanings to

the subject. Sue was unable to attend a training because of a medical appointment that

had been scheduled months in advance. She described how her supervisor responded by

dismissing her from the room and visibly displaying anger toward her:

> I [Sue] have this appointment and I'll have to leave early. She turned really red
>
> and she was really angry, and she told me that I had to leave and that I was
>
> dismissed. The way that she said it, I didn't know if I was dismissed from my job
>
> or just the meeting we were having.

In a likewise manner, April was dismissed in the middle of her dissertation proposal with

the distinctive understanding that she was excluded from further discussions related to

90

her project. Body language, tone and pitch of his voice, deliberate use of terminology, and dismissal were communication types deployed by this aggressor.

> He [advisor] said 'April talk about your proposal' and so I'm talking about my proposal and they're [the committee] asking me questions and I'm responding. And then at one point, he slams his hand down on the table and says, 'See this is why you are not a doctoral student, leave the room right now, we will discuss.'

Using forceful language that April experienced indicated the intensity of words, as did the physical slamming down of the aggressor's hands. Physical body position was another way bullies exerted domination over the subject. John recalled an encounter with his bully in which she entered his office: "She stood over me while I was sitting at my desk. She came right next to my chair, inches away, total personal space and was standing over me."

During her graduate studies, Emma was exploited by her advisor who used physical touch to exert power: "It felt different; it was still really unacceptable and there were times where he tried to kiss me, he tempted to do things like touch me in inappropriate ways." Aggressors would challenge physical boundaries in their objective modes and find ways in which to corner the subject to remove the subjects comfort or power.

Sue had described the anger of her bully as "under the surface and unpredictable". Unpredictable behavior created an environment that felt unsafe; unsafe to be honest, do good, and move past mistakes. Emma described her bully "oh, she was totally unpredictable." Lisa shared the anxiety of not knowing what might happen the next day: "I would go home and think 'what the fuck is she going to do next?'"

Anger was commonly used to describe how the bully felt toward the subject. Lisa and Sue shared their understanding of anger toward themselves as subjects. Lisa, along with the aggressor, attended a meeting with human resources in which anger was displayed: "At one point I said I didn't know something and she was demanding that I answer her question, she became really red in the face. I really felt like she's going to blow up." Sue expressed her understanding of her bully's anger in this manner:

> Her anger, I would describe it as cold and under the surface. You were always
>
> waiting … you never knew what was going to set her off or what she was going to
>
> be mad about; would she think that what you said was funny or would she take
>
> you into her office and rip you a new one for it?

"***Death by 1,000 cuts.***"

Subtle use of language and style of communication was an undercurrent in many circumstances. Bullies did not always use aggressive language or loud voices to manipulate the situation. Fran described an interaction with her advisor where he employed a very calming and deliberate tone of voice to get what he wanted: "The way he was talking to me in this really weird reassuring voice; it was basically saying you will finish this, you will get this done; if I pass you, you will finish this."

Parallel to extensive surveillance, bullies would use tactics that often started subtly and over time continued to wound the subject's credibility, confidence, and sense of security. John used the phrase "death by 1,000 cuts" to describe the continued abuse of slight occurrences that overtime developed into repeated, excessive harassment. Mike acknowledged how long it took to understand the behavior as unacceptable: "It didn't come out as really threatening behavior for a while, it took a couple of years for that to

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come out." John described the strategy involved to get at him: "…throwing little shit like that and throwing those barbs out. In faculty meetings… 'that sounds like a flawed way of doing it, are you really sure that you are the person who should be doing it?' Again, throwing little things like bits and pieces but enough, and a lot of that was just a death by 1,000 cuts; instead of a bludgeoning."

Some of the processes of institutions that were requirements for graduation were designed to break students down. These presentations were created for the sole purpose of 'preparing for oral exams' but in a way to humiliate and damage the students' confidence. Rachel described the process of her literature seminar: "Literature seminar is something we have to do, a 15-minute presentation that is considered the prequel to your orals. You have the badness beaten out of you basically, so you are ready for when it really counts, which is orals."

Strong language.

Subtlety was not always granted, and the disapproval was sharp with the use of tone of voice, aggressive behavior, and lurid dialogue. Doug remembers a specific meeting with his graduate assistantship supervisor in which she waited until the end of the meeting to confront him about an issue:

> I said yeah, I'm done but do you have something to talk to me about? She said 'Yeah, first of all, I need you to stop talking shit about me behind my back. I heard you were saying this to this person' and it escalated from there. She got very loud and very angry. … 'which also probably means that you have been saying this to all these other people, because you hate me and you want me fired. And so I need you to stop doing that and then she said does that make sense to

you?' I was in shock and I said 'I have no idea what to say right now. That was a

lot for me to process.' She said 'oh you don't get it. Ok, let's wind it back.' She

proceeded to go back through the entire conversation again.

Using high pitch voices and screaming were described as communication tactics. Olive

distinctly remembered a situation in which she heard an altercation between a colleague

and her supervisor:

I heard screaming, so I walk into the room to see if I can defuse the situation. And

I walk in and she [supervisor] turns around and screams at me and says 'you can't

even make a cup of coffee and I have grounds in my coffee.' And she is shaking

so much with anger, screaming at my colleague, and then screaming at me that the

coffee was shaking out of her cup onto the floor.

Graduate students experienced similar episodes of yelling; as described above,

April was loudly dismissed from her meeting and Daisy was confronted in a cafeteria full

of people by her faculty member: "I was in the cafeteria and she found me and started

yelling at me."

When seeking guidance and support for a difficult situation, Ava's questions and

concerns were not acknowledged. Ava had gone to her faculty supervisor for support in

addressing student concerns: "He basically said that he had better things to do and that I

was wasting his time. He said, 'just do your job' and was very abrupt."

Language and style of communication were chosen to subtly or abruptly change

the dynamic of the conversation. Regardless of it being over a period of time or a direct

shift, the subject was dismayed the abuse was allowed to continue. These represent

strategies to achieve objectives and to win any cost. Strategy is part of the power

paradigm that explores how the power is implemented to meet an end (Foucault, 1994).

Defamation.

Death by 1,000 cuts was an attempt to discredit and disarm the reputation of the

subject. When the subject presented a threat, the bully would create a strategy to

undermine the story of the victim. Some circumstances occurred directly in front of the

victim and in other cases their credibility was destroyed behind their back. Ava

remembers asking for a letter of recommendation from a colleague and the response she

received was surprising:

> I asked him for a recommendation letter and he said, 'Well I don't know if I can
>
> give you one because your department chair said you didn't get very good
>
> evaluations when you taught for her.' I sent him copies of my evaluations and
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> said, 'actually they are pretty good.'

John described having to deal with the abuse over time and how it cut into his credibility:

"You're telling me I have to eat it for another year and put up with this person and this

professional harassment. Taking the slander behind the scenes and the knocks to my

credibility that are unwarranted."

Accusations of character created unhealthy environments. Lisa was repeatedly

accused of denying knowledge: "I was accused of lying and that I should be helping this

person do certain things; that I should be doing things to help do her job. Again, saying

that I know information that I am not providing for her." Personality jabs were used to

create distrust of the subject to others. At the end of a conference, Rachel, her advisor,

and other members of the research team were sitting together at a restaurant to celebrate

the presentations and discuss the conference. She described these meetings as usually being an opportunity to celebrate the hard work that was accomplished. Rather than feeling support, Rachel shared how her advisor compared her to someone else and insulted her in front of the team of researchers in her department:

My advisor says to her [colleague], 'you know, you have such a nice personality, you really exemplify everything a young professional woman should be.' Then he turns to me and says, 'now you, I can't say the same for.' He goes on to tell me that I am overly confident and stubborn as hell and completely unprofessional…Then he looks at me and says, 'The only reason you are still in the group is because you're productive.'

Kim described watching harassment throughout her entire career and how her profession has been known for "eating their young." The destructive back talk was infamous in the field and continued into her teaching career in higher education. She talked about this experience:

They love to eat their young. I would watch people destroy others because they had authority and they've had years of experience. When I came into teaching I noticed they like talking about other staff and students and it wasn't nice… After confronting them and I directly said, 'I don't appreciate this and I don't want to work this way.' Ever since that time they have not talked to me, but they talk about me and I know this…They have tried to undermine my position ever since I confronted them.

Instrumental modes in higher education were expressed through the evaluative process, in extensive surveillance, through isolation and avoidance, and by using

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communication to achieve objectives. Behaviors ranged from subtle to obsessive, consistent abuse. Bullies used their strategy to include abrupt experiences to undermining credibility over time. Differentials in position were targeted and the processes in the institution supported the development of these behaviors. Troubling the experience was the degree and reasons why the behaviors were allowed to continue.

Rationalization

Of all the power paradigms, rationalization created the highest degree of frustration. There were few support systems in place and challenging the bullying behaviors required being persistent in new techniques and for most subjects, it required more resources than they had at their disposal. Resources included emotional, financial, social support, and career stability. As described by Foucault (1994) resource allocation is a differential in the power paradigm; wherein, those with power have more resources. Rationalization occurred in multiple platforms and resulted in the behaviors going unaddressed.

"It's just who they are…"

When subjects shared their experiences, they were often met with the response that the aggressor had a difficult personality and not to worry about it. Sue described how her concerns were handled: "It was very much written off that, that was just her personality. I don't think that was her personality; I think that was just years and years of bad behavior unchecked."

Support systems in place for students disregarded the concerns, despite having received multiple complaints about the same person. Rachel described the response of the graduate committee counselor: "They said ahh it's just him, he has a bad sense of humor

you know. He doesn't mean it, and just try to push past it or get a new advisor.'" Dealing with the situation and the problem was put back on the victim's plate with no support or additional resources. John experienced the 'deal with it' mentality from other colleagues who had been bullied by the same aggressor:

> One of the other faculty members that had been bullied she just said, 'John, it's your turn.' I said, 'what?' She said, 'Yeah, she does it all the time. She picks a new faculty with no power who is a threat to what she is or what she might be doing professionally.'

There was a sense that the victim needed to accept the treatment without recourse. Emma described how few people, including other graduate students, believed her advisor was sexually harassing her. The harassment would often occur behind closed doors, without witnesses, yet there was one instance she shared where her advisor openly harassed her in front of other students:

> The other thing is that nobody ever believed me with him or they were like oh he's just an old man, so just let him do his thing. It wasn't until there were a few witnesses to some of the behavior. So, he came into the grad student office and said, 'I'm off to vacation in Hawaii. I'd love for you to come with me and I'd love to see you in a bikini.' And the other grad students were like *gasp* *mouth open* and they said, "you told us these things were happening, but we didn't believe you until we witnessed it ourselves."

As a graduate student, Emma was told it was an expectation to have this happen: "Oh he's just like an old guy getting his kicks, just let it happen, you'll be out of here soon enough."

An undercurrent of moral acceptance to what degree the behavior should be tolerated also created additional tension in the rationalization of personality. April shared how the dean of the college did not interfere when graduate students were sexually exploited, and it took the bully being imprisoned for the friendship and relationship to be extinguished.

> He [the dean] broke off the friendship [with the bully] and said that he needed to do that because he broke a moral code in his perspective; which I find interesting. Ok, so you break a moral code on this issue, but you don't make a moral code for sleeping with grad students or exerting power and control over grad students; it's somehow ok.

John and Lisa both discovered the individuals they sought advice from in the current situation were protecting their acquaintance rather than addressing the behaviors professionally. John shared "It was somebody who was good friends with the person that I was having a problem with. You can tell that they were torn rather than professionally doing the right thing." Lisa realized the human resources contact also had multiple social roles with her bully and stated: "The other thing I found out, although she denied having a social relationship with the manager, was that they were friends outside of work."

Victim blame.

In several circumstances, rationalization of the bully's behavior was coupled with simplistic resolutions that required the victim to address the situation. Lisa shares her experience with the response received from human resources: "She said 'oh your boss seems like a very reasonable person. I'm sure if you just keep going and handle things as

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they are, I'm sure that things will be fine.'" Olive was given a similar response which included an additional tone of blaming her for the situation.

> When I got there [to the human resources office] I was asked 'well do you wish to file this?' Obviously, I'm filing a grievance. The HR person said I really don't think that should go in her file. We need all of you to be adults and approach this and we can certainly give you a direction as far as how to handle these different items.'

Administration and others would not only rationalize the behaviors of the bullies, they would subsequently dismiss the victim as overreacting to the behaviors. Sue said: "I think a lot of times I was dismissed as being hysterical or overreacting and I wasn't taken seriously." John was also described as being overly emotional. After John discussed his concerns with the dean, the dean went and talked to another faculty member in the department. John recalls being told about the situation:

> 'John came into my office and was talking about that individual [the bully] and I think John was just being a little overly emotional and overreacting when he said this.' My colleague said, 'you know what, he didn't even tell you half of the things that have happened.'

Subjects also felt nobody would believe them; that the person they would accuse would have too much power and name recognition to be impacted by the accusation. April recalled thinking about sharing her story: "Who's going to believe you? Will anyone believe you? He's got all the perceived or real power and people see him as a demi god." Emma expressed distrust from others around her:

The other thing is that nobody ever believed me with him, or they were like oh

he's just an old man, so just let him do his thing. It wasn't until there were a few

witnesses to some of the behavior that they started to believe me.

Dismissal of the experience and blaming the victim developed structure for the

bullying behavior and diminished subjects control. Rationalization in this nature is key to

seeing the power paradigm grow for the bully. Increasing from the pre-established

policies and differentiation, bullies used all of the components in their stratagem for

control.

"There is nothing that we can do…"

Institutional hierarchy and tenure protections created an environment where it was

accepted that nothing, or very little, could be done to address the behaviors of the bully.

Administration, ombudsmen programs, and victims alike felt there was little in place to

enforce any regulatory recommendations to challenge the situation. Lack of follow

through on the grievances was also rationalized by the role the bully played. John was

told:

They've been doing this forever and they do the garbage jobs here that no one else

wants to do. The justification for allowing this to continue was because no one

else will want to do the job that this person is doing.

Mike felt tenure made it difficult for the ombudsmen recommendations to be

taken seriously: "Because of the protections that come with tenure it's very hard." John

emphasized the rationale of tenure and perceived value in the bully's work as significant

components to his experience of moving the complaints forward: "She's really good at

what she does, she's tenured and promoted and nothing was going to happen to her anyway. Suck it up and go back to your office and deal with it."

Other concerns were a higher priority than dealing with these grievances. Victims were told that their issues were not as important as other concerns the university was addressing at the time. When John discussed bringing the matter forward he was discouraged from doing so, despite the confirmation that the situation was detrimental.

He [the dean] said everyone knows it was bad and that the complaints are legitimate. But low on a scale of concern, it was either we have budget issues to worry about, we're not going to take the trouble with that. We have these other issues that are happening and yours is just not as important.

Victim and bully rationalization.

Administrators and human resources staff were not the alone in the rationalization of the behaviors. Victims and bullies considered the normality of the situation. With her graduate assistantship position, Sue was given a stipend, tuition, housing, and a meal plan. Sue rationalized her experience by thinking: "I developed this mentality that it's a free education and maybe I need to take some abuse to get this free education." Similarly, Fran thought: "maybe I'll get a paper and it's worth it." Often bargaining the worth of dealing with the harassment or trying to do address the behavior in some way.

Other subjects felt it took some time to accept the behaviors as inappropriate; during the early stages, they rationalized the behaviors in some way. Mike shared "at first I tried to rationalize it like, maybe there's a good reason…" When the behaviors accumulated it sunk in that he was being targeted with aggressive tactics of isolation and defamation. Kim also brushed aside the behaviors thinking "What people put out into

others' lives comes back to them. And for a while there I thought it was relocation stress." It was hard to address the problem when it materialized as a personal problem and also the mentality that the problem will take care of itself.

April described how her bully conceptualized his behavior "He didn't think he was doing anything wrong and he didn't think he needed to do anything differently." Normalizing their own behavior granted the bully freedom from personal guilt. Rachel shared: "I think my advisor is incredibly selfish and he twists reality, so he doesn't feel so bad about it at the end of the day." In a likewise manner, Olive felt there was little concern in her doctoral program because it was not uncommon in her field for students to drop out, "I think it's just looked at this is normal, this is the norm."

Rationalization is the final component of the power paradigm described by Foucault (1994). The embodiment of differentiation, institutionalization, objectives, and instrumental modes become supported by normalizing the behavior within the structure of higher education. Objectives were created by the institutional culture, where the behaviors were targeted to those with differences and because of the strong cultural significance of norms within higher education, it became difficult to separate normal experiences from intolerable moral decisions.

Impact

Foucault (1994) developed the framework to which a bully is able to manipulate, access, and abuse their power; however, the paradigm did not discuss what becomes of the subject when the ends are met. Participants shared the emotional turmoil, destruction of their lives, and the outcome of their experience of power dynamics in higher education. The experience was life changing and long lasting.

Self-doubt

Participants expressed confusion and doubt about their decision to be in the current academic program and career. When the bullying behaviors were rationalized it made the situation more difficult to process and Sue talked about how others' perception of the situation made her question herself: "Over time, and the actions and reactions of others, made me doubt myself." April described her experience as a doctoral student with the term demoralizing: "You really feel like you're demoralized in a way because it takes a piece of your identity away."

Self-doubt would manifest in questioning career choice and if the subject had pursued the wrong line of work. Mike often asked himself if he deserved the treatment: "I did a lot of self-reflection; did I do something to deserve this? Is what they're saying true? I would end up in the cycles of blaming myself that would cause so much stress."

There was also the concern of what faculty members were thinking or saying about a student. Beth shared her insecurity of taking a longer time to graduate: "I think I've always felt more vulnerable a little bit. I used to think I was a joke or a problem child of the department because I was taking so long. I was worried about my reputation already."

Self-doubt became coupled with life, career changing thoughts and for some, outcomes. Sue began program shopping after feeling like she couldn't last another year in the program: "It made me really question if I was in the right program and I started program shopping because I couldn't see myself doing that for the next few years." Daisy also felt a sense of disappointment for her field of study: "It puts you in an emotional

whirlwind; it creates anxiety and it affects your health. It certainly took the wind out of my sails for the profession."

John shared his frustration at home and in discussions with his spouse discovered he had considered leaving the teaching profession after 18 years. "She [his wife] said 'in all of the 18 years of teaching, I can't imagine you ever being this close to miserable.' I said, 'I'm not, and I haven't been, and I don't know if I'm going to be teaching.' Which to me is just phenomenally mind blowing."

Emma described the emotional discord of deciding to give up her dream job, a dream she had written about in elementary school. Her faculty experience was so damaging that she has not returned to academia and scarred her in the years since holding that position. When describing the toll of the abuse, her eyes teared up and her voice became shaky:

> I was ready to never be a faculty member again. I was never going to be in a
>
> tenure track position again, I was never going to be a professor. I feel she took
>
> that from me. It is still something I really, really struggle with because that was
>
> always my dream. It has scarred me, and it has made me look at things differently.
>
> I am a lot more hesitant to establish relationships with faculty and it has made me
>
> question motives of faculty and especially department chairs. I haven't let go of
>
> that anger that I feel toward her for being the reason that I left and the reason all
>
> of these things had to end for me. Like my dream of being a faculty member and I
>
> see it affecting how I have conversations with people today and how I view the
>
> world of higher education. And it's really unfortunate that is still lingering for me.

It has been three and a half years since I left and it still affects me. I think about it every day.

Participants questioned if they would finish their degrees or complete the tenure and promotion track. For several of the graduate students, they stuck with the program and graduated later than expected, while others left. Participants who continue to face the bullying are struggling to remain in the career or the graduate program.

Mental and Physical Health

Along with self-doubt and life changing decisions, came the emotional and physical stress. Impacts of the experience spread throughout the participant's life infecting their personal, professional, and academic lives. Sue describes how the impact infiltrated her home life:

I fought a lot with my family at that time. I think the immense amount of stress that I was under to perform for my boss, perform for the leadership team, perform for the projects at work, finding time to go to school full time and work 30 to 35 hours a week. I felt all the time that I was failing; failing everything.

Stress, anxiety, and depression created physical symptoms where Lisa developed issues with the temporomandibular joint (TMJ) that was alleviated the day she left her position at the university. The stress of feeling like a failure increased the intensity and frequency of migraines as well as caused a lack of sleep for Sue. Daisy also described feeling the pressure of stress: "Oh it was so stressful, it was super stressful. Not only was I pregnant and throwing up everywhere; I was tired and I had a toddler already."

Doug and Beth both experienced prior mental health issues that worsened and reoccurred during this period. Doug described the moment he felt the desire to self-harm again:

> I hadn't self-harmed for a year. While I was at home I was laying down and getting really emotional, and I sat up and I hit myself in the chest really hard. It was a very weird sensation because I had been so good for so long about not doing that. It had pushed me over the edge that day and it was very much not feeling in control that day and very powerless, very sad in general about how everything was going and I got really frustrated about it.

Beth had previously suffered from anxiety and described the worsening of her symptoms: "I do tend to have a lot of anxiety with stress. I tend to not sleep in those situations, I get sick more easily." Kim developed her mental health issues in the process of the bullying. "It seemed like it weighed on me and it has really caused mental problems for me; caused me to be really depressed. I have had to go on antidepressants and I've had to start therapy this year and it's made a life change for me."

Impacts of the emotional trauma created an atmosphere of giving up; participants' desire to share knowledge, remain committed to the institution, and their ability to maintain functionality were diminished. Mike remembers feeling paralyzed when the bully and crew had closed-door meetings:

> When there was a closed-door meeting going on, I would literally sit at my computer and be unable to work. I could not function at what I was supposed to be doing, whether it was research, preparing for class, or grading. I would be frozen, and my heart would be racing, my palms would be getting sweaty.

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Following one encounter with her advisor, Rachel described the length of time it took her to recover: "It took a long time to recover from that; a few months where I wasn't really productive; I didn't do anything."

Emma responded to the situation with sleep deprivation and crying. Her family noticed the difference in her health and she described her family's response: "My parents saw me at Christmas and they were like 'you look like you have aged years. What is going on?' They could just see it on my face, that I had lost weight, they could see it in my spirit that I was feeling defeated."

Coping.

Coping strategies ranged from therapy appointments, running, and quitting. While going through the experience several participants developed unhealthy coping mechanisms. Rachel described being at the peak of her health before entering her doctoral program and then started to develop strategies that deteriorated her health. When asked how she coped with the situation she responded:

> Lots of weed. Yeah, and then slowly and surely through graduate school, beer, drinking takes its toll, the diet takes its toll, and weed keeps you sane, but like your habit escalates to a point where it's ridiculous and you end up with lots of kitties. It drastically impacted my health, I'm still obviously recovering. I'm still mentally and physically recovering.

While Rachel described her experience, she was drinking a beer and held it up during the moment she said, "I'm still obviously recovering." Emma also described turning to alcohol: "I drank a lot; I was drinking probably every night."

Mitigating Bullying in Higher Education

Participants were asked about their perspective on reducing bullying in higher education. Few concrete ideas emerged from their experience, yet several areas came to light. Additionally, this is an area that requires future research. It is recommended the findings from this research be used to start the discussion within institutions on mitigating the power paradigms for the creation of a system that thrives.

Support Systems

Throughout the shared experiences participants discussed the overwhelming value of support and detrimental effects from lack of support. One recommendation for addressing bullying is to create systems in which support can be found. As Emma shared the idea to create a deliberate mentorship system for newer faculty members to connect with another person not in their department. Without support, the impact of the bullying was greater.

Finding other colleagues who had gone through or were going through the experience lessened the pain. John described the value in having found someone who would listen:

> Even talking to that individual who physically suffered as a result of the bullying, she was very willing to listen. I really appreciated that, and she was kind of my counseling center, and if anything, was my catharsis. I could shut the door and I would say 'you wouldn't believe what she said today' and she said, 'I bet I could.' She was that safe spot.

Likewise, Mike felt once he established connections with others in similar situations, the power diminished.

I think for me, one of the ways that we have diminished the power of this person was by coming together and recognizing that it wasn't just happening to one of us; that it was happening to a bunch of us. Then teaming up together to create a support system that when events occurred, we could all find solace with one another.

Support in some form was extremely important for those involved and made the situation bearable during the time they experienced bullying. Each participant talked about the social network and the difference it made when a piece of the structure was gone. Future studies would be instrumental in designing an ideal system of support and structure. It would require taking into account other power concerns such as hierarchy, resources, and implications from a system perspective.

System of Accountability

Much like support systems, the victims felt there was no chain of command for dealing with this issue; nobody to go to for administrative support. As outlined in rationalization, it was easy to brush off complaints as not being important or blame the victim for the problem. Emma mentioned she had no intention to take the problem to administration for fear of being re-victimized:

I never seriously thought about how I could talk to administration and complain. I honestly felt that I would be on trial; like what have I done wrong, what have I misinterpreted? I really felt like it would re-victimize me and that I would be the one targeted for dismissal and not her. Like get rid of the squeaky wheel, you know, get rid of the person who is making the waves, and not the person who is causing that person to make the waves.

It would be prudent in addressing these behaviors to have systems of accountability. As Mike shared the experience with the Ombudsmen was nice, but there was no authority in making the recommendations a reality. Overall, it was felt there was a substantial lack of support for victims and even ability for administration to hold authority over the bully. Cultural structures within the system of higher education make it difficult to fully address the problem.

Entrapment of the Spirit

Spirit is defined as "the immaterial intelligent or sentient part of a person" (Spirit, 2017). New beginnings, new knowledge, new growth, and the excitement of developing curiosity builds the spirit. A dream job or graduate program calls to the spirit with a deep sense of wonder and joy. Pouring into the program or position, the heart is lured into situations with a sense of vigor and determination for doing the best. One abusive moment does not entrap the spirit, but overtime with repeated attacks on the intellect or sentient part of someone, the spirit disappears; leaving confusion and self-doubt where joy had been.

Power is the cunning guise that imprisons the spirit from the outside world. Power over someone leaves them with little control and as the spirit seeks the light again, it needs a way to regain control. Enduring bullying leaves the soul empty, diminishes creativity, and destroys an individual's love of their work. A tremendous loss occurs for the individual and organizations that can no longer tap into a fulfilled spirit.

Losing their spirit during the time of the bullying can take years to find again. Anger, resentment, and fear linger, continuing to hold the soul hostage. Sharing the story can help release the spirit in small pieces. Being heard and talking through the experience

is a powerful release; someone is no longer trapped by the experience. The spirit must be

free to develop in a safe, supportive environment; where power is not a crushing force but

used to bring the spirit of others forward to do their best work.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS RELEVANT TO THE LITERATURE

Bullying in higher education is pervasive, explicit, and damaging. Victims were exposed to abuse by those who were entrusted to provide mentorship in their graduate programs or new roles as faculty members. Power was present as an undertow in the experiences of bullying, from which the subject of the power holder suffered during the time of the experience and for subsequent years. Previous research has explored bullying to some degree, yet no literature has explicitly examined how power manifests in higher education and how power contributes and perpetuates bullying. The complexity of the experience makes the behavior difficult to address and prevent.

The purpose of this research was to explore the lived experiences of graduate students and faculty members who were bullied as a result of their position. Additionally, this study revealed unique findings related to experiences of bullying, the key components of power, and how power manifests in the university setting. In this chapter, the findings from this study are discussed in relation to the current literature.

Power and Bullying within Higher Education

Power was consistently discussed in the literature related to bullying (Chapell et al., 2006; Nelson & Lambert, 2001; Twale & Deluca, 2008). No research to date has explored the connection of power to higher education in situations of bullying. Unique findings from this study were discovered through the exploration of bullying,

how power dynamics exploited, affected, and perpetuated the experiences of the victim. The findings in Chapter IV were outlined on the types of differentials, institutionalization, types of objectives, instrumental modes, and rationalization based on Foucault's (1994) explanation of power relationships.

In most cases the complexity of the experience can be reflected in how the power dynamics weave together. Many participants expressed an inability to pinpoint exactly what was happening and that it took time to realize their relationship was unhealthy. Within the exploration of the relationship, participants expressed the features of power and how those features played a role in creating the context of the bullying.

When expressed alone, the power dynamics do not equate to bullying; however, when combined, and along with abuse, these features compound an already difficult situation. April, for example, expressed frustration with not being able to communicate with committee members without consent from her advisor (a form of hierarchy and institutionalization). Alone, this experience would not justify bullying, yet knowing her advisor was no longer communicating with her and verbally attacked her (instrumental mode) during her proposal meeting, it begins to paint the picture of how the paradigms of power weave together to create environments where bullying thrives. In addition, it felt like an impossibility for April to change advisors because of the influence he had in the field (differentiation). Furthermore, the institution was not able to address her concerns because her advisor filled out the proper documentation and his tenured position at the university granted him protections (a combination of differentiation, institutionalization, and rationalization).

It was within the stories of bullying the power dynamics came to light. When power dynamics were more complex, the bullying experience intensified. Pilch and Turska (2015) found that with more perceived hierarchy in an organization, the more bullying was reported. Higher education is built on levels of hierarchy that were discussed by participants in this study in forms of academic rank, position in the department, and protections of tenure. Differentials were also a result of the institutional structure with positional rank, promotion and tenure, and evaluative processes. Similarly, institutionalization may have instigated types of objectives such as publication requirements. Rationalization interacts with features of the institution and differentials as well. For example, many participants commented that nothing could be done (rationalization) because of tenure (hierarchy) or resources available (institutionalization).

The five paradigms of power are explored in previous research and supported through the findings of this research. Structural parameters were expressed in past research as contributing to the phenomena of bullying in higher education (Twale & Deluca, 2008; Nelson & Lambert, 2001). These structural parameters were exposed in this study and contribute to differentials, institutionalization, types of objectives, and rationalization.

Being "omnipotent" with positional rank is a clear differentiating feature between the bully and the subject. Other differentials found in this study were gender, age, and life experience. This component of the power paradigm is important as it provides context to understand the instrumental modes, institutionalization, and types of objectives presented by the participants. Gender and tenure were both explored in previous research; whereas

age, and life experience were not (Sedivy-Benton et al., 2014; Simpson & Cohen, 2004; Twale & DeLuca, 2008).

Differentiating features were expressed as targets exploited by the aggressor in their strategy to win; to choose who was in and who was out. Foucault (1994) discusses the use of strategy as the means to the objective. Gender has been explored more frequently in the literature as a form of differentiation. Simpson and Cohen (2004) found women experienced bullying behaviors more often than men. While previous research asserts that men and women experience power differences, women in this study expressed that gender was part of the reason they were bullied; whereas, men did not.

Simpson and Cohen (2004) found women and men experienced differences related to instrumental modes. In their study women expressed being more frequently verbally abused and humiliated; the men felt they were victims of intimidation and unfair criticism (Simpson & Cohen, 2004). The results of this study did not seek to explore gender differences and the stories revealed similarities of instrumental modes between both men and women. Uniquely, women specifically called out their gender as a reason for being targeted in this study. Current research also indicated differences in the impact between men and women, yet these discoveries were not confirmed in the findings from this study (Hoertel et al., 2012; Sedivy-Benton et al., 2014; Simpson & Cohen, 2004.

Hierarchy and structure within the organization create systems of authority in which certain individuals have protections; whereas, others receive limited support. Traditional hierarchy in higher education also created differentials. The processes common within graduate programs or levels of communication further established protections and frustrations for addressing the problematic behavior.

Hollis (2015) remarked that the siloed nature of higher education created hardships in addressing complex cases. Furthermore, proper follow through on the channels of communication could not be established and key people were not included in the conversations (Hollis, 2015). April, John, and Rachel noted an inconsistent reporting structure in their experience. Additionally, no one was designated to follow through the process; therefore, when a complaint was made in one location and if there was turnover in positions, connections were not made to the complexity and pervasiveness of the problem. Several participants commented on a lack of follow through in their department, from the graduate school, or human resources.

Positional rank, within, and outside the university created tension between the subject and those they went to for advice or support. Graduate students and faculty alike felt that the multifaceted roles the bully held were protective measures for the bully. As a result of the bully's connections very few outsiders were willing to address the behavior. Subjects felt powerless to say anything with the fear that their career, academic advancement, or resources would be destroyed.

In some cases, the protection was inherent in their position and the bully would be supported within the system. Higher titles and tenured faculty had additional protections from the system. In addition to creating a space for the bullying to occur, this system also established the inability to share grievances in a safe manner (Nelson & Lambert, 2001). Positional titles at the university were one way that gave aggressor protections and created differentiating features between students and faculty. Additional leverage was present when the advisor was well known in their field and had extensive networks

within the field. Bullying behavior would go unchallenged because the global reach could have caused career hardships.

Tenure was used as a reason for not addressing the bullying behavior. Hollis (2015) found faculty members were granted a sense of immunity with tenure. Findings from this study support Hollis (2015) and when junior faculty received their tenure the threat of bullying or outcomes of the bullying changed. Faculty members from this study expressed tenure as rationale for not moving forward with complaints; both John and Mike expressed feelings of frustration with this reasoning.

Types of objectives sought by the bully varied and were often tied with the requirements of the job (i.e. publication, promotion, and additional leverage in the field). Leveraging additional rank was one objective achieved by the bullying behaviors. Along with advancement and name recognition, the bully felt a threatening presence by the subject. It was as if the bullies fear of being 'found out' became a reality as the subject learned the secret that the aggressors were not as good as they expressed to be in their jobs. Carrying the fear of the discovery, the bully would do what was necessary to undermine the subject to gain additional credibility in their field.

Leverage was accentuated by both the differentials and the institutional structure described above. Movement within different layers of authority was entrenched within the institution and no one would address the behavior. As the bully established their unspoken authority, they continued to gain more power and used that power to exploit other faculty members or students for their personal gain. Additionally, jealousy has been explored in other research as a reason for bullying in higher education (Seivy-Benton et al., 2014).

Bullying experiences and modes in which the behavior occurred were substantial findings from this research. One of the instrumental modes described by the graduate students in this study was stealing their work. Taking students' work and not providing credit is a common complaint among graduate students (Simpson & Cohen, 2004). Faculty members in this study also expressed frustration with their work going uncredited and resulted in diminished work ethic.

Differentiation created a gap between the subject and bully that was exploited and used as a rational for the instrumental mode and behaviors. Institutional factors with policies and procedures further created a system that discouraged reporting of bullying behaviors; thus, supporting the aggression. Furthermore, objective types were sought to increase position with the institution and widen the gap of differentials and garner more support from their authoritative role. Accompanying the surveillance were the ways in which the bully conducted the scrutiny. Similar results were shared by Simpson and Cohen (2004) where high levels of criticism were an instrumental mode of behavior.

Isolation could be considered a mode through which communication is intentionally denied to others. Additionally, communication in its style, manner, and timing were distinctly used to the bully's advantage. Bullies controlled, or attempted to control, multiple aspects of the subject's life; whom they interacted with, when, and where the conversations could occur. Not only were the subject's personal lives tampered with, so were the ways in which the bully communicated with the subject.

Strong, deliberately chosen language was used to shame subjects and create underlying threats to their graduation, career, tenure and promotion, and assistantships. Language was also used as a weapon to undercut the credibility of the subject. Within the

bully's locus of control, the act of dismissing the subject from meetings or their opinions was a tactic favored in the higher education system. Bullies would choose their communication as a verbal signal of their disapproval; whether it be no communication, strong language, yelling or screaming, and the inclusion of forceful body language.

Personality differences were used to rationalize behavior and prevented the grievances from being filed. Rationalization of this type was amplified when the bully was friends with those in human resources or administration. The overlapping of relationships has been problematic in higher education and makes it easier for administration to brush off the complaints (Nelson & Lambert, 2001).

Brushing off behaviors as a personality difference left the victims confused and unsure about what to do next. Subjects would identify the problem as their responsibility to solve after sharing their concerns with administration. Pushing problems back to the victim created victim blame and further rationalization of the problem. The issue of victim blaming is further exposed in the research by Sedivy-Benton et al. (2004) and is frequently described by those in higher education.

Nelson and Lambert (2001) discovered similar results in their study. They uncovered the basis of academic freedom as a justification for their behavior. Differences of power were rationalized by tenure and safety from implications (Hollis, 2005). Culturally, higher education has a level of acceptance with certain behaviors that allows complaints to be dismissed (Twale & DeLuca, 2008). This mentality can be related back to the rite of passage into the world of academia (Young-Jones, et al., 2015). Cultural expectations, particularly "the cherished cut and thrust of the academic life' were noted by Nelson and Lambert (2001, p. 93).

Bullying and abuse of power is pervasive in higher education; where the paradigms of power have created an environment supportive of aggressive behavior. While resources become tighter the types of objectives and desire to stay ahead may increase the behaviors. The complexity of the situation is impacted by power relations and how they are interwoven.

Impact on Graduate Students and Faculty

Many participants in this study expressed increased mental health symptoms where they required medications and anxiety or depression therapy. They experienced significant feelings of stress, resulting in many coming home at the end of the day and crying. The impacts of the stress were noticeable in their personal lives as well. These findings are similar to what Holt et al. (2014) discovered where college students with previous bullying experiences were more likely than non-bullied counterparts to have depression and anxiety symptoms.

Previous research has also explored the motivation and academic achievement of college students who have been bullied. Graduate students were more likely to leave their program, feel less competent, and express higher rates of dissent for their graduate program (Martin et al., 2015). Findings from this study were similar. For example, Rachel expressed a significant lack of motivation and issues with mental health during her doctoral program. She would go weeks without accomplishing academic work because of the comments made by her advisor and noted it was because of depression. Olive left her graduate program completely without earning her degree. Leaving their program before completion was a significant finding in former research and was expressed through this study (Martin et al, 2015).

Graduate students were not the only ones to describe low levels of motivation. In particular, Mike remembers feeling paralyzed and unable to perform work duties when the faculty bully would hold closed door meetings and feeling significant amounts of stress. Emma has never returned to academia because of the experience during her faculty role. Her memories of the impact included stress, crying, depression, and a lack of motivation to move forward in her work.

It is also important to note that not all participants felt a decrease in motivation; as Daisy felt more resolve than ever to finish her degree before the arrival of her second child. Despite having more resolve to finish, Daisy expressed a great deal of stress and pressure from the experience and was discouraged about continuing in her professional field. Likewise, John felt such significant pressures of stress that he considered quitting his position and not returning to teaching in the future.

Summary

Contained in this chapter is the discussion on the relationship of the findings from this study to the current published literature. Findings from this study were supported by previous research and new ideas emerged from this study including how power relations are expressed and create complexity of bullying in higher education. The impacts of bullying in higher education included mental health issues as previously published and also in the form of self-doubt.

Chapter VI holds the concluding thoughts and summary of findings from this research. The final overview of the previous chapters can be found in the next chapter. Additionally, limitations of the study, as well as recommendations for higher education and future research are explored.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of bullied victims in higher education. Phenomenological inquiry was used to determine factors associated with the bullying experiences and how power specifically expressed itself within this context for graduate students and faculty members. The guiding question for this qualitative study was: "What are the lived experiences of bullying victims in higher education?" Additional exploration occurred around how those experiences impacted individual participants' academic career and their life outside of higher education, as well as their perception on how bullying could have been prevented.

Methods, Methodology, and Analysis

Phenomenology provides the opportunity to return to the basic understanding of the phenomenon and how it appears to the person in that moment (Moustakas, 1994). Exploring the essence of power and bullying as it came to be for the victims provides a level of understanding in this area that had not yet been discovered. This study examined the reality of the experience through the perception of the participant and creating knowledge of their expressed meaning.

Using a phenomenological approach, interviews were the main source of data collected. Trustworthiness elements of this study were in line with recommendations by Maxwell (2013), Creswell (2014), and Moustakas (1994) and included: researcher bias, reflexivity, rich data, triangulation, and member checking. Several rounds of interviews

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were completed with fourteen individual recruited using a snowball sample. Recruitment methods included personal conversations, emails to key informants, Facebook and LinkedIn public posts as well as private messages.

Participants were informed they needed to be over the age of 18 and have experienced bullying as a result of their role as a graduate student or faculty member. Seven participants explored their stories as faculty members and ten shared stories relevant to their experience as a graduate student. While fourteen individuals were interviewed; three of the faculty members had shared their graduate school experiences as separate from their faculty role, totaling the ten graduate school stories.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and were analyzed using a modification of the Van Kaam phenomenological analysis as described by Moustakas (1994). Analysis drew 36 unique codes funneled to fit under the five paradigms of power, impacts of the experience, and recommendations for addressing bullying in higher education. Within those 36 codes, 1216 moments were captured as relevant to those codes.

Summary of Findings

Bullying and the abuse of power is pervasive and extensive within the structure of higher education. Foucault (1994) outlined ways in which power is determined, expressed, and how it lingers within the institution. Five distinctive paradigms were explored; differentiation, institutionalization, types of objectives, instrumental modes, and rationalization. From the power abuse, impact on the subject was described to be life changing and long lasting.

Differentiation highlights the ways in which an aggressor is unique to the subject (Foucault, 1994). Findings from the study highlight that being a nontraditional student,

being a woman, age differences, and diverse life experience created dissonance from the bully. Additional position rank within the institution and having far-reaching connections outside the university created a persona of someone who is highly regarded and incapable of being a bully. Differentials of position contributed to rationalization and not having the subject's story be believed.

Structural divisions in higher education have been explored as contributing factors for bullying (Nelson & Lambert, 2001; Hollis, 2015; Twale & DeLuca, 2008). Institutionalization, with its cultural expectations and hierarchy, contributed to the differentials (Foucault, 1994). Tenure and promotion were protective of the bullies in many instances and also used as a weapon for the bully. It was expressed as a significant threat to reaching tenure and promotion for subjects to challenge the behavior in their junior faculty years. In the case of positional rank, it was a differential that was exploited by institutionalization.

Other institutionalization factors that perpetuated bullying in higher education were the policies and procedures inherent in the system. Most universities lacked a department or person who would deal with the complaints. There was no continuity of follow through on complaints. The silo of operation diminishes the complexity of the behavior (Hollis, 2015). Additionally, when procedures were followed there appeared to be a black and white cut off from moving a complaint forward.

Behaviors and instrumental modes relied on the differentials and institutionalization to have their full effect. In many cases the subject felt targeted and came to the conclusion it didn't matter what they did, they were going to be treated unfairly. Using institutional and positional power the bully would use the system to attack

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credibility through the evaluation process or by extensive oversight. Victims became isolated and were prevented from talking to specific people.

Slander and defamation of character occurred behind the victim's back and in some cases, directly in front of them with other people present. There were both subtle and unexpected communication tactics deployed by the bully. Subtlety often occurred in small situations that over time became extremely damaging to the subject; whereas, screaming, yelling or tone of voice displayed intense disapproval.

Many of the experiences were rationalized. Rationalization was not unique to any one group involved and was expressed by the victims, bullies, administration, outsiders, and human resources. In some cases, the differentials created reasons to allow the bullying; this is to be expected for someone in a doctoral program or as a new faculty member. When the experience was seen as a rite of passage or "normal" in the system, subjects were less likely to bring complaints forward and complaints were not taken as seriously (Young-Jones et al., 2015).

From the abuse of these power paradigms was the substantial impact it had on the victims. Outcomes resulted in some students leaving their program of study and faculty members permanently leaving the world of academia. For each subject, the results were life changing and detrimental. Stress, anxiety, and self-doubt were reoccurring impacts expressed by the victims. It would be difficult to calculate the magnitude of cost from these experiences; faculty leaving, lost tuition, resources being used, and paralysis from doing one's job.

As the cost and toll of bullying is extensive, universities should start exploring ways to permanently address the problem. The issue is pervasive and with the deeply

rooted cultural norms in higher education it is to be expected the problem is causing

significant damages that go unreported. Support systems, accountability, and victim

protections will be integral to having the solution be effective. Additionally, exploring

how the paradigms of power manifest within a particular university will be required to

fully understand and implement a procedure of dealing with bullying.

Limitations of the Study

This research and experiences shared are a result of those who participated. This

research did not explore race or ethnicity as a part of the bullying experience. In each

experience, the participants were Caucasian. It is likely race and ethnicity could be a

contributing difference in the paradigms of power for other individuals. Likewise, the

participants were all subjects of power and interviews were not completed with

administrators or aggressors. Perspectives of other individuals in the system would likely

alter how power is perceived in higher education. Additionally, higher education is a

complex system embedded in historical procedures. The structures in which institutions

function were not systemically reviewed and were examined through the perspective of

the participants.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings from this research and limited published research, the

following recommendations are made to support understanding in this area. Due to the

impact experienced from bullying, additional research on coping or exploring this topic

with a psychological lens would be useful to understanding how to specifically address

these concerns in higher education. Power manifests in unique ways in higher education

and as the five paradigms intertwine with much of previous research and findings from

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this study exploring institutional measure, research on the policies, procedures, and structure may help identify areas that could be improved for addressing these behaviors. Structures may include support systems in place, what organizational structures thrive, what limits or complicates the grievance procedure, and other universities are doing to combat this issue.

Recommendations for Higher Education

As shared in the findings, participants found safety and comfort with social support systems. When they did not get support from the university, having someone in their network to talk with was therapeutic. Suggestions were made to create a mentoring system, where support outside of the department might be established with a senior faculty member who knows the university system in more depth. Building a community for new faculty members or students would provide a system of support and networking. Many of the participants in this study described feelings of isolation and the importance of friends and colleagues in coping with the experience.

For faculty members, a mentorship program should offer support from a mentor in a different department, a faculty member who is well-established in the university. The mentor should not be someone who is directly tied to the mentee's evaluation. To further support community development, the mentor might invite the mentee to events and would be available to discuss the university's policies, procedures, and resources available. Mentorship might be viewed as a guide to the university and its systems. As administration considers a program of this nature, additional components should be reviewed. For example, will mentors be able to count their time for service requirements and who will be responsible for implementing and managing the mentorship program?

Mentorship and community building would look different for graduate students. Graduate students may benefit from having conversations with other students who are further along in the program, discussing expectations, and going through the stages of graduate studies. These conversations might be supported at the beginning or end of a class, encouraged by faculty members, and potentially included in the curriculum. Many graduate programs provide seminar sessions that are designed to prepare graduate students for the stages of their program. Within these seminars, specific opportunities to talk with other students who have gone through those stages would provide time for students to network and ask questions about the experiences.

While ombudsmen programs are designed to support friendly working relationships, programs in this study were not expressed as effective in enforcing recommendations. An additional recommendation for creating an effective ombudsmen program, is to have accountability authority. Recommendations provided by ombudsmen were often not implemented and left participants in this study without resolution. It is an interesting concept that the structure in higher education was part of the development of power and is also being recommended as part of the solution. As recommended for future research, examining effective systems and structures is important to implement an approach that addresses the underlying nature of bullying.

Training for faculty and staff would be an appropriate start to discuss bullying behaviors. As the literature demonstrates, some individuals feel that bullying is a necessary part of the experience of graduate school or belonging in academia (Twale & DeLuca, 2008). Training on the acceptable style of communication and what will not be tolerated can begin the conversation of how to properly support a graduate student or new

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faculty member. It will be prudent to provide training for new faculty, students, and tenured faculty. Within these trainings, instructions on filing grievances and who to talk to will be necessary. Participants from this study described a lack of follow through on grievances, when they went through the normal chain of command. As a result, institutions may need specific personal in this support structure to address the behaviors.

These trainings might open the lines of communication and what support systems are available for students and faculty members. An established system for reporting behaviors and investigating those behaviors, along with accountability measures to address the grievances will need to be considered. Trainings for graduate students might include the expectations of their program and what appropriate behavior from a faculty advisor or instructor includes.

Mentoring, community building, and training might be a starting point in addressing bullying and power in higher education. However, deeper conversations on addressing the root causes that bolster bullying must be discussed, before the problem can be significantly reduced. These conversations must include how the power dynamics of higher education fosters a bullying environment. This is not to say that the structure alone is the problem; nonetheless, is a contributing factor that cannot be ignored.

Closing Statement

Bullying can result with the misuse of power; power is the component that allows bullying to thrive. Over time the continued abuse created environments that were unproductive, fear based, and ineffective. Participants felt a loss of who they were and the imprisonment of their core self; their spirit. These experiences destroyed individuals as well as damaged the department and university.

APPENDICES

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE: *A Phenomenological Study of Bullying Experienced by Graduate Students and Faculty Through the Lens of Power*

PROJECT DIRECTOR: *Anne Bodensteiner*

PHONE #   ■■■■■■■

DEPARTMENT: *Teaching and Learning*

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH

A person who is to participate in the research must give his or her informed consent to such participation. This consent must be based on an understanding of the nature and risks of the research. This document provides information that is important for this understanding. Research projects include only subjects who choose to take part. Please take your time in making your decision as to whether to participate. If you have questions at any time, please ask.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

You are invited to be in a research study about the experiences of bullying in higher education because you have been bullied by someone of authority in higher education.

The purpose of this research study is to explore the personal stories of bullying in higher education, how the bullying occurred, the impact of the bullying behaviors, and exploration of how to reduce bullying in higher education.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL PARTICIPATE?

Approximately 12-15 people will take part in this study.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THIS STUDY?

Your participation in the study may last through May 31, 2018. You will be asked to participate in two to three interviews with the researcher. These interviews are expected to take approximately 90 minutes. In addition, the researcher may contact you following the interviews for clarity in the analysis related to your interview.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THIS STUDY?

Approval Date:	AUG 25 2017
Expiration Date:	APR 20 2018
University of North Dakota IRB	

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The researcher will contact you to schedule an interview time that is convenient for you. Once a date and time are agreed upon, the researcher will contact you at that specified time through a video conferencing system.

During the interview, you are able to skip any questions you prefer not to answer.

Upon completion of the interview, the researcher will transcribe verbatim the interview. Analysis will be conducted through an electronic program.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THE STUDY?

You may experience an emotional response during the interview. Questions may be of a sensitive nature, and you may therefore become upset as a result. However, such risks are not viewed as being in excess of "minimal risk."

If, however, you become upset by questions, you may stop at any time or choose not to answer a question. If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings about this study, you are encouraged to contact, ███████████████████, or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255).

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY?

You may not benefit personally from being in this study. However, we hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study because sharing your story will demonstrate the impact of experiencing bullying as a graduate student or faculty member in higher education and begin discussing how to reduce these behaviors from happening to others.

WILL IT COST ME ANYTHING TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You will not have any costs for being in this research study.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING?

You will not be paid for being in this research study.

WHO IS FUNDING THE STUDY?

The University of North Dakota and the research team are receiving no payments from other agencies, organizations, or companies to conduct this research study.

Approval Date:	AUG 25 2017
Expiration Date:	APR 20 2018
University of North Dakota IRB	

CONFIDENTIALITY

The records of this study will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. In any report about this study that might be published, you will not be identified. Your study record may be reviewed by Government agencies and the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board.

Any information that is obtained in this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. The researcher is conducting this research as a student and therefore, not considered a mandatory reporter.

If we write a report or article about this study, we will describe the study results in a summarized manner so that you cannot be identified.

The interviews will be recorded and digitally stored. You may be asked by the researcher to review the analysis of the interview for clarity. Recordings will be deleted after three years from completion of the research project.

IS THIS STUDY VOLUNTARY?

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of North Dakota.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS?

The researcher conducting this study is Anne Bodensteiner. You may ask any questions you have now or at the time of the interview. If you later have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research please contact Anne Bodensteiner █████████ or Dr. Myrna Olson █████████.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact The University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board at **(701) 777-4279** or **UND.irb@research.UND.edu.**

- You may also call this number about any problems, complaints, or concerns you have about this research study.
- You may also call this number if you cannot reach research staff, or you wish to talk with someone who is independent of the research team.
- General information about being a research subject can be found by clicking "Information for Research Participants" on the web site: http://und.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/research-participants.cfm

Approval Date: _____ AUG 25 2017 _____
Expiration Date: _____ APR 20 2018 _____
University of North Dakota IRB

I give consent to be audio recorded during this study.

Please check: _____ Yes _____ No

I give consent to be video recorded during this study.

Please check: _____ Yes _____ No

I give consent for my quotes to be used in the research; however I <u>will not</u> be identified.

Please check: _____ Yes _____ No

Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Name: _____

_____
Date

Emails to informants

_____,

As a Ph.D. student at UND in the department of Teaching and Learning, I am working on my research exploring graduate students' and faculty members experiences with bullying in higher education; in particular, experiences with faculty/staff, advisors, or other person of authority they interacted with during their graduate program or as a faculty member.

The purpose of this research study is to explore the personal stories of bullying in higher education, how the bullying occurred, the impact of the bullying behaviors, and exploration of how to reduce bullying in higher education. Participants must have experienced bullying in higher education; as defined as: when someone with perceived or actual power over the victim repeatedly; uses verbal attacks with damaging words, name calling, or verbal threats; physically attacks the victim or; uses intentional isolation or exclusion from groups or experiences. Participation in this study involves being interviewed about their experiences.

I am asking you if you know of any students or faculty members who you think meet the above criteria and would be interested in participating in this study. Please ask them if they agree to have me, the researcher, connect with them about the study. You may share the above information about the purpose of the study and they are welcome to contact me directly about their interest, as well.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Warm regards,

Anne Bodensteiner

Email to potential participants

_____,

My colleague/friend/participant in the research, indicated you might be interested in participating in my research study related to bullying in higher education; they further expressed your permission to have me contact you about the study.

To provide a brief overview of the study, I am exploring the experiences graduate students have had with bullying. The purpose of this research study is to explore the personal stories of bullying in higher education, how the bullying occurred, the impact of the bullying behaviors, and exploration of how to reduce bullying in higher education. Participants must have experienced bullying in higher education; as defined as: when someone with perceived or actual power over the victim repeatedly; uses verbal attacks

with damaging words, name calling, or verbal threats; physically attacks the victim or; uses intentional isolation or exclusion from groups or experiences.

Participation in this study involves being interviewed about your experiences. Please let me know if you have an interest in taking part in this study or if you have additional questions. More details related to this study will be provided and your consent to participate will be obtained.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Warm regards,

Anne Bodensteiner

Social Media Post

As a Ph.D. student at UND in the department of Teaching and Learning, I am working on my research exploring graduate students' experiences with bullying in higher education; in particular, experiences with faculty/staff, advisors, or other person of authority they interacted with during their graduate program.

The purpose of this research study is to explore the personal stories of bullying in higher education, how the bullying occurred, the impact of the bullying behaviors, and exploration of how to reduce bullying in higher education. Participants must have experienced bullying in higher education; as defined as: when someone with perceived or actual power over the victim repeatedly; uses verbal attacks with damaging words, name calling, or verbal threats; physically attacks the victim or; uses intentional isolation or exclusion from groups or experiences. Participation in this study involves being interviewed about the experiences.

If you, or someone you know, might be willing to share their story please contact Anne Bodensteiner directly at

Appendix C
Sample Questions from the Semi-Structured Interviews

1. Tell me about your general experiences with this person.
2. Are there any experiences that stand out to you with the person? Tell me about those experiences in as much detail as possible.
3. If you could describe the experience using three words, what would they be and why?
4. How would you personally describe power?
5. What was your response to these behaviors?
6. What was your sense of why you were targeted?
7. What was your understanding of the reason why they treated you this way?
8. What was your sense of support systems in place to address the behavior?
9. What if any impact did you experience as a result?
10. Tell me about their tone of voice and language used in that moment.
11. When did you notice the behavior was unusual and how did you know?

- Stolen work
- Impact - high, high levels stress, interal struggle of who they are; unhealthy coping strategies
- Communication - language to manipulate and threaten, tone of voice,
- Sense of happiness/pride when the student failed
- What the student was told by the bully was very different than what the bully told other people
- There tended to be a tipping point - something happened and the student "Crossed" a line where the bully maybe interpreted a threat or interpreted the relationship was not what they wanted anymore
- Unspoken/unwritten rules and expectations of what a student is or what a student should be and what they needed to tolerate
- "Under the microscope" TVK, Mel
- Locus of control was in the hands of the bully
- Consequences - losing their degree, losing years of work, financial stress
- Intentional experiences pg. 55 Moustakas - memory meanings and experiences extending toward meaning
- Participants often didn't back down and continued to ask more geustions, seeking understanding until they felt if they continued they would lose it all. Strong willed and daring to ask why (feminist - see deb interview)
- Students tended to have mental health issues
- Bullies had mental health issues
- Confusion at the confrontation point
- Boundaries - they tend to be inappropriate
- Other people in the system - clearly stating they disapprove but offer no concrete support for the students, even though they may have been in a position to help. Other people in a position to help TVK interview specifically chose not to help
- Threatened, incompetant
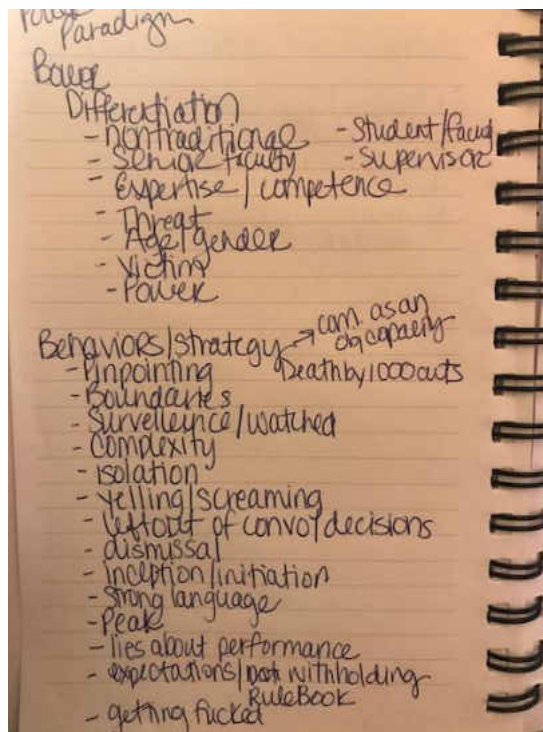
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