

**Adults' Perspectives on Resiliency After the Trauma of Being Chronically Verbally Bullied
in Adolescence.**

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Abstract

The problem addressed in this study was to investigate the challenges associated with chronic verbal bullying that individuals encountered during adolescence and how these experiences manifested in adulthood. The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study was to investigate how adults who endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their experiences of developing and sustaining resilience into adulthood. The primary aim was to examine the contextual factors within participants' social environments that contributed to overcoming negative experiences and fostering resilience. Social cognitive theory guided this study highlighting how individuals learn by observing behaviors, self-efficacy, and environmental factors. Data were collected through semi-structured, open-ended interviews with 12 participants, who provided in-depth reflections on their experiences. Two central research questions guided the inquiry: RQ1: How do adults who experienced chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their processes of developing and sustaining resilience in adulthood, particularly in relation to personal and social challenges? RQ1-a: How do these adults reflect on the strategies they have employed to cultivate resilience and navigate adversity across diverse life domains, including relationships, employment, and emotional well-being? This study aimed to contribute to the broader understanding of resilience-building after trauma, emphasizing the critical role of social context in shaping adaptive responses to adversity.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study investigated the pervasive issue of bullying in the United States, focusing on the long-term implications. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory, multiple-case study was to investigate how adults who endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their experiences of developing and sustaining resilience into adulthood (Stake, 2006). Bullying is often characterized by a pattern of intentional, unsolicited aggressive behavior that recurs over time. This behavior encompasses actions such as ridicule, name-calling, shaming, and public humiliation. The psychological consequences of verbal bullying can manifest in various forms, including diminished self-worth, interpersonal distrust, aversion to intimacy, persistent anxiety, challenges in workplace relationships, and maladaptive coping strategies (Morin et al., 2019). Additionally, bullying is often characterized by its repetitive nature, often occurring on multiple occasions, which establishes a sustained pattern of victimization (Pervanidou et al., 2019). Bullying often manifests in various forms, including verbal, cyber, physical, sexual, psychological, and prejudice-based bullying. It typically begins in early education and continues through adolescence, impacting students across diverse educational settings (Morin et al., 2019). Recent statistics reveal that 81% of adolescent students have encountered verbal bullying National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2019). Over 77% of students report having been victims of verbal bullying (Naas, 2023).

Moreover, Morin et al. (2019) found that 64% of adolescents aged 18 and older reported being bullied at least twice during their school years. Among those affected, Asch (2023) identified that 32% were in the ninth or 10th grade, 31% were in the 11th grade, and 17% were in the 12th grade or pursuing their GED. Furthermore, Saeed Al-Ani (2022) emphasized that the profound impact of verbal bullying is often linked directly to severe mental health issues among

students. Overall, bullying has been characterized as a form of aggressive behavior that is deliberately intended to cause harm (Saeed Al-Ani, 2022). Numerous other researchers have also investigated this pressing issue.

Pervanidou et al. (2019) critically examined the various forms of bullying and their potential to inflict harm, revealing the long-lasting effects on individuals. Such experiences are often associated with alarming behaviors, including self-harm, verbal threats, such as “go kill yourself,” and, tragically, instances of suicide (Saeed Al-Ani, 2022). While Naas (2023) and the NCES (2019) provided compelling data corroborating the detrimental effects of bullying on adolescents, Saeed Al-Ani (2022) highlighted a substantial power imbalance, either real or perceived, between perpetrators and victims. These concerning statistics underscore the profound impacts of chronic verbal bullying on the resilience of affected adults and highlight the urgent need for support mechanisms to mitigate these effects (Saeed Al-Ani, 2022).

Educational institutions must adopt proactive strategies to address this crisis, thereby fostering safe and inclusive environments for all students. Many individuals who experience verbal bullying do not pursue formal therapeutic interventions, often relying instead on informal coping mechanisms to make sense of their experiences and to navigate the dysfunction in their social and emotional environments (Park et al., 2021). Despite the significance of these experiences, there exists a lack of empirical research regarding the internal processes through which these individuals conceptualize resilience following instances of verbal trauma in adolescence (Park et al., 2021; Morin et al., 2019; Simmons, 2021).

Verbal trauma can have effects on individuals who have previously successfully navigated challenges without suffering from psychological consequences, such as depression, which can compromise their sense of security and lead to anxiety (Timmermann, 2020). This

analysis will concentrate on adults who demonstrate resilience through the cultivation of meaningful personal relationships, the potential for family formation, and the acquisition of profound insights into their life experiences. Additionally, Allison et al. (2019) underscored a pressing concern: young adults aged 18 to 25 and adults aged 26 to 44 who have endured prolonged bullying frequently experience substantial psychological distress. The impact of bullying on mental health is profound; victims frequently experience symptoms of depression and diminished self-esteem (Timmermann, 2020) and are often marginalized in their social circles. This social isolation can perpetuate a cycle of silent suffering, leading to various psychosomatic manifestations, including recurrent upper respiratory infections, sore throats, and palpitations. Feelings of pervasive unhappiness and insecurity can also emerge (Paniagua et al., 2020). Furthermore, physical ailments such as abdominal pain and nausea are prevalent among these individuals, with many resorting to detrimental coping strategies, including substance abuse and alcoholism. These are some of the long-term effects of bullying.

The long-term consequences of school bullying are profound and far-reaching, with victims often enduring substantial challenges well into adulthood. Research conducted by Lunder & Tharaldsen (2020) revealed that even 10 years after the last incident of bullying, victims frequently contend with elevated rates of psychiatric symptoms, depressive episodes, comorbid anxiety, psychosomatic issues, violent behaviors, and suicidal ideations Hall et al. (2018), alongside a range of other emotional disorders. Furthermore, Allison et al. (2019) asserted that school bullying can function as a preventable catalyst for mental health issues extending into midlife. The detrimental repercussions of bullying are critical, as these victims often struggle with social integration and securing stable employment (Lunder & Tharaldsen, 2020). Adult survivors of bullying, particularly those with a history of trauma, face substantial obstacles that

can adversely affect their overall quality of life. Many reports experience profound feelings of hopelessness, loneliness, difficulty in socializing, and a diminished sense of self-worth (Lunder & Tharaldsen, 2020; Paniagua et al., 2020). As a result, some adults may resort to abusive behaviors within their family dynamics (Paniagua et al., 2020).

A study by Danielsdottir et al. (2022) revealed that 30% of adults who have encountered abusive behavior, referred to as adverse childhood events, particularly those involving abuse in dysfunctional environments, are at an increased risk for mental and physical health issues throughout their lives. This finding underscores the long-term consequences of early adverse experiences (Danielsdottir et al., 2022; Paniagua et al., 2020). Furthermore, substance abuse and problematic alcohol consumption are prevalent among adults (Simmons et al., 2020). Additionally, some survivors of such experiences may engage in victimization of others within their communities or participate in criminal activities, often driven by low self-esteem and social difficulties (Hutson et al., 2021; Simmons et al., 2020).

Bullying often can have a substantial and cyclical impact, often leading victims to become perpetrators within their communities. Research conducted by Panosso et al. (2023) reveals that victims frequently face challenges in forming healthy interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, media coverage, as noted by Simmons et al. (2020), has underscored the alarming prevalence of bullying, with studies from the Center for Disease Control (2018) indicating that 19% of individuals occupy dual roles as both perpetrators and victims. Hammel (2008) asserts that increasing public awareness is crucial for acknowledging the severe psychological consequences experienced by those targeted by bullying (Donat & Wolgast, 2023; Panosso et al., 2023). Consequently, educational institutions should actively implement comprehensive strategies to promote the well-being and safety of students within their environments.

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study was to investigate the challenges associated with chronic verbal bullying that individuals encounter during adolescence and how these experiences manifest in adulthood (Moraes et al., 2020). The enduring effects of such bullying can often profoundly influence adult experiences and development. This research underscores the necessity of examining these individuals' perspectives, particularly their meaning-making processes and resilience in the face of adversity. Many individuals who have endured chronic verbal bullying often confront persistent psychological and social difficulties that extend into adulthood (Conway, 2016; Stein et al., 2020). As awareness of the ramifications of this form of bullying increases, it is crucial to analyze how these adults interpret their experiences and cope with the lasting effects throughout their lives.

Adults who experienced and endured repeated verbal bullying aggression during their adolescent years, as identified by Vissing et al. (2022), frequently carry the lasting repercussions of these experiences well into adulthood. Such aggression is often characterized by ridicule, name-calling, shaming, and public humiliation. Research conducted by Bokhari et al. (2022) suggests that these adverse interactions can lead to substantial long-term psychological outcomes that may persist for decades. Furthermore, bullying can often be associated with a wide range of detrimental effects, impacting physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and mental health (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2021).

The consequences of verbal trauma during adolescence may present as diminished self-esteem, interpersonal distrust, avoidance of intimacy, chronic anxiety, impaired workplace relationships, and maladaptive coping strategies (Rahmawati et al., 2022). Often, individuals

affected by these issues have not received formal therapeutic support; instead, they rely on informal mechanisms to make sense of their experiences and navigate their social and emotional functioning. As a result, these adults frequently demonstrate resilience in the aftermath of such trauma. Victims of bullying face an elevated risk of developing depression and anxiety (Bokhari et al., 2022) and are also more likely to experience adverse academic outcomes (Man et al., 2022). Furthermore, they may exhibit disruptions in sleep and dietary habits and may disengage from previously enjoyable activities (Bokhari et al., 2022; Man et al., 2022).

The existing gap in scholarly understanding stems from a lack of insight into how individuals interpret, navigate, and cultivate resilience during adulthood. Consequently, the study conducted by Man et al. (2022) demonstrates that adolescents are adversely affected in terms of mental health and may display aggressive behavior towards others. Meanwhile, resilience researchers are confronted with an incomplete comprehension of the long-term adaptations that follow experiences of chronic verbal bullying during adolescence (Conway, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study was to investigate how adults who endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their experiences of developing and sustaining resilience into adulthood (Stake, 2006). The study analyzed how participants reflect on their past experiences and interpret the long-term personal, social, and emotional outcomes through the lens of resilience. This qualitative design research investigated how adults who endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their experiences of developing and sustaining resilience into adulthood, utilizing one-on-one semi-structured interviews (Man et al., 2022). By analyzing personal experiences and qualitative data, the study will examine how these experiences have influenced their well-being in adulthood (Bokhari et

al., 2022; Man et al., 2022). Through a systematic examination, this research aims to elucidate the resilience patterns and themes that emerge from participants' reflections, providing meaningful insights into the enduring effects of verbal bullying, as discussed by Maaliki et al. (2024), during critical developmental periods. This research investigates the development of resilience in these individuals (Ackerman et al., 2023). In the active inquiry process of this multiple-case study, participants consisted of adults aged 18 years and older who are not currently engaged in therapeutic interventions. The interview guide was utilized to determine eligibility. The targeted population for this study included twelve participants. This study used a purposive sampling method, as outlined by Etikan et al. (2015), targeting participants who have experienced chronic verbal bullying during adolescence.

Multiple case interviews are designed to cultivate meaningful connections with participants. Stewart (2011) proposed that this engaging, conversational, and data-gathering approach utilizes semi-structured interviews to delve into the intricacies of adults' experiences with bullying behavior (Stewart, 2011). The collected data was systematically analyzed, coded, and thematically analyzed, with keywords, theming, and interpretation reported to elucidate how participants characterize their resilience as adults in the aftermath of being bullied during their school years (Naeem, 2022). The findings were validated using the methodologies established by Miles and Huberman (1994), which affirm data display, reduction, and the formulation of meaningful conclusions.

Introduction to Framework

This study on bullying and resilience was grounded in a theoretical framework drawn from social cognitive theories. Albert Bandura first developed social cognitive theory (SCT). His framework, as outlined in Bandura (1986), emphasizes the importance of observational learning, imitation, and modeling, demonstrating how individuals can acquire new behaviors not only through direct experience but also through observing others within their social contexts. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), as outlined by Bandura (1986), elucidates the intricate interplay among personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. SCT provides a framework for understanding how individuals who endured verbal bullying may experience decreased self-worth. Additionally, Schunk et al. (2020) noted that other scholars, such as Luszczynska et al. (2017), have applied social cognitive theory to motivate individuals to cultivate resilience by adopting coping strategies. These strategies are often learned through observing modeled behaviors and the reinforcement of positive outcomes.

Bandura's theory offers a lens for understanding the role of self-efficacy in developing resilience, emphasizing the importance of believing in one's ability to succeed. In his seminal 1986 research, Bandura elucidated the emotional and social dimensions of self-efficacy, which are integral to resilient behavior. The phenomenon of bullying is often multifaceted and shaped by a variety of social factors, including enactive experiences, observational learning, self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and processes of moral disengagement. Furthermore, cognitive learning can enhance self-efficacy, thereby strengthening individuals' resilience over time (Bandura, 1986).

Several fundamental tenets of SCT contributed to articulating the theoretical framework and enhancing our understanding of resilience as it is examined across diverse contexts. Key

concepts include self-efficacy, the social construction of resilience (Schwarzer et al. 2013), and the processes by which individuals develop behaviors that are shaped and modified through their interactions with others and their environments. These tenets facilitate a comprehensive investigation into how resilience was cultivated and sustained in various settings.

Resilience theory, as articulated by Masten (2014), demonstrates the importance of integration and interconnections within systems. Van Breda (2018) complements Masten's Resilience Theory; this study will focus on Van Breda's work, which was grounded in research on children who exhibit resilience despite experiencing adverse childhood environments (Van Breda, 2001). The framework originates from an exploration of adversity, aiming to understand the detrimental effects that adverse life experiences can have on individuals (Van Breda, 2018). Moreover, Van Breda (2001, 2016, 2018) defines resiliency theory as underscoring the importance of protective factors that can mitigate the adverse effects of trauma, particularly in the context of chronic verbal bullying during adolescence (Masten, 2014; Van Breda, 2018). By examining how these resilience protective elements interact with the contributions to ego-resilience and ego-control (Garmezy, 1993). This study can help better understand the development of adolescents who experience such bullying. This theoretical framework highlights not only the risks associated with verbal bullying but also the potential for positive adaptation and resilience in affected youth. Such a perspective invites a broader understanding of resilience not merely as a reactive measure but as a proactive integration of strengths that facilitate sustained growth and development even amidst difficulties. The American Psychological Association (2014) defines resilience as the ability to adapt positively while maintaining mental and emotional health in the face of challenges. This research focuses on how participants became resilient despite having experienced chronic verbal bullying from the trauma of bullying as a

youth (Castillo et al., 2020). This study enhances the theoretical framework of SCT by illustrating its application to the concept of resilience (Castillo et al., 2020; Masten, 2014; Van Breda, 2016, 2018). The integration of these frameworks of social cognitive theory and resiliency theory provides a comprehensive understanding of the recovery process that adults undergo following experiences of chronic verbal bullying in adolescence. Therefore, SCT and Resilience Theory collectively offer a critical lens for analyzing and interpreting the narratives of the participants.

Introduction to Research Methodology and Design

The planned research design used an exploratory multiple-case study approach to generate meaningful findings. This methodology enables the use of semi-structured interview questions that promote an understanding and interpretation of the participants' lived experiences while prioritizing self-reflexivity (Yin, 2012). According to Yin (2018), a multiple case study is a qualitative research design utilized to explore contemporary phenomena within their real-life contexts, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are ambiguous. This study uses a multiple case design to conduct qualitative research aimed at understanding the perspectives of adults who endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence. Each participant was treated as a distinct case to facilitate a comprehensive exploration of their experiences and insights.

This exploratory multiple-case study approach addressed the research problem by providing flexibility to utilize diverse data sources comprehensively and understand participant perceptions of adults who endured chronic verbal bullying (Yin, 2018). Additionally, this multiple-case exploratory study aligned with the research objectives by allowing the application of methodologies, thereby facilitating the selection of data collection techniques that were

designed to achieve triangulation (Natow, 2019) and fulfill the study's objectives. First, a case study approach offered the opportunity to pose probing questions (Yin, 2018) regarding the relationship with resilience. Additionally, the case study design facilitated an in-depth exploration by engaging participants in areas of research that have received limited scholarly attention (Yin, 2018). Qualitative methodology was employed for the collection and analysis of data to enhance understanding of specific topics or phenomena. This qualitative exploratory study seeks to identify shared behaviors and common characteristics among participants. Research designs grounded in qualitative methods emphasize the importance of gaining insights that can lead to actionable outcomes, particularly in addressing complex problems or issues that require thorough investigation (Creswell et al., 2018).

This study utilized one-on-one semi-structured interviews and recruited 12 eligible adults who met established criteria for participation. This research seeks to gather data on verbal bullying by investigating the contexts in which participants encountered such incidents, thereby providing essential insights into their lived experiences. By analyzing these personal perspectives, the study aims to elucidate how experiences of chronic verbal bullying during adolescence can be informative and shape effective prevention and intervention strategies (Yubero et al., 2022). Since each interview was analyzed as data, it was then coded to identify related themes until saturation was achieved (Karakus et al., 2021).

Research Questions

The research questions outlined below formed the foundation of a compelling qualitative study aimed at understanding resiliency in survivors of chronic verbal bullying during adolescence.

RQ1

How do adults who experienced chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their processes of developing and sustaining resilience in adulthood, particularly in relation to personal and social challenges?

RQ1-a

How do these adults reflect upon the various ways they have utilized to cultivate resilience and effectively navigate adversity across diverse life domains, including interpersonal relationships, employment, and emotional well-being?

Significance of the Study

This study was important as it holds the answer for the qualitative research into chronic verbal bullying during adolescence, association, and resilience, as its findings can address existing gaps in the comprehension of adolescents experiencing psychological and mental health challenges. By providing a nuanced understanding of this population, the research makes a meaningful contribution to the field. It highlights the resilience exhibited by specific individuals, emphasizing a characteristic that was not universally present among victims of verbal bullying in our society. Selecting a qualitative study was appropriate given the topic's relevance to transformative outcomes. This research utilized a critical observational lens to investigate how adults perceive their resilience following experiences of chronic verbal bullying.

Furthermore, it identified various techniques employed by these individuals to cultivate resilience. The study also has implications for educational administrators and stakeholders by highlighting additional factors that may help prevent bullying in academic environments. Bullying is often a persistent issue within educational institutions, necessitating that

administrators proactively devise effective prevention and intervention strategies. Williford et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of raising awareness by presenting evidence-based strategies to mitigate the detrimental effects of bullying and foster a safer, more supportive environment for youth. Furthermore, Cohn et al. (2019) assert that preventative measures should engage both professionals and media outlets to enhance awareness and combat systemic intimidation and psychological harm. Such efforts are essential for substantially reducing the recurrence of violent incidents (Panosso et al., 2023). Further research is necessary to elucidate the role of bullying in masking behaviors and to determine how this knowledge can be utilized to assist other students. While this study will focus on adolescent resilience, the findings may contribute to the development of intervention and prevention programs in educational settings.

Definitions of Key Terms

The following terms are defined to help the reader better understand the context of this study.

Adolescent Bullying

Adolescent bullying, as defined by Vassallo et al. (2013), is characterized by young adults who, having endured the harsh realities of bullying, now struggle with the challenges of antisocial behavior (Vassallo et al., 2013). However, Abregu-Crespo et al. (2024) define adolescent bullying as individuals who exhibit heightened psychiatric conditions as a consequence of experiencing bullying victimization.

Bullying

Bullying is often characterized by an unwanted, repetitive nature, intentionality, and an inherent power imbalance between the victim and the aggressor (Mischel et al., 2020). In their research, Brank et al. (2012) identified four primary categories of bullying: verbal, physical,

relational, and cyber. The repercussions of bullying are extensive, impacting victims' academic performance, psychological well-being, interpersonal relationships, and physical health.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is categorized by Wilson and Keane (2004) as a syndrome that manifests following a traumatic injury. This psychobiological condition is marked by a dysregulated stress response system, resulting in both internal and external biobehavioral symptoms. PTSD is a prolonged reaction to stress, which can induce considerable alterations in an individual's identity, cognitive processing, memory, perception, motivation, and interpersonal relationships (Wampold et al., 2010). Furthermore, Alper et al. (2022) expand on the definition of PTSD as the experience of traumatic events that can precipitate the onset of PTSD. This condition has a lasting impact on an individual's life, with enduring effects on their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.

Post-Traumatic Growth

Post-traumatic growth (PTG) is a concept articulated by Calhoun and Tedeschi (2014) that describes the positive psychological changes individuals may experience following a traumatic event. Research indicates that many individuals navigating crises report transformative experiences that lead to substantial personal growth. PTG is considered to encompass distinct dimensions, including appreciation of life, enhanced relationships with others, spiritual development, the pursuit of new possibilities, and an overall sense of personal growth (Alper et al., 2022).

Resilience

As defined by Southwick et al. (2014), resilience is the process of adapting effectively to trauma, tragedy, adversity, threats, or other considerable stressors. It reflects the capacity to

navigate and adjust to challenging circumstances while maintaining psychological well-being in the presence of such difficulties (American Psychological Association, 2014).

Social isolation

Social isolation, as defined by Cacioppo et al. (2012), is frequently equated with loneliness and is linked to chronic psychological distress. This condition arises when individuals perceive themselves as socially disconnected, which in turn triggers feelings of social pain and experiences of social rejection. Such profound loneliness often encompasses a deep yearning for more meaningful social connections (Timmermann, 2020).

Self-efficacy

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform the behaviors necessary to achieve specific outcomes. It strongly indicates their control over their social environment, their actions, and their self-confidence (Bandura, 1997). As defined by Maddux (2014), self-efficacy pertains to the behavioral skills and the probability of successfully implementing selected courses of action. Furthermore, these factors play a critical role in psychological adjustment and dysfunction.

Trauma

Trauma is defined as an emotional response to a profoundly distressing mental state event, such as a natural disaster, a witnessed accident, or abuse. This response often initiates a process characterized by feelings of denial and shock. In the wake of trauma, these initial reactions may become overwhelming. Over time, individuals may experience persistent effects, including vivid flashbacks, intense emotional fluctuations, physical symptoms, and strain on interpersonal relationships. According to the American Psychological Association (2014), trauma can result in these enduring challenges. Furthermore, Williams (2018) posits that trauma

encompasses any experience that surpasses an individual's capacity to process and psychologically integrate the event, leading to its classification as a traumatic experience.

Summary

In summary, achieving resiliency is a complex challenge that requires attention and action. Research indicates that a large number of adolescents lack the understanding necessary to recognize the profound impact of bullying, which often leads them to struggle with severe depression and anxiety. Alper et al. (2022) have demonstrated that those who undergo such traumatic experiences can experience PTG, yet many remain ill-equipped to manage their emotional pain. This inadequacy sometimes drives victims to resort to harmful coping mechanisms, such as substance abuse, in an attempt to numb their distress.

Implementing best practices for building resiliency is essential for empowering victims to grasp how internalized victimization affects their behaviors and contributes to feelings of hopelessness, depression, and anxiety, as noted by Alper et al. (2022). By equipping these young individuals with practical coping skills and tools, we can help them navigate their emotional challenges and prevent them from spiraling into crisis (Panasso et al., 2023). However, there remains a pressing need for further research into how adolescents manage life stressors after receiving clinical therapy. Specifically, it was crucial to assess the enduring impact of the skills gained during treatment and their effectiveness in preventing a return to depression or anxiety. By addressing this gap, we can better support adolescents on their journey toward resiliency.

The study will adhere to a rigorous ethical framework, ensuring that participants aged 25 and older are fully informed about the study's purpose. Importantly, participants were reassured that they could discontinue the survey at any point if a question caused discomfort. Participants

will also be informed that their responses will contribute to the development of effective strategies to prevent bullying.

Central to this research was the SCT, which has proven essential in crafting tailored behavioral interventions for those who bully. These initiatives are designed to foster empathy by helping perpetrators recognize the profound emotional impact of their actions on others (Swearer et al., 2014). Furthermore, Alper et al. (2022) highlight a vital practice that equips individuals throughout our communities with essential knowledge about bullying and its harmful effects on mental health. Their findings suggest that timely intervention enables victims to acquire critical coping skills for resilience, thereby mitigating the impact of verbal bullying much more effectively than those who lack support. The research also identifies constructive behaviors that can be adopted and harmful ones to avoid, helping to ensure that bullying does not recur in their lives. Chapter 2 examines the literature that forms the foundation of this study, highlighting its relevance and importance.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study sought to summarize the literature surrounding chronic verbal bullying during adolescence and the resilience displayed by affected adults. This study aims to highlight the critical importance of this issue by examining how individuals maintain their resilience in adulthood (MacLeod et al., 2016). The literature review will explore the characteristics of chronic verbal bullying behaviors, the various factors that influence them, and the socio-psychological aspects of resilience. Furthermore, this review will thoughtfully address the research question, ensuring a thorough and insightful understanding of this vital topic.

The literature review was strategically divided into subsections, each of which revealed critical factors contributing to bullying and resilience. In the section focused on the characteristics of bullying and associated mental illnesses, this study will investigate the intricate cause-and-effect relationship between bullying and the heightened risk of behavioral disorders for both victims and aggressors (Bond et al., 2001; Conway et al., 2018). This comprehensive exploration provides valuable insights into the underlying reasons for bullying, fostering a deeper understanding of its complexities. The section addressing the associated risks of bullying will establish fundamental principles that reveal the behaviors exhibited by both aggressors and victims. The comprehensive evaluation of bullying will shed light on the pervasive issues faced by victims of chronic verbal abuse, pinpointing essential elements of bullying and the resilience necessary to overcome it. Moreover, the sociopsychological section will uncover the subtle social dynamics at play between aggressors and their victims, illustrating how these relationships can be manipulated to exert control. It will also reveal the vital role of self-efficacy and the psychological constructs that support individuals' mental well-being (Walton & Lee, 2023).

Additionally, the review will empower readers by discussing resilience among adults who were bullied in adolescence, reinforcing confidence in the robustness of this research. The process was examined, and the behavioral adaptations that enable individuals to foster resilience after enduring prolonged bullying were discussed, along with meaningful discussions on the findings (Conway et al., 2018). This multifaceted exploration promises to enhance our understanding of bullying and resilience, ultimately informing the development of effective interventions.

Documentation

A considerable portion of the information compiled for the literature review research study was sourced from reliable platforms, including ProQuest databases, EBSCO, and Google Scholar. Specifically, I used targeted keywords in databases such as PsycINFO and PsycARTICLES to identify peer-reviewed journal articles directly related to the topics of interest. In order to solidify the theoretical framework for this study, I incorporated seminal and historical literature. I consulted authoritative sources, such as the American Psychological Association (APA, 2014), to clarify key concepts and terminology.

In this research, recent statistics on school bullying and violence were accurately collected and analyzed from reputable sources, including the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2023) and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). To strengthen the rigor of this study, a resilience framework articulated by Moore (2019) for adults was employed, while integrating foundational scholarship from Britt et al. (2012), Deshields et al. (2015), and Masten and Powell (1999). This comprehensive approach will deepen our understanding of resilience within the specified context. This framework was essential, as it may serve as a

considerable buffer, enhancing protective factors that promote superior recovery outcomes and fostering resilience in those affected by these challenges.

According to Kotera et al. (2022), resilience is a key predictor of mental well-being, as shown in studies by Gao et al. (2017), Akbari and Khormaiee (2015), and Mayordomo et al. (2021), which revealed that self-compassion plays a crucial role in effective recovery (Ackerman, 2019; Kotera et al., 2022). Furthermore, this literature review will make a compelling case for the necessity of intervention and prevention strategies. Drawing on research by Chmitorz et al. (2018), Rolf and Johnson (2018), and Smokowski (2019), the techniques were articulated to substantially enhance the mental well-being of individuals who have experienced victimization.

Overall, this thorough examination convincingly demonstrates that the literature review surveyed a wide range of academic articles and books, primarily obtained from university libraries and reputable online databases, including EBSCO, ProQuest, SAGE, JSTOR, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. These sources were carefully chosen to ensure their relevance to the research topic and to support the development of the theoretical framework. Many studies identified in this search reported their findings on chronic verbal bullying, highlighting the depth and importance of the research conducted, thereby ensuring readers recognize its significance (Kotera et al., 2021; Moore & Woodcock, 2017). The chapter concludes with a summary that highlights the key findings from each section, while also addressing the notable gaps in the existing literature that relate to the study's purpose.

Framework

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study was to investigate how adults who endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their experiences of

developing and sustaining resilience into adulthood. The specific problem of bullying was often identified as a violent act that inflicts serious harm on its victims, contributing to detrimental health outcomes for the affected individuals. Additionally, an exploration of how adults develop resilience was conducted (DeKraker, 2017; Liez, 2008; Zhang et al., 2021). The central issue addressed was the alarming increase in instances of bullying among adolescent students.

Furthermore, bullying behavior frequently originates in elementary school and escalates during middle school and adolescence (Eyuboghu et al., 2021). This qualitative research will strategically utilize resilience theory as its foundational framework. Prominent contributions from key scholars in the field (Garmezy, 1974; Windle, 2011; Van Breda, 2018) have rigorously examined the core tenets of resilience: confronting adversity, adapting to or resisting challenges, and mitigating adverse outcomes.

The theoretical framework for this study was grounded in Albert Bandura's theory of bullying behavior and resilience. Bandura's theory suggests that social cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors should not contribute to the prevalence of bullying among children (Schwarzer et al., 2013). Extensive research over several decades has demonstrated that strategies aimed at reducing opportunities for bullying and promoting a sense of community among children and adults can effectively mitigate such behaviors.

Bandura's theory provides a robust foundation of reliable, research-based knowledge concerning bullying and victimization within educational settings. Analyzing bullying behaviors inherently necessitates a focus on the environments in which they occur, including communities, classrooms, and schools, as well as relevant aspects such as classroom norms, social-psychological mechanisms, and school policies. The behaviors and reactions of victims have substantial implications, both in the short and long term, for all individuals involved.

Longitudinal studies highlight that these issues represent critical public health challenges with far-reaching societal consequences (Schwarzer et al., 2013). By elucidating these distinctions, this study aims to enhance our understanding of the intricate dynamics of resilience within the framework of social behavior, ultimately contributing to the development of effective interventions and supportive environments for children (Fine, 1991; Rutter, 2018; Ward, 1999).

Van Breda (2016, 2018) conducted extensive and insightful research studies that enhance the overall understanding of resilience, a complex and multifaceted construct. These studies contribute to a substantial body of academic literature, demonstrating that resilience has been extensively examined through various theoretical frameworks, underscoring its vital role in comprehending human adaptability and strength. The influential research by Van Breda (2016, 2018) offers a considerable perspective on resilience theory that warrants consideration.

The capacity to recover from adversity has been studied by Van Breda (2016, 2018) and Windle (2011). Masten and her colleagues (Masten et al., 1990; Masten, 2018) have delineated three distinct forms of resilience: robust recovery from trauma, the capacity of at-risk individuals to achieve outcomes that surpass expectations, and the sustained positive adaptation in the face of stress (Ungar, 2014; Wright & Masten, 2001; Wright et al., 2013). This resilience process embodies the act of overcoming adversity and emotional challenges while effectively navigating considerable hardships. Numerous illustrations of resilience can be found, ranging from the ability to view adversity as an opportunity for growth to maintaining a positive outlook in the face of challenging circumstances (Masten et al., 1990; Masten, 2018; Van Breda, 2016, 2018). Adopting these principles can considerably empower individuals to flourish, even in the face of daunting situations.

In empirical research, various methodologies have been utilized to define and measure resilience, each contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of this crucial concept (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Garmezy, 2013). Garmezy's (2013) research examined resilience as the exceptional ability to rebound from adversity, adapt positively to life's stressors, and even thrive under challenging circumstances. Resilient individuals often exhibit key traits (Jacelon, 2008; Oshio et al., 2018) such as self-confidence, emotional regulation, optimism, flexibility, adaptability, determination, and strong problem-solving abilities (Cicchetti & Garmezy, 1993; Garmezy, 2013; Windle, 2011).

A key theme highlighted by the research was the importance of supportive relationships with adults and peers. These connections play a crucial role in fostering growth and resilience. Masten (2014) demonstrates how resilience was the process that enables many individuals to recover, adapt, and thrive in adverse circumstances. Masten et al. (1990) explored the psychosocial risk factors and stressors that can hinder development, focusing on vulnerability and the resilience strategies that allow individuals to overcome substantial challenges. This research substantiates the assertion that, despite encountering formidable challenges, individuals possess the capacity to mature into competent and resilient adults (Jenkins et al., 2008; Rutter, 1987; Veer, 2021). By investing in understanding and enhancing resilience, we can effectuate transformative changes in individual lives and simultaneously strengthen the collective resilience of our communities.

As research on resilience accumulates, scholars have identified numerous recurring themes across diverse studies. The seminal work of Rutter (2007) examined the critical processes that lead to varied pathways culminating in the same behavioral outcomes. This diversity was vital as it fosters a broader understanding of essential concepts, notably in the seminal

foundational works of Rutter and Garmezy (1983), who investigated the considerable risks inherent in longitudinal studies. They revealed that the challenges related to schizophrenia pose substantial developmental hurdles that can extend into adulthood. Garmezy and Rutter (1983) demonstrated that the interplay of stress, coping mechanisms, and developmental processes in children holds considerable implications for psychologists and mental health professionals working with this population. Their findings examined the critical importance of understanding these factors in the context of child development and mental health (Rutter & Garmezy, 1983; Rutter, 2007; Werner & Smith, 2024).

Garmezy's influential research (1992) underscored the importance of proactively preventing mental illness by identifying key resilience factors such as cognitive skills, personal agency, motivation, and social change (McDaid et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2016). Building on this foundation, Masten's work (2018) integrates various strategies to reduce risk while promoting resilience, thus enhancing human adaptability across the lifespan (Masten, 2018; Rutter & Garmezy, 1983; Rutter, 2007; Werner & Smith, 2024). By prioritizing these protective factors and resilience-enhancing approaches, we can empower individuals to navigate challenges and thrive in their environments. Correlation and attention were drawn to these interconnected threads, powerfully illustrating that resilience was attainable and crucial for successfully navigating life's challenges. In a different experimental study, Masten's (2018) research compellingly illustrates that exploring parallel concepts and findings related to resilience can considerably enhance our ability to adapt positively in the face of escalating threats.

Holling's (2004) study provides a crucial empirical framework for understanding social-ecological systems SES; (Fleury & Lee, 2006; Golden et al., 2015; Kilanowski, 2017), which play a vital role in shaping behaviors associated with resilience, the ability of a system to absorb

disturbances while preserving its function, identity, and structure; adaptability, the agency of actors to influence resilience; and transformability, the capability to reform a social structure when the existing system becomes unbearable. This theoretical framework is of great importance, as it offers a deep understanding of resilience and its application to chronic verbal bullying during adolescence, thereby revealing the considerable potential of this research to advance the field (Holling, 2004; Masten, 2018; Rutter & Garmezy, 1983).

The findings from Walton et al. (2023) on the resilience of social networks are compelling and considerably advance our understanding of this critical area. Their longitudinal survey revealed the empowering role of social networks in fostering resilience, indicating that individuals who maintain strong connections with friends, colleagues, family, and neighbors are considerably better equipped to manage and cope with adversity. This study will utilize resilience theory, a robust theoretical framework that demonstrates individuals can effectively rebound from challenging situations.

Roberts et al. (2002) affirm Walton et al.'s (2023) findings, establishing that resilience enables individuals to cultivate the capacity to overcome difficulties and achieve social and vocational competence, even in the face of considerable stress and adversity. Furthermore, Luthans (2002), a seminal author, supports this argument by revealing a notable correlation between resilience and bullying, underscoring the ability to recover from setbacks, conflicts, and adverse experiences.

Luthans (2002) also highlighted the importance of the resiliency construct in the recovery process, an idea reinforced by Miao et al. (2020). Their study identifies crucial correlations among various dynamics, further demonstrating the capacity for meaningful positive adaptation in the face of considerable adversity (Luther et al., 2018; Luthans, 2002; Miao et al., 2020;

Walton et al., 2023). Ultimately, this research powerfully illustrates that resilience was perceived differently across organizational, cultural, and societal contexts, thereby deepening our understanding of its profound implications for individuals and communities.

A study by Walton et al. (2023) investigated the principle of social learning, which asserts that individuals can recover from negative experiences. This research centers on a unique group of individuals who endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence (Naidoo et al., 2016; Pinquart, 2017; Santos et al., 2023) and are now over 18+ years old. It aims to uncover how they have successfully fostered resilience throughout their adult lives.

The principle of social learning challenges the notion that aggressive behavior is inherent; instead, it suggests that such behavior is learned through complex social interactions (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). This perspective suggests that aggression was not an inherent trait but rather a behavior that is cultivated through complex social environments (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Walton et al., 2023). Furthermore, resilience was not a one-dimensional concept; it is multifaceted and varies considerably across cultural, organizational, and societal landscapes (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Miao et al., 2020; Walton et al., 2023). Understanding these dynamics was crucial to fostering resilience in individuals who have faced adversity.

Establishing uniformity across theoretically comparable domains in resilience studies was essential for a comprehensive understanding and practical implementation. Recent research by Ceciline et al. (2023) identifies seven fundamental principles that can considerably impact approaches in this crucial field. These principles include managing connectivity, maintaining redundancy and diversity, encouraging learning, and managing slow feedback while promoting polycentric governance (Ceciline et al., 2023). Additionally, they revealed the importance of fostering complex adaptive systems thinking and broadening participation. The practical

application of these principles was not merely advantageous but essential for enhancing resilience research, ultimately increasing the likelihood of achieving meaningful and positive outcomes.

Moreover, Wade et al. (2023) conducted a comprehensive study focused on a well-grounded model of resilience with substantial implications for psychological rehabilitation. Building upon the foundational work of Ceciline et al. (2023), they explored strategies that enhance resilience in the aftermath of considerable adversity. Their findings examined the importance of managing interpersonal relationships and the pivotal roles played by redundancy and diversity. By promoting critical thinking and learning through facilitating social networks, this strategy not only cultivates innovative ideas but also fosters trust among individuals, thereby reinforcing overall resilience in the face of challenges.

Ceciline et al. (2023) conducted an insightful study on the critical need for effectively managing the aftermath of adversity for both victims and perpetrators. Their research highlights the detrimental effects of delayed feedback and identifies several factors that require attention. They propose a compelling framework that emphasizes enhancing participation through inter-organizational collaboration, fostering meaningful interactions at multiple levels, and cultivating inspirational leadership. These crucial components are beneficial for driving transformative change and achieving lasting sustainability in our communities (Ceciline et al., 2023; Miao et al., 2020; Wade et al., 2023).

To advance our understanding of resilience, future research must be guided by careful consideration and a strong focus on processes rather than on personality traits alone. Cecilie et al. (2023) thoroughly examined former bullying victims within social psychology, revealing the importance of uncovering valuable insights to drive meaningful change. Their findings

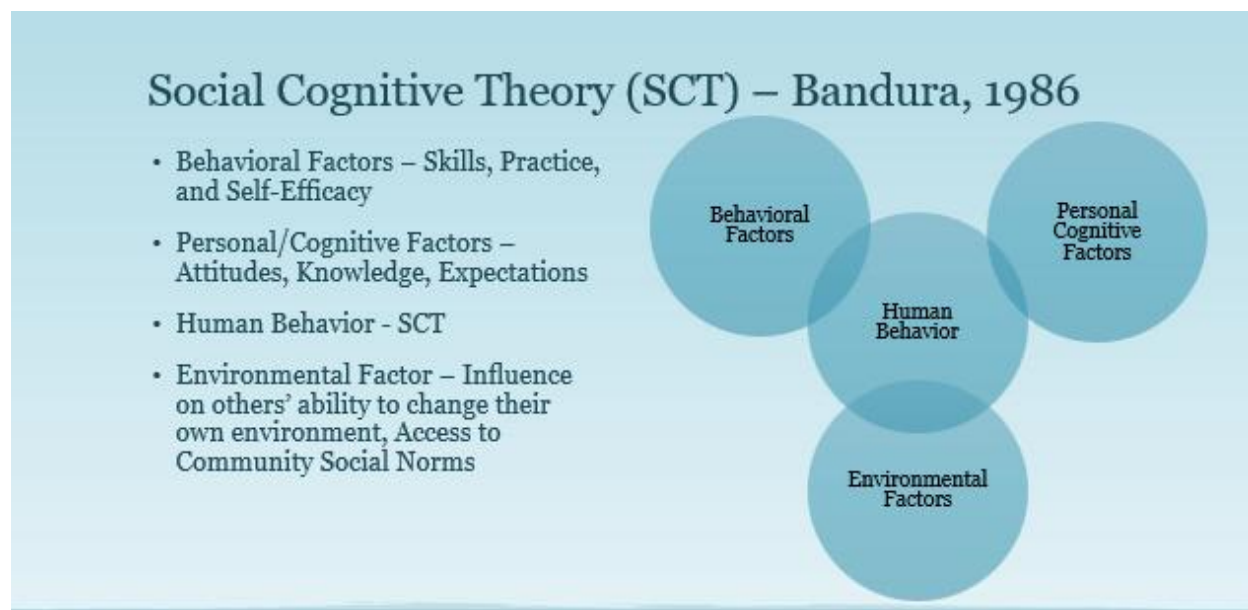
demonstrate that resilience acts as a vital protective factor against depression for bullying victims and examine its critical connection to mental health challenges. Moreover, the study investigates how individuals who have successfully navigated their trauma and developed resilience have maintained these traits for over a decade after adolescence.

Moore and Woodcock, (2019) propose a nuanced framework that explores three fundamental resilience attributes. The study found that first, Emotional Reactivity is related to impairment, sensitivity, and the process of recovery; second, Relatedness encompasses aspects such as support, tolerance, comfort, and trust; and Ceciline et al. (2023) third, Mastery, which pertains to adaptability, self-efficacy, and optimism. These attributes are crucial for empowering individuals to recover from adversity, thrive in challenging circumstances, and navigate life's difficulties effectively. Empirical evidence examined the role of resilience in mitigating the impact of depression among adolescents and indicates a negative correlation between resilience and experiences of bullying and mental health issues (Cecilie et al., 2023; Moore, 2019; Wade et al., 2023). This suggests that fostering resilience could be a pivotal strategy in enhancing mental health outcomes and overall well-being in youth populations.

In the subsequent sections, this study will conduct a comprehensive analysis of bullying, with a particular focus on its prevalence within educational settings and its detrimental effects on participants' mental health. This examination highlights the pressing need to address these critical issues in order to create a safer and more inclusive environment for all learners. By examining the multifaceted nature of bullying, I aim to elucidate its implications and advocate for the implementation of effective intervention strategies that are essential for promoting student well-being and resilience.

Figure 1

Social Cognitive Theory- Albert Bandura Relationships



Bullying in Schools

School bullying is often a pervasive issue in U.S. schools that requires urgent attention, as it manifests in various harmful ways that can severely impact mental health. This includes physical aggression, such as hitting, and verbal aggression, such as name-calling (Naidoo et al., 2016; Piquart, 2017; Santos et al., 2023). The concept of bullying, first identified by Burk (1897), involves a pattern of intentional, repeated aggressive behaviors directed at a targeted individual to inflict emotional pain or distress. Recognizing and addressing this behavior was crucial to fostering a safer and healthier school environment for all students.

A study by scholars Olweus (1993, 1978) investigated the characteristics correlated with bullying behaviors in schools. The findings of this study indicated a substantial association between bullying as intentional and the involvement in recurrent acts of aggression perpetrated against victims who lack the means to defend themselves easily. Longitudinal studies have

suggested that bullying is a considerable risk factor that contributes to conduct problems and other violent behavior-related problems (Santos et al., 2023).

These aggressive behaviors may take the shape of verbal attacks, including threats and name-calling; relational or social aggression, such as spreading rumors or socially isolating the victim; and physical violence, which can result in actions like kicking, hitting, property damage, or even stabbings (Burk, 1897; Fluck, 2015; Menesini et al., 2017; Olweus, 1993). Addressing these diverse manifestations of bullying is crucial for fostering a safer and more supportive environment for all students.

Understanding the phenomenon of bullying behavior was crucial for developing effective intervention and prevention strategies. Menesini et al. (2017) identify the fundamental criteria defining aggressive bullying: repetition, intentionality, and power imbalance. Expanding on this framework, Fluck (2015) explores the various forms of bullying, with a particular focus on verbal abuse, which can manifest as either isolated incidents of name-calling or persistent harassment. This type of behavior may be relational and can occur in direct interactions or through digital platforms. It often targets individuals based on their distinctive attributes, such as race or other external characteristics (Burk, 1987; Fluck, 2015). Understanding these dynamics was essential for addressing the complexities of bullying in contemporary contexts.

Bullying Symptomology

Bullying in schools is not just a pattern of aggressive behavior; it is a troubling form of abuse that exploits an imbalance of power, allowing the bully to dominate or harm their victim. Koo (2007) reinforces Burk's (1897) claim that bullying among young people often arises from perceived differences, such as dialect, which can lead to physical harassment and social isolation (Burk, 1897; Fluck, 2015; Koo, 2007). By categorizing and assessing the various forms of

bullying behavior, current research reveals considerable insights into their impact on victims. Determining whether a perpetrator's motivation is rooted in a desire for revenge or simply in amusement is essential to addressing this pervasive issue (Burk, 1897; Fluck, 2015; Koo, 2007; Menesini et al., 2017). Understanding these dynamics was vital to creating a safer environment for all individuals.

Bullying, particularly physical bullying, poses a considerable threat to vulnerable youth who are often perceived as different (NIH, 2023). In order to address the complexities surrounding the issue of bullying, it was essential to distinguish between the various groups affected (Koo, 2007). These distinctions encompass ethnic minorities, racial groups, individuals with disabilities, and those with noticeable physical features, as well as refugees and immigrants (Waseem & Nickerson, 2023). A pivotal study by Olweus (1993) demonstrated that victims of bullying often experience repeated adverse actions over time (Koo, 2007). Importantly, these individuals tend to have the least influence among their peers, revealing the urgent need for intervention and support (Koo, 2007; Olweus, 1993; Waseem & Nickerson, 2023).

Bullying in U.S. schools is a public health issue, with reports indicating that 20% of adolescents experience incidents of bullying (Centers for Disease Control, 2020). This behavior, described as a social issue by Nazir et al. (2015), involves targeted aggression towards vulnerable individuals, enabling bullies to exert power and control over their peers. The repercussions of such aggression can profoundly affect mental health, as evidenced by research (Bosacki et al., 2007; Gini and Pozzoli, 2009; Gomez-Tabares, 2021), highlighting the urgent need for effective interventions to address this critical concern.

Bullying can often be classified into two main types: chronic bullying (Bowes, 2013; Lian et al., 2018; Yubero et al., 2021), which affects the same victim over time, and social media

bullying, characterized by the viral spread of harmful posts. Research shows that bullying entails not just behavioral concerns but also the importance of psychological and emotional crises for both victims and perpetrators. It often involves an imbalance of power, resulting in physical aggression or the dissemination of humiliating information. Addressing these issues is critical for creating safer and healthier school environments for all students (CDC, 2020; Nazir et al., 2015).

The findings of Moore and Woodcock (2017) indicate that bullying is not only a behavioral issue but also a profound psychological and emotional crisis for both victims and perpetrators. Bullying often creates an imbalance of power, often manifesting as physical aggression or the sharing of humiliating information (Moore & Woodcock, 2017; Nazir et al., 2015; CDC, 2020). Addressing this urgent issue is essential for fostering safer and healthier school environments for all students.

The World Health Organization (2022) revealed that bullying represents intentional acts of violence, utilizing both psychological and physical power to threaten individuals or groups, resulting in considerable psychological harm, deprivation, and developmental issues. Understanding the prevalence and consequences of bullying is not just important but imperative. Victims may suffer long-term mental health issues, hinder social development, and diminish academic performance. This understanding should motivate us to take decisive action in intervention and prevention efforts, particularly for educators and school boards, who play a critical role in shaping effective policies (Koo, 2007; Olweus, 1993).

School administrators must recognize their pivotal role in tackling bullying in educational settings. Their unwavering commitment to these efforts is vital for creating safe school environments. Moreover, administrators must be well-versed in intervention techniques and understand their profound impact on reducing the prevalence and detrimental effects of bullying.

Yet, the responsibility doesn't rest solely on their shoulders. Each community member plays a critical role in challenging and addressing bullying. Together, our collective awareness and proactive measures can considerably alter the landscape of bullying in our schools and communities, fostering a safer and more inclusive environment for all.

The findings from the CDC (2020) examined the alarming reality that bullying is a critical form of youth violence, with 30% of children likely to be victims on multiple occasions. This assertion is further supported by Lunder and Tharaldsen (2020), who revealed the severe repercussions of bullying, including a considerably heightened risk of mental health issues among victims. Bullying can manifest in various forms: direct or overt behaviors like hitting, fighting, or name-calling, as well as covert forms, such as gossip and intentional exclusion, both of which fall under emotional and social bullying (CDC, 2020; Lunder & Tharaldsen, 2020). Additionally, Moore and Woodcock (2017) reveal that bullying has extended into the digital realm, occurring through social media, phones, computers, tablets, and online gaming platforms.

Furthermore, these bullying behaviors can be categorized into physical, verbal, and cyberbullying, each with distinct but harmful impacts. Bullying continues to be a pervasive social challenge, where children exploit power dynamics to intimidate or harm others in various ways. The CDC (2020) further revealed that victims endure a cascade of mental health challenges, including heightened anxiety, stress, diminished self-esteem, and struggles in forming healthy relationships. Such issues may lead to thoughts of suicide and depression that can persist well into adulthood. Addressing this critical issue was not just a challenge; it is our collective duty, especially given the long-lasting effects on those affected (CDC, 2020; Moore & Woodcock, 2017). Efforts must be prioritized to combat bullying and support the well-being of our youth in their school environments.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2020) has outlined essential categories of bullying, offering valuable insights into its multifaceted nature. The most prominent type, verbal bullying, encompasses various forms, such as verbal victimization, which includes teasing, taunts, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, and threats (Costantino et al., 2019). Additionally, physical victimization involves self-harm and injuries, with the potential for tragic outcomes such as death. Bullying can also manifest through attacks on personal property, including the destruction or theft of belongings like mobile phones and backpacks.

Moreover, relational or social exclusion entails harmful behaviors that can lead to high-risk sexual activities, increased substance use, and the spreading of rumors, potentially resulting in future violence (CDC, 2020; Costantino et al., 2019). Research indicates that adults who experienced bullying during their adolescent years, regardless of the duration since their last incident, demonstrate considerable alterations in cognitive, emotional, physical, and social domains (Patchin et al., 2017). Lunder and Tharaldsen (2020) examined the critical role of providing continuous support and follow-up for individuals affected by bullying. Their research indicates that sustained intervention can considerably mitigate the detrimental consequences of bullying, thereby fostering improved mental health and enhancing overall well-being as individuals transition into adulthood. Resilience is a vital trait that adults can develop, encompassing positive coping strategies, cognitive resources, and behavioral capabilities linked to strong psychological health (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2017; Lunder & Tharaldsen, 2020; Patchin et al., 2017).

However, it was critical to acknowledge that bullying continues to be a considerable issue in schools, where power imbalances often lead to harm and suffering for others. In the following sections, further examination of the phenomenon of bullying in educational settings has garnered

substantial scholarly attention due to its pervasive nature and considerable implications for students' well-being. This comprehensive evaluation aims to examine the prevalence of bullying in school, analyzing statistical trends and patterns across different educational contexts.

Furthermore, the investigation will address both short-term and long-term consequences of bullying and reveal how these experiences can affect academic performance, self-esteem, and social relationships. Additionally, the implications for mental health was thoroughly examined, underscoring the urgent need for effective interventions and support systems to mitigate the adverse effects of bullying within our educational institutions.

Prevalence of Bullying in Schools

Bullying is often a critical issue that affects countless students, with its prevalence varying widely across different research studies. This inconsistency often stems from differing definitions and measurement methods regarding what constitutes bullying. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2021), bullying in schools is measured by the percentage of students who report experiencing it during the academic year. Esteemed researchers, including Cross (2011), Smith and Gross (2008), and Modecki et al. (2014), revealed the need for a unified approach to understanding this problem. A comprehensive study involving 335,519 youths aged 12 to 18 showed that statistics: 20-25% of participants identified themselves as either bullies or victims. This reveals the urgent need for effective interventions and policies to address and combat bullying in our schools. Furthermore, Modecki et al. (2014) reported that traditional bullying, encompassing both victimization and perpetration, occurred at approximately 35% (Elmahdy et al., 2022; Menesini et al., 2017; Modecki et al., 2014; NCES, 2021).

Despite the concerning nature of these statistics, existing literature inadequately addresses the mechanisms through which bullies might mitigate their own experiences of victimization. This omission highlights a substantial research gap that warrants attention, particularly in low-income communities, where the demand for effective, proactive interventions is pressing. By focusing on strategies to reduce victimization, stakeholders can make substantial progress in fostering safer educational environments for all students.

Recent studies on school bullying, particularly considerable findings from Wilkins-Shurmer et al. (2021) and corroborated by Elmahdy et al. (2022), reveal deeply concerning statistics. An alarming 65% of victims report being bullied, with physical violence occurring in 21% of those cases. Verbal bullying remains the most prevalent, affecting 75.6% of students, while cyberbullying impacts 28% and social bullying affects 27.6%. School administrators must urgently reconsider the alarming prevalence of bullying in our schools, as victimization is linked to severe outcomes in social development, academic performance, emotional well-being, and overall life prospects (Elmahdy et al., 2022; Wilkins-Shurmer et al., 2021). These findings highlight the critical long-term health implications of school bullying, underscoring the need for immediate action to address this widespread issue (Elmahdy et al., 2022; NCES, 2021; Wilkins-Shurmer et al., 2021). Schools are responsible for creating safe environments for all students and ensuring that bullying is addressed effectively.

Bullying often remains a pervasive issue within educational environments, with research underscoring its impact on diverse student populations. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2021), an alarming 37% of students have reported experiencing bullying, revealing the urgent need for interventions. This issue is particularly pronounced among racial minorities; specifically, 22% of Black students, 18% of Hispanic students, and 13%

of Asian students have indicated involvement in bullying incidents (Menesini et al., 2017; NCES, 2021; Zhang & Jiang, 2022).

Further, the prevalence of verbal and physical bullying affects approximately 22.59% of students, as noted by Zhang and Jiang (2022). The NCES (2021) provides additional context by revealing a troubling global trend: bullying rates have considerably increased in multiple countries, prompting concerns about the effectiveness of existing anti-bullying intervention programs. Equally critical to address are the emotional and social repercussions of bullying, which extend beyond direct victims. Research indicates that bystanders often experience emotional distress and may feel immobilized by fears of retaliation should they choose to intervene (Zhang & Jiang, 2022).

These dynamics contribute to a hostile school atmosphere, wherein the well-being of all students, both victims and observers, is compromised. It is imperative to have advocates for students' safety in educational environments, and it is essential that schools collectively prioritize anti-bullying measures to mitigate the ongoing harm caused to our children. Establishing a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying, supported by community engagement and awareness initiatives, is crucial in fostering a healthier and more inclusive environment for all students (Menesini et al., 2017; NCES, 2021; Zhang & Jiang, 2022).

Building on the critical insights of Smith et al. (2022) and Zhang et al. (2022), compellingly demonstrates the severe psychological consequences of bullying victimization. Victims commonly endure increased aggression, reduced empathy, a greater likelihood of substance abuse, difficulty in relating to authority figures, and worrying rates of suicidal thoughts (Al-Darmaki et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). Bullying is often defined by aggressive behaviors in schools involving force and intimidation, causes profound

physical and emotional harm. Alarming, this mistreatment can escalate to tragic acts of violence, including school shootings. Furthermore, Al-Darmaki et al. (2022) revealed that students who experience bullying face a considerably higher risk of developing severe mental health issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, suicidal thoughts, and depression. This alarming situation revealed the urgent need for effective interventions and resources to protect our students' mental health.

The rise of bullying in adolescents has reached epidemic proportions, infecting our educational environments like a toxic virus (CDC, 2020; NCES, 2021). Research from Schaffer (2023) reveals shocking statistics: in 2022, 3% of middle school students were subjected to derogatory name-calling, 22% were victims of harmful rumors, and 17% received explicit images without their consent. This disturbing trend considerably heightens the likelihood that these victims will contemplate suicide (NCES, 2021; Schaffer, 2023). School administrators must take immediate action to address this pressing issue and ensure the safety and well-being of our students.

Rubin (2023) has drawn attention to a deeply concerning trend: the ongoing rise in bullying, with annual rates climbing to 40% in 2023, 37% in 2022, 32% in 2021, 25% in 2020, and 26% in 2019. These statistics presented reflect an urgent need for action regarding bullying, as examined by Blakeslee et al. (2021), who have identified it as a critical public health crisis affecting adolescents. Schools must implement immediate measures to address this epidemic and safeguard our youth. In addition, Rubin (2023) presents a concerning statistic: Adolescent students who are subjected to bullying face a reported 4.64 times greater likelihood of contemplating suicide. Bullying often manifests in both direct and indirect forms, occurring frequently during school breaks, at lunchtime, on social media, and during school events. Direct

bullying encompasses overt aggressive actions and harmful verbal expressions directed at the victim, while indirect bullying can operate through the exclusion of individuals and the dissemination of damaging rumors. This grave reality necessitates prompt intervention to protect and support our young people (Blakeslee et al., 2021; NCES, 2021; Rubin, 2023).

Research conducted by Stamate et al. (2021) reveals a troubling reality regarding adolescent students who experience bullying related to their appearance, particularly concerning their weight, who face a considerably heightened risk of dropping out of school. This phenomenon was further examined by Blakeslee et al. (2021), who indicate that students who were bullied are often viewed as different from their peers within the adolescent community. In alignment with these findings, Sheridan et al. (2022) examined the urgent need for effective prevention strategies within extracurricular activities. School-based programs can cultivate a supportive environment where students are encouraged to explore their interests and talents alongside empathetic peers (Blakeslee et al., 2021; Sheridan et al., 2022; Stamate et al., 2021). Administrators must take immediate and concerted action to promote a safe and inclusive school environment for all students (Blakeslee et al., 2021; Sheridan et al., 2022; Stamate et al., 2021).

Bullying is not merely a childhood issue; it is a critical public health and psychological challenge that demands immediate attention. The World Health Organization (2022) warns that the ramifications of bullying can be devastating, leading to physical injuries, emotional scars, and, in extreme instances, even suicide. A groundbreaking study by Al-Darmaki et al. (2022) sheds light on the alarming scope of bullying, which is predominantly manifested through verbal attacks, face-to-face confrontations, and physical interactions. In the study of Al-Darmaki et al. (2022), which included 839 participants, they revealed that 22.8% had witnessed bullying, 8.7%

identified as victims, and 3.6% admitted to being perpetrators. This data illustrates the widespread nature of this issue and examines the urgent need for targeted intervention.

Additionally, the research revealed a troubling link between aggressive behaviors, personality traits, and elevated stress levels. Notably, males with lower stress tolerance exhibited increased aggression. Perhaps most alarming is the finding that individuals who have experienced bullying tend to mirror this aggression in their behavior (Al-Darmaki et al., 2022; WHO, 2022). Breaking this cycle of aggression is crucial for creating a safer and more supportive environment for all. Now is the time for action; let us unite to combat bullying and ensure a brighter future for everyone. Chen and Chen (2020) substantiated Al-Darmaki et al. (2022) supposition that brings to light a critical issue: school violence, which includes sexual bullying, extortion, and various forms of bullying, verbal, social, relational, and physical, remains a pervasive threat in our educational institutions. Al-Darmaki et al. (2022) further reinforce this message, revealing a disturbing rise in bullying during adolescence despite a decline in victimization as students age.

Smith et al. (2022) examined the vital responsibility that school administrators and teachers have in tackling this crisis, as they are essential to both the intervention and prevention of bullying by actively addressing students' needs in their environments (Al-Darmaki et al., 2022; Chen & Chen, 2020; Smith et al., 2022). However, while literature often discusses the impacts of bullying and victimization rates, it frequently fails to provide actionable strategies for implementing effective prevention measures and new intervention methodologies; school administrators must focus on creating comprehensive solutions that ensure every student can thrive in a safe and supportive school environment.

In the subsequent sections, this study will examine the influence of bullying on the aggressive behaviors exhibited by victims. This exploration will involve a review of relevant literature and empirical studies that shed light on the psychological and behavioral implications faced by individuals who endure bullying. By analyzing the varying degrees of aggression that victims may display as a response to their experiences, I hope to provide a comprehensive understanding of this complex relationship. Key factors such as the nature of bullying, the victim's coping mechanisms, and the environmental context will also be discussed to elucidate further how these elements contribute to the development of aggressive behaviors in victims.

Influence of Bullying on Aggressive Behaviors by Victims

The persistent cycle of aggression is a critical concern, perpetuated through learned behaviors that aggressors often adopt from their home environments (Camodeca & Goossens, 2022; Nittle, 2023). Research conducted by Camodeca and Goossens (2022) compellingly illustrates that aggression frequently originates from the experiences faced by bullying victims. Both victims and aggressors exhibit elevated levels of hostility, a pronounced desire for revenge, and a propensity for engaging in aggressive behaviors. It is essential to recognize that bullying does not solely manifest through overt aggression; subtle behaviors, such as name-calling and physical confrontations, are prevalent and reveal a deeply concerning pattern that necessitates attention. Nittle (2023) further elucidates the underlying issues associated with bullying behavior, indicating that individuals who engage in bullying often contend with considerable insecurities or a distorted sense of power over others. Understanding and addressing these underlying dynamics is imperative for fostering a safer and more supportive environment for all individuals involved.

Furthermore, Ferreira et al. (2023) investigated the importance of social theory in understanding the phenomenon of bullying. According to this theory, motivation strongly influences behavior and learning, enabling individuals to replicate the aggressive actions and responses of those they observe (Ferreira et al., 2023; Nittle, 2023). By recognizing these critical factors, schools can effectively confront and dismantle the issue of bullying in our society.

Moreover, research into school behavior reveals that clear performance expectations led well-behaved students to emulate positive actions more readily. Conversely, focusing on problematic behavior revealed performance issues rather than promoting genuine learning and fostering a non-coercive educational environment. In a similar study, Akers (2020) examined the social learning theory and the social behavioristic approach in the social sciences. This theory posits that when a behavior is tied to a valued outcome, it tends to be rewarded more frequently than it is punished. As a result, schools can infer that consistently demonstrated positive behaviors are reinforced, leading to a more effective learning atmosphere.

McLeod (2023) substantiated Bandura's (1977) supposition and provided a compelling analysis that examines the importance of both behavioristic and cognitive approaches in traditional learning paradigms, thereby maintaining the importance of cognitive and mental factors in the learning process. Bandura (1977) articulates the intricate connection between the imitation of behaviors and resilience, revealing the critical role of emotional responses in conjunction with modeling, observing, and shaping attitudes (Bandura, 1977; McLeod, 2023). The environment serves as a vital stimulus, guiding individuals in pursuing fundamental psychological needs that have been demonstrated to influence their behavioral responses. This cognitive framework examines internal behaviors shaped by environmental factors and includes a mediational process characterized by retention, attention, motor reproduction, and motivation.

Consequently, mental events manifest in observable behaviors, fulfilling our innate need for social connection (McLeod, 2023).

Further reinforcing this perspective, Greer et al. (2006), a seminal author, explored the considerable impact of observational learning on biological processes, cognitive research, and behavior analysis. Performance evaluations constitute a substantial aspect of behavior analysis, demonstrating that performance behaviors have lasting effects over time. As Akers (2020) noted, both victims and aggressors often replicate their bullying behaviors, underscoring the need for effective interventions. The observational learning environment relies heavily on the dynamics of imitation and modeling. These elements are essential in transforming behavior to facilitate resilience recovery. This method was invaluable for influencing peers and adults, as well as inspiring meaningful changes in observational conduct (Akers, 2020; McLeod, 2023).

Rosenthal et al. (2013) demonstrates that a sense of belonging plays a vital positive role as a model. Their research revealed that observational learning is essential for enhancing resilience through social learning. Notably, Akers (2020) found that individuals are more likely to adopt behaviors displayed by their reference groups, such as peers, parents, friends, and family. Furthermore, self-efficacy plays a considerable role in influencing and reflecting these observed behaviors, thereby fostering a stronger sense of belonging. Rosenthal et al. (2013) examined the importance of cognitive control (Derakhshan, 2019; Rodman et al., 2019; Stine-Morrow, 2012) in sustaining resilience. However, some critics argue that social learning theory, as examined by McLeod (2023), asserts that individuals are accountable for their cognitive processes and their interactions with contextual factors (Akers, 2020; Bandura, 1999; Groome, 2019; Isen, 2019; Rosenthal et al., 2013; McLeod, 2023).

In the following sections, this study will analyze the impact of bullying on mental illness among victims, affirming the urgent need for increased awareness and intervention strategies. This examination will draw on current research findings to reveal the psychological consequences of bullying, including anxiety, depression, and other long-term mental health issues. School administrators can better advocate effective prevention and support measures within educational and social environments by addressing these challenges.

Impact of Bullying on Mental Illness

Bullying often represents a critical concern in psychological discourse, profoundly affecting the mental health of its victims. The American Psychological Association (APA, 2014) describes bullying as a form of aggressive behavior that is both persistent and threatening, often directed at those perceived as weaker or more vulnerable. This pervasive aggressiveness not only disrupts the immediate social environment but also inflicts lasting psychological harm on individuals.

Research has established a compelling correlation between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and the emergence of serious mental health issues later in life. A study conducted by Thurston et al. (2023) revealed that victims of bullying are more susceptible to various psychological challenges, including self-harm, depression, anxiety, psychotic-like experiences, and suicidal ideation. These findings demonstrate the urgency of addressing bullying as a precursor to more severe mental health crises.

The APA (2014) further demonstrated the importance of recognizing the link between bullying and mental illness. Mental health disorders, characterized by considerable impairment, necessitate prompt intervention and psychological support to alleviate their debilitating effects (Ireland et al., 2007; Moore et al., 2017; Scott et al., 2014). Extensive scholarly research

corroborates the adverse effects of bullying on mental health, exposing not only the immediate consequences but also the long-term ramifications for victims (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; DeLara, 2018). Researchers, practitioners, and policymakers must prioritize the prevention and intervention of bullying as a pressing public health issue that requires comprehensive, evidence-based strategies.

Moreover, a prospective longitudinal study demonstrated the major issues with mental health trajectories with considerable societal consequences for individuals who experienced verbal bullying, supported the findings of Walker et al. (2021) and Thurston et al. (2023), which asserted the pervasive environmental problem of bullying dominance that can create confusion when assessing its prevalence, contributing to feelings of distrust among adolescents. The researcher generated a small sample size to develop data that can be used to gauge a much broader geographical area and a wider population. It was crucial to create a comprehensive understanding of the factors that amplify or reduce the harmful effects of bias-based harassment on its victims. Equally important is identifying the reasons that drive young individuals to perpetrate such harassment. Addressing these issues was essential for fostering a safer and more inclusive environment for everyone.

Furthermore, this erosion of trust can lead to considerable long-term mental health complications (DeLara, 2018; Henderson, 2023; Tsomokos et al., 2024). The robust methodology employed will aid in establishing a comprehensive study and a systematic research pathway. Therefore, addressing bullying is not only essential for immediate safety but also critical for the mental well-being of future generations. The research on mental health disorders is considerably enhanced by studies conducted by Thurston et al. (2023) and Capsi et al. (2020), which revealed alarming statistics from a sample of 1,037 participants. Notably, 59% (600 out of

1,013) reported the emergence of mental disorders by midlife, and shockingly, by age 45, 85% (737 participants) had multiple comorbid conditions.

The impact of bullying on mental health cannot be overstated. Victims frequently endure feelings of intimidation, humiliation, and ridicule. The consequences of such experiences manifest as ongoing struggles with social anxiety, depression, recurring sadness, shame, revenge fantasies, PTSD, and even suicidal ideation (DeLara, 2018). Research by Tsomokos et al. (2024) reinforces this connection, revealing that bullying is a catalyst for severe mental health issues, including depression, self-harm, anxiety, substance abuse, and thoughts of suicide. Likewise, DeLara (2018) illustrates how teasing contributes to persistent phobias and social anxiety in victims (DeLara, 2018; McCabe et al., 2003).

Furthermore, Tsomokos et al. (2024) assert that bullying erodes mental health, mainly due to the socially threatening environments that children face, ultimately casting a long shadow on their adolescent mental well-being. Administrators must address these issues proactively to protect our youth and nurture healthier communities. In the U.S., a striking 42% of young adults aged 18 to 25 are struggling with mental health conditions, as revealed in Henderson's 2023 study. One considerable aspect of this issue is the role of weight-related bullying, which has been identified in research by Puhl and Latner (2013) and Caspi et al. (2020). Victims of such bullying often face persistent body image concerns that can lead to severe eating disorders, including bulimia and anorexia, alongside a spectrum of anxiety disorders such as social phobia, panic disorder, agoraphobia, and other internalizing conditions like PTSD and depression (Caspi et al., 2020; DeLara, 2018; Puhl et al., 2013). Alarming, 30.6% of individuals with a diagnosable mental health condition reported being unable to afford the necessary support and treatment

(DeLara, 2018; NAMI, 2022). This urgent issue revealed the need for increased awareness and accessible mental health services.

Victims of bullying often suffer considerable impairments in their ability to form friendships and intimate relationships, while depression can profoundly affect adolescents' social interactions. When left unaddressed, severe depression can become life-threatening (DeLara, 2018; Ye et al., 2023). Those who have experienced bullying often harbor a profound fear of trust and helplessness, making the formation of new relationships a daunting challenge that can last a lifetime (DeLara, 2018).

Research conducted by Scott et al. (2014) validates the findings of NAMI (2022), linking mental health issues, such as anxiety, suicide attempts, schizophrenia, depression, and suicidal ideation to experiences of bullying. Moreover, Amen (2023) corroborated DeLara (2018) and revealed that individuals with personality disorders or psychosis, such as schizophrenia, are often viewed as eccentric or delusional. These individuals frequently struggle to cultivate meaningful relationships and may not recognize the impact of their actions on others. This misinterpretation can lead to a deep-seated distrust of others and a tendency to isolate oneself, resulting in a lack of close friendships (Amen, 2023; DeLara, 2018; Mayo Clinic, 2023). It is crucial to address these issues to foster healthier relationships and support mental well-being.

Another considerable impact resulting from being bullied reveals that individuals who are persons with mental illness (PMI) frequently find themselves in contact with law enforcement due to challenges in respecting authority and adhering to the law, leading to potential legal complications and, often, death by law enforcement (NAMI, 2022). Daitzman (2021) study outlines four key indicators of the psychopathological social construct of an individual with danger, deviance, dysfunction, and distress. Sema et al. (2021) complement Daitzman's

observations by revealing instances in which people with mental illness exhibit unusual behavior that draws police attention. In some cases, such behavior can incite fear in public spaces through violent crimes, including sexual offenses and assaults. Meanwhile, nonviolent individuals may still cause considerable disturbances through minor offenses (Daitzman, 2021; NAMI, 2022; Sema et al., 2021).

Moreover, research by Hartford et al. (2005) revealed that individuals charged with minor property offenses are often released without being held in custody. Alarming, police data shows that 41% of mentally ill individuals who are arrested for nuisance offenses result in frustration for officers, primarily due to inadequate support from mental health agencies for repeat offenders. This lack of response is exacerbated by a severe shortage of resources in hospitals and mental health institutions (Sema et al., 2021; Hartford et al., 2005; Daitzman, 2021). Studies consistently indicate that lingering depression and anxiety, often a result of childhood bullying, contribute to bizarre behavior as an adaptive coping strategy, showcasing a dimension of resilience (DeLara, 2018; Daitzman, 2021). In the subsequent sections, examining the short-term effects of bullying reveals the pressing need for enhanced support systems and a deeper understanding of those impacted by this issue.

Short-term Impact of Bullying

A study conducted by Olweus (1992) and Schoeler et al. (2018) illustrates the urgent need to address bullying in our schools, revealing its alarming short-term effects on students who are victimized. These bullied students frequently experience deep feelings of depression and heightened anger, leading to a considerable decline in their academic performance due to dropping grades and increased absences. Tragically, many also struggle with suicidal thoughts and increased susceptibility to illness (CDC, 2020; Olweus, 1992; Schoeler et al., 2018).

School administrators must take decisive action against bullying to safeguard the well-being and future of our students. Bullying is not just a minor issue; it carries serious consequences for all: victims, bystanders, and perpetrators alike. The CDC (2020) reports that students who face bullying suffer from considerable educational setbacks, including higher dropout rates and diminished academic achievement. Schoeler et al. (2018) support this view, maintaining that the repercussions extend beyond academics as victims endure increased psychological effects, including sleep disturbances and emotional distress. Furthermore, countless adolescent victims are left to contend with debilitating depression and anxiety. It is time for a collective effort to combat this pervasive issue.

Depression Research conducted by Lin et al. (2022) examines a critical issue: individuals exposed to bullying are at an elevated risk for severe, often permanent mental health challenges, particularly depression and anxiety. Alarming, studies indicate that 20-35% of adolescents who suffer victimization from bullying are likely to develop depression. This alarming trend is compounded by the detrimental effects of bullying on resilience, with substantial evidence linking these experiences to various mental health disorders, including depression and thoughts of suicide. Supporting this view, Heino et al. (2011) have demonstrated that bullying can cause considerable mood alterations, creating a pathway to severe conditions such as schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, and suicidal behavior (Dale et al., 2014; Heino et al., 2011; Lin et al., 2022).

Moreover, the pursuit of protective factors against depression and improved life satisfaction for these victims is vital, as noted in recent studies by Dale et al. (2014) and Lin et al. (2022). Rahmawati et al. (2022) further revealed the severe repercussions of bullying, revealing that the devastating impact results in heightened worry, chronic depression, diminished

happiness, and increased suicidal tendencies stemming from repeated mental and physical assaults.

It is particularly concerning that depression rates among adolescent students who have faced bullying are 47% higher than those of their non-bullied peers. This pattern suggests that victims not only endure immediate harm but may also face long-term social isolation and low self-esteem well into adulthood (Lin et al., 2022; Rahmawati et al., 2022). Addressing the issue of bullying is not just important, but it's essential for the mental well-being of our youth and the health of our communities.

Anger. Bullying in schools is not just a harmless phase; it leads to serious anger-related issues that can have lasting impacts on victims. According to the Journal of Research in Health Science (JRHS, 2022), a considerable 18.4% of individuals report experiencing behaviors such as hostility, reduced prosocial behavior, and physical aggression stemming from their bullying experiences, with verbal bullying being the most prevalent form. Hisar et al. (2021) revealed that the anger and aggression resulting from bullying can manifest in violent behavior, impacting the lives of victims long after the bullying has ceased. If left unaddressed, this unchecked anger can escalate into criminal activities, including violence, vandalism, and theft. The mental health ramifications of bullying create a vicious cycle of stress, which in turn can lead to increased use of volatile substances and alcohol or drugs among students (Hisar et al., 2021; JRHS, 2022).

Moreover, research by Zhang and Jiang (2022) found that anger and violence are pivotal factors that perpetuate bullying behavior in schools. The findings from Nazir and Nesheen's analysis (2015) confirm that the emotional toll of bullying is substantial, resulting in considerable stress for victims. Namie et al. (2003) explored how the anger stemming from bullying often leaves victims feeling shame, guilt, frustration, and disappointment, emotions that

can lead to self-destructive behaviors such as excessive drinking, overeating, and difficulties functioning both at work and home, along with misplaced anger directed at children or partners and an overwhelming commitment to work.

Nazir et al. (2015) further clarified that the traumatic impact of bullying is often profound, affecting students more than most realize. Hisar et al. (2021) also identified a critical link between anger from bullying and dysfunctional family environments, which further hampers the behavior of these individuals, increasing their risk of developing substance use disorders as a way to numb the pain of their bullying experiences (Hisar et al., 2021; Nazir et al., 2015; Namie et al., 2003). Addressing bullying and its effects is not just a school issue; it is a societal imperative that requires immediate attention.

Lower grades/missed school. Bullying often has far-reaching consequences that considerably hinder the academic performance of victims, as illustrated by the findings of Samura et al. (2021). Many victims struggle with lower grades as a direct result of their experiences with bullying, which can be compounded by factors such as poverty. This intersection impacts their academic outcomes, lowers standardized test scores, and undermines their self-esteem.

The correlation between bullying and academic decline is evident; frequent absences due to bullying can result in poor academic performance. Research by Costantino et al. (2019) and Gaffney et al. (2019) revealed alarming rates of absenteeism and high dropout rates among bullied students. The 2020 CDC study examines this issue, demonstrating how bullying contributes to lower standardized test scores and diminished grade point averages.

The study by Samura et al. (2021) examined the relationship between academic performance and bullying victimization from a cognitive-motivational perspective. Victims often

lack academic motivation and achievement, showing little interest in school engagement. The effects of bullying can extend beyond immediate harm; they erode students' aspirations and motivation, key ingredients for academic success. Moreover, bullying victimization takes a toll on emotional well-being, fostering feelings of social exclusion and peer rejection. As a consequence, bullied students feel disconnected from their schools, further exacerbating their academic struggles; it is clear that the impact of bullying is often profound and detrimental, leading to poorer academic performance among victims (CDC, 2020; Gaffney et al., 2019; Samura et al., 2021).

Suicidal thoughts and feelings. The issue of suicidal thoughts and feelings is a pressing public health crisis closely linked to bullying, as revealed by Kwan et al. (2022). Alarming, research shows that 20% to 56% of youth who endure bullying annually report that their experiences are directly tied to suicidal ideation, dangerous behaviors, and deteriorating mental health. The impact of bullying can be devastating, leading to mental health struggles that considerably increase the risk of suicide-related behaviors, as noted by the CDC (2020). When a victim attempts self-directed suicide, it is often a manifestation of deep emotional pain and a serious intent to end their life.

Kwan et al. (2022) further elucidate that various risk factors contribute to suicidal behaviors among bullying victims. These include profound emotional distress, patterns of self-harm, depression, experiences of domestic violence, alcohol abuse, fragile family bonds, and heightened anxiety. Victims contemplating self-harm may vividly express a disturbing glorification of suicide, often mention weapons, and articulate their intent to harm themselves. Indeed, as their thoughts of suicide increase, often coupled with psychiatric disorders, they may discuss weapon possession or express a desire to die more frequently.

Tragically, many victims believe that seeking assistance from teachers or counselors is unnecessary, leading them to suffer in silence (CDC, 2020; Kwan et al., 2022). This silence can be deadly; administrators must recognize this connection between bullying and suicide and take bold action to support those in need. Addressing these issues openly can pave the way for healing, understanding, and ultimately saving lives

Higher Rate of Illness. Baldry (2004), a seminal author, revealed that bullying victimization in schools profoundly affects students' physical health, mirroring its detrimental impact on emotional well-being. This distress hinders a student's ability to adapt to the school environment and can escalate to life-threatening situations. A study by Costantino et al. (2019) revealed that bullying can lead to considerable health issues, including psychosomatic symptoms like sleep disturbances, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, enuresis, and headaches, along with psychological maladjustment. The CDC (2018) further examined that victims are at heightened risk for depression, sleep anxiety, emotional turmoil, self-harm, diminished academic performance, and social isolation. These consequences represent a serious threat to the mental health and overall development of affected students (Baldry, 2004; CDC, 2018; Costantino et al., 2019).

In order to effectively reduce harm and protect vulnerable students, schools must implement comprehensive bullying prevention programs. The CDC (2018) highlighted the need for schools to engage more deeply in violence prevention initiatives, develop universal school-based strategies, and actively transform both physical and social environments to create safer, more nurturing spaces for all students (Baldry, 2004; CDC, 2018; Costantino et al., 2019).

In the following sections, this study will examine the long-term effects of bullying, highlight the urgency of implementing necessary measures, and address the experiences of those

affected by this pervasive issue. This study aims to elucidate the psychological, social, and academic repercussions that persist over time, underscoring the critical need for effective intervention and support systems. This exploration will contribute to a deeper understanding of the implications of bullying and the importance of proactive strategies in fostering a safer and more inclusive environment for all individuals, particularly vulnerable victims.

Long-term Impact of Bullying on Its Victim. Bullying can represent a critical and pervasive issue that considerably impacts the psychological, physical, and psychosomatic well-being of countless children. A study by Vanderbilt et al. (2010) investigated the alarming prevalence of this phenomenon among schoolchildren worldwide, signaling a need for urgent intervention. Similarly, comprehensive research conducted by Dale et al. (2014) elucidates the profound long-term consequences of bullying within educational institutions.

The findings reveal that victims often face considerable social repercussions, struggling to establish and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships essential for both personal and professional success. Such difficulties can persist into adulthood, hindering one's ability to secure employment, manage finances effectively, and develop efficient coping mechanisms. Furthermore, the psychological ramifications of bullying can frequently manifest as a range of mental health disorders, including anxiety disorders, panic disorders, depression, substance use disorders, and agoraphobia. Addressing the issue of bullying is imperative for creating healthier, more supportive environments that promote the well-being of all students.

Further reinforcing these findings, Olweus (1992) agreed with Schoeler et al. (2018) that a student who experienced victimization has additional critical long-term effects that they endured, causing a student to experience fear or avoidance of new social situations and accompanying mental and physical health problems. Dale et al. (2014) agreed with Olweus

(1992) that students who have been bullied also have noticeably low self-esteem, which their study showed has been linked to victims experiencing sexual abuse and a higher rate of obesity, which led to their inactivity and smoking. Schoeler et al. (2018) asserted that a student who was chronically bullied by their peers may suffer from lingering bitterness and anger, which can result in offending behavior and a tendency toward social isolation, sometimes leading to choices such as elective home school education and they often have difficulty trusting others which contributes to poor employability (Dale et al., 2014; Olweus, 1992; Schoeler et al., 2018). These compelling findings revealed the urgent need to address bullying in schools and support victims in overcoming these lasting challenges.

Bullying is not often just a fleeting childhood experience; its effects linger long into adulthood. According to Sheridan et al. (2022), verbal bullying is specifically designed to intimidate, taunt, and threaten victims, resulting in severe relational issues and social isolation. Notably, sociodemographic factors, such as sex, reveal that females are victimized at higher rates than their male counterparts. Blakeslee et al. (2021) have documented alarming consequences for these victims, including heightened anxiety, suicidal tendencies, and an increased likelihood of depression and illness. Further affirming this issue, Wolke et al. (2015) identified critical risk factors for mental health problems among bullying victims. These individuals often struggle to adapt to adult roles, face poor physical health, struggle with economic independence, and find it challenging to form enduring relationships or integrate into the workforce.

The NCES (2022) also examines the lasting impact of bullying, indicating that prolonged toxic stress stemming from environments of violence, systemic racism, impoverished living conditions, substance abuse, and insufficient access to support services plays a considerable role in these ongoing struggles. Similarly, Jones (1999) revealed the severe psychological, emotional,

and social repercussions that victims endure over time. Finally, the long-term effects of bullying often extend far beyond the immediate harm inflicted on victims and aggressors alike. If these issues remain unaddressed or untreated, the consequences can be profound and enduring (Jones, 1999; NCES, 2022; Wolke et al., 2015). To effectively combat bullying, early intervention and comprehensive support systems are essential.

Bullying at Home. The ramifications of adverse home experiences on children's mental health are considerable and warrant serious attention. Research conducted by Zequinao et al. (2020) unveils a concerning correlation between exposure to violence in the home during childhood and subsequent involvement in bullying behaviors. Their findings indicate that children who endure physical punishment or abuse are not only more likely to engage in bullying but also face an increased risk of grade retention. This perpetuating cycle of violence exacerbates existing vulnerabilities, rendering these children more susceptible to victimization and more prone to exhibiting aggressive behaviors toward peers, often as a reflection of the harsh treatment they receive from caregivers.

Further corroborating this perspective, Bond et al. (2022) affirm the long-term consequences associated with childhood bullying, revealing that individuals who experience such traumatic events are likely to contend with elevated levels of depression and anxiety throughout their lives. The urgency of addressing these issues cannot be overstated; breaking this cycle is crucial for fostering healthier developmental environments for children, ultimately enhancing their well-being and contributing to societal resilience.

Furthermore, Fisher et al. (2012) provides a detailed examination of the prevalence of psychiatric conditions among affected individuals, noting an alarming increase in symptoms associated with mental health disorders. These findings also examined a heightened risk of

suicidal ideation, panic disorders, and self-harming behaviors in this vulnerable population (Bond et al., 2022; Fisher et al., 2012). Consequently, this body of evidence revealed the urgent need for intervention and support to address the detrimental effects of home environments on youth mental health and behavior.

Gordon (2021) revealed a critical link between sibling bullying and school bullying. Children often imitate their siblings' aggressive behaviors as a way to regain control and assert power in their lives, leading them to target peers at school. His research reveals that teens from abusive households are particularly prone to bullying, as they learn violence and aggression as acceptable behaviors. Furthermore, Bond et al. (2022) found that children with absent or single parents frequently turn to bullying, seeking a sense of power and control that is missing in their home environments (Bond et al., 2022; Fisher et al., 2012; Gordon, 2021). Addressing this issue is vital; the next section will outline effective prevention and intervention strategies for victims.

Intervention and Prevention measures to support victims of bullying. In recent years, a growing body of research has examined the crucial role of intervention programs in combating bullying within educational settings. These precisely designed initiatives not only provide support for victims of bullying but also equip both students and school administrators with the necessary training to effectively mitigate and prevent this pervasive issue from sociological and psychological perspectives. Cowie (2011) explored the essential connection between anti-bullying initiatives and peer support, identifying it as a fundamental intervention strategy. Furthermore, Tzani-Pepelasi et al. (2019) bolster Cowie's findings by demonstrating that cultivating peer support considerably enhances the efficacy of bullying prevention efforts. Implementing such comprehensive programs is imperative for fostering safe and inclusive school environments.

Researcher Cowie (2011) investigated the primary aim of peer support, which is, to empower students by equipping them with essential conflict resolution skills and fostering social and interpersonal competencies. This form of peer support effectively addresses incidents of peer distress (Cowie, 2011; Houlston et al., 2011; Nguyen et al., 2022; Turunen & Punamaki, 2016; Tzani-Pepelasi et al., 2018) through strategies such as active listening, peer mediation, and befriending programs. Restorative justice, introduced initially as an alternative framework within the criminal justice system (Van Ness, 2005), is grounded in the principles of reconciliation for offenders and healing for victims. Empirical evidence suggests that this approach can yield positive psychological effects for victims (Braithwaite, 2015; Menkel-Meadow, 2007; Van Ness, 2005). Core components of restorative justice encompass victim-offender mediation, the process of making amends to victims, and the expression of sincere apologies. Braithwaite (2015) substantiated Van Ness's (2005) considerable contributions to the field, positioning restorative justice as a restitutive alternative to both retributive and rehabilitative models. This framework presents potentially transformative and challenging perspectives for individuals pursuing peace, accountability for transgressive behavior, and a substantive sense of justice.

School-wide positive behavioral interventions and support (SWPBS) focus on creating inclusive, equitable, and safe school environments (Fallon et al., 2012; Sugai, 2006; Warren et al., 2006). According to Sugai (2006), SWPBS integrates measurable, evidence-based outcomes, provides overt support systems for those implementing the programs, and relies on data-driven decision-making. Warren et al. (2006) added that prevention-minded educators recognize that positive behavioral interventions can be effectively used as proactive measures to promote appropriate behavior in all student environments. Additionally, Fallon et al. (2012) concur with Warren et al. (2006) that students subject to disciplinary consequences and who spend more time

outside the classroom are at an increased risk for adverse outcomes. These negative outcomes may include deficient academic skills, higher dropout rates, and a diminished sense of scholarly identity (Fallon et al., 2012; Sugai, 2006; Warren et al., 2006).

Active listening plays a crucial role, as it trains peer supporters in emotional guidance and counseling techniques, equipping them to assist students who are being bullied effectively. Research has revealed the importance of peer mediation, which empowers trained peer supporters to facilitate conversations between victims and aggressors, enabling them to resolve conflicts collaboratively (Adiguzel, 2020; Haft et al., 1998; Johnson et al., 1996). This emphasis on peer engagement helps cultivate an environment where students actively participate in preventing bullying, fostering both responsibility and personal empowerment.

Moreover, befriending schemes are instrumental in helping vulnerable children develop resilience within their social networks. These initiatives instill strategies for managing emotional distress, maintaining composure, and preventing overreactions (Cowie, 2011; Pepelasi et al., 2019; Tzani-Pepelasi et al., 2019). In the following sections, this chapter will examine the multifaceted dimensions of resilience following trauma, highlighting its meaningful impact on recovery. It will also reveal the transformative role of post-traumatic growth in overcoming adversity. A thorough examination of these themes were conducted throughout this chapter, contributing to a deeper understanding of how individuals navigate and emerge from traumatic experiences.

Resiliency after Traumatic Events

Enhancing resilience after adverse childhood experiences is critical and can be effectively achieved through active coping strategies and nurturing relationships (Connor, 2006; Mary et al., 2023; Nugent et al., 2014). The research by Lloyd et al. (2021) highlights the importance and

lasting impacts of childhood trauma on mental and physical health throughout life, making it essential to focus on these strategies and relationships for recovery and well-being. Additionally, Carpenter et al. (2012) provide compelling evidence regarding the lasting impact of trauma resulting from bullying, which challenges prevailing assumptions in this field and examines the necessity for further research and comprehensive support systems.

Moreover, the work of Haraldseid-Driftland et al. (2023) enriches our understanding of the multifaceted nature of resilience in the aftermath of trauma. Currently, our models are primarily based on self-report measures, which may not fully capture nuanced connections, leaving clinical practices without clear guidance beyond well-known outcomes like anxiety and depression. This research is crucial in unraveling the complexities of resilience following traumatic experiences (Herman et al., 2014; Nettles et al., 2000; Wu, 2013) and identifying methods to cultivate and sustain resilience. Implementing behavioral modification techniques can empower individuals to overcome the shame associated with their traumas. This study articulates how essential characteristics foster positive adjustment in stressful situations, ultimately providing valuable insights that enable others to better support individuals on their resilience journey

Resilience manifested in various groups. Resilience is a pivotal construct that emerges prominently within multiple groups, particularly as individuals navigate the recovery process following experiences of verbal bullying. The American Psychological Association (APA, 2020) examined that this iterative journey often culminates in considerable personal growth, as supported by multiple researchers (Bryant et al., 2022; Kaplan, 2018; Shaikh et al., 2010). In support, studies on cultivating resilience conducted by Shaik et al. (2010) and Kaplan (2018) found that it is not an automatic response but rather a conscious endeavor that unfolds over time,

allowing individuals to glean insights from and transcend their traumatic experiences. Their studies also confirmed that the transformative journey is anchored in four fundamental components: wellness, connection, healthy thinking, and meaning (Shaik et al., 2010).

Moreover, adults often participate in local organizations that provide essential social support, fostering a renewed sense of hope and enhancing overall well-being. These community resources play a crucial role in fostering resilience by providing a network of support and understanding that is vital for individuals recovering from adversity. By encouraging healthy lifestyle choices, such as adequate sleep, balanced nutrition, consistent exercise, and proper hydration, these groups foster an environment conducive to healing. Furthermore, mindfulness practices like prayer and meditation are essential tools for restoring hope and mental clarity.

In a recent study on adolescence conducted by Gillihan and Hurley (2024), the findings mirrored those of earlier studies, which revealed the importance of adaptability, perseverance, and flexibility in sustaining resilience (Nicholis, 2012; Richardson, 2002; Stride & Cutcher, 2015). By making conscious changes to their behaviors and thought patterns, adolescents are equipped to sidestep negative influences, such as social media, while focusing on effective stress management and avoiding harmful substances like drugs and alcohol.

Additionally, adolescents discover a sense of purpose by engaging in community service or supporting friends during challenging times. Such actions not only bolster self-worth but also contribute considerably to cultivating resilience. Seeking guidance from a licensed mental health professional is crucial for adults and adolescents who face obstacles in their resilience journey, ensuring they receive the support needed to thrive (Gillihan & Hurley, 2024).

Family Factors in Resilience. The concept of resilience is profoundly shaped by a multitude of factors, as revealed in studies conducted by the National Scientific Council on the

Developing Child (NSCDC, 2015). Key components contributing to resilience include genetics, neurodevelopment, and the immune system. These biological differences are instrumental in understanding why some children exhibit heightened sensitivity to stressors, a phenomenon documented by Herman et al. (2011). Their research suggests that resilience is not a static attribute but rather a dynamic process influenced by individual experiences and modulated by broader cultural, political, and social contexts, as evidenced in the work of Benzie et al. (2008), Black (2008), and Yusuf et al. (2020).

Furthermore, the resilience of individuals is frequently challenged by diverse stressors, which encompass adverse life events, dysfunctional relationships, and environmental crises, such as natural disasters. This multifaceted interplay revealed the need for a comprehensive understanding of the resilience framework, acknowledging its biological underpinnings and the socio-environmental factors that bolster or undermine an individual's capacity to navigate hardship. A supportive family environment is paramount in fostering resilience. Key family factors include clearly defined roles (Kuang et al., 2022; Li et al., 2024; Qui et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2022), practical parenting skills, opportunities for children to navigate rejection and criticism, and the cultivation of trusting relationships.

The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP, 2023) presents a comprehensive framework to enhance resilience within families and communities. This framework identifies three key focus areas, confirming that the first is strengthening families by promoting parental resilience and fostering social connections among parents. Encouraging strong relationships and support networks can considerably bolster a family's ability to cope with stressors. Secondly, the Supporting Optimal Child Development, where CSSP (2023) advocates for educating parents about child growth and development. By equipping parents with knowledge and resources, they

can better support their children's developmental needs, thereby enhancing their overall well-being and, thirdly, Minimizing Child Abuse and Neglect. The framework revealed the importance of fostering children's social and emotional skills.

Additionally, it requires providing practical support to families during challenging times to mitigate the risks associated with adverse childhood experiences. Investing in these critical family dynamics is essential for building resilience and nurturing the next generation, ultimately contributing to healthier communities. The approach examines the importance of a holistic understanding of family support systems in promoting positive outcomes for children and families (CSSP, 2023).

In the subsequent sections, this study will examine the distinction between resilience in response to isolated incidents and resilience in the context of chronic bullying. This analysis will examine the diverse psychological and emotional effects of these various forms of adversity and their impact on an individual's ability to cope and recover. By understanding these differences, school administrators can better appreciate the complexity of resilience and the factors that contribute to it across contexts.

Resilience Distinctive Features. Understanding the distinction between isolated incidents of bullying and ongoing bullying is crucial to addressing the issue effectively. Research by Bowes et al. (2014) reveals that children who face frequent victimization, known as chronic victims, are at considerably higher risk for academic difficulties, mental health challenges, and disruptions in their behavioral and emotional development (Li et al., 2024; Qui et al., 2024). Contributing factors such as low socioeconomic status, maltreatment, and diminished maternal warmth further exacerbate the prevalence of persistent bullying (Barker et al., 2008; Bowes et al., 2014).

Research has shown that a single name-calling incident does not constitute bullying. Only when name-calling becomes repeated does it qualify as bullying (Hazelden, 2023). Furthermore, disagreements among students that are not intended to cause harm should be recognized as conflicts, not as bullying. By understanding these nuances, schools can foster an environment that effectively supports and safeguards children against the damaging effects of bullying.

The findings are strongly complemented by a study by Haraldseid-Driftland et al. (2023), which examines emerging research on resilience as critical for individuals navigating trauma to thrive in their future lives. Importantly, the journey of recovery should not be measured solely in terms of time taken to heal from bullying experiences. Carpenter (2012) revealed that, historically, some individuals have felt exhausted and disheartened in their attempts to produce good work. Therefore, it is crucial to understand that individuals must remain determined in their efforts to foster positive emotional behavior (Li et al., 2024; Qui et al., 2024). This entails early exposure to positive emotional practices, which can instill good habits and reinforce the skills essential for lifelong growth and development.

Consequently, it is essential for individuals to understand the fundamental principles of fostering positive emotional behavior (Gkintoni et al., 2023; Lapalme et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023) and to seek suitable mental health counseling. Such proactive measures were best suited to cultivate the traits necessary for future resilience. The individual-centered model of resilience is fundamentally rooted in the concepts of ego resilience and ego control (Carpenter et al., 2012; Haraldseid-Driftland et al., 2023), highlighting the vital connection between personal development and the journey toward resilience.

Haraldseid-Driftland et al. (2023) demonstrated that learned social behavior produces clear and testable assumptions about the specific actions that can foster resilience. Their research

revealed that individuals who exemplify a resilient prototype enjoy a considerably enhanced quality of life and experience reduced psychological distress, greater emotional flexibility, and an improved ability to tolerate emotional discomfort and biases (Haraldseid-Driftland et al., 2023). This evidence examines the importance of cultivating resilience-oriented behaviors for a healthier, more fulfilling life.

Carpenter et al. (2012) research examines the necessity of fostering resilience in individuals. It posits that the journey toward general resilience assumes that complex systems inherently possess properties that considerably affect their adaptability to change. While many studies have examined the adverse impact of bullying on victims during their school years and revealed the subsequent trauma affecting mental health, there exists limited empirical evidence focusing on how adults who have endured bullying trauma can cultivate and sustain resilience. Notably, findings from Haraldseid-Driftland et al. (2023) and Carpenter et al. (2012) suggest that those with histories of bullying may experience a remarkable capacity to not only achieve resilience but also maintain it for a decade or more following their traumatic experiences.

Carpenter et al. (2012), leading figures in resilience research, have examined the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to this evolving field. The current study builds on their work by exploring key system properties that enhance the capacity to navigate change effectively. Although developing a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexities of resilience was no easy feat, this endeavor holds immense potential, particularly in identifying traits that knowingly enhance the likelihood of achieving resilience.

In order to conduct this research, this study will utilize the SCOPUS online database (scopus.com), which provides a comprehensive representation of scholarly contributions. A Boolean search strategy was employed to locate all relevant publications discussing resilience,

specifically those featuring the terms "adversity and resilience" or "resilience open access" in their titles, abstracts, or keywords. While committed to a thorough review, no limitations were placed on publication dates, and the focus will strictly be on journal articles. Although grey literature often poses challenges, its inclusion in this review was warranted due to the valuable insights it provides into resilience while ensuring the reliability of the sources.

The research conducted by Haraldseid-Driftland et al. (2023) revealed the critical principles of resilience, which play a vital role in fostering recovery from mental health challenges throughout the year. By embracing these principles, schools can considerably enhance recovery for themselves and for others who may be vulnerable to mental health issues. According to the Mental Health Training and Technical Assistance Center (MHTTC, 2023), resilience and recovery are driven by hope and grounded in respect. They are inherently family- and person-centered, allowing for multiple pathways to healing, affirming community involvement, and thriving through collaboration, thereby taking a holistic approach.

Furthermore, resilience and recovery are greatly strengthened through the support of peers and allies, reinforcing the notion that they are also family- and community-driven. They flourish within nurturing relationships and social networks while addressing trauma and harnessing the strengths and responsibilities of individuals, families, and communities (Haraldseid-Driftland et al., 2023; MHTTC, 2023). Moreover, Schluter and Schoon (2015) have demonstrated that human perspectives are integral to the concept of resilience. This perspective affirms that social-ecological systems operate as complex adaptive systems that adapt through past experiences and self-organization, exhibiting emergent and nonlinear behaviors. Recognizing these interconnections will pave the way for more effective recovery strategies that empower and uplift all individuals involved.

Resilience plays a vital role in the interconnectedness of social systems, as demonstrated by the findings of Haraldseid-Driftland et al. (2023), which support Schluter and Schoon's (2015) insights into the challenges of maintaining human well-being amidst continuous change. As our society undergoes rapid transformations, innovative approaches to resilience are becoming increasingly important. The resilience framework provides a comprehensive lens for understanding, analyzing, and managing the changes individuals experience in their lives.

While health, nutrition, and security are fundamental human needs, the spiritual and cultural fulfillment derived from our relationships and interactions is equally crucial. These dimensions nurture resilience and enhance sustainability. According to Carpenter et al. (2012), recognizing the challenges that necessitate resilience is essential for progress. Furthermore, adaptive capacity emerges as a key principle in enhancing resilience, particularly within social systems. This capacity is not just a concept but a distinguishing feature that facilitates ongoing adaptation, ensuring human well-being despite inevitable changes. By building the ability to withstand shocks and respond effectively to transformations, schools can create a more resilient society capable of thriving in the face of uncertainty.

Strengths and Limitations of Resilience. The study by Lin et al. (2022) demonstrates considerable strength in using standardized, validated measures to summarize depressive symptoms. By examining resilience levels (Brownlee, 2013; Goodman et al., 2017; Taylor and Conger, 2017), various forms of bullying victimization, and the risk of depression, the research sheds light on critical connections. However, it faces a considerable limitation due to the absence of clear conceptualization, consistency, and a unified methodology for applying resilience measures. This gap has impeded the potential of adolescent resilience research, which often

focuses narrowly on resilience in the context of depression instead of embracing the broader implications of resilience itself.

Resilience plays a crucial role in protecting individuals from depression, influenced by essential factors like self-esteem, social support, and emotional intelligence. This study aims to explore the dynamics of individual behavior that contribute to achieving and sustaining resilience following traumatic experiences, such as chronic verbal bullying during adolescence (Carpenter et al., 2012; Haraldseid-Driftland et al., 2023; Schluter & Schoon, 2015). Understanding these elements can empower us to foster resilience and improve mental health outcomes for those affected.

In the following sections, this study will examine the various sources of resilience that can emerge after experiencing bullying. These sources may include personal attributes, social support systems, and coping strategies individuals utilize to recover and thrive despite adversity. Additionally, this study will investigate the roles of community and educational environments in promoting resilience among individuals affected by bullying. By emphasizing these factors, schools can gain a deeper understanding of the pathways to recovery and the potential for personal growth and empowerment that can arise from such challenging experiences.

Sources of Resilience. The American Psychological Association (APA, 2014) revealed that resilience is fundamentally “the process of adapting in the face of threat, trauma, considerable stress, adversity, and tragedy.” Peterson (2021) investigates resilience as a critical psychological construct that maintains mental toughness. This vital personality trait enables individuals to recover from challenging circumstances, regardless of the severity of the setback. This perspective revealed the importance of focusing on how individuals manage their experiences.

Cui and Xie (2022) revealed that bullying victimization is closely linked to serious consequences such as anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, and other mental health challenges. Peterson (2021) further argues that the mental resilience developed by victims of bullying comes from harnessing one's inner strength, which is essential for cultivating resilience and often requires reaching out for support. Moreover, Liao et al. (2023) demonstrated an impressive ability to recover swiftly from traumatic external events (APA, 2014; Cui & Xie, 2022; Peterson, 2021). Embracing these insights can considerably enhance our understanding of resilience and its role in overcoming adversity.

The Peterson (2021) study revealed crucial sources of resilience that empower individuals to embody optimism, self-control, emotional awareness, social support, and self-belief. This research examines the transformative power of developing resilience through stressful experiences, demonstrating that it can substantially improve one's life. In a similar study, Aci and Kutlu (2022) argue that the importance of resolving challenges lies in actively seeking solutions and acquiring new knowledge and skills that drive professional growth. Resilience correlates with positive outcomes, decreases depressive symptoms, enhances overall well-being, and bolsters immunity. Liu and Zhu (2022) examined motivational beliefs, shedding light on their role in cultivating strong resilience. Meanwhile, Malgonde et al. (2023) investigated the origins of resilience in psychology and medical science, assessing the literature that informs strategies for improving well-being.

Understanding resilience involves recognizing the protective factors outlined by Liu and Zhu (2022) and Aci and Kutlu (2022), which serve as crucial benchmarks for measuring resilience. Achieving considerable milestones despite adversity demonstrates the potential for positive adaptation in the face of risk or stress (Aci et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2022; Malgonde et al.,

2023; Moore et al., 2017). Positive psychology strongly suggests that confronting and coping with stress can lead to symptom relief and fundamentally alter long-term outcomes by fostering resilience, as Moore and Woodcock (2017) revealed.

The American Psychological Association (APA, 2014) proposes a multifaceted approach encompassing several essential strategies to enhance resilience. A primary focus is prioritizing mental and physical self-care to improve overall well-being. Research has demonstrated that resilience can be enhanced by adopting a proactive approach to directly confront challenges. This involves embracing acceptance rather than yielding to resistance, alongside cultivating and validating supportive relationships that provide emotional support and uplift.

Additionally, enhancing resilience includes setting and pursuing realistic goals that foster a sense of progress. Individuals are encouraged to seize opportunities for self-discovery while navigating through adversity. A pivotal aspect of this process is the willingness to extend assistance to others in need, as well as the practice of self-regulation through effective emotion regulation. This is a cornerstone of dialectical behavior therapy, which enables individuals to manage their emotions in a constructive manner (APA, 2014).

Harnessing personal strengths and aligning actions with core values empowers individuals to achieve and maintain mental agility. This capacity allows viewing circumstances through diverse perspectives, facilitating a richer understanding of experiences (APA, 2014; Moore et al., 2017). In the subsequent section, this study will examine the resilience risk factors following bullying experiences; it is crucial to understand the multifaceted nature of resilience itself. Resilience refers to the ability to withstand adversity and emerge from difficult experiences with a sense of strength and adaptability.

Resilience Risk Factors. Research conducted by Rambod et al. (2023) examines resilience as a complex and multidimensional construct heavily influenced by various risk and protective factors within our communities. Specifically, low socioeconomic status and limited resources have been shown to adversely affect the well-being of underserved populations. Moreover, the College for Behavioral Health Leadership indicates resilience as a critical component of mental health (CBHL, 2023). Individuals facing substance use disorders frequently experience compromised mental health, particularly during the formative adolescent years when various mental health disorders typically manifest. Thus, promoting resilience is essential, as it depends on the interplay of family, individual, and community factors. A concerted effort to strengthen these elements can enhance mental health outcomes and foster thriving communities. Furthermore, family dynamics, including domestic violence, neglect, abuse, poor parental supervision, and inadequate child-rearing practices, severely impact a child's resilience. Addressing these challenges is crucial for fostering resilience and promoting better mental health outcomes for future generations.

Rambod et al. (2023) research indicates that several key factors can influence an individual's resilience in the aftermath of bullying, which include a social support network, coping strategies that encompass coping mechanisms and problem-solving, self-efficacy in which the victims are empowered to navigate the challenges and recovery from bullying experiences more effectively and cultural context where the culture shapes the perception and background of the victims' resilience and recovery from bullying.

Factors such as negative emotions, poor self-control, and a desire for immediate gratification can considerably undermine resilience. According to Herrman et al. (2011), these elements may lead to defensive coping behaviors, which hinder personal growth and adaptive

responses. In this context, risk factors are stressors or events that can cause considerable distress and limit an individual's potential. Notable examples include family dysfunction, trauma, child abuse, poverty, and substance abuse (Herrman et al., 2011; Rambod et al., 2023).

The following section was an exploration of resilience in the context of bullying, which is a critical area of study, as it examines the protective factors that enable individuals, particularly adolescents, to cope with and recover from the harmful effects of bullying. In the following sections, an investigation was conducted into the various protective resilience factors that can mitigate the negative impact of bullying experiences. These factors may include supportive relationships, adaptive coping strategies, self-esteem, and personal agency. Understanding these elements is essential for developing interventions and support systems that foster resilience in victims of bullying, ultimately promoting their psychological well-being and social functioning.

Resilience Protective Factors. The resilience protective factor revealed by Gheisari et al. (2023) sheds light on essential variables and attributes that can considerably enhance, balance, or transform an individual's responses in high-risk situations. As Zhu et al. (2023) indicated, this research suggests that such factors are closely linked to mitigating adverse outcomes. Gheisari et al. (2023) explored vital protective elements and psychological resilience stemming from various adversities, which include potentially traumatic events, stressors, misfortunes, complex conditions, and other formidable experiences. According to the American Psychological Association (2014), resilience is described as “the process of effective adaptation when faced with trauma, adversity, threats, tragedy, or substantial stressors such as relationship challenges, financial troubles, and work-life conflicts.”

In a compelling examination of protective resilience factors, Walton and Lee (2023) categorize these elements into several key areas, underscoring their importance in fostering

resilience among individuals. Their research elucidates that protective resilience encompasses optimism and determination, revealing the importance of social support systems, including the invaluable backing of religious communities, family members, and friends.

Gheisari et al.'s 2023 study investigated several critical personal attributes of resilient individuals, including unwavering determination, optimism, self-empowerment, self-awareness, and self-advocacy. Furthermore, motivational influences, such as the commitment to care for loved ones and the necessity of allowing adequate time for decision-making, are integral to resilience. Effective management of panic and maintaining emotional stability during challenging circumstances also considerably enhances resilience. Additionally, family support is recognized as an essential resource for individuals navigating emotional, psychological, and physical challenges (Gheisari et al., 2023; Walton et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2023).

Moreover, Walton and Lee (2023) investigated the multifaceted nature of protective resilience factors and psychological dimensions. These resilient protective factors encompassing physical, spiritual, social, economic, and personal dimensions in adults demonstrate an exceptional capacity to recover from adverse experiences, often testing their limits yet refraining from succumbing to pressure. This resilience enables them to return to a state akin to their pre-trauma condition, revealing their inherent strength and adaptability. Integrating these resilience factors is vital for fostering a thriving and supportive community that collectively confronts and overcomes adversity (Walton and Lee, 2023; Zhu et al., 2023).

Resilience is not a static trait but a dynamic process through which individuals cultivate positive attitudes and emotions. This process reflects an intricate interplay between psychological, biological, and environmental factors that empower people to develop, maintain, or reclaim their mental health in the face of bullying or other adversities (Walton et al., 2023).

Furthermore, resilience includes both barriers and facilitators, and it's evident that resilient individuals tackle their challenges head-on, viewing complex tasks as opportunities for growth rather than threats to be avoided. Societal protective factors, particularly robust social support, enhance adjustment to traumatic experiences (Walton & Lee, 2023). In the following sections, this study will examine the positive aspects of resilience following experiences with bullying. Resilience refers to the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties and adapt well to adversity. This analysis aims to reveal how individuals who have been bullied can exhibit remarkable strength and growth, turning negative experiences into opportunities for personal development.

Positive Effects of Resilience. The resilience study conducted by Malgonde et al. (2023) compellingly revealed that the transformative effects of mental endurance, self-compassion, and positive psychotherapy stem from key attributes, including optimism, hope, and self-efficacy. Researchers Gheisari et al. (2023) found that victims who were equipped with effective coping strategies and protective factors experienced substantial stress prevention and management. This examines the importance of these elements in fostering resilience and enhancing well-being. Research indicates resilient individuals often demonstrate enhanced coping strategies, increased emotional intelligence, and a stronger sense of self-efficacy. They are better equipped to handle stress and interpersonal conflicts, which can lead to improved mental health outcomes. Furthermore, resilience can foster empathy and compassion, leading to positive social relationships and supportive networks.

Additionally, overcoming bullying can inspire a sense of purpose and advocacy, where survivors may become champions for others who face similar challenges. This transformation can have a profound impact on communities as resilient individuals work towards creating safer and more inclusive environments. By focusing on the positive outcomes of resilience after

bullying, school administrators can better understand the potential for recovery and growth in the aftermath of adverse experiences. This understanding underscores the importance of supportive interventions that foster this resilience.

In order to truly elevate the psychological well-being of victims, it was essential to consciously integrate specific coping mechanisms that they have identified as effective (Aci et al., 2021; Gheisari et al., 2023; Malgonde et al., 2023). Protective factors, such as strong social support, family connections, and practical coping skills, can lead to thriving outcomes, including enhanced self-worth and a sense of competence, as identified by Hogan (2020).

Moreover, positive psychology is integral in empowering individuals and cultivating collective intelligence for sustainable well-being. Yet, Walton et al. (2023) shed light on considerable challenges that obstruct this progress, including low self-esteem, perfectionism, fear, and the chronic need to please others.

Navigating human systems is inherently complex, with numerous levels of interaction at play. Hogan (2020) argued that overcoming specific challenges can be particularly daunting for victims due to their strong emotional responses. This often leads to a lack of critical thinking and collaboration, ultimately increasing cycles of anxiety, sadness, and feelings of shame and guilt, which hinder sustainable mental well-being (Hogan, 2020; Wade et al., 2023; Walton et al., 2023). Addressing these barriers is essential for promoting lasting psychological resilience and well-being.

The study on resilience conducted by Malgonde et al. (2023) reveals compelling benefits, including optimism, hope, and self-efficacy, which play a vital role in fostering mental endurance, self-compassion, and positive psychotherapy. Furthermore, findings from Gheisari et al. (2023) demonstrate that victims who adopt effective coping strategies and protective factors

can considerably enhance their stress prevention and management capabilities. This empowerment is a key component of their resilience and overall recovery.

In order to truly elevate the psychological well-being of victims, it is essential to incorporate targeted coping mechanisms with greater intention. Many victims have indicated that these practices are invaluable tools in their mental health improvement journey (Aci et al., 2021; Gheisari et al., 2023; Malgonde et al., 2023). Investing in these strategies can lead to profound transformative effects in their lives.

Protective factors such as robust family connections, supportive friendships, and effective coping mechanisms considerably enhance individual resilience. These components contribute to positive outcomes, including increased self-worth and a heightened sense of competence, as explored by Hogan (2020). Furthermore, positive psychology is integral to fostering empowerment and collective intelligence, which are vital for achieving sustained well-being. Nevertheless, Walton et al. (2023) identified several barriers that impede the efficacy of positive psychology interventions. These barriers encompass the need for external validation, low self-esteem, difficulties with anger management, a strong desire for control, pervasive fear, and perfectionism.

The complexity of human systems lies in the interplay of various levels, making true understanding a challenge. Hogan (2020) revealed that victims often face considerable barriers in overcoming their struggles, limiting their capacity for critical thought and collaboration. Consequently, those who are bullied may experience increased anxiety or sadness, reinforcing cycles of shame and guilt that ultimately jeopardize their pursuit of sustainable well-being (Hogan, 2020; Wade et al., 2023; Walton et al., 2023). To create a healthier environment, we must address these challenges and empower individuals to break free from these limiting cycles.

The collective intelligence that fosters individual well-being is pivotal for empowerment and aligns with the foundational principles of positive psychology research, as explored by Zhang et al. (2022). Their findings advocate integrating methodologies that tackle urgent issues critical to sustaining well-being.

Additionally, a vital component in crafting a robust mental model of resilience involves recognizing the dynamics of family life. The study by Soimah et al. (2019) revealed the importance of greater flexibility in achieving family objectives. This flexibility can be realized by diminishing negative distractions, as identified by Sema (2021), who suggests maintaining a task list to prioritize responsibilities. For example, addressing work tasks during lunch breaks can free up time in the evening, allowing you to return home early and unwind.

Implementing these strategies helps mitigate the resurfacing of negative emotions caused by family and work pressures and is essential for maintaining resilience. The research revealed the need to take proactive steps to overcome challenges for a healthier, more balanced life, as supported by Zhang et al. (2022) and others.

Moore's (2019) study powerfully examines the pervasive challenges of poverty, substance abuse, and community insecurities. To overcome these hurdles in adulthood, motivation to take control of one's actions is essential, as Zhang et al. (2022) revealed. This transformation can occur by consciously shaping one's mindset and managing the surrounding environment, all while pursuing personal goals that foster positive relationships and integrate interpersonal aspirations, ultimately enhancing resilience. Even with a robust sense of self-efficacy, individuals can draw on their inner strengths to enhance their psychological well-being (Hogan, 2020). Hogan's (2020) findings revealed that, despite adverse home conditions,

individuals can initiate positive change by drawing on intrinsic values. This resilience enables them to bounce back after setbacks and persevere through life's trials.

Positive psychology broadens our understanding of human potential, focusing on individuals' strengths and advocating for advanced cognitive strategies essential for sustainable well-being. School administrators can foster a more supportive and thriving community by recognizing the importance of cognitive-emotional integration alongside cultural individualism and shared empowerment (Hogan, 2020; Zhang et al., 2022). The research conducted by Roberts et al. (2002) compellingly revealed several protective factors that can transform the lives of victims, allowing them to achieve remarkable improvements in mental health through comprehensive and intensive therapeutic strategies. Ocampo and Bryant-Davis (2006) further revealed this point by examining communities where individuals face chronic struggles with comorbid mental disorders, including post-traumatic stress disorder, a history of abuse, depression, and extensive criminal behavior.

This study focuses on resilience theory, emphasizing self-reliance and the effective integration of psychological and social changes, as noted by Henley-Shepard et al. (2015). Essential components, such as a positive temperament, proactive transition planning, a nurturing home environment, supportive adult relationships, enhanced social skills, and self-efficacy, as discussed by Zullo (2009), are crucial to these transformations. Cultivating an internal locus of control is also vital for achieving resilience.

However, the exploration of these positive constructs must continue. Georgoulas-Sherry (2022) effectively harnesses resilience theory to investigate how individuals can successfully bounce back and adapt in the face of adversity. Furthermore, the research on resilience by Muller et al. (2014) offers invaluable insights into recovery from complex, chronic issues (Georgoulas-

Sherry, 2022; Muller et al., 2014; Roberts et al., 2002). Focusing on these areas can considerably advance our understanding of resilience and recovery.

The research conducted by Moore and Woodcock (2017) compellingly demonstrates that positive psychology can transform long-term outcomes for individuals seeking relief from life's challenges. A crucial factor for success in adulthood lies in actively nurturing a child's strengths throughout their developmental journey. This proactive support builds resilience and strength, while neglect can lead to considerable vulnerabilities in a young person's growth.

Skinner et al. (2013) further examined this notion by affirming that positive motivation, such as high self-efficacy and a sense of belonging in school, is a decisive protective factor. The findings from Gheisari et al. (2023) reinforce this by revealing that these elements are vital for promoting resilience, especially in the face of stressful experiences. By focusing on these key aspects (Gheisari et al., 2023; Moore et al., 2017; Skinner et al., 2013; Yeager et al., 2012), administrators can better equip individuals to thrive and overcome adversity.

Recent research has revealed the need for innovative alternatives to conventional resilience strategies in the context of anti-bullying practices. A study by Wade et al. (2023) demonstrated the importance of resilience as a positive psychological factor, albeit one that can be complex due to its lack of a solid theoretical foundation. However, motivational beliefs emerge as a promising avenue for fostering resilience in adults.

Wade et al. (2023) conducted a study on the efficacy of counseling interventions utilizing symptom-based approaches to reduce stress and identify distinct profiles associated with resilient personalities. These factors enhance resilience and support patients throughout the clinical rehabilitation process. A considerable relationship exists between psychological flexibility and the maintenance of resilience. Furthermore, it is essential to address personalized cognitive

distortions, such as internalizing unwarranted blame (Moore, 2019; Wade et al., 2023). In the subsequent section, this study will explore resilience within the framework of positive psychology, particularly concerning the enduring effects of bullying on individuals. Research in this domain frequently reveals individuals' capacity to recover from adversity, including the ramifications of bullying.

Positive Psychological Effects of Being Resilient. Moore (2019) conducted a study on positive psychology that focuses on strengths and factors contributing to human flourishing, often revealing the role of resilience in overcoming negative experiences. In the aftermath of bullying, individuals may employ various resilience strategies that facilitate recovery and promote well-being. Moore (2019) complimented Schulters et al. (2015) on their positive psychology approach, which focuses on strengths and factors contributing to human flourishing, often revealing the role of resilience in overcoming negative experiences. In the aftermath of bullying, individuals may employ various resilience strategies that facilitate recovery and promote well-being. Key concepts in resilience research include social support, optimism, self-efficacy, and adaptive coping strategies.

Schulters et al. (2015) investigated the possibility that individuals who can draw upon supportive relationships often experience better psychological outcomes than those who are isolated. Moreover, cultivating a growth mindset that emphasizes learning from experiences has been shown to considerably mitigate the negative impacts of bullying. It was further demonstrated that resilience is frequently explored in specific interventions designed to cultivate psychological strength and well-being following bullying, including cognitive-behavioral methods and mindfulness practices. These interventions aim to equip individuals with the essential tools to enhance their resilience and thrive in the face of adversity.

Furthermore, analyzing resilience through the lens of positive psychology after experiencing bullying reveals the potential for recovery and personal growth, underscoring the importance of fostering these qualities in individuals affected by such experiences. The study by Schuler et al. (2015) revealed that positive emotions are integral to promoting adaptable behaviors and thoughts, thereby establishing a strong link between happiness and resilience within the field of positive psychology. Additionally, their research investigates strategies for enhancing positive emotions and maintaining their critical role in fostering emotional well-being. Positive feelings serve as a powerful buffer against the detrimental effects of negative emotions on self-efficacy, notably contributing to ego resilience and personal growth. This examines the intertwined relationship between psychological well-being, resilience, and physical health (Aci et al., 2020; Schuler et al., 2015). The American Psychological Association (2014) defines resilience as "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity." Individuals who cultivate positive emotions frequently exhibit considerable resilience, enabling them to overcome personal challenges and diverse socioeconomic circumstances. The robust relationship between positive emotions and resilience indicates that nurturing such feelings is essential for enhancing resilience and effectively managing life's challenges.

Emotional resilience is essential for employing effective coping mechanisms, as revealed by Cui and Xie (2022), while also underscoring the transformative power of joyful interactions with others. This emotional energy is crucial in helping an individual recover from adversity. Research by Skinner et al. (2013) reveals that positive motivational resilience can considerably contribute to protection and recovery for victims facing challenges. Moreover, Zhang et al. (2022) elucidate how cultivating positive emotions, identified by Hinduja and Patchin (2017), can be achieved through strategies like relaxation meditation, fostering a joyful environment,

adopting an optimistic mindset, refraining from social comparisons, and engaging in careful mental preparation before embarking on new endeavors (Hinduja et al., 2017; Skinner et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2022). The forthcoming section will explore the resilience recovery process after trauma in adults, demonstrating that recovery is not just possible but achievable.

Resilience Recovery Process. Bonanno et al. (2011) define resilience as the ability to successfully adapt to challenging life experiences, involving mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility. This adaptability is critical for effectively responding to both external and internal demands. Resilience can be cultivated and developed through various targeted strategies and practices. The resiliency recovery process insights, as presented by Aci et al. (2021), indicate that these approaches have demonstrated effectiveness in fostering resilience through the development of emotional intelligence. This involves enhancing one's ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions, while also responding appropriately to the emotions of others.

Furthermore, establishing a supportive social network, characterized by a strong network of supportive relationships, can provide individuals with essential emotional and practical support. Engaging with peers, family, and community resources can also buffer against stress and enhance resilience. In addition, adopting a growth mindset, which involves viewing challenges as opportunities for learning and personal development, fosters resilience. Furthermore, practicing self-compassion, which consists of showing kindness and understanding toward oneself, particularly during times of distress, contributes to emotional well-being and enhances the ability to cope with challenges.

Prioritizing physical activity and self-care through physical and mental well-being is essential. Ensuring adequate sleep, maintaining healthy nutrition, and practicing relaxation

techniques can substantially impact resilience. Regular physical activity is also associated with improved mood and stress management techniques. Consulting with mental health professionals can provide individuals with valuable skills and strategies to develop resilience. These may include cognitive-behavioral techniques, mindfulness practices, and other therapeutic interventions that promote a positive outlook and effective coping mechanisms. By integrating these strategies into daily life, individuals can strengthen their resilience and enhance their capacity to navigate life's challenges effectively (Aci et al., 2021; Bonanno et al., 2011).

Aci and Kutlu (2021) found that the resilience recovery process plays a considerable role in shaping both positive and negative developmental outcomes. Throughout history, resilience has been essential in the context of human recovery. Moore and Woodcock (2017) further this understanding by characterizing resilience as the capacity to achieve positive outcomes and developmental milestones in the aftermath of substantial adversity, a concept that Aci and Kutlu (2021) reinforce, highlighting the interaction between elevated stress levels and the balance of risk and protective factors as critical in forming resilience.

Keye and Pidgeon (2013) explored the intricate relationship between bullying and the development of resilience among individuals who have successfully navigated their trauma as former victims. Additionally, Wade et al. (2023) provide evidence that enhancing social skills in victims can effectively reduce the incidence of bullying. Furthermore, as revealed by Liu et al. (2022), those identified as possessing strong resilience demonstrate heightened mental fortitude, which correlates with fewer bullying experiences and a lower tendency to engage in aggressive behaviors. Cultivating resilience, therefore, emerges as a vital strategy for fostering positive developmental trajectories in individuals facing adversity.

Moreover, as indicated by Moore and Woodcock (2017), victims who openly share their traumatic experiences, whether with family members or peers, can achieve better emotional regulation. This highlights the indispensable role of social support in fostering resilience, as it offers vital reassurance and encouragement to individuals facing challenges (Liu et al., 2022; Moore & Woodcock, 2017; Wade et al., 2023). Building a supportive network can empower individuals, encouraging and facilitating their recovery journey.

Moreover, certain resilience factors considerably predict an individual's negative emotions, such as shame, anxiety, guilt, and sadness, as illustrated by Hogan (2020). Luthar et al. (2000) extensively researched these vulnerability risk factors and revealed their importance. Additionally, when a person's role becomes excessively demanding, it can push them beyond their resource capacity, leading to feelings of failure, heightened negative emotions, exhaustion, frustration, and increased stress levels. These issues are often intertwined with conflicts at home or in the workplace, which can trigger a cascade of detrimental outcomes, including poor physical health, escalating depression, diminished life satisfaction, higher alcohol consumption, reduced work performance, and difficulties in managing low-income households (Hogan, 2020; Luthar et al., 2000).

In the subsequent sections that follow, the concept of resilience in the face of adversity were examined. This exploration will involve a multidisciplinary approach, integrating psychological, sociological, and environmental perspectives to understand how individuals and communities navigate challenges. Resilience is not merely a response to stress or trauma; it encompasses a dynamic process of adaptation and growth. I analyze case studies and theoretical frameworks to identify the factors that contribute to resilience and the practical implications for

fostering it across contexts. Through this scholarly investigation, I hope to contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding the importance of resilience in contemporary society.

Two Dimensions of Resiliency. Luthar et al. (2018) conducted important research that revealed the intricate relationship among adversity, resilience, and positive adaptation. These elements are critical to understanding how individuals can achieve positive outcomes, even in the face of considerable trauma or hardship (Brody et al., 2017; Bonanno et al., 2014; Clemente et al., 2016; Wright and Masten, 2014; Wright et al., 2013). Resilience can be defined as the remarkable ability to bounce back from challenging experiences and adapt positively to life's difficulties.

Importantly, resilience consists of two distinct dimensions: positive adaptation and the ability to cope with adversity. This duality leads to an indirect inference of resilience based on evidence from these constructs. Additionally, it provides a framework for understanding ego resiliency, the effectiveness of protective factors (Afifi et al., 2011; Karairmak, 2006; Werner, 2016), and the varied vulnerabilities faced by at-risk populations. High-risk conditions considerably increase the likelihood of maladjustment in key life domains.

In considering the devastating effects of community violence (Ahmed et al., 2004; Luthar and Goldstein, 2015; O'Donnell et al., 2002) and maternal depression (Brennan et al., 2015; Pargas et al., 2010; Riley, 2016). These situations place individuals, especially children, at considerable risk. Data suggests that those exposed to such adversities are more prone to mental health disorders, come from families with low income and education levels, and live in disorganized neighborhoods. Crucially, children facing these challenges show considerably greater maladjustment levels than their peers who are not subjected to similar environments

(Ribeiro et al., 2017; Scott et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2016). Understanding these dynamics is essential for fostering resilience and promoting positive adaptation in vulnerable populations.

Understanding the qualities and attributes associated with positive adaptation is crucial, as they represent a core element of resilience (Bonanno, 2012; Luthar et al., 2007; Tucker-Sixbey, 2005). Research has examined the risks associated with behaviorally exhibited social competence (Alvord et al., 2014), particularly in secure behaviors within healthy relationships (Ewart and Jorgensen, 2002; Jaureguizar et al., 2018). Studies exploring individuals who have endured major traumas (Kelley et al., 2013; Mancini et al., 2018; Pfefferbaum et al., 2017) have redefined risk evasion as a lack of severe psychopathology rather than as a standard of excellence in daily functioning. The concept of positive adaptation is not fixed; it varies over time, highlighting a fundamental aspect of resilience and revealing individuals' potential to recover from past dysfunction. Notably, a long-term prospective study has illuminated a considerable turning point in adulthood, revealing transformative shifts from negative adjustment patterns to positive, healthy trajectories (Kelley et al., 2013; Luthar et al., 2018; Mancini et al., 2018).

The 2014 study by Arup revealed the importance of ego-resilience, a concept explored by Block (1993) and Park and Lee (2011), which embodies traits such as character strength, resourcefulness, flexibility in facing challenges, and demonstrable competence. Ego-resilience plays a considerable role in fostering positive adaptations, particularly in the context of overcoming stress. It is essential to recognize that ego resiliency can be nurtured through strategies that alleviate the negative impacts of stressful life events, underscoring the notion that competence is a fundamental aspect of resilience (Block, 1993; Park & Lee, 2011). However, it's critical to understand that specific attributes linked to resilience can either enhance or hinder

specific behaviors and considerably impact a system's ability to cope with stressors (Arup, 2014). From extensive research, it is evident that both ego-resiliency and competence are crucial to achieving resilience, while communities play a pivotal role in cultivating this resilience (Arup, 2014; Block, 1993; Park & Lee, 2011).

Luthar et al. (2018) elucidate the critical distinctions between resilience and competence, affirming that resilience fundamentally acknowledges the presence of risk. The authors identify four key attributes that differentiate these concepts. First, resilience encompasses both positive and negative adjustment indicators, such as health metrics and the absence of psychological disorders. In contrast, competence is narrowly focused on the exhibition of positively charged traits alone (Arup, 2014). Second, the adaptation process associated with resilience is evaluated through emotional and behavioral indicators, in contrast to competence, which generally relies on observable behaviors. Third, resilience is conceptualized as a holistic construct that integrates various aspects of competence in conjunction with risk exposure (Arup, 2014; Block, 1993; Luthar et al., 2018; Park & Lee, 2011). This nuanced understanding of resilience is pivotal, as it can empower communities by highlighting their essential role in fostering both individual and collective resilience. The subsequent section will explore the key concepts of self-efficacy and resilience in adults, aiming to demonstrate how self-efficacy can enhance resilience.

Self-efficacy can enhance Resilience. French (2013) revealed that self-efficacy is a fundamental concept in health psychology. Tracing its origins to Bandura's work in 1977, self-efficacy evolved from social learning theory to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977; French, 2013; Mensah et al., 2023). Adebusuyi and Kolade (2022) illustrated a crucial connection between self-efficacy and personal empowerment, revealing how it profoundly influences our behaviors, thoughts, and self-image. Understanding self-efficacy is crucial, as it provides insight

into the motivations and attitudes that drive us, empowering individuals and enhancing their self-perception.

On the contrary, a weakened sense of self-efficacy can lead to feelings of pessimism, depression, helplessness, stress, and anxiety. The influence of self-efficacy is undeniable; it can either stifle or ignite motivation. For instance, a lack of hope can darken one's outlook, while higher self-efficacy can invigorate motivation and foster resilience (Adebusuyi et al., 2022; Bandura, 1977). Embracing and enhancing self-efficacy can transform lives, turning obstacles into opportunities for growth. Bandura (1997), a seminal author pivotal in psychology, examined self-efficacy as "beliefs about whether one can produce certain actions." This powerful idea has considerably influenced health-related behaviors. Meanwhile, self-concept and perception refer to how individuals perceive their skills and abilities in completing various tasks (Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 1997).

In a related study, French (2013) examined the transformative power of self-efficacy, a crucial concept in health psychology. Self-efficacy fosters motivation and encourages individuals to persist in the face of challenges, even when they encounter obstacles and setbacks. While it can enhance positive self-belief, Bandura (1997) pointed out that several factors shape this belief, including emotional responses to tasks, past successes, the influence of effective role models, and social support.

Although self-concept and self-efficacy are closely related due to their shared focus on perceived competence, they represent distinct perspectives. Self-concept primarily predicts outcomes, while self-efficacy reveals cognitive processes underlying these predictions. Self-efficacy influences how individuals think about and interpret information, directly affecting their

behaviors. Both constructs are vital for understanding perceived competence and can be utilized to promote success (Bandura, 1997; Bong et al., 2003; French, 2013).

A pivotal study by French (2013) examines the critical link between causation and the levels of physical activity in adults, maintaining the vital role of self-efficacy in driving strength and consistency in relationship behaviors. When individuals enhance their self-efficacy, they inevitably experience a corresponding increase in their physical activity levels. In this context, self-efficacy represents one's belief in their capability to engage in and sustain physical activity, a belief that considerably influences their actual behaviors.

Moreover, research by Keye and Pidgeon (2013) introduces compelling resilience theory. This framework illustrates the psychological strength necessary for navigating life's inevitable changes through reintegration and the law of disruption (Luthans, 2002). According to this theory, individuals develop coping mechanisms in response to distressing events, which enable them to integrate all aspects of their lives for positive outcomes, even amidst painful disruptions.

Furthermore, the investigation conducted by Meydanlioglu and Ergun (2013) reveals that the patterns of physical activity established in childhood persist in adulthood. This continuity is crucial, as physical activity has been proven to be a valuable strategy for enhancing both mental and physical health. Therefore, nurturing self-efficacy and resilience from a young age can lead to a lifetime of healthier, more fulfilling lives (Keye & Pidgeon, 2013; Meydanlioglu & Ergun, 2013).

Self-efficacy in physical activity is a powerful driver of health improvement, as Keye and Pidgeo (2013) revealed. Their research examines the considerable role of self-efficacy in various wellness dimensions—psychological, intellectual, spiritual, physical, and emotional—especially within a comprehensive wellness walking program (Meydanlioglu and Ergun, 2013). Moreover,

Zullkosky (2009) explored how personal belief systems are shaped by individual motivation, thoughts, and feelings, all of which contribute to the development of self-efficacy.

Meydanlioglu and Ergun (2013) further illustrate that witnessing others succeed in their tasks can instill a sense of empowerment in individuals. Positive feedback from overcoming challenges reinforces this feeling and can influence further success. As Bandura (1989) explains, self-efficacy beliefs are crucial in determining an individual's motivation levels, affecting the amount of effort they are willing to invest and their resilience in the face of setbacks. Ultimately, self-efficacy is fundamental in shaping how adults respond to challenges, making it a vital component of their journey toward improved health and wellness (Bandura, 1989; Meydanlioglu & Ergun, 2013; Zullkosky, 2009).

In the following section, an investigation of social cognitive competence and resilience is made, which are two interrelated constructs central to understanding human behavior and psychological well-being. Social cognitive competence is the ability to process social information and navigate complex social environments effectively. This includes skills such as social perception, empathy, and the capacity for social problem-solving, as well as investigating the more profound meanings, interrelationships, and implications of these constructs for personal development and social interaction.

Social Cognitive Competence and Resilience. In their research, Adebusuyi et al. (2022) investigated the critical relationship between social cognitive competence and self-efficacy, highlighting their connections to the foundational aspects of social cognitive theory. Resilience is the ability to adapt positively in the face of trauma or considerable stress. It involves the interplay between individual traits and environmental factors contributing to a person's capacity to bounce back from challenges. One can explore how social cognitive

competence enhances resilience by examining these concepts in detail. For instance, individuals with high social awareness and strong interpersonal skills may find it easier to seek support networks during difficult times, bolstering their resilience (Alvord, 2014; Xi et al., 2011).

Furthermore, resilience can foster social cognitive competence by enabling individuals to approach social interactions with greater confidence and adaptability. Research has revealed various factors that contribute to social cognitive competence and resilience, including upbringing, educational experiences, and exposure to diverse social environments. Understanding the dynamics between these constructs can provide valuable insights for developing interventions to enhance individual and community well-being (Alvord, 2014; Henry et al., 2023; Xi et al., 2011).

Social cognitive theory considerably impacts mood, emotion, and the concept of interchangeability, with self-efficacy playing a pivotal role in shaping our thoughts and motivations for action (Adebusuyi et al., 2022; Alvord, 2014; Henry et al., 2023; Xi et al., 2011; Yin et al., 2022). In the study of self-efficacy theory, Albert Bandura (1997) identifies four pivotal sources contributing to the development of self-efficacy beliefs. Firstly, in support of the Physiological and Affective States, which serve as vital somatic indicators, enabling individuals to evaluate their vulnerability, emotional well-being, and overall capabilities. Bandura (1997) noted that the following dimension revealed the necessity for empirical research to elucidate the mechanisms through which self-efficacy beliefs are cultivated and strengthened. Secondly, the Vicarious Experience plays a considerable role, where observing others' success can shape one's self-efficacy beliefs, often facilitated by comparisons with peers' achievements. This suggests that witnessing the accomplishments of others can lead to a belief in one's potential for success.

Thirdly, the Mastery Experience is critical; through successfully navigating new challenges, individuals build a robust cognitive framework that reinforces their confidence in their personal abilities. Mastery experiences are perhaps the most influential source of self-efficacy, as they establish a direct correlation between effort and achievement. Lastly, Verbal Persuasion involves encouraging and validating considerable figures in an individual's life, which can bolster self-efficacy. The positive reinforcement received from mentors, coaches, or peers can prompt individuals to engage in tasks they may have otherwise avoided due to self-doubt. Understanding these components enables us to leverage self-efficacy, ultimately fostering personal growth and development across various life domains. By enhancing self-efficacy, individuals can be better equipped to tackle challenges and pursue their goals with greater confidence and resilience (Bandura, 1997).

Yin et al. (2022) established that individuals can achieve their goals and take essential actions, a belief underpinning this research study. The literature of Alvord et al. (2014) has thoroughly examined the antecedents that lead to the development of effective interventions (Cleary, 2018; Liu et al., 2011) aimed at supporting victims. The social cognitive theory, as presented by Bandura (2003) and Benight, along with insights from Henry et al. (2023) and Qamar et al. (2023), highlights the importance of psychological well-being and the cultivation of harmonious relationships.

Integrating positive psychology with self-efficacy, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) reveals how fostering these experiences can expand positive emotions, thereby enhancing a person's resilience and personal resources (Luthar et al., 2014; Henry et al., 2023; Qamar et al., 2023; Yin et al., 2022). This framework empowers individuals and provides a robust foundation for creating interventions that genuinely make a difference in the lives of those affected. In the

following section, this study will explore post-traumatic growth (PTG), which refers to the positive psychological changes that can occur in individuals following traumatic experiences. In the context of bullying, the impact can be profound and multifaceted, sometimes leading to considerable personal development (Henry et al., 2023; Qamar et al., 2023).

Post Traumatic Growth: A Pathway to Positive Growth.

Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) offers a profound understanding of the positive transformations that can emerge after adversity. According to a pivotal study by Tedeschi et al. (1995), a seminal author, PTG enables individuals who have endured trauma to cultivate essential character strengths. These strengths exemplify resilience and include vital qualities such as bravery, gratitude, hope, and kindness, which serve as protective factors in the healing process.

Tedeschi and Calhoun (1990) initially developed the PTG framework to explore how people can undergo meaningful transformations following trauma. Bryngeirdottir et al. (2022) further elaborated on this concept, describing PTG as a meaningful psychological shift that prompts individuals to concentrate on the potential positive outcomes of their traumatic experiences rather than fixating on the negatives.

Research conducted by Alper et al. (2022) identifies the following core components of post-traumatic growth (PTG): a deeper appreciation for life, the emergence of positive spiritual changes, the ability to recognize new life possibilities, enhanced strength derived from negative experiences, and improved interpersonal relationships. These findings examined that PTG is not merely a theoretical concept but a tangible pathway to personal development and resilience (Bryngeirdottir et al., 2022; Alper et al., 2022; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1990).

The phenomenon of Post Traumatic Growth illustrates how individuals can positively transform their lives after experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) resulting from trauma (Bryant-Davis, 2019). A phenomenological study on PTG revealed that individuals who have endured various traumatic experiences often encounter profound personal changes. This research examines the facilitators and barriers that characterize the essential components of PTG, revealing the importance of positive behaviors in fostering healthy relationships, which may manifest differently in individuals with PTG compared to typically developing adults.

Moreover, Loewenthal's research (2022) sheds light on traumatized adults exposed to experiences like childhood bullying. Participants in a trauma therapy study who engaged in “eye movement desensitization and reprocessing” (EMDR) demonstrated considerable enhancements in their religious faith (Bryant-Davis, 2019; Georgiades, 2016; Loewenthal, 2022). This compelling evidence examines the potential for recovery and growth following trauma, inviting further exploration of therapeutic approaches that facilitate such transformations.

EMDR therapy is an innovative approach to traumatic memory treatment that has gained considerable traction in recent years. Recognized as a psychological therapy alongside cognitive behavioral therapy, psychotherapy, and psychodynamic therapy, EMDR is particularly effective for individuals who have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Loewenthal, 2022). According to Loewenthal, (2022) study, EMDR therapy possesses remarkable transformative power. This therapeutic method works by helping individuals confront and reprocess their frozen traumatic memories, allowing these negative experiences to be integrated into their broader life narratives. As a result, EMDR reduces the emotional charge of these memories, fostering desensitization and healing. The compelling evidence supporting the effectiveness of EMDR

therapy serves as a beacon of hope for those navigating the challenges of trauma recovery. It inspires a sense of possibility and progress, empowering individuals on their journey toward healing (Loewenthal, 2022).

Research by Loewenthal (2022) has revealed the complex relationship between EMDR, religion, and spiritual transformation, a topic that often sparks debate in academic circles. Central to this discussion is communal prayer, which the author identifies as a key component of religious belief. Complementing this perspective, Pargament and Exline, (2022) propose that spirituality represents a profound quest for meaning or a sacred connection with the divine; this journey enhances an individual's sense of purpose in life.

Moreover, because each person processes trauma uniquely, the healing journey can vary greatly. Alexander (2020) notes that some individuals emerge from their struggles with a deeper appreciation for life, enriched spiritual growth, and heightened personal resilience. Others seize this moment as a call to action, actively creating organizations to support and uplift community members facing similar challenges (Alexander, 2020; Pargament & Exline, 2022). This collective engagement fosters personal healing and strengthens communal bonds, demonstrating the profound impact of spirituality in overcoming adversity. By focusing on personal development and support strategies, individuals can transform their experiences into opportunities for positive change; understanding these dynamics can inform interventions and support strategies aimed at helping victims of bullying navigate their healing journeys (Pargament & Exline, 2022).

Summary

This research study seeks to explore the resilience that can emerge in the aftermath of trauma, specifically chronic verbal bullying during adolescence. Victims often struggle with

uncertainty about themselves and their relationships, leading them to perceive dependence as synonymous with vulnerability to pain. As revealed by the APA (2014), trauma survivors in marginalized communities face considerable barriers to accessing effective treatment for PTSD, leaving them at a disadvantage.

Gap in Literature

Although there have been numerous studies that have explored themes such as intervention, prevention, and resilience in the context of bullying, there remains a critical gap in understanding the long-term mental well-being of students who have experienced bullying. Furthermore, little attention has been given to diverse populations and ethnicities, particularly regarding how resilience develops in individuals with pre-existing mental health conditions. Addressing this issue is essential; administrators must provide trauma-informed support that nurtures mental health, spirituality, social-emotional skills, and self-efficacy. Equipping individuals with these vital tools is crucial for fostering productive lives, securing gainful employment, and enabling them to thrive within society.

Notably, both victims and aggressors of bullying bear emotional scars that can linger well into adulthood. Bullies may experience persistent aggressive tendencies and may even engage in violent criminal behaviors later in life. One powerful intervention to combat bullying is reducing social media use among students during school hours. By minimizing online interactions, schools can create a safer school environment for victims, reducing instances of harassment during the day. While it is a fact and schools acknowledge that bullying can still occur after school hours, limiting social media engagement during the school day is a proactive step toward curbing this pervasive issue.

In a similar study, the American Psychological Association APA, (2014) revealed the need for a task force of multicultural psychologists to establish trauma treatment guidelines tailored for survivors in marginalized neighborhoods. The high costs associated with obtaining mental illness diagnoses are a considerable barrier. It is profoundly concerning that individuals facing mental health crises, particularly in underserved communities, often find themselves interacting with the police only to be discharged prematurely. After being involuntarily committed to a hospital that may not offer adequate treatment, these vulnerable individuals are sent back to their environments without the necessary interventions. Consequently, they return home without tools for resilience, perpetuating disruptive behaviors that impact their communities. Schools must advocate comprehensive support systems that address these shortcomings and foster healing for those in need.

A growing body of research, including insights from Armstrong et al. (2019), revealed the power of positive psychology in enhancing resilience and mental health for those undergoing psychological crises. While the impact of bullying on victims may be difficult to quantify, the Bible reminds us to “speak to yourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19). This approach serves as a vital tool against negative self-talk. Rather than focusing on the hurtful words of bullies, individuals can reclaim their self-worth by consistently affirming their strengths and declaring themselves to be strong, beautiful, intelligent, and considerable. Embracing this practice can foster a more resilient mindset and promote a healthier self-image.

Post-traumatic growth, as articulated by Tedeschi and Calhoun (1990), emerges when individuals endure trauma early in life, leading to profound long-term effects on their identity, resulting in increased vulnerability and fragile boundaries. Yet, many survivors find ways to

adapt, often feeling like they do not have a protective shield against further harm. Remarkably, some have turned their painful experiences into a source of strength, helping others while bolstering their resilience. With the damaging effects of bullying, it is essential to address this issue proactively, providing comprehensive support for both victims and aggressors. By doing so, we can mitigate the long-term consequences of bullying. It is imperative for future research to investigate the enduring impacts of mental health therapy for those affected, ensuring a more supportive environment for all.

The limitations identified in this current research pave the way for future studies that can considerably enhance our understanding of resilience. Future investigations should examine in greater detail the mechanisms of achieving and sustaining resilience over time, as well as the motivational beliefs that enable individuals to overcome the effects of bullying. Previous studies have examined resilience theory, which effectively frames motivational beliefs as critical protective factors (Skinner et al., 2013).

This study investigated post-traumatic growth beliefs, an area that has received insufficient attention as protective factors and motivational beliefs among adults who have triumphed over traumatic adversity. The following section will introduce the key research questions that guide this exploration of post-traumatic growth following trauma concerning resilience. In Chapter 3, a detailed description of the research design was provided to reinforce the rationale for a qualitative approach. The study will address the ethical measures implemented to safeguard participants from revealing sensitive information, meticulously outline the data collection process, and clarify the sampling strategy. Furthermore, elaborating on the criteria for determining participants' eligibility ensures a rigorous and ethical approach throughout the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study was to investigate how adults who endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their experiences of developing and sustaining resilience into adulthood (Stake, 2006). The problem addressed in this study was the challenges faced by adults who endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence and how these experiences manifest in adulthood (Moraes et al., 2020). To participate in this research, participants should have been at least 10 years past the most recent trauma and demonstrate resilience. In this study, resilience (Chen et al., 2022; Panosso et al., 2023) in one or more of the following key areas were investigated, first by participants forming positive relationships, second by achieving social, emotional, mental, and physical resilience Donat et al. (2023), third by securing gainful employment, fourth by pursuing higher education, and fifth by enhancing problem-solving skills, this research underscores the potential for growth after adversity (Chen et al., 2022; Donat & Wolgast, 2023).

This chapter describes the qualitative research design and the rationale for choosing this research method and design. A review of the methods, research methodology, and design, as well as the population and sample for this research, the study procedure, data analysis, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and ethical assurances, will conclude with a chapter summary and a transition to the next Chapter.

Research Methodology and Design

The multiple-case qualitative research method was identified as the most suitable approach for this study. This qualitative research methodology was well-suited for this study, as it enhances understanding of the issue, offers profound insights, and facilitates an exploration of the intricate details of human experiences. By examining personal meaning-making, perceptions,

and attitudes, qualitative research reveals the depth and complexity inherent in individual perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). To meet the proposed statement and answer the research questions, a qualitative research design was selected over quantitative or other qualitative design approaches. This research aims to explore the fundamental processes associated with individuals' experiences in developing and sustaining resilience in the aftermath of chronic verbal bullying.

Ultimately, the study focuses on understanding individual experiences of their resilience. One-on-one, semi-structured interviews served as a prevalent methodology for data collection (Halcomb & Peters, 2015), offering a structured framework that simultaneously enables participants to articulate and convey their insights. Merriam (2015) further discussed qualitative data collection, which involves in-depth interviews with individuals who possess formative insights on the subject at hand. It also involves keen observations of behaviors and activities within the research study, alongside the thoughtful collection and examination of their experiences. This approach gathers the intricate perspectives and experiences that shape their social behavior, which is not readily available through quantitative methods, thus enriching the overall data landscape (Merriam, 2015; McGrath, 2019; Peters et al., 2015).

Unlike quantitative approaches that predominantly analyze numerical data, qualitative research allows for a detailed description and exploration of how individuals describe their resilience after experiencing chronic bullying during adolescence (Patton, 2015). Given the deeply personal and subjective nature of navigating adversity, this study advocates an approach emphasizing first-person accounts and rich contextual understanding. Creswell and Poth, (2018) noted that qualitative research is essential for investigating complex social phenomena, where individual perceptions can shape our understanding of reality. Multiple case studies were employed to gather diverse perspectives on the research question in this study. Therefore, this

study will employ a multiple case study design, integrating two methodologies: case comparison and case survey. These methodologies are intended to illuminate the processes that participants engaged in to develop resilience (Yin, 2018). The focus was on exploring the exceptional pathways through which adults who have endured chronic verbal bullying cultivate resilience over time. The cross-case comparison can be made by coding and establishing cross-case patterns between participants' responses (Yin, 2018). This methodological framework is particularly appropriate, as it allows for a comprehensive examination of a precisely defined group of individuals who share a common history of trauma within their authentic, real-world context, as the cross-case analysis was used to explore patterns in resilience after being bullied (Yin, 2018).

According to the APA (2007), qualitative data capture behaviors and experiences, providing rich insights from participants. Creswell (2007) identifies the connection between qualitative research and social science data collection, emphasizing the observation and interpretation of pressing social issues. Global challenges can be understood through the interactions involving race, economic inequality, gender, and individual differences, demonstrating the importance of qualitative research in addressing complex societal topics (APA, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2002).

Alternative qualitative methodologies such as phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, case study, and narrative were considered but ultimately deemed unsuitable for this research. Phenomenology, which endeavors to uncover the essence of shared experiences (Connelly, 2010; Khan, 2014), was not selected because it focuses on understanding how individuals construct resilience over time rather than identifying a singular, universal experience. Ethnography, which emphasizes the study of cultural groups (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019),

was likewise inappropriate, as this investigation does not target a specific cultural context but prioritizes individual experiences. Grounded theory, which seeks to generate theoretical frameworks (Charmaz, 2006), was considered unnecessary, as this study aims to elicit comprehensive narratives from participants rather than develop new theoretical constructions.

A case study allows the researcher to engage deeply with a specific group and may involve data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews or surveys. This methodology amplifies the voices of underrepresented populations, facilitating impactful social change (Mertz, 2017). The narrative research model serves as an instrumental framework for understanding how individuals perceive the world and make decisions. By constructing detailed narratives that reflect the richness of these lived experiences (Wolgemuth & Agosto, 2019). Such narratives encapsulate important cultural and social norms, providing profound insights into both individual and collective identities. Lastly, quantitative methods were excluded, as resilience is a personal and multifaceted event that cannot be adequately captured through numerical data alone (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, Creswell (2007) examines key factors, including race, gender, individual differences, and economic disparities, to illuminate the unique challenges faced by specific populations. By gathering firsthand accounts from those affected, this study seeks to foster a deeper understanding, establish a foundation, and create a pathway for effective interventions.

Qualitative research explores complex issues through methods such as interviews, observations, and examinations. The researcher plays a crucial role in interpreting data and extracting insights by engaging with the contexts and personal experiences surrounding the subject matter. This approach efficiently addresses social challenges, such as bullying, by

prioritizing the perspectives of those most affected. It focuses on interviewing individuals or groups most knowledgeable about the topic under investigation (Merriam, 2015).

This study identifies themes that resonate widely, in line with Stakes' (2010) recommendations; thus, a qualitative methodology was appropriate for gaining a deeper understanding of the themes that emerged when participants discussed their perceptions of the event, as recommended by Stakes (2010). As a researcher, I commit to fully immersing myself in this study, dedicating myself to engaging with each participant's data collection and interpretation to ensure a comprehensive understanding of this important social issue. Ultimately, this research will illuminate the issue and provide an opportunity to collect qualitative data, offering a deeper understanding of the topic.

Population and Sample

This multiple-case qualitative study examined the perspectives of 12 participants on their experiences with bullying and subsequent approaches to resilience. The target population for this research consisted of US adults who are over 18+ years old, with the last bullying incident occurring over 10 years ago, who meet the eligibility criteria, and who have experienced chronic verbal bullying during adolescence. This investigation aims to gain a deeper understanding of the psychological and emotional processes individuals undergo when navigating and recovering from the effects of bullying. Participants were selected according a specific criteria to ensure they met the study's requirements. This study employed two sampling methods to achieve the desired sample size, if needed. The first method was purposive sampling, as described by Etikan et al. (2016), followed by snowball sampling to achieve the desired sample size.

In contrast to convenience sampling, which involves selecting a sample from the readily available population without assessing whether those selected possess the desired knowledge,

purposive sampling is more appropriate as it focuses on obtaining the most informative participants (Etikan et al., 2016). Purposive sampling effectively identifies a subset of adults aged 18 and older who exhibit resilience to inclusion in selecting a random sample from a broader purposive sample. This approach ensures equitable representation of the target population while mitigating potential sampling bias.

A study conducted by Campbell et al. (2020) revealed that purposive sampling is an effective strategy for selecting participants whose experiences are directly relevant to the research questions. This methodology contrasts with convenience sampling, which selects individuals from an accessible population without rigorously assessing their ability to provide the desired information (Campbell et al., 2020; Rai, 2015). This study employed a purposive sampling, a method that involves selecting a smaller group of participants to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. If purposive sampling does not yield the needed sample size, snowball sampling is used.

Participants were recruited through targeted outreach. Potential qualified candidates were sourced from community organizations, such as churches (e.g., Hollywood Presbyterian and Spirit Food Christian Center Church) and Grief Share (New Life) recovery groups, where they were identified and recruited. Subsequently, snowball sampling was employed to expand the participant pool, leveraging the referrals of current participants who met the established eligibility criteria. Before participation, all individuals were required to complete a screening questionnaire to determine their eligibility for participation (refer to Appendix E). Recruitment was conducted by posting an online study description on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram, as detailed in the “verbal bullying flyer” (see Appendix G). Once potential participants have been determined as eligible and agree to participate, a consent form was emailed to them for

completion. If participants are interested in engaging in this research opportunity, I would encourage them to contact me directly. The success of this research relies on the full commitment of all participants.

All participants were required to provide their age, educational background, gender, and the time since their last bullying incident, offering appropriate insights into their experiences. Their participation was essential to identifying and fostering discussions on resilience and recovery. Before launching this important study, obtaining approval from the National University Institutional Review Board (IRB) was essential. First, purposive sampling was used initially in the recruitment process for participants. Snowball sampling was used if that does not yield enough potential participants. This successful approach has been demonstrated in previous research, as seen in the work by DuPue et al. (2014).

Snowball sampling, according to Saldana et al. (2018), focuses on the effectiveness of the snowball sampling method as a valuable tool for researchers seeking to identify additional participants while engaging with hard-to-reach populations. Potential participants with personal connections to the researcher will not be used as participants. If a participant proposes an additional candidate for the study, they were given the recruitment flyer to share with them. Nevertheless, this is acceptable only if the proposed individuals do not have a personal connection with the researcher. In that case, those potential participants can be given the recruitment flyer and included in the study upon their consent.

Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria for this study are as follows: all eligible participants must be adults over 18 years of age and have experienced at least 10 years since the last trauma. Participants should indicate they have experienced resilience in a few crucial areas of their lives (i.e., stable

employment, robust social connections, and effective coping strategies) and that they experienced chronic verbal bullying during adolescence to demonstrate resilience.

Exclusion Criteria

Exclusion criteria for participants include individuals who experienced bullying less than 10 years ago and those who are unwilling to participate in recorded interviews. Adults who do not believe they have fully attained their resilience in more than one of the areas qualify by achieving social, emotional, mental, and physical resilience. These areas were screened based on the resiliency criteria questions form (see Appendix E).

Individuals who are currently experiencing bullying-related trauma, which may be exacerbated by participation, and this study seeks to engage participants whose experiences align with these criteria, as their insights will contribute to our understanding of resilience in the context of the long-term effects of bullying. In order to ensure confidentiality and safeguard identity, each participant was assigned a distinctive identification code.

Interviews were conducted either via Zoom or over the phone, with recordings made only after obtaining explicit consent from participants. These recordings were transcribed verbatim to facilitate comprehensive analysis. This process underscores our commitment to maintaining participant confidentiality while capturing their valuable insights. After screening potential participants, consent forms were sent to them via email. Before scheduling an interview, eligible individuals must complete a consent form, ensuring that all volunteers are well-informed and willing to participate. Semi-structured interviews were scheduled based on the participants' convenience. As a gesture of appreciation, every participant will receive a \$10 gift card for their time and meaningful contributions to this study.

The results of this study were analyzed using manual coding techniques in Microsoft Word and Excel, following a methodology consistent with that of Miles et al. (2015). Through this approach, researchers were able to identify patterns and draw conclusions from datasets by developing thematic structures across multiple sources. This research will also have a comparative analysis of identical codes, continuously and systematically identifying contrasting elements within the data. Each new data sample will undergo an exploration through the lens of the original codes, facilitating the integration of related items. In this study, keywords were highlighted throughout this intricate process, and annotations were made in the margins, enriching the interpretative framework and contributing to a deeper understanding of the data.

Materials and Field Testing

This study utilizes semi-structured interviews as the primary method for data collection, effectively balancing flexibility with a systematic investigation of key research themes. There was an effort to develop rapport with the participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). This methodological approach facilitates an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, allowing the researcher to conduct follow-up inquiries that clarify and deepen their understanding. The semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix B: Interview Guide) was developed based on the framework of resilience and to address the research question (RQ). This protocol was further refined based on consultations (i.e., Dr. Crissie Jameson) with experts in qualitative research methodologies. Each interview question was carefully designed to align with the study's objectives, enabling participants to articulate and reflect on their lived experiences (Yin, 2016).

The materials for this study included an interview guide crafted through a comprehensive review of the literature. In developing the guide, a careful alignment was established between the research and interview questions. This thoughtful process ensured that each question posed to

participants would resonate with them and directly illuminate the core research questions driving this study. The interview protocol (Appendix B) serves as a guide for conducting semi-structured interviews, effectively striking a balance between the need for consistency and the natural progression of the conversation. In the area of qualitative research, interview guides are indispensable as they provide a structured focus on important themes while granting participants the liberty to articulate their experiences in rich detail (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

The development of this guide involved a rigorous multi-step process, which can be summarized in the following three areas. First, the initial design in developing this guide was grounded in an extensive literature review that closely examined the intricacies of resilience and bullying. Second, consultation with experts for feedback was sought from specialists in qualitative methodology to enhance the clarity of the language used and to ensure that it aligns with the research objectives. Third, the field testing for the evaluation involves experts assessing the clarity, relevance, and overall effectiveness of the questions in eliciting rich narratives from participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). This guide comprises semi-structured interviews designed to investigate participants' lived experiences with bullying, their processes of resilience-building, and their reflections on personal growth over time. Additionally, there may be a need to conduct follow-up questions to facilitate deeper inquiry into emerging themes during the interviews, enriching the overall qualitative data collection process and unfolding it in an illuminating manner.

Field Testing

The field-testing process in this study ensures that the semi-structured interview questions are clear, relevant, and capable of eliciting profound and meaningful responses from participants. This important process enhances the credibility and dependability of qualitative

research, allowing experts to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of the questions before embarking on complete data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, the interview questions were specifically designed for qualified participants who meet the established criteria.

Experts in the field thoroughly vet these questions to ensure validity and reliability. Although these experts were not a part of the research, please refer to the interview guide (Appendix B) for their input. Their assessment will focus on clarity, alignment with our research objectives, and the potential to generate rich, narrative-driven insights. The panel comprises renowned qualitative methodologists with extensive experience in interview-based research, as well as psychologists specializing in resilience and the psychological impact of bullying. The feedback gathered from this field testing was instrumental in refining the wording, removing ambiguity, and ensuring that our questions facilitate deep, reflective responses (Clibbens et al., 2012). After being field tested and approved by the IRB, this study will implement the final interview protocol only after expert reviewers confirm that the questions meet the highest standards of trustworthiness and richness in data.

The researcher utilizes an interview guide to ensure that each participant receives the same questions, thereby gathering rich data to thoroughly address the research questions. This guide featured a carefully crafted set of questions, complemented by probing inquiries designed to uncover the depths of participants' experiences with chronic verbal bullying during adolescence and their remarkable resilience in the face of adversity. Upon receiving qualified responses, this study conducted individualized interviews with each participant via Zoom, ensuring they found the most convenient times. Confidentiality was a priority; therefore, all participants' identities remained private, and personal information was securely stored on my

computer for one year before it was permanently deleted. This research aims to clarify chronic verbal bullying during adolescence, an important issue that deserves attention and understanding.

Participants actively defined their identities through the semi-structured interview provided, which was important for cultivating a safe and supportive environment. This study will capture interviews and responses using a recording device to identify each participant's distinct perceptions and experiences related to the research questions. This study involves a supervised data collection process, ensuring precise alignment with these research objectives while upholding the highest methodological integrity and scholarly rigor standards. This commitment ensures that our data analysis was thorough, enhancing both the interview experience and its contributions to this field of study.

The one-on-one format allows for scheduling flexibility, accommodating participants' needs to ensure their comfort and participation. In order to cultivate a welcoming environment, each session will start with an introduction to the "criteria for participation," establishing a foundation of trust and ease. Should any uncertainties arise during these discussions, participants may be asked to follow up with questions to clarify and ensure that their views are accurately captured and represented. This process was designed to represent and honor the victim's voice.

Study Procedures

This study engaged participants through semi-structured interviews, which will serve as the primary data collection method to explore participants' experiences, adhering to a structured framework (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The data collection process was initiated through the strategic recruitment of participants, designed to ensure consistency and align with the study's overarching objectives. In conducting the interviews, I will adhere to a set of criteria designed to facilitate participant engagement throughout the process. The interviews were conducted via

Zoom and scheduled at the convenience of the participants. Each session was structured to last between 45 and 60 minutes with a couple that was over 60 minutes and will utilize a semi-structured framework. This methodology aims to strike a balance while maintaining consistency across the interviews, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the topics under discussion. This approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of participants' narratives, thoroughly capturing their unique experiences and insights (Patton, 2015). Recording and notetaking was conducted with each participant's explicit and informed consent. Interviews were rigorously audio-recorded using secure, password-protected devices.

Furthermore, this research engages in systematic field note-taking to document pertinent nonverbal cues and contextual insights; this dual approach will enhance the qualitative analysis and foster a more nuanced understanding of each participant's distinctive perspective. The researcher will email the informed consent form to the participant, who will sign it effortlessly using DocuSign, a secure and encrypted platform designed for handling confidential documents. Once the participant has signed the consent form, the researcher will contact them to coordinate a convenient time for both parties to engage in a meaningful interview.

The post-interview procedures adhered to established criteria governing participant engagement and data collection. The transcription process from each interview were cleaned to ensure an accurate representation of participants' responses, thereby maintaining the integrity of the data collected. Regarding "clarifications and follow-ups", participants may receive brief inquiries via email to enhance clarity and understanding of their responses. This helps clarify any important points discussed during the interview, allowing me to capture the full details of their insight. (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Collection

This study utilized a data collection method that includes one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with eligible participants. This multiple-case study requires thorough research, drawing upon diverse sources for data collection (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2017). In this proposed multiple-case study, I have conducted one-on-one interviews with participants to gather results for the research question. This approach will capture the firsthand accounts of bullying events while also understanding participants' perceptions of their traumatic experiences. To further safeguard participant privacy, some interviews were conducted by Zoom. Participants felt secure in expressing their thoughts freely, as there was no risk of repercussions. Once the interviews are recorded, they were transcribed verbatim for detailed analysis, ensuring that every voice is heard and respected.

Data security encompasses measures to ensure the integrity of data and maintain confidentiality. All audio recordings and transcripts were stored securely and confidentially. A thorough discussion of our rigorous data security measures can be found in the section on ethical assurances. Through these protocols and by adhering to these procedures, this study seeks to create a respectful and secure environment that encourages participants to share their experiences candidly, yielding rich qualitative insights that foster open and honest dialogue, allowing appropriate insights to emerge from our participants' experiences, and contribute to the study's research objectives.

This study aims to compare and assess the data collected to identify themes, distinguish among participants, and explore potential shared experiences. To the utmost accuracy, all data were stored securely on digital devices, such as iPads and voice recorders, before being transcribed into Microsoft Word. Ultimately, this research aims to investigate how individuals

sustain their resilience after enduring traumatic events. Sarkar (2017) noted that the research question must remain relevant and aligned with the findings. This investigation offers insights into the journey of resilience.

Data Analysis

Each participant's interview consists of three distinct coding cycles. Through this process, emergent and superordinate themes can be discerned, thereby enriching our understanding of the participants' lived experiences and the complexities inherent in the data. Each interview were thematically coded following the guidelines established by Miles et al. (2014). This methodological approach entails carefully examining a discrete segment of empirical material, such as a word, a paragraph, or a page, and assigning a label, typically a word or a concise phrase, that encapsulates its fundamental meaning. Central to qualitative analysis, coding not only reduces extensive volumes of data into accessible segments but also enhances the rigor and depth of the analytical process.

Furthermore, coding represents an early stage of analysis, facilitating the extraction and verification of the final conclusions with clarity and methodological soundness as described by Miles and Huberman, (1994); thematic analysis is a well-established technique in qualitative research that facilitates systematic categorization and interpretation of data, thereby accommodating both inductive and deductive theme development (Linneberg, 2020; Nowell et al., 2017). While various methods exist for collecting data, including personal accounts and diaries, the semi-structured interview emerges as the most effective and widely utilized approach in this research. This method facilitates an interactive dialogue between the researcher and participant, empowering the researcher to adapt initial questions in response to the participant's insights. Moreover, this flexibility enables a deeper exploration of salient themes and important

topics that emerge during the conversation, thereby enriching the richness of the participants' lived experiences and contributing to a more nuanced understanding of these issues under investigation (Miles et al., 2013).

Initial Codes

Generating initial codes consisted of an inductive approach to conduct open coding, systematically identifying key concepts within the data. These initial codes will highlight the patterns in participant responses related to resilience, emotional coping, and personal growth, as outlined by Miles et al. (2014). Developing code categories will follow the generation of initial codes, which were systematically grouped into broader categories that encapsulate the overarching patterns of meaning derived from participant experiences. This categorization was guided by established theoretical frameworks on resilience, particularly those articulated by Sarkar (2017). The use of software will enhance analytical efficiency and organization, and this study will utilize HyperResearch (ResearchWare, 2008) as a software tool. This platform will facilitate systematic coding and aid in the organization, retrieval, and comparative analysis of coded segments.

Development and Refinement

Theme development and refinement involve identifying emerging themes and refining them. As the analysis progresses, it locates thematic patterns within participant responses, ensuring that recurring concepts are thoroughly captured and contextualized within the broader scope of the research. Next, in reviewing and refining themes, each identified theme undergoes an assessment for coherence and relevance, aligning with Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2023) six-step approach to thematic analysis. With the final theme categorization, the themes were clearly

defined and appropriately named, reflecting their contributions to addressing the research questions posed.

Trustworthiness and Reflexivity

The following principles of trustworthiness and reflexivity were employed through transparency and reflexivity. This was used throughout the analytical process, and the researcher will systematically maintain a journal of reflexivity. This qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study aims to investigate and analyze the experiences of individual participants. To enhance the credibility of the data collected, establishing rapport with participants was crucial. This rapport fosters trust and creates a conducive environment for open and honest communication (Melton, 2019). This journal was crucial for documenting coding decisions, uncovering inherent assumptions, and critically reflecting on the meaning-making process. By doing so, the researcher promotes greater clarity, rigor, and transparency in the analysis, fostering a deeper understanding of the data and ensuring a more robust academic inquiry, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2021). For the audit trail maintenance for this study, a comprehensive and detailed coding log were maintained to document the evolution of themes over time. This systematic approach will ensure transparency and accountability in our analytical decision-making processes, thereby enhancing the integrity and rigor of our scholarly work.

Interpretation and reporting

The interpretation and reporting for this study will employ the following steps: the final theme synthesis of the principal themes were synthesized into a cohesive narrative that elucidates the intricate connections among participant experiences, thereby deepening our scholarly understanding of the underlying complexities involved (Miles et al., 2014). The use of visual representation enhances clarity and engagement, effectively communicating our findings. This

study will utilize HyperResearch to create visual representations, such as code mappings and thematic diagrams, to effectively illustrate key findings.

Findings Summary

The findings summary for the results were presented in a structured and scholarly format, establishing clear connections back to the research questions and ensuring that each insight contributes meaningfully to the discourse. Through this systematic, methodical approach to analysis, this study aims to produce a rich and detailed thematic representation of resilience among adults who have experienced chronic verbal bullying during adolescence. Data analysis includes an important process that enables researchers to uncover appropriate insights and make meaningful discoveries. This study was focused on understanding the resiliency of victims of verbal bullying after experiencing chronic traumatic events. This study aims to examine this important issue (Miles et al. 2014).

To ensure the validity of these findings, data was collected through a member-checking process with a select group of 10 to 12 participants. These individuals will receive coded responses to confirm the interpretations and enhance accuracy. Participants' experiences were documented in an Excel spreadsheet, and their responses were linked to the relevant research questions and coding framework. Confidentiality was taken seriously in this study, and all participants' identities are protected throughout. After successfully defending my dissertation, these files were permanently deleted, thereby safeguarding the privacy of participants and the integrity of their contributions. Flick's (2019) research highlights the importance of a comprehensive data collection approach, ensuring that each individual's story was thoroughly examined (Smith, 2016; Flick, 2019).

While interviews will form the primary data collection method, they will also incorporate memoing and summarizing techniques. These methods will identify essential notes and facilitate the identification of important details that will guide the development of initial codes. Additionally, employing techniques like rhetorical analysis will allow for a more nuanced understanding of the data's layers of meaning. The coding process were instrumental in categorizing and structuring the information, supporting the study's findings and conclusions. As I transcribe and analyze the interviews, emerging themes and insights will provide a robust foundation to support or reveal additional themes essential to this research.

The next phase of this study will focus on thematic coding, building upon the initial codes established. This study will review all notes and apply coding to uncover additional insights that support or identify emerging themes. This qualitative interview study aims to explore in depth how participants have successfully navigated their recovery from bullying. The semi-structured interview will feature targeted items that empower participants to reflect on their resilience, including factors such as stable employment and positive relationships. Through this approach, the goal was to identify the strategies that promote healing and resilience in the aftermath of adversity.

The thematic coding of this qualitative exploratory case study was designed to provide a profound investigation of the experiences of adults involved in the inclusion process. To ensure the highest standards of interrater reliability, I will collaborate with my professor on 30% of the interviews. Data were gathered through one-on-one sessions via Zoom to guarantee participant confidentiality and protect the integrity of their insights. This data were systematically categorized into codes that reflect emerging themes, which will then be organized in Excel for a detailed comparative analysis of the codes and themes.

Miles et al. (2014) describe the initial data collection stage as an iterative approach that involves shifting among the nodes. In the second phase, the data code extracts and composes analytical memos. The third phase will focus on generating code categories to effectively condense the data. The themes are conceptualized and developed based on the categorized and coded extracts in the fourth phase. Finally, in the fifth phase, this study will contextualize and present the findings by synthesizing the meanings derived from the data and constructing a coherent representation using tables and networks.

To ensure interrater reliability, which will enrich the analysis, the data must be collected. This coding segment will yield essential insights, both inductive and deductive, regarding resilience and the experiences of recovered individuals throughout their resilience journeys. During member checking, I will thoroughly discuss the interview data to guarantee that participants' perceptions and views are accurately captured. By summarizing and restating their contributions, this study will affirm the precision of the documented data. A comprehensive account of each step in this study will enable other researchers to replicate it effectively and contribute their knowledge to the field.

Self-reporting and Memory Bias

Participant self-reporting and memory bias: the following criteria will apply to participants who self-report and those who exhibit memory bias. Limitations in relying on participants' reflections on past experiences introduce the potential for memory bias. Recollections may be incomplete or influenced by the passage of time, rendering self-reported experiences highly subjective and subject to personal interpretation (Patton, 2015).

Mitigation Strategy

Rather than striving for wide-ranging generalizability, this study aims to uncover nuanced insights into the resilience process. Purposeful sampling seeks to achieve a profound thematic understanding rather than relying solely on statistical generalization (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Future research endeavors may build upon this foundation by incorporating various populations or implementing longitudinal methods. Furthermore, the mitigation strategy for implementing semi-structured interviews facilitates follow-up questions and probing techniques that enhance the clarity of responses and minimize gaps in memory recall (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). With triangulation, existing resilience literature will enrich the contextual understanding, providing depth and rigor to the examination of these intricate events.

The exclusion of individuals currently in therapy will apply if they meet the following criteria, and those who fall within these limits were excluded. These limitations for this study deliberately exclude participants who are currently undergoing therapy for bullying-related trauma. Consequently, the nuanced perspectives of those in active recovery will remain unrepresented. Mitigation strategy: while this exclusion focuses on the events surrounding long-term resilience, it was acknowledged that the insights from individuals in therapy could enrich the understanding of resilience in diverse contexts. Future research may aim to rectify this gap by incorporating participants at varying stages of their recovery trajectories.

Potential researcher bias and limitations in qualitative research are well documented, and a researcher's background, beliefs, and assumptions can inadvertently influence both the data collection and analysis processes (Braun & Clarke, 2023). This influence may lead to a selective emphasis on certain themes while inadvertently marginalizing others. Additionally, it acknowledges that bias could be a concern; however, this study was committed to minimizing it

to ensure that the information gathered accurately represents the participants' experiences. Furthermore, to maintain objectivity, only the recruited participants have had any prior professional or personal interactions with the research team. This careful selection process reinforces the commitment to producing appropriate and unbiased findings.

Level of Risk and Participant Well-being

The following level of risk and consideration for participants' well-being were employed to discuss potential risks related to past bullying experiences that may evoke emotional distress for participants due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter. Mitigation strategies in recognition of these risks: this study will implement the following strategies to provide participants with comprehensive information about potential emotional triggers prior to their involvement, ensuring they understand their right to pause, skip questions, or withdraw at any time without consequence. Additionally, provide a resource list that includes mental health support options, such as local and national crisis hotlines, to facilitate immediate access to assistance when needed. In addition, interviews should be conducted emphasizing a supportive environment, employing empathetic interviewing techniques designed to promote participant comfort and well-being (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Post-Interview Support

Post-interview support were encouraged for participants to engage in a debriefing session and have the opportunity to pose questions following the interview. Furthermore, a summary of the study's findings were provided upon request, thereby fostering transparency and continued engagement. By applying these ethical principles, this study reaffirms its commitment to treating all participants with the utmost dignity, respect, and care while maintaining rigorous standards of confidentiality and integrity (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

In this qualitative study, the researcher will take great care to alter identifiable details and employ aliases to safeguard participant confidentiality. All data collected was reviewed privately by the researcher to maintain confidentiality. To ensure the utmost security, data was stored in a highly protected environment with password access, both during the study and beyond its completion. Notably, no identifying information has been used in the analysis or reporting of findings, thereby maintaining participants' integrity and privacy.

At no point will participants be required to reveal their names to one another, and this study will strongly urge them not to disclose any personal information to the researcher. To safeguard identity and confidentiality, each participant will receive a unique numeric code (ranging from P01 to P12), ensuring that all data was handled with the utmost care and respect. Authorization letters were collected from each eligible participant prior to the commencement of data collection. This study aims to seek approval from the National University Institutional Review Board, ensuring commitment to ethical standards. Each participant will formally complete a consent form (see Appendix D) before engaging in the research.

All aspects of the research must prioritize the protection of vulnerable populations, ensuring that participants are not subjected to unnecessary risks or exploitation that could harm their well-being. This study aims to create a supportive and respectful atmosphere for all participants. The data collected from each participant were analyzed strictly in accordance with the ethical guidelines established by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). In this study, we are committed to ensuring that the solicitation process was carried out with utmost integrity. The information provided here outlines the study's purpose and includes essential documents such as the consent form and eligibility requirements (see Appendices A through H).

The consent form will clearly articulate the study's goals, emphasizing the important need for further research in this area. Prospective participants will receive an informative page and an informed consent form detailing the potential risks and triggers they may encounter during the study. Importantly, participants can withdraw at any point if they find the study challenging or distressing. This research specifically targets individuals who have been bullied and have been so for over 10 years since the last event, ensuring that their voices and experiences are heard.

Additionally, this study will provide all participants with contact information for the National University Review Board, identifying this commitment to transparency and ethical standards. This study will guarantee participants that all information gathered were treated with the highest level of confidentiality. Names, personal identifiers, and content were securely protected. Participants were informed about the safeguards in place to protect their personal information, and the program will manage inquiries, responses to interview questions, and consent forms. Participants will also be informed about any potential risks, including the possibility of being triggered by specific questions, with the assurance that they can skip or pause any questions if they experience discomfort or other psychological distress. The participants' involvement in this study was appropriate, as it prioritized their well-being.

Assumptions

This research study aims to foster open and honest conversations with adults who have experienced bullying. Drawing on insights from participant interviews, this study assumes that participants will candidly share their experiences in a genuinely enlightening manner. Researchers propose assumptions before conducting a comprehensive examination (Yin, 2015). According to Yin (2015), an assumption can be characterized as a prospective vulnerability or

flaw that may emerge within the study. Recognizing and evaluating these assumptions was important, as they shape the research framework and open pathways for deeper exploration.

With several years having elapsed since the last incident, it was understandable that some participants may have difficulty recalling specific details. Nonetheless, this study must assume that participants were honest about their resilience in the aftermath of chronic verbal bullying during adolescence. This study aims to identify the benefits of schools that implement bullying prevention programs for both victims and perpetrators of bullying. Such initiatives can substantially reduce chronic bullying issues. To ensure the integrity of the findings, I will minimize bias and implement robust measures to ensure reliability and validity. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their self-identified resilience attributes and respond to questions truthfully and transparently. This approach not only values their experiences but also paves the way for future research on resilience in adults who have endured bullying (Yin, 2015).

Limitations

This study provides limitations and insights into the resilience that develops in individuals following chronic verbal bullying during adolescence. It was important to acknowledge several inherent limitations that may affect the findings. The researcher identifies the potential for bias, influenced by their previous interactions with former youth who have either experienced the hardships of being bullied or have engaged in bullying behavior themselves. This recognition of dual perspectives enriches the complexity of the analysis and necessitates a more nuanced interpretation of the presented data.

The researcher recognizes the possibility that this background may unduly influence the interpretation of findings. Consequently, a valid concern exists that personal experiences could overshadow objective analysis, resulting in interpretations that reflect the researcher's

preconceptions rather than accurately representing the data. This awareness underscores the importance of maintaining an impartial and rigorous approach throughout the research process to ensure the integrity of the findings. Additionally, these limitations encompass issues related to generalizability, the reliance on self-reported data from participants, the exclusion of individuals currently undergoing therapy, and the potential influence of researcher bias. A thorough acknowledgment of these factors was important for refining and contextualizing the implications of our findings within a broader scholarly framework, thereby enhancing the robustness and significance of our research.

Delimitations

This study on resilience examined specific delimitations that may influence its outcomes while endeavoring to identify practical solutions. Participants must be adults 18+ years or older and at least 10 years removed from experiencing bullying. Delimitation refers to the clearly defined boundaries established by research guidelines, which shape the methodological approach of the inquiry (Yin, 2015). This delimitation was closely tied to the problem statement, purpose statement, and research question formulated for this proposed study, thereby enhancing the clarity and focus of our research objectives. This investigation focuses on the pivotal issue of chronic verbal bullying during adolescence, their behavior, and the resilience that can arise as a response to such adversity (Yin, 2015).

Furthermore, our participants consist of adults who have developed their resilience over the years, with a minimum of ten years since their last experience of bullying. The primary objective of this research was to establish a solid foundation for future studies while identifying best practices that aim to reduce bullying in schools. This study enhances the educational environment by fostering a supportive and empowering atmosphere through a rigorous

exploration of effective practices. Central to this initiative was the implementation of comprehensive bullying prevention and intervention programs, accompanied by ongoing professional development for students and administrative personnel, including educators, aimed at fostering an inclusive school culture.

A notable delimitation of this study was that the researcher possesses personal experiences working as a Probation Officer with suicidal, murderer, traumatized, mentally ill, and bullied clients, which may result in researcher bias. To mitigate this concern, the researcher implemented several measures to minimize potential influences. Throughout the data collection and analysis phases, a reflexive journal was maintained. This journal provided a platform for the researcher to engage in self-reflection, document methodological processes and decisions, and practice bracketing while adopting a phenomenological approach. Furthermore, member checking were utilized as an additional strategy to reduce bias. Each participant had the opportunity to review their transcripts for clarity and accuracy, which helped to address any potential biases that may have arisen during the transcription process.

Ethical Assurances

In this qualitative exploratory study, the researcher first sought the approval of the Institutional Review Board at National University prior to initiating the data collection process. Participants were assured that their confidentiality and privacy are paramount throughout their study. Individual interviews were conducted via Zoom, facilitating a conducive environment for in-depth discussion. To protect the identity of each participant, pseudocode were used as needed, ensuring that their contributions are captured while maintaining their privacy.

Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained prior to participation, and each individual will receive a comprehensive consent form (Appendix D), which clearly outlines the study's purpose and its specific objectives for the procedures involved, including the interview structure and the estimated duration of the session. Potential risks, benefits, and the voluntary nature of participation (participants are free to withdraw at any time). Robust confidentiality measures and strategies for data protection. Transparency and participant rights include encouraging all participants to ask questions before signing the consent form. In order to ensure a smooth experience, contact information for both the researcher and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) representatives were readily available to address any concerns or inquiries. Once this important approval was secured, the researcher will systematically gather relevant qualitative data, protect participants, and maintain the ethical integrity of the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Confidentiality and Privacy Protections

Participants' confidentiality and privacy protections were maintained for the following purposes. For this study, confidentiality was prioritized to ensure the utmost privacy of all participant data. Personal identifiers were removed from transcripts, and responses were shared exclusively in de-identified and aggregate form (Patton, 2015). Anonymity is not considered in this study, as it is not anonymous; the researcher will recognize the participants' identities. However, to safeguard privacy, all identifiers were removed from the final dataset (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Coded data for each participant were assigned to a unique numerical code in place of their real name, further enhancing the protection of their privacy while allowing us to conduct meaningful research.

Security and Storage for Secure Storage

Data security and storage for secure storage to mitigate the risk of unauthorized access, all data, including audio recordings, transcripts, and consent forms, were stored securely on a password-protected external hard drive with access strictly limited to authorized personnel and regularly backed up on an encrypted cloud service to ensure the integrity and reliability of the data. Data will be retained for five years following publication, and all data were permanently deleted in accordance with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines. Restricted Access to raw interview recordings were limited to the researcher, and data analysis will exclusively utilize de-identified data to safeguard participant confidentiality.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory, multiple-case study was to investigate how adults who endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their experiences of developing and sustaining resilience into adulthood. This study determined the most suitable approach for collecting and analyzing data. This study provided insight into the participants' lived experiences with bullying behaviors, thereby contributing to the discourse on this important issue. This research approach provided valuable insights into how individuals can effectively utilize their creative thinking. This flexibility allowed for a nuanced understanding of the varying importance of resilience scales. Such insights were particularly relevant to emotional psychology practices, informing the development of targeted resilience-based intervention programs for bullying. While many factors contribute to positive outcomes, resilience was the cornerstone for achieving them. It empowered individuals to transform negative experiences into opportunities to help others navigate their own traumatic events. Notably, the study's findings indicated that

relatedness may be a potent protective factor against depression, underscoring the importance of fostering connections in these interventions.

Protective factors were important for fostering resilience and can be distilled into three fundamental principles: first, nurturing a warm and secure family relationship; second, ensuring the availability of supportive peers outside the family unit; and third, developing dispositional and temperamental attributes within individuals, such as intellectual capacity, independence, and responsiveness. Notably, emotional reactivity stood out as a particularly potent protective factor against anxiety. These findings strongly indicated that resilience-based interventions targeting bullying should prioritize the cultivation of a sense of relatedness and emotional responsiveness, as these attributes may have stemmed from inherent personality traits. Focusing solely on reducing emotional reactivity could limit the effectiveness of such interventions. Therefore, establishing peer support networks and implementing social skills programs were essential strategies.

Moreover, it was essential to acknowledge that many existing resilience programs already emphasized building strong connections with family and peers, which were crucial for helping individuals recover from challenges. As a result, expanding the concept of resilience within an adult framework to explore its diverse forms and configurations was valid and highly beneficial. The next chapter thoroughly examined the findings (Chapter 4). In Chapter 4, this study delves into an interpretive inquiry that clarifies the specific findings and results derived from data collection and analysis. By employing robust data analysis techniques, this chapter illuminates key findings, characteristics, patterns, and participant statements regarding their resilience, all drawn from the comprehensive data gathered.

Chapter 4: Findings

The problem addressed by this study was adults' perspectives on resiliency after the trauma of being chronically verbally bullied in adolescence (Fernanda et al., 2023). The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study was to investigate how adults who endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their experiences of developing and sustaining resilience into adulthood (Stake, 2006). The phenomenon of bullying has emerged as a critical issue on a global scale, with substantial implications for the well-being of children (Pervanidou et al., 2019).

The research conducted by Craig (2007) was a study to gather data from adult participants who had experienced verbal bullying, seeking to understand their perspectives on the issue and to explore potential strategies for addressing, mitigating, and ultimately eradicating bullying within contemporary educational environments. Recruitment was facilitated through the snowball sampling method; whereby eligible participants were encouraged to participate in the study. The targeted sample size was 12 participants; ultimately, 12 individuals completed the informed consent form, indicating their willingness to engage in the study. Data collection from study participants was conducted through semi-structured, open-ended interviews, lasting 45 to 60 minutes. The researcher recorded these interviews via Zoom or telephone. To identify the most salient experiences of the participants, the qualitative exploratory data analysis steps delineated by Sutton et al. (2015) were employed (Yin, 2016).

This chapter presents the findings from an exploratory multiple-case study comprising 12 interviews with research participants. This chapter provides a demographics section that provides essential background information on the study participants, thereby enhancing understanding of their shared lived experiences, as discussed later in the report. Subsequently, the researcher

presents a data analysis section that outlines the methodology used to code the interviews. The findings section articulates the emergent themes and includes verbatim responses from participants as conveyed during their interviews. The chapter concludes with a comprehensive summary of the findings.

Additionally, this chapter provides a comprehensive evaluation and validation of the data's trustworthiness, detailing the methodologies employed to ensure its credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Through systematic analysis, the chapter underscores the rigorous processes implemented to uphold the integrity of the research findings. Moreover, it underscores the assessment and reporting of the findings within the framework of existing research and theoretical frameworks. This chapter presents the study's results, summarizes them in relation to existing research and theoretical frameworks, and concludes with a summary. The main objective of this study was to address the following research questions, which guided this study:

RQ1. How do adults who experienced chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their processes of developing and sustaining resilience in adulthood, particularly in relation to personal and social challenges?

RQ1-a. How do these adults reflect on the strategies they have employed to cultivate resilience and navigate adversity across diverse life domains, including relationships, employment, and emotional well-being?

The researcher has provided a comprehensive presentation of the research findings from the semi-structured interviews conducted as part of the data collection. The analysis was thoroughly aligned with the two research questions and framed within the established conceptual framework guiding this study. The chapter was organized into distinct sections: demographics,

data collection methods, data analysis procedures, results categorized by research questions, and a summary of key findings. This structured approach facilitates a clear understanding of the data and its implications within the context of the research objectives.

Data Collection

Upon receiving approval from the National University Institutional Review Board (NU IRB Number: IRB-FY25-26-88) on August 28, 2025. The researcher employed a snowball sampling method to recruit participants, primarily through private community groups, inviting individuals to engage in the study. A total of 12 participants who satisfied the inclusion criteria indicated their willingness to participate.

The study received interest from potential participants and conducted 12 separate interviews via Zoom and phone over two weeks, from August 30, 2025, to September 9, 2025. The researcher interviewed with care and followed the procedures detailed in Chapter 3, ensuring a thorough and engaging process. A snowball sampling technique was used, in which the researcher encouraged participants who had already responded to recommend colleagues and acquaintances for inclusion in the study. The recruitment process involved distributing a recruitment package designed to attract potential participants. The participant signed the consent form at the beginning of the interview, as found in Appendix B. To ensure participant anonymity, a pseudocode (P01 - P12) was assigned to each individual throughout the interview process. The data analysis process engaged in careful coding and theme identification, reinforcing the trustworthiness of the study's conclusions. By implementing these strategies, the study laid the foundation representing reliable findings, enhancing its overall credibility.

Trustworthiness of the Data

Data trustworthiness was a fundamental element in qualitative research, particularly in multi-case exploratory studies that have experienced chronic verbal bullying and subsequently developed resilience in adulthood (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2016). This methodological approach enables the collection of rich, in-depth data while ensuring the trustworthiness of the findings through the establishment of credibility, dependability, transferability, confirmability, and member checking. Such an approach seeks to investigate and understand participants' individual experiences and the meanings they ascribe to them. To enhance the credibility of the data collected during this research, several strategies may be employed (Yin, 2016).

First and foremost, establishing rapport with participants was essential. Regular interactions between the researcher and participants can cultivate trust and create an environment conducive to the open exchange of personal narratives (Melton, 2019). This rapport not only fosters a sense of comfort among participants but also enhances the reliability of the data obtained. This diversity not only enriched the data but also strengthened the process (Yin, 2018). By comparing participants' findings, the researcher was able to conduct a more nuanced assessment of thematic developments. This comparative analysis yielded multiple perspectives on the data and substantially contributed to the overall trustworthiness of the research (Stake, 1995). The participants were a diverse group comprising individuals from various ethnicities, ages, socio-economic backgrounds, and genders.

The sample of this study examined individuals who have experienced chronic verbal bullying in school settings. Recruitment was conducted using a snowball sampling technique, wherein qualified individuals were invited to participate. The sample comprised 12 participants, all of whom provided informed consent. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured

interviews, each lasting 45-60 minutes, which the researcher recorded. To analyze the data, the methodological steps outlined by Yin (2018) were employed to identify the most meaningful experiences shared by the participants. This chapter delineates the findings from the analysis of the twelve interviews conducted with the research participants.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the degree to which the findings of a study are perceived as accurate and reliable (Connelly, 2016). The data protocols enabled the researcher to enhance the accuracy and clarity of data analysis (Stake, 1995). This approach enabled the development of a rich, nuanced understanding of the data, offering profound insights that enriched the interpretations. To enhance the credibility of the current study, the researcher employed a member-checking approach, in which participants reviewed the transcripts to confirm that they accurately reflected their responses. A total of 12 participants affirmed the accuracy of the transcripts. Furthermore, the researcher implemented an audit trail, which involved careful documentation of the research process and comprehensive notes on how the findings were reported. This systematic approach contributes to the study's overall trustworthiness and validity.

Member checking served a dual purpose within this study, it involves the sharing of research findings with the participants for the validation of the data, it not only enhanced the trustworthiness of the research by fostering a strong rapport between the researcher and the participants, but it also provided participants with the opportunity to verify the accuracy of how their views were represented (Mayring, 2019). This iterative process of feedback and validation was essential in establishing the reliability and confirmability of the research outcomes.

Therefore, the study's internal validity was not merely a byproduct of methodological rigor; it

also reflected the deliberate implementation of strategies to bolster the credibility of the research findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Transferability

To ensure transferability, which refers to the degree to which research findings can be applied to other contemporary contexts (Connelly, 2016). To enhance transferability, the researcher offered a comprehensive description of the methodology employed to achieve the results. Within seven days of the interview, each participant received an electronic copy of the interview transcript and was asked to provide feedback and confirm the collected data. This member validation helped improve the study's accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). This in-depth account enables readers to assess the applicability of the findings within their own contexts (Adler, 2022). Furthermore, the researcher acknowledged the study's limitations and outlined the strategies implemented to mitigate them.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the degree to which research findings can be replicated to achieve consistent results (Stahl & King, 2020). To ensure dependability, the researcher employed open-ended questions designed to elicit spontaneous, unbiased responses. A voice recording device was utilized to capture the participants' replies accurately. The interview transcripts underwent several rounds of analysis, during which major emerging themes were identified and thoroughly documented. It also evaluates the consistency and reliability of these findings over time. To bolster dependability, the researcher implemented an audit trail. This involved thoroughly documenting the research methodology, including procedures, notes, audio recordings, transcriptions, and analyses. The audit trail facilitated a transparent, accountable research process, thereby enhancing the study's credibility.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which research findings can be confirmed or corroborated by participants or other observers, thereby ensuring that the results accurately reflect the data collected. The confirmability of this study was predicated on the assumption that participants would provide authentic and candid responses to the interview questions. Throughout the interview process (see Appendix B), participants were actively encouraged to express their thoughts openly, thereby fostering an atmosphere of honesty and trust. This dedication to forthrightness not only enhanced the credibility of the findings but also ensured that the conclusions were based solely on the participants' perspectives, free of any biases or personal influences on the part of the researcher.

This concept was closely linked to the idea of neutrality, which is characterized by the absence of bias in responses gathered from study participants (Ahmed, 2024). To enhance confirmability, researchers often employ techniques such as member checking. This process involves participants reviewing the findings to ensure that they accurately represent their perspectives and experiences (Tracy, 2020). By incorporating member checking, researchers can strengthen the validity of their findings and thus satisfy the criteria for confirmability in qualitative research.

Finally, all communication with research participants was conducted via personal email addresses, ensuring a straightforward process, a thorough record of communication, the ability to address methodological inquiries, and a systematic research pathway. To uphold the integrity of data in qualitative exploratory multiple case study research, it was essential to foster strong relationships with participants, implement robust data collection and analysis procedures, engage a diverse team of researchers or assistants, and provide transparent documentation of the research

process. By embracing these strategies, researchers can notably enhance the credibility and reliability of their findings, making their exploratory multiple-case study design not just rigorous but truly impactful.

Data Analysis

The analytical framework employed in this study follows the guidelines established by Braun and Clarke (2022) for thematic analysis. This framework begins with data familiarization and coding, allowing researchers to immerse themselves in the dataset and start identifying patterns. Subsequently, the process involves generating initial themes, which are then developed and rigorously reviewed to ensure their relevance and coherence (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The analysis culminates in the refinement, definition, and naming of these themes, followed by the composition of the final report. Each phase of the data analysis procedures will be elaborated upon in the following sections.

The coding process employed an inductive analysis approach, prioritizing the dataset derived from study participants. This inductive framework facilitated the generation of codes directly from participants' data, thereby enhancing the relevance of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This methodological approach promotes a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and perspectives, which is vital in qualitative research. Data saturation serves as a foundational principle in qualitative inquiry, acting as a critical benchmark for data collection. In this study, our objective was to conduct 12 semi-structured interviews, and notably, saturation was achieved upon completing this exact number.

According to Braun and Clarke (2021), data saturation was recognized when a discernible pattern emerged in the data, allowing researchers to confidently conclude that additional data collection was unlikely to yield novel insights. During the length of this research,

the collective perspectives of the participants yielded a substantial compilation of data, resulting in a total of 497 single-spaced pages transcribed. This extensive material encapsulates the insights derived from the semi-structured interviews conducted. The data provides a robust foundation for analysis and further exploration of the research topic. An analysis of this dataset revealed a diverse array of themes, illuminating the intricate complexities of the subject under investigation. This thematic variation compellingly reflects the nuanced perspectives of the participants, thereby enriching our understanding of their experiences. Finally, the research's findings and insights, along with the attainment of saturation, not only corroborated the robustness of the collected data but also reinforced the validity and reliability of the research outcomes. The following section represents the results of this study.

Results

In this section, the researcher employed an exploratory multiple-case study design and a snowball sampling technique to recruit potential participants effectively. Data collection was conducted through engaging semi-structured one-on-one interviews (see Appendix B), fostering an in-depth exploration of the subject matter. Interviews were scheduled for 12 eligible participants and conducted over Zoom and phone. The interview sessions lasted from 45 - 60 minutes with a couple over 60 minutes. Each participant's interview was transcribed. The transcript was then sent to the participants for member checking. All participants were assigned pseudonyms (P01–P12) to protect their identities. Once the transcripts were completed and the member-checking process was completed, the interview transcripts were coded. This approach not only enriches the findings but also sheds light on the more profound insights inherent in their experiences. Throughout the coding process, I employed open coding to uncover emerging themes for each research question, which were subsequently analyzed in depth.

The development of codes, categories, and themes was achieved through a rigorous six-step thematic analysis process, designed to derive profound insights from participants' responses. This systematic approach, as articulated by Braun and Clarke (2006), consists of the following six phases: first: Immersing oneself in the data to achieve a comprehensive understanding; second: Conducting multiple and thorough reviews of the data to capture its intricacies; third: Uncovering similarities among themes and identifying shared commonalities; fourth: Critically evaluating the themes to ensure their substantive relevance, followed by the generation of codes that emerge from these insights; fifth: Defining and explicitly naming the categories; and sixth: Synthesizing the findings to construct a coherent and compelling narrative that robustly supports the research questions posed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Table 1 presents the basic demographics of all 12 eligible participants who consented to participate in this study, illustrating the diverse backgrounds of these resilient individuals and showcasing their unique stories and experiences. The study sample in Table 1 comprised 12 participants, eight females and four males. The ethnic identities represented included three White (Caucasian) individuals (2 females and 1 male), seven Black (African American) individuals (5 females and 2 males), one Egyptian female, and one Hispanic (Latino) male. Participants' ages ranged from 36 to 80 years. Finally, the researcher presented the thematic results for each of the two research questions.

Table 1*Participant Demographics*

Participant	Education	Career	Ethnicity	Employed	Gender	Age
P01	Bachelor	Writer	Caucasian	< 40 hrs	Female	77
P02	Juris Doctor	Lawyer	Black	40+ hrs	Female	52
P03	Some Colleges	Project Manager	Black	40 hrs	Male	55
P04	Master	Realtor	Black	40 hrs	Male	69
P05	Bachelor	Teacher	Caucasian	< 40 hrs	Female	56
P06	Associate Art	Pre-school Teacher	Egyptian	Not working	Female	62
P07	Bachelor	Teacher	Black	40 hrs	Female	44
P08	Some Colleges	Vocational Nurse	Black	40 hrs	Female	61
P09	Bachelor	Engineer	Caucasian	Retired	Male	80
P10	Bachelor	Registered Nurse	Black	Retired	Female	73
P11	Bachelor	Director Art Gallery	Latin	40 hrs	Male	36
P12	Trade School	Nursing Assistant	Black	40 hrs	Female	61

Research Question 1

RQ1: The first research question was, how do adults who experienced chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their processes of developing and sustaining resilience in adulthood, particularly in relation to personal and social challenges?

The theoretical framework of SCT was utilized to inform the results. There were 10 interview questions (see Appendix A). The interview questions were based on the constructs from this framework to answer the RQs. In an in-depth exploration with 12 participants, the interview questions were designed to gather robust, meaningful data and to draw out compelling insights from participants' experiences with resilience. The participants' perspectives provided valuable insight into the processes of resilience and recovery. The results showed three principal themes: Theme 1. Changing the way they perceive a situation, Theme 2. Promoting mind and body Well-being, and Theme 3. Sustaining resilience. The thematic analysis of RQ1 responses identified three principal themes, each with subthemes. Table 2 delineates the basic themes for RQ1 and RQ1-a – from the 12 interviewees.

Table 2

Research Question 1 – Themes and Sub-themes

Themes	Subthemes
Changing the way they perceive a situation	Building Self Awareness Developing emotional regulation Managing mental stress
Promoting Mind and Body Well-being	Seeking self-care support Healthy emotional balance
Sustaining Resilience	Periodic reflection Building long-term emotional endurance Education and training

There were 10 interview questions regarding the “Adults’ perspectives on resiliency after the trauma of being chronically verbally bullied in adolescence, providing insight into how their perception influenced their resilience.

Main Theme 1 for RQ1: The primary central theme in response to RQ1 was changing how they perceive a situation. According to Robson (2023), changing how they perceive a situation is a technique that involves altering one's perspective toward a given situation, behavior, or thought. This process aims to transform negative, self-destructive beliefs into positive, constructive ones, highlighting the importance of mindset in achieving emotional and mental well-being. There were three key subthemes under this central theme of changing how they perceive a situation: (a) Building self-awareness, (b) Developing emotional regulation, and (c) Managing mental stress.

Ten of 12 participants reported intentionally fostering personal development by changing how they perceive situations. By cultivating positive and constructive beliefs, these individuals have enhanced their capacity to cope with life’s challenges, demonstrating the pivotal role of adaptive thinking processes in resilience-building. The participants mentioned that due to the chronic bullying they endured during adolescence, they now look back on the situations as having retrospectively altered the way they perceive situations. These reflections suggest that, over time, adversity contributed to a shift in perspective, enabling them to reinterpret challenging circumstances and potentially fostering greater psychological resilience. By changing the way they perceive a situation, they can increase their overall well-being and promote healthier behavioral responses. They acknowledge that the ability to change how they perceive a situation is a means of increasing resilience and reducing anxiety. As a result of chronic verbal bullying,

participants also noted that these changes had a positive and meaningful impact on how they responded to various situations.

They demonstrated an openness to altering their perceptions, which facilitated adaptive coping strategies and contributed to more effective responses in the face of adversity. The participants further indicated that implemented changes had a demonstrably positive impact on their responses to a variety of situations. Moreover, these individuals demonstrated a willingness to reconsider and adapt their perspectives, reflecting openness to mental and behavioral change. Therefore, when asked about building self-awareness, participants described how these changes had a positive impact, as reflected in Subtheme One: Changing the Way They Perceive a Situation. Their responses highlighted the connection between increased self-awareness and the adoption of more adaptive, constructive perspectives, which contributed to their overall resilience.

Subtheme 1, building self-awareness, falls under the central theme of changing how they perceive a situation. When asked about building self-awareness, five of the 12 participants emphasized its significance for personal development. Self-awareness emerged as a salient theme, with three participants specifically noting that heightened awareness of their own behaviors would enhance the quality of their responses to various situations. These insights underscore the role of self-reflection in fostering adaptive coping strategies and promoting resilience. This self-reflective capacity was viewed as instrumental in facilitating adaptive coping and informed decision-making when confronted with challenges. When asked about building self-awareness, each participant offered a compelling perspective, emphasizing the transformative value of self-reflection. Participant 04 mentioned, “argued that consciously

examining one's own behaviors and thought patterns is essential for personal growth and improved responses to challenging situations.”

This persuasive assertion underscores the critical role of self-awareness in fostering adaptability and resilience, encouraging others to engage in ongoing self-examination as a pathway to positive change. P01 asserted - "Upon recognizing feelings of irritability, I would take a walk in the alley and have a cigarette. This practice provided an opportunity to re-evaluate my thoughts and contributed to the development of more effective coping strategies in response to life's challenges.” By fostering self-awareness, participants can identify maladaptive thought patterns that may contribute to negative outcomes, such as anxiety or depression. Two participants reported being unable to change their perspective on a situation because they had a panic attack.

P06 also mentioned that “My preference toward self-preservation often resulted in confrontational encounters; however, in my earlier years, I more frequently opted for avoidance as a coping mechanism.” Three participants noted that their thoughts regarding self-awareness in learning to actively engage in self-reflection, in which I can understand my emotions and how they perceive a situation in my resiliency journey. Self-awareness allows them to consciously re-evaluate these thoughts, leading to more constructive and positive interpretations of experiences (Robson, 2023). Additionally, P07 further mentioned that “Connecting in open conversation with myself and developing self-faith were helpful for me. Furthermore, spending time in nature considerably contributed to my well-being, as it enabled me to reframe my perspective on various situations.” All participants mentioned that facing their stressors enables them to contribute to their personal strengthening of their resilience. This journey not only facilitates the

promotion of behavioral change but also contributes to the enhancement of overall well-being (Robson, 2023).

Subtheme 2, Developing Emotional Regulation. Under the central theme, changing the way they perceive a situation. All participants mentioned that in the context of developing emotional regulation, participants highlighted the importance of employing strategies to distance themselves from individuals who perpetuate negative interactions. Four out of 12 participants emphasized that developing emotional regulation is essential for successfully navigating challenging times. Their experiences strongly suggest that honing this skill can make a pointed difference in overcoming adversity. P05 asserted that “By becoming more skilled in recognizing my emotions, I gained greater control over my emotional responses. This awareness empowered me to respond more effectively when faced with adversity, demonstrating just how transformative emotional regulation can be.” Participant P09 also confirmed the positive experiences mentioned, “By on purpose acknowledging my emotional state, I strengthen my resilience. This self-awareness empowers me to adapt more readily to adversity and safeguard my well-being, proving the profound impact that emotional awareness can have on one’s life.”

All 12 participants agreed that true transformation begins with changing the way they perceive and respond to various situations. By doing so, they not only shape their emotions and behaviors but also set themselves on a path toward lasting positive change. Key to this activity is developing self-awareness, which enables individuals to recognize and understand their thoughts, beliefs, and emotional responses. Changing the way, they perceive a situation is a strategy for improving mental health outcomes, as each participant learned to approach life’s challenges with a more adaptive mindset (Robson, 2023).

Subtheme 3: Managing Mental Stress under the main theme of changing the way they perceive a situation. Six out of 12 participants affirmed that managing mental stress is a powerful tool for changing emotional responses and behavior. Their experiences underscore the effectiveness of stress management in fostering meaningful personal growth. P07 mentioned that “In recognizing the importance of my well-being, I decided to start seeing a therapist. This empowered me to confront adversity head-on, and by managing my mental stress sometimes even through simple actions like punching my pillow to release my anger, I found it an effective way to cope and persevere.” Additionally, P10 noted, “I realized that relying on my mental state alone was not enough, so I often reached out to my friends for support. Their encouragement became an essential source of strength, reminding me that seeking help can make all the difference in overcoming challenges. Participant P03 expressed that “I felt like I knew how to manage my emotions, but I was unable to control my intense rage, revealing the gap with my knowledge of how to apply it.” The strategies for managing mental stress were ineffective for him when he highlighted the specific aspects where he felt these approaches failed to address his needs on a particular occasion.

Main Theme 2: The second main theme was Promoting mind and body well-being. According to Tang (2019) psychological well-being for mental health is defined as including meaning, fulfillment, happiness, as well as resilience, coping, emotion regulation, and healthy problem solving. The well-being of both mind and body emphasizes that improvement can often lead to a positive outcome.

There were two essential subthemes under this main theme, which were (1) seeking self-care support, and (2) Healthy emotional balance. This perspective aligns with adopting general approaches, which enable participants to recover from adversities. When asked about the

subtheme one: seeking Self-care support under main theme two: promoting mind and body well-being. Four of the 12 participants reported that seeking self-care assistance was effective. The following 3 direct quotes are: P04 affirmed that, “I had to enhance my overall well-being by not only playing sports... but I had to pursue the help of self-care intervention when my sister and mother encouraged me to stand up for myself, foster my resilience... Physical well-being was in me playing sports.”

Three of the 12 participants agreed that to enhance their overall well-being, they recognized that participation in sports was beneficial for their physical health, which strengthened their resilience, addressing both their physical and psychological needs, contributing to their sense of well-being. P06 asserted that, “I had to practice by attending yoga and physical exercises...being consistent with physical exercise was my routine. This allowed me to sustain my personal growth and psychological well-being, which helped me foster resilience.” Four of the twelve participants affirmed that sustaining their personal growth and psychological well-being was essential to strengthening their body and enabling them to cultivate resilience, and reinforcing a positive mindset and self-improvement. P09 affirmed that “I had to pursue my own self-care and support, which enabled me to... sort through my emotions and coping strategies.” Three participants also agreed that the same thought in that processing their emotions enables them to refine their coping strategies, as this deeper understanding contributes to them managing their psychological challenges.

When asked about Subtheme two: Healthy emotional balance under the main theme promoting mind and body well-being. Subtheme two had six out of 12 participants who discussed the importance of healthy emotional balance in fostering overall well-being in both mind and body. They articulated that emotional stability is essential not only for mental health,

but also for physical well-being, underscoring the connection of mind and body. This involves implementing behavioral changes to enhance psychological resilience and promote physical health (Espiner et al., 2017). Seven out of 12 participants mentioned that they can cultivate a more appropriate state of being by integrating strategies such as mindfulness, emotional regulation, and social support, which supports psychological and physiological wellness.

P10 asserted, “My whole promoting of physical and mental well-being through connection, which helps me to cultivate my resilience, my emotional and physical health underscores the importance of addressing behavioral patterns that may hinder well-being, thereby leading to improved health outcomes and a more fulfilling life experience.” Four of the participants noted that cultivating their resilience required them to remain committed to protecting their mental well-being, enabling them to improve their health and lead a more fulfilling life. Additionally, P11 mentioned that “I had to find a connection through my community in the LGBTQ+. This strategy for my mind and body enabled me to sustain my resilience by possessing a meaningful connection, which allowed me to cultivate and sustain my physical and mental well-being.” Two more participants agreed that focusing on their behavioral patterns, which could ultimately impede their well-being, could ultimately improve it.

Main Theme 3: The third main theme was sustaining resilience. According to Easton-Gomez (2022) the concept of resilience is increasingly recognized as a vital attribute in coping with change and adversity. Sustaining resilience often involves repetitive exposure to challenging situations, whether in personal or professional contexts. There were three essential subthemes under this main theme, which were (a) periodic reflection, (b) building long-term emotional endurance, and (c) Education and training. To enhance emotional resilience, it is essential to develop and implement effective strategies that foster a healthy emotional balance.

Such strategies may include mindfulness practices, behavioral techniques, and supportive social networks, all of which can help participants adapt and thrive in the face of adversity (Espiner et al., 2017).

All twelve participants indicated that they intentionally work on maintaining resilience when faced with adversity, which causes them to navigate adversity through regular reflective practices. P02 asserted, “I had to engage in reflective practices to assess my emotions and my experiences, which enabled me to foster a healthy emotional balance, to maintain my resilience.” Three participants asserted that a positive aspect of engaging in reflective practices empowered them and ultimately led to a healthy emotional balance. P03 shared that “My reflective process not only enhances self-awareness by exploring what is causing me to feel the anxiety I am experiencing during my adversities and challenges, which I am presently facing, but by focusing on my emotional resilience, I was able to cultivate a better emotional stance which supports my sustained resilience.” Their intentional efforts were important in sustaining their resilience and strengthening their determination. P08 affirmed that “I actively try to dedicate time to thoughtfulness, which helps me to navigate my stressors and cultivate a more proactive mindset, leading me to improved mental well-being. By managing exposures to challenging situations, I was able to sustain my resilience.” Three participants mentioned that performing these reflective practices was vital in empowering them to foster healthy mental well-being.

Research Question 1-a (RQ1-a)

The second central theme in response to the research question (RQ1-a) was: How do these adults reflect on the strategies they have employed to cultivate resilience and navigate adversity across diverse life domains, including relationships, employment, and emotional well-being?

The results revealed three central themes: (1) seeking social support from friends and family, (2) education and maintaining a job, and (3) seeking spirituality. Corresponding subthemes further illuminated each of these central themes. The findings, summarized in Table 3, provide a detailed account of the specific subthemes within each central area, offering a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted strategies participants employed to cultivate and sustain resilience.

Table 3

Research Question 1-a and Themes

Themes	Subthemes
Seeking social support from friends and family	Validation and support promote good mental health. Obtaining Comfort and Empathy from friends.
Education and maintaining a job	Maintaining resilience in society Possessing successful careers
Seeking Spirituality	Personal connection to spiritual beliefs A sense of belonging, hope through prayer and meditation.

The research question was formulated to clarify how participants were motivated to attain and sustain their resilience. To address this, the researcher conducted an in-depth exploration with the twelve participants for RQ1-a, seeking their insights into experiences of resilience following chronic verbal bullying during adolescence. This inquiry was grounded in Bandura's

(1986) Social Cognitive Theory, which provided a theoretical framework for examining the relationships among personal, behavioral, and environmental factors that influence the development and maintenance of resilience. The researcher invited the participants to reflect on the strategies they employed to navigate and overcome the trauma associated with chronic verbal bullying. The process of cultivating resilience and navigating adversity was a multifaceted endeavor that crosses various life domains, including interpersonal relationships, occupational challenges, and emotional well-being. Resilience is identified as the capacity to adapt and thrive in the face of stressors and difficulties. In relationships, it involves fostering strong connections and maintaining communication during challenging times (Espiner et al., 2017).

The participants' perspectives provided valuable insights into the process of resilience and recovery. The thematic analysis of RQ1-a responses illuminated three main themes. The principal themes for RQ1-a are: (1) Seeking social support from friends and family, (2) Education and maintaining a job, and (3) Seeking Spirituality. Along with the principal themes, there were associated subthemes. The results represent the foundational themes identified for RQ1-a based on interviews with the twelve participants. Notably, when asked about seeking social support from friends and family, all twelve participants expressed united agreement regarding its importance. This agreement underscores the critical role that social support networks play in fostering resilience following experiences of chronic verbal bullying during adolescence.

Central Theme One: The first main theme under RQ 1-a was seeking social support from friends and family. There were two essential subthemes under this central theme, which were (1) Validation and support promote good mental health, and (2) Obtaining comfort and empathy from friends. All twelve participants reflected on how they have cultivated resilience

and navigated adversity across diverse personal and employment settings in fostering well-being. Resilience in the workplace plays a pivotal role in managing workplace stress, navigating job transitions, and overcoming career-related obstacles. It enables individuals to sustain productivity and maintain job satisfaction even in the face of adversity. Additionally, emotional well-being was profoundly influenced by the capacity to develop and exercise resilience, as it facilitates effective emotion regulation, reduces the risk of mental health challenges, and promotes overall psychological well-being.

When asked about subtheme one: Validation and Support Promote Good Mental Health, which falls under the main theme of Seeking Social Support from Friends and Family, participants emphasized the critical roles of validation and support in fostering mental well-being. Validation and support not only help individuals navigate adversity across various life domains but also strengthen resilience. The implication of seeking social support from friends and family cannot be overstated, as these relationships offer both emotional and practical assistance that are essential for sustaining good mental health. Participant P02 asserted, “My mother’s friend, Mother B., offered me remarkable support and wise counsel, encouraging me to stand tall and confront my bullies instead of fleeing from them. My social support networks help me develop coping strategies that are effective in managing stress and overcoming challenges.

The pursuit of social support from friends and family was a vital aspect of promoting good mental health and effectively navigating adversity across various life domains.” While P03 stated, “I find it essential to reach out to someone I trust. Their comfort in confiding in me...helped me to feel a supportive space for sharing. The ability to seek and receive support from close relationships not only lowers my stress but also fosters a sense of belonging and purpose.” Furthermore, P08 mentioned that “The support which I found in my friends...I played

sports and my teammates, which I often cherished as they uplifted me during this time, their validating my experiences led me to improved psychological outcomes, as I felt understood and valued.” The importance of cultivating relationships lies in their capacity to promote empathy and understanding, which serve as buffers against stress and facilitate adaptive responses to challenges. Recognizing and understanding these interpersonal dynamics can inform the development of interventions aimed at strengthening social support systems, thereby improving mental health outcomes and overall well-being.

When asked about subtheme two: Obtaining Comfort and Empathy from Friends, under the central theme of seeking social support from friends and family, participants highlighted the essential role that comfort and empathy from social networks play in fostering positive mental health. The desire for such support underscores the importance of nurturing relationships that provide emotional reassurance, which was critical for maintaining psychological well-being and resilience in the face of adversity. Research by Robson (2023) indicates that supportive friendships play a vital role in enhancing emotional well-being and resilience. Five of 12 participants reported experiencing adversity across multiple life domains. They emphasized that their ability to seek and receive social support from friends and family played a pointed role in strengthening their coping mechanisms. This finding highlights the essential function of social support networks in enabling individuals to manage challenges and maintain resilience.

Nine of the 12 participants reported receiving emotional support. Participant P05 mentioned that “I was encouraged by my family to embrace the comfort and heartfelt support...that would enable me to rise above the bullying incident and their negativity. The underlying forces of social support can inform interventions aimed at strengthening these relationships to support better mental health outcomes.” Additionally, P07 stated, “I cannot

emphasize how I found so much comfort in revealing my emotions to my grandmother and mother; their steady support made me feel safe for my thoughts and feelings. The importance of my seeking social support from friends and family cannot be overstated, as these relationships provide emotional and practical assistance that enhances resilience.”

When asked about the second theme to emerge under main theme two: Education and Maintaining a Job, all twelve participants expressed unanimous agreement regarding its significance. All 12 participants attended college, further stressing the importance of education and stable employment in fostering good mental health, which cannot be overstated. Participation in educational pursuits and sustained employment not only ensures financial security but also cultivates a sense of purpose and self-worth. These factors collectively contribute to enhanced psychological well-being and resilience in the face of life’s challenges (Robson, 2023).

All twelve participants indicated their chosen career path. The relationship between education, employment, and mental health is multifaceted and notable. Engaging in educational pursuits not only enhances knowledge and skills but also fosters a sense of purpose and belonging, which are crucial for mental well-being. Moreover, maintaining stable employment contributes to financial security and personal identity, both vital for promoting good mental health. The relationship between education, sustained employment, and robust social support systems is critical in fostering mental health, particularly in the face of adversity. Strategies aimed at enhancing these areas can substantially improve individual well-being and resilience.

There were two essential subthemes under this main theme of *Education and maintaining a job*, which were (1) *Maintaining resilience in society*, (2) *Possessing successful careers*. All 12 participants emphasize the importance of setting specific, achievable goals a

navigating adversity by establishing clear objectives that create a sense of direction and motivation, helping them stay focused and resilient. When asked about the subtheme two: *Maintaining resilience in society*. Six of the 12 participants mentioned that its importance in fostering collective well-being. Participant 07 asserted that “From her perspective, prioritizing initiatives that support mental health by reading or exercising it equipped her to navigate adversity across diverse life areas, which is essential for cultivating societal resilience”. Such efforts not only strengthen individual coping capacities but also contribute to the broader community's adaptability and stability.

When asked about subtheme two Possessing Successful Careers, emerged under the main theme of Education and Maintaining a Job. All twelve participants demonstrated remarkable resilience, which contributed to their success in achieving careers across diverse professional fields (see Table 1), including accounting, law, nursing, teaching, art gallery directing, and professional writing. This finding underscores the integral role of educational attainment and sustained employment in fostering both career success and long-term resilience. This highlights the potential for individuals to overcome challenges and achieve their professional aspirations through perseverance and adaptability.

Main Theme 3 One-a: The third main theme was “Seeking Spirituality” as part of their coping mechanisms; participants reflected on the role of spirituality in fostering resilience. The pursuit of spirituality that fosters positive mental health can be instrumental in navigating adversity across various life domains. Engaging with spiritual practices may enhance coping mechanisms and encourage resilience, particularly during challenging times.

There were two essential subthemes under this main theme, which were (1) personal connections to spiritual beliefs, and (2) A sense of belonging, hope through prayer and meditation

All twelve participants indicated that seeking spirituality was a key component of their coping mechanisms, highlighting the major role that spirituality plays in fostering resilience. This finding underscores the importance of spiritual practices in helping individuals navigate adversity, providing a sense of meaning, purpose, and inner strength that contributes to their overall psychological well-being. When asked about seeking spirituality, P05 asserted - " I had that kind of faith, the kind of spirituality that I knew that I was going to get through this, this is what kept me focused. By integrating spiritual wellness with strong social networks, individuals can cultivate a more holistic approach to mental well-being and effectively manage life's challenges". P06 also indicated that "my parents were Christian, they reminded me God created you, have faith in God, for God is the one who knows what you are going through, the importance of my family support cannot be understated. These interpersonal connections provide emotional sustenance."

Subtheme 1: involves personal connections to spiritual beliefs that offer comfort and guidance during challenging times. The exploration of personal connections to spiritual beliefs reveals their meaningful role in providing comfort and guidance during challenging times. Four of 12 participants reported seeking a personal connection to their spiritual beliefs, noting that these beliefs are often associated with improved mental health outcomes. Participant P06 emphasized that "my spirituality serves as a source of resilience and provided effective coping strategies when steering through my adversities." This connection underscores the role of spiritual beliefs in supporting psychological well-being and adaptive functioning.

While P12 agreed that "my weekly attendance at church every Sunday, where I felt accepted and comforted during these times, reinforced both spiritual and emotional well-being. In this way, my spirituality and social support were viewed as connected." Spirituality and social

connection emerged as key mechanisms that enable individuals to manage life's difficulties more effectively. These aspects provide essential sources of support, meaning, and belonging, thereby enhancing individuals' capacity for resilience and their ability to navigate adversity across multiple life domains.

Subtheme 2: A sense of belonging, hope through prayer and meditation under seeking spirituality. A sense of belonging and hope cultivated through prayer and meditation emerged as important aspects under the theme of seeking spirituality. Three of the twelve participants specifically identified these practices as integral to their resiliency journey, emphasizing the role of spiritual engagement in fostering hope, connectedness, and psychological strength during times of adversity. When asked about a sense of hope through prayer and meditation, P04 asserted that, "My spirituality in having faith allowed me to get through this struggle where I felt like I could go on. My spiritual beliefs are linked to improved mental well-being." While P08 stated that "my spirituality serves as a source of resilience and coping strategies when steering my stressful circumstances."

The themes and subthemes presented in this study were derived from carefully selected excerpts of participants' transcripts, gathered during one-on-one interviews with the researcher. This rigorous analytical approach ensured that the findings reflect participants' lived experiences and perspectives, providing a nuanced understanding of the factors contributing to resilience. The themes and subthemes presented were subsequently validated through excerpts from the transcripts of the one-on-one interviews conducted between participants and the researcher. By establishing clear correlations between these themes and the research question, the researcher was able to conduct a critical evaluation of the study's findings. This evaluative process served to ensure the validity and impact of the results, reinforcing their relevance within the broader

context of the study. These insights were thoughtfully aligned with the research question, leading to the development of themes and subthemes that are richly detailed in the results section. The researcher conducted a thorough evaluation of the study's findings, ensuring their validity and their impact on the main research narrative.

Comparison of Results to the Literature Review

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory, multiple-case study was to investigate how adults who endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their experiences of developing and sustaining resilience into adulthood (Stake, 2006). The factors that motivated how participants, with the evaluation of findings centering on the two primary research questions and the study's overarching theoretical framework. This approach enabled a comprehensive examination of the data in relation to existing literature and established theoretical constructs, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of the implications of the findings. The theoretical framework guiding this study is Bandura's (1986) conceptualization of bullying and resiliency, grounded in Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which emphasizes the dynamic interplay between individual, behavioral, and environmental influences on resilience. Albert Bandura first developed SCT. His framework, as outlined in Bandura (1986), emphasizes the importance of observational learning, imitation, and modeling, demonstrating how individuals can acquire new behaviors not only through direct experience but also through observing others within their social contexts.

This section provides a comprehensive evaluation of the research findings in relation to the study's research questions, incorporates pertinent literature, and aligns with a theoretical framework grounded in Albert Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory. According to Olweus and Limber (2010), the prevalence of bullying among children is not a normative or acceptable

phenomenon. In the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked to detail their methods for addressing chronic verbal bullying in their educational environments. They shared the strategies they implemented and their views on the efficacy of the measures taken to confront and mitigate this critical issue. The subsequent section essentially examines each finding in relation to existing literature and the overarching theoretical framework guiding this study. By synthesizing the empirical data with established theories, we enhance our understanding of the research implications and contribute to the ongoing scholarly conversation.

Research Question 1: How do adults who experienced chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their processes of developing and sustaining resilience in adulthood, particularly in relation to personal and social challenges?

Theme 1: Changing the way they perceive a situation. This theme aligns with the literature. The study by McGrath (2024) highlights the importance of changing the way they perceive a situation during adulthood as a crucial process for building and maintaining resilience, particularly in the face of personal and social challenges. Through this process, adults can shift their perspectives, allowing them to better navigate difficulties and foster a more adaptive response to obstacles they encounter in their development. This approach not only aids individual growth but also enhances their ability to engage with and contribute positively to their social environments.

Theme 2: Promoting Mind and Body Well-being. According to research conducted by Melton, (2019), reinforcing these qualities, the research highlights the importance of fostering holistic well-being during adulthood, positioning it as a critical mechanism for developing and maintaining resilience in the face of personal and social challenges. By integrating mental and

physical wellness strategies, the study underscores the necessity of equipping individuals with the tools to navigate and thrive amid adversity.

Theme 3: Sustaining Resilience. The research underscores the importance of maintaining resilience throughout adulthood, framing it as a continuous process essential for developing and preserving resilience in the face of personal and social challenges. This perspective highlights the dynamic nature of resilience and its critical role in navigating life's adversities. Resilience, particularly in the context of managing challenging behaviors, has been shown to influence individuals' motivations and to have a potential impact on both mental and physical well-being. The ability to adapt and respond constructively to adversity not only shapes motivational processes but also contributes to the holistic health of body and mind.

Research Question 1-a: How do these adults reflect on the strategies they have employed to cultivate resilience and navigate adversity across diverse life domains, including relationships, employment, and emotional well-being?

Theme 1: Seeking social support from friends and family. Devodua et al. (2024) The research highlights the importance of leveraging social support from familial and peer networks as a mechanism for fostering resilience in adulthood, ultimately contributing to sustained emotional well-being. This process underscores the vital role that interpersonal relationships play in enhancing individuals' ability to cope with challenges and maintain psychological health over time.

Theme 2: Education and maintaining a job. Devodua et al. (2024) conducted a study that emphasizes the critical role of education and stable employment in fostering resilience throughout adulthood, positioning these factors as integral processes for enhancing emotional well-being. This highlights the connection between lifelong learning, career stability, and

individual psychological health, suggesting that investment in these areas can knowingly contribute to a person's overall ability to navigate life's challenges.

Theme 3: Seeking Spirituality. The research by Devodua et al. (2024) underscores the importance of pursuing spirituality as a means to foster resilience throughout adulthood, framing this endeavor as a fundamental process for promoting emotional well-being. By engaging in spiritual practices or exploration, individuals can develop coping mechanisms that enhance their psychological fortitude in the face of life's challenges. This study contributes to the understanding of how spiritual engagement can serve as a protective factor in emotional health, offering a pathway to greater resilience.

Bandura's (1977) framework of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), centered on the principle of reciprocal determinism, reveals the complex interplay among the environment, behavior, and individual cognition, evidence from cognitive findings substantively supports the tenets of reciprocal determinism. Participants articulated how collaborative support from family and friends pointedly enhanced their resilience, facilitating a balance between their personal and professional spheres while fostering individual growth. This underscores the critical role that social connections play in personal development and overall well-being.

Summary

In chapter 4, the researcher developed patterns and connections to create codes and themes. After analyzing the coded transcripts derived from the semi-structured interviews and incorporating feedback from a peer, the researcher was able to identify three main themes. This systematic and collaborative approach to data analysis enhanced the credibility and rigor of the findings, ensuring that the themes accurately reflected the participants' experiences and perspectives. The themes determined the findings, which were then linked to the results and

literature, and ultimately to Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory. Trustworthiness was demonstrated throughout this chapter through the provision of dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability. Trustworthiness in qualitative research was about transparency, reflexivity, and thoughtful decision-making. Credibility in qualitative research was essential, and this study exemplifies it through several rigorous validation techniques. The researcher employed member checks, allowing participants to review and confirm the accuracy of the interpretations, further strengthening the reliability of the results. Additionally, the researcher maintained transparency by providing a comprehensive and nuanced description of the data, context, conditions, and participants involved in the study. By addressing these aspects, the researcher established confidence in the data and findings.

This investigation aims to illuminate how such experiences may influence psychological well-being and interpersonal relationships in later life. This study involved 12 participants who shared insights into their experiences. The themes that emerged from the findings served as the result of existing literature. This approach aimed to provide a rich, complex representation of the lived experiences of this population. In total, 12 participants were interviewed.

The researcher developed an interview guide to facilitate the interviewing process, ensuring that the questions posed were not only practical but also ethically sound, thereby allowing the collection of relevant data tailored to the study's two research questions. Participants in this study were recruited through snowball sampling. Semi-structured interviews were conducted via both telephone and zoom to gather comprehensive qualitative data. The data analysis adhered to the framework established by Smith et al. (2019), enabling the identification of prominent themes across the dataset. Upon analyzing participants' responses, several

consistent themes emerged, aligning with the specific interview questions, thereby contributing to the overall validity and reliability of the findings.

In evaluating the findings of the research questions, it was essential to recognize that these questions were formulated based on both the existing literature and the theoretical framework employed in this study. There were three main themes that summarized participants' perceptions of resilience. The themes identified in this study were the following: first, changing the way they perceive a situation, second, Promoting Mind and Body Well-Being, and third, sustaining resilience. Each theme provided a foundation for the key findings. The three key findings of this study examined how participants' perceptions shape their resilience. The first finding was seeking social support from friends and family. The second finding was maintaining a job. The third finding was seeking spirituality. The research study's results aligned closely with the prevailing literature. Specifically, the findings related to Theme 1 corroborated the existing literature. Chapter 5 will provide a detailed analysis of the implications, examination of overall contributions, findings, recommendations for practice and future research, and conclusions for this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Study Summary

The problem this study addressed was adults' perspectives on resiliency after the trauma of being chronically verbally bullied in adolescence. Specifically, this study investigates how these experiences relate to SCT by examining the long-term effects of verbal bullying experienced in adolescence (Adebusuyi et al., 2022). The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study was to investigate how adults who endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their experiences of developing and sustaining resilience into adulthood (Stake, 2006). By examining participants' experiences, the study aimed to reveal the processes, strategies, and contextual factors that contributed to the development and maintenance of resilience in adulthood (Bonanno et al., 2012; Ryff et al., 1998). This problem carries important implications for resiliency in adulthood. While existing research has identified a range of factors influencing resilience, there was a notable gap in the literature regarding the application of SCT to this issue (Yin, 2018). Few studies have systematically used SCT to examine the factors that contribute to healthy mental health outcomes following adolescent verbal bullying.

There was a dearth of research on SCT, which provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how personal perception and behavioral influences interact to foster resilience. SCT suggests that individuals' perceptions and behaviors mutually influence one another, shaping resilience in the face of adversity. By examining these interactions, the theory reveals the process through which individuals interpret challenges, adopt adaptive coping strategies, and ultimately develop resiliency. By leveraging SCT, future research can uncover the mechanisms through which individuals develop and maintain psychological resilience, offering valuable insights for interventions aimed at promoting mental well-being (Schunk et al., 2019). Chapter 5

presents the researcher's findings, data interpretations, study implications, the development of key themes, and proposes future research.

Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study was to investigate how adults who endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their experiences of developing and sustaining resilience into adulthood (Stake, 2006). This study researches the pervasive issue of adults' perspectives on resiliency after the trauma of being chronically verbally bullied in adolescence. This motivated the adults' perspective on resiliency after the trauma of being chronically verbally bullied in adolescence. This research seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of how adults interpret and navigate their past bullying experiences through the lens of resilience.

Data for this study were collected through individual interviews with 12 eligible participants, all recruited via snowball sampling. Each participant provided informed consent prior to participation. The interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, with a couple of sessions extending beyond 60 minutes. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis, ensuring a systematic and rigorous approach to identifying and interpreting key patterns in the data. The research investigated this by gathering adults' beliefs and perspectives through one-on-one semi-structured interviews. This qualitative approach facilitated an in-depth examination of participants' struggles, challenges, and perceptions of what supported their motivation and sustained their commitment to building and maintaining resilience. By capturing their personal experiences, the study provides valuable insights into the factors that support their resilience in adulthood. Several

themes emerged regarding participants' coping strategies, long-term impacts, and personal growth (Bonanno et al., 2012).

Qualitative methods were deemed more suitable for this research than quantitative approaches. Quantitative research was designed to measure data through statistical analyses and subsequently generalize findings to a broader population (Fisher, 2019). The qualitative approach employed in this study facilitated an in-depth exploration of participants' lived experiences and perspectives. This methodological choice enabled the capture of rich, detailed narratives, providing nuanced insights into the processes and factors that contribute to resilience. By prioritizing participants' voices and subjective realities, the qualitative approach enhanced understanding of resilience in the context of chronic verbal bullying. This methodology facilitated a nuanced understanding of the complex processes underlying resilience, which may not be fully captured through standardized measurement alone. This study examines adults' perspectives on resiliency after experiencing trauma. Qualitative methods were most appropriate for capturing the depth and complexity of their experiences. The use of quantitative research methods would not align with the study's goals, as such methods are primarily designed to measure frequencies and assess quantifiable data points (Barnham, 2015). In contrast, this research aimed to explore perceptions and experiences unique to each individual element that are inherently unquantifiable and best understood through qualitative inquiry.

The research design used open-ended, semi-structured interviews with participants who were chronically verbally abused during adolescence. To enhance the credibility and validity of the findings, interview observations and member checking were integrated. The use of semi-structured interviews was particularly appropriate for this study, as it enabled the collection of diverse perspectives from participants while balancing structure and flexibility (Brinkmann &

Kvale, 2015). This approach facilitated in-depth exploration of individual experiences and supported the emergence of rich, nuanced data.

Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic approach used to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns within the qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This approach involves a systematic, six-phase process that facilitates the identification, interpretation, and synthesis of key patterns and themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), the six phases of thematic analysis are: first, becoming familiar with the data; second, generating initial codes; third, searching for themes; fourth, reviewing themes; fifth, defining themes; and sixth, writing up the findings. This structured approach ensures a rigorous and transparent analysis of qualitative data, enabling researchers to derive meaningful insights from complex datasets.

The researcher's approach for this study was designed to ensure authenticity by eliciting and representing participants' experiences, thoughts, beliefs, opinions, and perceptions concerning the motivations that influence their commitment to resilience. By prioritizing participants' experiences, the study aimed to provide insight into the complex factors that drive sustained resilience. The researcher identified several limitations in this study. Notable constraints included the sample size, which may affect the findings, as well as the geographic location of participants, which could limit the diversity of perspectives captured. None of these limitations affected the trustworthiness of this study in terms of credibility and accuracy (Mertens, 2018). Additionally, the study was limited to the specific type of bullying experienced by participants and related contextual factors, potentially limiting the applicability of the results to broader populations. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the study's findings and when designing future research. These limitations may have influenced the range of the findings, underscoring the need for further research with more diverse populations.

Another potential limitation of this study was the possibility of researcher bias arising from the researcher's personal experiences. To mitigate this risk, the study adhered closely to established qualitative research protocols, including a structured interview protocol and member checking. These procedures served to limit extemporaneous discussion, maintain the validity of the data collection instrument, and introduce additional sources of accountability. By rigorously following these protocols, the study minimized the influence of researcher bias and enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Additionally, as Yin (2016) emphasized, researcher bias can be further mitigated through ongoing review of related research, which enhances accuracy, validation, and credibility. By regularly engaging with contemporary literature and maintaining an ongoing process of cross-verification, researchers can ensure that their interpretations remain grounded in established knowledge and methodological rigor. This practice contributes to the overall trustworthiness and reliability of qualitative research findings.

The following subsections detail these findings and explore how individuals navigated their recovery and built resilience after enduring adolescent verbal bullying. The research question and associated interview questions were intended to explore participants' experiences. This qualitative study used Bandura's (1986) SCT to gain insight into participants' unique experiences (Schunk, 2019). The sample consisted of 12 participants, which was deemed sufficient for this qualitative study. The initial goal was to interview 10 participants, with the intent of continuing until saturation was reached. It was reached with 12 participants and became redundant (Creswell, 2007). This approach ensured that the study collected descriptive data about the lived experiences of adults who were chronically verbally bullied during adolescence.

Research indicates that resiliency extends beyond simply recovering from adversity; it also encompasses the ability to adapt, grow, and thrive in the face of ongoing challenges

(Dervish et al., 2019). In order to accomplish that purpose, the exploratory multiple case study was selected to answer my two research questions that centered on (a) adults developing resiliency after enduring chronic verbal bullying and (b) strategies they employ across life's diverse stages in maintaining their resilience. The present study aims to contribute to the existing literature regarding adult perspectives on bullying and the coping strategies they employ to manage their experiences. Through an exploration of these experiences, this research seeks to enhance understanding of how adults navigate the complexities of resiliency and the effectiveness of various coping mechanisms.

Research Question 1

RQ1 was "How do adults who experienced chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their processes of developing and sustaining resilience in adulthood, particularly in relation to personal and social challenges?"

The formulation of the research question was driven by the researcher's intent to gain greater clarity into how adults' motivations influence their decisions to remain resilient in adverse situations. Additionally, the study sought to explore whether years of experience shape these motivations, thereby contributing to healthy mental wellness. This inquiry was central to the study, as understanding the factors that support resilience and sustained commitment throughout life can inform strategies for fostering mental health. Moreover, insights gleaned from the lived experiences and perspectives of those who have navigated adversity may offer valuable guidance for supporting resilience in others facing similar challenges. To ensure a comprehensive response to the research question, the researcher developed ten targeted interview questions. Analysis of the interview data, including systematic coding of transcripts, identified

three primary themes aligned with the study's objectives. These three emergent themes provided a structured framework for interpreting the findings and addressing the core aims of the research.

Theme 1: Changing the Way They Perceive a Situation

All participants concurred that cultivating interpersonal relationships and engaging in personal development were essential to their resilience. Key findings highlighted the importance of deliberately reframing one's thoughts, thereby altering one's perception of situations—as emphasized by Social Cognitive Theory. This theoretical framework proved instrumental in illustrating how changing how participants interpret their experiences can have profound effects on their mental well-being. By demonstrating the transformative impact of perspective shifts, the research advances understanding of the mechanisms that promote psychological resilience and foster personal growth.

Theme 2: Promoting Mind and Body Well-Being

All participants agreed that fostering both mental and physical well-being was fundamental to their resilience. The key findings underscored the critical role of mind and body wellness in shaping individuals' perceptions of and responses to challenging situations. This emphasis on perception aligns with the principles of Social Cognitive Theory (Usher et al. 2018; Zimmerman et al., 2018), which posits that cognitive processes, including self-efficacy and personal beliefs, interact with behavioral and environmental factors to influence adaptive outcomes. The study's results highlight the significance of holistic well-being as a cornerstone of resilience, particularly as interpreted through the SCT framework.

Theme 3: Sustaining Resilience

All participants asserted that actively cultivating and sustaining resilience was essential to their ongoing well-being. The key findings highlighted the importance of maintaining

resilience, particularly through the way individuals perceive and interpret situations. This perspective is strongly emphasized by Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that cognitive appraisals and self-reflective processes play a pivotal role in how individuals adapt to adversity. The study underscores the significance of perception in resilience development, reinforcing the theoretical alignment with SCT (Usher et al., 2018).

Implications/Discussions

The findings of this study are consistent with the reviewed literature and provide a foundation for a focused investigation of resiliency behaviors among adults, guided by two specific research questions. This approach enables nuanced exploration of the factors that shape resilience during adulthood and supports the development of targeted strategies to enhance psychological well-being in this population. The literature review presented in Chapter 2, along with Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory (SCT) framework, informed the interpretation of the findings in this study.

The primary aim of this study was to explore and elucidate participants' experiences with resiliency processes and behaviors in their lives, as articulated in Research Question One. By examining these lived experiences, the study sought to deepen understanding of how individuals navigate challenges and develop resilience over time. Equally, research question two examined the resilience of adults who have navigated adversity across multiple life domains, including interpersonal relationships, employment, and emotional well-being, which represents a critical area of inquiry (Bonanno et al., 2012). Emotional well-being refers to a positive state of emotional health characterized by the effective management of one's feelings, a clear sense of purpose, and the cultivation of strong interpersonal relationships. This form of well-being enables individuals to navigate stress, adapt to changes, and experience fulfillment in life.

Importantly, emotional well-being does not equate to perpetual happiness; rather, it encompasses the capacity to process both positive and negative emotions in a constructive manner. Central to emotional well-being are self-awareness, resilience, and the recognition of when to seek external support (Bonanno et al., 2012).

Understanding how individuals adapt and thrive despite challenges in these areas offers valuable insights into the mechanisms underlying psychological resilience in adulthood. This explains not only the immediate impact of bullying and the processes of resilience but also addresses the long-term psychological consequences and the coping mechanisms that emerge in response to such adverse experiences. By examining both short- and long-term effects, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how individuals adapt and recover, thereby enriching the discourse on psychological resilience.

Research Question 1

RQ 1 was “How do adults who experienced chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their processes of developing and sustaining resilience in adulthood, particularly in relation to personal and social challenges?”

Theme 1: Changing the way they perceive a situation. Insights from longitudinal studies, changes in perceptions of situations, and the issue of resilience have attracted substantial attention in recent years and illustrate the multifaceted strategies individuals employ to foster psychological resilience in the face of adversity. Zimmerman (2000) longitudinal study sheds light on the phenomenon that changing the way individuals perceive a situation was central to Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that internal processes such as self-efficacy, social comparisons, goal-setting, outcome expectations, and attributions play crucial roles in shaping motivation (Bandura, 1986; Zimmerman, 2000). The theory asserts that motivational

processes are reciprocally related to behavioral, environmental, and self-regulatory factors. Self-regulation in the context of resilience refers to the essential capacity to consciously manage one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in the face of adversity. This ability allows individuals to prevent emotional overwhelm, maintain composure, think clearly, and respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively. Self-regulation serves as an internal control mechanism that enables adaptive responses to stress and setbacks, thereby fostering problem-solving and flexibility. As a foundational component of mental toughness, self-regulation is integral to overcoming challenges and achieving personal goals. Empirical research has provided robust support for these predictions, highlighting the dynamic interplay between personal agency and contextual influences within the broader field of motivation (Schunk, 2019; Usher, 2019).

The findings support the notion that the theme of changing one's perception of situations closely aligns with Bandura's theory of self-efficacy. According to this framework, self-efficacy, the belief in one's capacity to influence events and manage challenges, plays a pivotal role in shaping resilience, motivation, and overall performance. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to effectively manage challenges and recover from adversity. As a fundamental component of resilience, self-efficacy influences how individuals approach difficult situations, persist in the face of setbacks, and sustain well-being. Those with high self-efficacy are more likely to invest sustained effort, interpret failures as temporary obstacles, and maintain motivation toward their goals. Importantly, self-efficacy is not merely about possessing specific skills, but rather the confidence to apply those skills when confronting difficulties. This belief shapes motivation, decision-making, and emotional responses during adversity, thereby enhancing one's ability to adapt and thrive (Bandura, 1986). This alignment underscores the

importance of fostering self-efficacy as a means to enhance individuals' ability to adapt, persevere, and thrive in the face of adversity.

The contributions of this study serve to enhance and expand the understanding of Social Cognitive Theory as a theoretical framework. One key finding highlights the role of altering one's perception of situations, demonstrating how adaptive cognitive processes inform and are influenced by social constructs. This insight provides empirical support for the premise that individual interpretations of adversity, shaped by social interactions and contexts, play a pivotal role in fostering resilience. By illustrating how social cognitive mechanisms operate in real-life contexts, the study deepens theoretical knowledge and underscores the dynamic interplay between cognition, environment, and social factors in resilience development.

Theme 2: Promoting mind and body well-being. Theme 2 contributes to several studies. It is an important role in various academic studies. Promoting mental and physical well-being entails recognizing the intricate interconnections between mental and physical health. This holistic perspective acknowledges that thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and behaviors exert substantial influence on physical health, while physiological states can, in turn, impact mental and emotional well-being. Adopting such an integrative approach seeks to foster a harmonious balance between mind and body, thereby enhancing overall health.

By addressing both psychological and physiological dimensions, through interventions such as physical exercise and mindfulness practices, individuals can cultivate greater self-awareness, build resilience, and achieve optimal well-being. Self-worth, within the context of resilience, is defined as the steadfast belief in one's intrinsic value, independent of accomplishments or external validation. This internal conviction serves as a foundational anchor, enabling individuals to withstand adversity, recover from setbacks, and sustain emotional

equilibrium. Recognizing one's inherent worth fosters the confidence necessary to cope effectively with stress and adapt constructively to challenges, rather than succumbing to pressure. Ultimately, self-worth underpins the resilience process by affirming that one is fundamentally good enough, regardless of circumstances or outcomes (Brooks et al.,2018). This underscores the complex interactions between resilience and self-worth in the context of promoting mind and body well-being.

Theme 3: Sustaining resilience. Theme 3 contributes to several studies. Theme 3 shows a meaningful role in various scholarly discussions. Schunk et al. (2019) provide compelling evidence of the importance of sustaining resilience, the capacity of an individual to withstand, adapt to, and recover from challenges without yielding to collapse. This concept encompasses both immediate adaptive responses and the development of enduring strength, enabling individuals to endure and thrive amid ongoing changes and stressors, such as disruptions. In the context of sustainability, resilience was fundamental, as it empowers systems not only to recover but also to emerge stronger, thereby supporting long-term stability and consistency.

This finding is consistent with the idea that effectively managing emotions stemming from experiences of bullying can enhance students' capacity to advocate against injustice, particularly on behalf of peers who are being bullied. Such insights encourage deeper exploration into the intersection of emotional regulation and empowerment. Sustaining resilience was supported by several key constructs, including self-efficacy, persistence, social comparisons, outcome expectations, self-regulation, and sustained effort. Self-efficacy empowers individuals to believe in their capacity to overcome adversity, while persistence ensures continued striving despite obstacles. Social comparisons and outcome expectations provide reference points and motivate adaptive behavior, and self-regulation facilitates the management of emotions and

actions. Collectively, these factors contribute to the maintenance and enhancement of resilience over time (Schunk & Usher, 2019).

Research Question 1-a. How do these adults reflect on the strategies they have employed to cultivate resilience and navigate adversity across diverse life domains, including relationships, employment, and emotional well-being?

Theme 1a: Seeking social support from friends and family. The examination of Theme 1a reveals its contribution to various scholarly works. Notably, Johnson et al.'s (2007) study provides compelling evidence that seeking social support to foster resilience entails actively engaging with others, such as friends, family, colleagues, or community networks, for emotional, informational, or practical assistance during periods of adversity. Social support serves as a critical buffer against psychological distress, enhancing individuals' capacity to adapt and recover from challenges and trauma. By providing both tangible support and emotional reassurance, social networks play a foundational role in reducing stress and maintaining mental health. Thus, cultivating social support was a vital strategy for building resilience and promoting overall well-being. Social networks, in the context of resilience, refer to the essential web of interpersonal relationships, including friends, family, and community members, that support individuals and groups in recovering from adversity (Schunk et al., 2019; Usher et al., 2018).

These networks offer crucial resources such as information, emotional support, and practical assistance, serving as buffers against stress and enhancing coping capacity. In times of crisis, such as disasters or pointed hardships, social networks facilitate effective, coordinated responses, thereby strengthening both individual and collective adaptability. By fostering connection and mutual aid, social networks play a pivotal role in promoting resilience at both personal and community levels. This finding aligns with the idea that leveraging social support

can mitigate the effects of bullying. Such insights underscore the importance of social networks in fostering resilience in an individual.

Theme 2a: Seeking Spirituality. Theme 2a contributes to several studies. Theme 2a encompasses contributions across multiple studies, notably Espelage's (2014) research, which provides empirical evidence that seeking spirituality to cultivate resilience involves engaging in practices that foster a connection with something greater than oneself, thereby offering a sense of meaning and purpose. Such practices may include prayer, meditation, or personal reflection on one's beliefs, all of which help individuals access inner peace and strength. Spirituality serves as an internal compass, guiding individuals through periods of stress and adversity, and contributing to enhanced coping abilities, emotional intelligence, and overall well-being.

Integrating spiritual practices into daily life can reduce stress and cultivate a more profound sense of purpose, thereby strengthening psychological resilience. Spirituality, in the context of resilience, involves drawing on core beliefs, values, and a sense of purpose to cultivate inner strength, hope, and meaning in the face of adversity, stress, and trauma. Spirituality is not limited to organized religion but often involves connecting with something greater than oneself, serving as a foundation for perseverance and adaptation. Individuals draw upon both internal resources—such as faith, values, meaning-making, and external resources, including supportive communities, to sustain well-being and foster growth through challenges. Ultimately, spirituality helps individuals remain grounded, maintain positivity, and continue moving forward despite hurdles. This finding supports the idea that seeking a higher spiritual source can play a substantial role in bolstering efforts to mitigate psychological resilience.

Theme 3a: Education and maintaining a job. Theme 3a plays a meaningful role in various academic studies, notably in McGarth's (2007) research. This study offers compelling

evidence that education plays a pivotal role in fostering resilience for career success by equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and adaptive mindset necessary to navigate the complexities of the modern workforce. Continuous learning, facilitated by formal education and ongoing professional development, enables individuals to regularly update and diversify their skill sets, ensuring relevance and adaptability in an ever-evolving job market.

Furthermore, education cultivates a growth mindset, empowering professionals to embrace challenges, recover from setbacks, and pursue lifelong improvement (Adebusuyi et al., 2022). By investing in education and sustained employment, individuals enhance their employability and capacity to thrive amid professional uncertainties and change. This aligns with the emphasis on education and sustained employment, which aligns with Bandura's self-efficacy and persistence in behavioral processes, and with a broader discussion of the significance of supportive professional development and lifelong learning in fostering resilience. These elements are widely recognized as foundational for continuous personal and professional development, enabling individuals to adapt to evolving workplace demands and to maintain resilience in the face of career-related challenges.

Recommendations for Practice

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory, multiple-case study was to investigate how adults who endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their experiences of developing and sustaining resilience into adulthood. This study was to provide an investigation into adults' perspectives on resiliency after being chronically verbally abused. The basis of these recommendations was firmly grounded in the study's research questions, emergent themes, and key findings. Each recommendation directly reflects the insights gained from the data analysis, ensuring that the suggested practices and future research directions are both relevant and

evidence-based. This alignment enhances the applicability and impact of the study's contributions to the field.

The problem addressed by this study revolves around the prevalence of chronic verbal bullying among adolescents in educational settings (Espelage, 2014). The researcher created a total of 10 interview questions to answer the proposed research question: In response to these findings, the following recommendations are proposed to bridge our research insights with actionable strategies that educators can adopt to mitigate and manage bullying behaviors effectively: the investigation into chronic verbal bullying has provided valuable perspectives from adults, shedding light on their lived experiences and the strategies they employed to cultivate resilience. These findings reveal the complex nature of resilience as a dynamic, multifaceted process influenced by behavioral and environmental factors. By capturing the nuanced ways in which individuals adapt and thrive following sustained adversity, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of resilience, particularly through the lens of Social Cognitive Theory.

Based on the findings of RQ1, this study, three main recommendations are put forth for developing resilience. These recommendations are grounded in the research questions, the emergent themes, and the overall findings of the investigation. Several of these recommendations have been synthesized across themes and address the key implications of the study. Additional strategies identified in the study for fostering resilience included effective time management, seeking help from others, purposefully engaging in distractions, venting emotions in a safe and supportive environment, and maintaining physical safety. Collectively, these strategies reflect the diverse and multifaceted approaches adults employ to enhance their resilience following chronic verbal bullying in adolescence.

Additionally, Westphal et al. (2007) noted that posttraumatic growth (PTG) is an interesting construct as it offers new perspectives for examining psychological trauma. The appeal of PTG lies in its capacity to convey hope in the face of escalating adversity and man-made catastrophes. Furthermore, PTG is attractive as a theoretical lens because it enables integrating trauma research with the broader movement in psychology and the social sciences toward the exploration of the positive aspects of human nature. By focusing on the potential for growth following trauma, PTG enriches our understanding of human resilience and adaptation. Furthermore, resilience following a traumatic event is not uncommon. In adverse environments, resilience was often contingent on factors such as adequate preparedness, strong social support, and proactive coping strategies. These findings highlight the dynamic interplay between external resources and internal coping mechanisms in facilitating both resilience and positive psychological transformation after trauma (Brooks et.al., 2018; Westphal et al., 2007).

The recommended areas for practice include:

1. **Support from Families and Friends:** Encouraging individuals to seek and maintain strong support networks, as family and social connections play a crucial role in fostering resilience. Participants also emphasized the importance of regulating emotions, setting clear goals, adopting a future-oriented mindset, and following structured work-rest intervals. Some individuals reported using emotional suppression as a coping mechanism.
2. **Seeking Spirituality:** Promoting the exploration of spiritual or existential frameworks, which can provide meaning, hope, and a sense of purpose during and after adversity.
3. **Sustaining Resilience and Creating a Robust Resiliency Plan:** Emphasizing the importance of ongoing efforts to sustain resilience, including the development of personalized resiliency plans that incorporate strategies for self-reflection, goal setting,

and adaptive coping. Participants highlighted the use of self-regulatory practices as essential components of their resilience. These practices included goal setting, effective time management, and actively seeking help when needed. Additionally, participants described a range of strategies for managing their emotions, such as redirecting their attention, intentionally placing themselves in environments conducive to well-being, and openly discussing their feelings with trusted individuals. Together, these self-regulatory and emotional management practices contributed substantially to the development and maintenance of resilience in the aftermath of chronic verbal bullying. Furthermore, schools should mandate biannual bullying prevention/intervention training to reinforce positive behavior and equip students with tools for coping strategies beginning from Elementary and continuing through High School.

These recommendations align with the study's implications and offer practical guidance for individuals and practitioners seeking to enhance resilience in the aftermath of chronic verbal bullying.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for further research are based on the findings of this study. The first three recommendations for future research align closely with Theme 1, grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. The initial recommendation draws from Bandura's seminal work on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), which defined and theorized the pivotal role of self-efficacy in shaping human behavior. Future research should investigate the cognitive and social mechanisms underlying why some individuals exhibit maladaptive coping strategies, such as avoidance, helplessness, and a defeatist or victim-oriented mindset, when confronted with stress, rather than demonstrating resilience and adaptability. Further, the second recommendation is for research to

explore how factors such as self-efficacy beliefs, observational learning from significant role models, and perceived outcome expectancies contribute to an individual's inability to adapt to stress. By emphasizing the significance of motivational processes as dynamic personal influences, these processes continually interact with and are shaped by both behaviors and environments. The third recommendation highlights the importance of individuals' cognitive and self-regulatory capabilities. Studies could clarify how these cognitive and social processes interact to influence whether a person breaks under pressure or bounces back, offering insights for targeted interventions to promote adaptive coping and resilience. In particular, setting resiliency goals and implementing effective strategies to achieve them. Collectively, these recommendations underscore the foundational elements of Social Cognitive Theory and their relevance to understanding and fostering resilience.

A subsequent recommendation for future research was to conduct a follow-up study with the same population to explore further the influence of learning goals on motivational outcomes and achievement. Existing research indicates that adopting learning goals is associated with enhanced motivation and greater achievement, especially over extended periods. A key underlying mechanism in this relationship may be the increase in self-efficacy for learning that accompanies the pursuit of learning goals. Further investigation into this process could provide valuable insights into the ways that learning goals contribute to resilience and adaptive outcomes among adults who experienced chronic verbal bullying during adolescence (Chmitorz et al., 2021).

Another recommended future study was to conduct longitudinal research following adolescents over extended periods to gain a deeper understanding of how resilience develops and is maintained over time, particularly in the aftermath of major traumatic events or disasters. Such

studies would provide valuable insights into the dynamic processes underlying resilience, capturing both immediate and long-term adaptations. This approach would complement and extend existing research on resilience by elucidating the mechanisms and trajectories through which adolescents cultivate and sustain resilience across major life changes.

Study Summary

This study's qualitative, exploratory, multiple-case study design employed in this research has yielded valuable insights into participants' descriptions of their resilience. By facilitating an in-depth examination of individual experiences across multiple cases, the study was able to capture the nuanced ways in which adults interpret, develop, and maintain resilience in the aftermath of chronic verbal bullying during adolescence. This process involves persistent self-reflection, adaptive coping strategies, and the cultivation of inner strength. Adolescents who have endured sustained verbal abuse may initially grapple with diminished self-esteem, emotional distress, and a heightened sense of vulnerability. However, through resilience-building, individuals can begin to reframe their experiences, transforming their pain into a sense of purpose.

This transformation often entails a deliberate effort to extract meaning from adversity, channeling negative emotions into constructive actions and personal growth. Prayer and spiritual practices may serve as sources of comfort, guidance, and renewed focus, enabling individuals to redirect their attention from past wounds to future aspirations. By integrating faith and purposeful intention, survivors can chart a pathway from suffering toward self-actualization, ultimately allowing their experiences to inform and inspire their pursuit of destiny. In this way, resilience was not merely about recovery but about leveraging hardship as a catalyst for meaningful life direction.

Chapter 5 presents the study's implications, recommendations for practice, and suggestions for future research. This study confirms that adolescents conceptualize resilience in ways that are consistent with current theoretical models. Specifically, participants demonstrated an understanding of resilience as a dynamic process rather than a static trait, reflecting contemporary perspectives in the resilience literature. These findings reinforce the validity of process-oriented frameworks and underscore the importance of supporting adaptive capacities that evolve over time in response to adversity by participating in support groups, fostering encouragement, and shared coping strategies. Building deeper peer relationships: encouraging meaningful connections to reduce isolation and enhance social connectedness, both of which are critical components of resilience. Furthermore, many individuals who experience such adversity also report posttraumatic growth, characterized by a renewed appreciation for life and an enhanced sense of self-worth (Brooks, 2018).

These recommendations are designed to inform educators, practitioners, and policymakers in their efforts to support students affected by chronic verbal bullying and to strengthen resilience-building initiatives. This study addressed the following by conducting semi-structured interviews, which combined intentional and spontaneous questioning. The research examined adults' perspectives on resilience and their experiences with bullying in educational environments. The study rigorously adhered to ethical standards by securing informed consent from all participants and ensuring the confidentiality and privacy of their sensitive information. This adherence underscores a strong commitment to ethical research practices and the safeguarding of participant well-being. Additionally, the thorough documentation and secure storage of data further exemplify the researcher's dedication to upholding the integrity and confidentiality of the study's findings, which remain essential to the

credibility and validity of the research in addressing bullying among adolescents (Schnuck, 2019).

The findings of the study illuminate the pervasive issue of chronic verbal bullying behaviors among adolescents within educational environments, highlighting the detrimental effects on the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and mental health of both victims and perpetrators. This research underscores the necessity for effective interventions aimed at addressing bullying behaviors and mitigating their long-term impact. Furthermore, the study offers insights into adults' perspectives on resilience following the trauma associated with chronic verbal bullying experiences among students, thereby contributing additional evidence to the discourse on this critical issue.

The results derived from Research Questions 1 and 1a indicate that bullying is associated with substantial adverse effects on the mental well-being and developmental outcomes of students. Furthermore, it was essential to recognize that individuals' perceptions of bullying influence their likelihood of either experiencing victimization or engaging in perpetration. This underscores the necessity for a nuanced understanding of the various perspectives surrounding bullying behaviors, as such insights are critical for developing effective interventions and support mechanisms within educational settings.

This chapter presented the implications derived from the study's findings and examined factors that may have influenced the interpretation of the results. The discussion situated the results within the broader context of the study's problem and purpose, articulating their contributions to the existing literature and theoretical framework. The implications of this study extend well beyond its immediate findings, offering valuable insights for both practical applications and future research. Key implications and consequences for both society and the

desired outcomes were highlighted, underscoring the dissertation's broader relevance. In addition, the chapter offered targeted recommendations for practice and future research, outlining specific ways subsequent studies may build on and refine the present research, particularly in light of its identified limitations.

Based on the evaluation of the research, the text highlights the importance of the study's findings in deepening the understanding of resiliency behavior, particularly through the application of Bandura's theoretical framework. The results illuminate the dynamic interplay between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors that contribute to resilience as conceptualized within Social Cognitive Theory (Schunk et al., 2019; Usher et al., 2018). By framing the findings within Bandura's model, the research advances scholarly knowledge of how individuals develop and sustain resilience in response to adversity and informs the design of targeted interventions that leverage self-efficacy, observational learning, and social support.

At the inception of this research, limited information was available regarding resiliency following chronic verbal bullying in adolescence. Since then, a few additional studies have been conducted within academic environments. This study contributes to the field by offering valuable insights into the ways individuals can be empowered toward positive change, particularly in their relationships and perceptions. It provides a nuanced perspective on the experiences of students who endure bullying in school settings, thereby enriching scholarly discourse on resilience and informing future interventions to support affected individuals.

The recommendations derived from this study have the potential to assist educational institutions in recognizing early signs of verbal bullying and in providing more effective training for administrative staff, students, and teachers. By implementing these recommendations at the onset of verbal bullying, institutions can better equip their communities to intervene promptly,

support affected individuals, and foster a safer, more resilient school environment. Provide staff-supervised support groups for students, equipping them with coping mechanisms to manage their adverse experiences and develop supportive friendships. Furthermore, this chapter outlined four recommendations for future research. These recommendations focus on advancing the application of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), cultivating supportive environments, and conducting comparative analyses of the relationship between bullying and resilience development. Employing Bandura's (1986) SCT as a guiding framework may provide valuable direction for enhancing research practices and deepening our understanding of the mechanisms that foster resilience in the context of bullying.

The analysis of the research findings provides valuable insights into perceptions of resiliency following experiences of verbal bullying. The study underscores the need for continued inquiry and refinement of both theoretical frameworks and intervention strategies in resiliency behavior research. By advancing understanding in this area, the research contributes to the ongoing development of more effective approaches to support individuals in overcoming the adverse effects of verbal bullying and fostering long-term resilience.

Future research should prioritize addressing the discrepancies identified in the present study, especially those related to schools' legal obligations and the efficacy of preventive programs aimed at mitigating bullying behaviors and enhancing resiliency. Investigating these areas were critical for informing policy development, improving school-based interventions, and ensuring that educational institutions are equipped to fulfill their roles in both prevention and support. Such research will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the systemic and programmatic factors that influence resilience outcomes among students affected by

bullying. By targeting these specific types of bullying, prevention programs can more effectively foster a supportive school climate conducive to the well-being of all students.

In conclusion, this critical evaluation serves as a channel for future scholarly pursuits aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of anti-bullying initiatives, ultimately fostering a safe and supportive educational environment for all students. Finally, schools must implement comprehensive strategies to address the multifaceted nature of bullying. Furthermore, relational bullying, where the efforts should also be directed towards preventing harm caused through the manipulation of social relationships. This involves fostering inclusive environments that promote friendship and acceptance, thereby reducing the likelihood of relational bullying.

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Appendix A: Research Questions

Research Questions

The research questions outlined below will form the cornerstone of this study, a qualitative research project aimed at understanding resilience in survivors of chronic verbal bullying.

RQ1

How do adults who experienced chronic verbal bullying during adolescence articulate their processes of developing and sustaining resilience in adulthood, particularly in relation to personal and social challenges?

RQ1-a

How do these adults reflect on the strategies they have employed to cultivate resilience and navigate adversity across diverse life domains, including relationships, employment, and emotional well-being?

Adults' perspectives on resiliency after the trauma of being chronically verbally bullied in Adolescence.

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Opening Statement:

Hello, and thank you for your willingness to participate in this study and to share your experiences with chronic verbal bullying during adolescence with me today (Santos, 2023; Naidoo et al., 2016). My name is Marcia Adams, and I am a doctoral student at National University, where I am conducting my dissertation research. This interview session is expected to last between 45 and 60 minutes. It will be recorded, and notes will be taken to capture your responses. All of your information will be held in confidence.

Please indicate your willingness to participate and contribute to this study by participant checking: Yes ____ or No ____.

Note: Participants are not required to disclose any identifiable information about themselves and others.

The primary objective of this study is to deepen our understanding of the emotional responses and resilience of individuals who have experienced verbal bullying during their academic years. This research aims to identify the strategies and tools utilized by adults to overcome the adverse effects of such experiences and to explore how they cope with the resulting trauma.

Participants in this interview will be invited to share their personal narratives and any therapeutic interventions that have contributed to their resilience. The study seeks to gather insights into the perspectives of adults who have endured chronic verbal bullying during adolescence, specifically focusing on the factors that enable them to cultivate resilience and navigate challenges effectively. It is important to note that participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Participants may choose to skip any questions or discontinue the interview at any point should they experience any discomfort.

In this research study, participants will be provided with informed consent, and I will seek your permission to record the interview for transcription purposes. Following the interview, I will analyze the recorded responses and provide an interpretation of the findings based on your input. Upon completing interviews with all participants, I will request a follow-up meeting to verify the accuracy of my interpretations and ensure a comprehensive understanding of your responses.

As a reminder, your participation is voluntary; you will be allowed to withdraw or skip questions from the study if it has caused you great distress. Do I have your permission to begin recording our conversation so that I will have a good understanding of your traumatic event of verbal bullying? Yes ___ or No___

Do you have any questions before we get started (see Semi-structured – Interview questions below)?

Adults' perspectives on resiliency after the trauma of being chronically verbally bullied in Adolescence.

Appendix B cont'd: Semi-structured Interview Questions

Note: Participants are not required to disclose any identifiable information about themselves and others.

1. What role do you believe these preventative programs play in reducing chronic adolescent verbal bullying during adolescence?

a- Could you share your story and give examples from your own experiences where a particular program, educator, or support system markedly influenced the situation (or, conversely, failed to do so)?

2. Could you share your personal experiences regarding verbal bullying?

a- What particular details emerge as salient when you reflect on your encounters with verbal bullying?

3. Please describe how your experiences with verbal bullying shaped your emotional landscape, particularly concerning feelings of depression and anger.

a- In what ways did chronic verbal bullying during adolescence impact your emotional well-being, fostering feelings of depression or anger?

b- What specific incidents helped you shape your coping strategies during this period?

4. What resilience-building techniques did you use to mitigate these negative emotions?

a- What targeted strategies or support systems equipped you to navigate and transcend the emotional consequences of verbal bullying?

b- How did these approaches adapt and evolve over time?

5. How frequently did you experience verbal bullying?

a- Could you provide a detailed account of the frequency of verbal bullying you endured and the profound effects it had on your daily life?"

6. What coping mechanisms did you draw upon during challenging times, perhaps family, friends, spirituality, or support groups?

- a- Who or what emerged as your strongest source of support during this period?
- b- Were there specific coping strategies (such as social support, spirituality, or therapy) that proved particularly effective for you?"
7. Reflect on the challenges you face while building your resilience.
- a- What obstacles stood in your way as you sought to cultivate resilience?
- b- Were there moments when some of your coping strategies fell short?
8. In what way do you see yourself as a resilient individual?
- a- How would you define resilience based on your unique journey?
- b- In what ways do you feel you have evolved as a resilient person?
9. Do you believe that bullying will remain a pervasive issue even with the presence of teachers and administrators?
- a- What role do you think educators and school leaders play in preventing or addressing bullying?
- b- Can you recall moments in your experience when their presence made a big difference or when it, unfortunately, did not?
10. How can you help someone maintain their resilience by quickly returning to pre crisis status either mentally, emotionally, socially and physically?
- a- What appropriate advice would you offer to someone currently facing verbal bullying?
- b- What insights have you gained that you wish you could have shared with yourself back then?"

Closing Statement

This concludes our interview questions. Before we move into the debriefing, do you have any additional information you would like to share? Thank you for meeting with me today and contributing your perspective on resiliency after being verbally bullied as a youth. Thank you for participating in this important study. I may contact you by phone or email if I have any questions that need clarification. Do you have any further questions or concerns?

Adults' perspectives on resiliency after the trauma of being chronically verbally bullied in Adolescence.

Appendix C: Prerequisite for Eligibility of Bullying Research

The participants will respond to the following semi-structured interview, which will be used for potential inclusion in the study, with five possible answers. Please circle the most appropriate answer.

1. I experienced chronic verbal bullying during adolescence Yes / No
2. I was verbally bullied several times a week in adolescence Yes / No
3. Do you consider yourself a strong, resilient person Yes / No
4. Suggestion to help another victim -fill in _____

Requirements for Participants

1. The participants of this study will be limited to individuals who are over 18+ years of age and who have been verbally bullied while in adolescence.
2. The participants must have been at least 10 years since the last bullying incident and not currently seeing a therapist for their psychological damage because of being bullied or persistently experiencing depression or anxiety.
3. The researcher limited the participants of the study to adults who have exhibited resilience after experiencing chronic verbal bullying.
4. The participants who will be investigated must exhibit levels of resilience, such as being gainfully employed, entering a higher education program, maintaining successful relationships, and possibly having a family.
5. Interviewees will be recruited through the snowballing method.

Adults' perspectives on resiliency after the trauma of being chronically verbally bullied in Adolescence.

Appendix D - Informed Consent

Introduction

My name is Marcia Adams, and I am a doctoral student at National University (NU). I'm asking you to take part in a research study about Adults' perspectives on resiliency after the trauma of being chronically verbally bullied in Adolescence. The name of this research study is "Adults' perspectives on resiliency after the trauma of being chronically verbally bullied in Adolescence."

I, (enter your name) _____, hereby agree to participate in this research study voluntarily.

You may participate in this research if you meet all of the following criteria:

1. You are aged 18 or older.
2. You are not currently in therapy.
3. You experienced chronic verbal bullying during adolescence.

I hope to include 10-12 people in this research.

What you will be asked to do: If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following activities:

1. Participate in an online interview via Zoom for 45- 60 minutes
2. Review interview summary via email for 10-15 minutes
3. Create a pseudonym for yourself to protect your identity
4. There will be fifteen interview questions.
5. Participate in a 10-minute debrief after the interview for clarity, if needed
6. Review your interview transcription via email within 72 hours

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts in discussing an adult's lived experiences with chronic verbal bullying associated with this study. In order to minimize any risks and

flashbacks that may arise, you can still skip any question you do not wish to answer, skip any activity, or stop participating at any time without any penalty.

Benefits: If you participate, there are no direct benefits for participants in this study. This research may increase the body of knowledge in the subject area of this study.

Recording: I would like to audio/video record your responses with Zoom during the interview. You can disable the video function of the online meeting platform at any time.

Compensation: After you complete the interview, you will be compensated \$10 Cash, Starbucks or Zelle.

Confidentiality: All recordings will be stored privately for this study and reasonable measures will be taken to protect the security of all your personal information. In any report I make public, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. I will securely store your data for 3 years. Then, I will delete electronic data and destroy all paper data.

If you have questions: Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at m.adams8314@o365.ncu.edu or at (818)915-7174

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) via email at irb@nu.edu

Your signature below means that you have read and understood the information provided above and agree and consent to participate in this research.

Print your Name: _____
Date: _____

Participants Signature: _____

Researcher's Name: _____
Date: _____

Researcher Signature: _____

Adults' perspectives on resiliency after the trauma of being chronically verbally bullied in Adolescence.

Appendix E: Criteria for Participation Resiliency - Questions

Unique Confidential ID #: _____ Participant Name: _____

1. Were you chronically verbally bullied in adolescence? ___ Yes ___ No
2. How do you identify your gender? _____
3. What will be your age: _____ years?
4. Will you be willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview? ___ Yes ___ No
5. What will be the preferred method to contact you? _____ Zoom
6. What is your Racial Identity? _____
7. What is your current Marital/Partnership status? _____
8. How many children do you have? _____

9. Employment Status:

- ___ (1) Work 40 hours or more a week
- ___ (2) Work fewer than 40 hours a week
- ___ (3) Homemaker
- ___ (4) Retired
- ___ (5) Unemployed
- ___ (6) Not Working/Disability

10. What will be the highest education level you have obtained?

- Some High School _____
- High School Diploma _____
- GED _____
- Some College _____
- Community College Associates degree _____
- University Bachelor's degree _____
- Graduate degree _____
- Trade school _____

Adults' perspectives on resiliency after the trauma of being chronically verbally bullied in Adolescence.

Appendix F: Email Recruitment Message

Email Subject: Adults' perspective on resiliency after bullying – Seeking study participants

Body of Email:

Dear Potential Participant:

My name is Marcia Adams, and I am a doctoral student at National University. I am conducting a research study to gain a deeper understanding of adults' perspectives on resilience after being chronically verbally bullied. This is in support of my doctoral dissertation, which will be focused on adults who were formerly chronically bullied in adolescence and have now attained and maintained their resilience. I would like to include tools and tips that you have utilized to overcome your trauma from being bullied. I am recruiting participants who are willing to complete a semi-structured interview and may be eligible to participate in a follow-up interview afterward. Participants will be encouraged to speak on their experience with negative emotional responses such as guilt, shame, anxiety, fear, and shock.

If you meet the minimum criteria and decide to participate, you will be asked to devote at least 45-60 minutes (over Zoom with a one-on-one person) of your time in exchange for a \$10 gift card to Starbucks. Additionally, questions may be used if the response requires further clarification. You will be asked to sign a consent form prior to the collection of your confidential data collection. The compilation report will be used to help other students recognize and prevent bullying. In addition, upon completion of the interview, participants will receive \$10 gift cards if we meet in person, or it will be mailed to you if we meet via Zoom.

I look forward to your response regarding your willingness to participate in this much-needed research. If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me at trusthope23@yahoo.com

Thank you in advance for your assistance on this matter. Your commitment to this research will be much appreciated.

Thank you!

Marcia Adams

Adults' perspectives on resiliency after the trauma of being chronically verbally bullied in Adolescence.

Appendix G: Verbal Bullying Flyer

I am a Doctoral student conducting my dissertation research at National University in the School of Psychology. I am seeking participants who have been in resilience recovery for at least 10 or more years in resilience recovery from being verbally bullied. **To be eligible, participants must be over 18+ years old and not currently in therapy for this trauma.**

If you are qualified, you will be asked to complete 2 semi-structured interviews either online through Zoom or in-person. Interviews will be approximately 45 to 60 minutes.

If you are interested in participating, please email Marcia Adams via email at trusthope23@yahoo.com, or to conduct an interview by phone, please text 818-915-7174



Have you experienced one or more of these verbal bullying incidents?


- Embarrassing remarks in public
- Name – Calling (negative)
- Spreading false or malicious rumors
- Racist remarks
- Abusive phone calls
- Sexually suggestive or abusive language
- Threatening to cause harm.
- Making cruel comments
- Suicide Prevention Hotline call 988

Appendix H - IRB approval letter.

8/28/25, 6:54 PM
 Outlook
 IRB-FY25-26-88 - Initial: Exempt from Further Review - Marcia Adams - Outlook

IRB-FY25-26-88 - Initial: Exempt from Further Review

From do-not-reply@cayuse.com <do-not-reply@cayuse.com>
 Date Thu 8/28/2025 6:58 PM
 To cjameson2@ncu.edu <cjameson2@ncu.edu>; Marcia Adams <M.Adams8314@o365.ncu.edu>



9388 Lightwave Ave. San Diego, CA 92123
 irb@nu.edu

Notice of Exemption

August 28, 2025

To: Marcia Adams


Project Title: Adults' Perspectives on Resiliency after the Trauma of Being Chronically Verbally Bullied in Adolescence
NU IRB Number: IRB-FY25-26-88
Determination: Exempt from further review 45 CFR 46.101 Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
 Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or

Status: Active - Research activities may begin as of August 28, 2025 Dear Marcia Adams:
 The study referenced above has been reviewed by the National University IRB. The IRB has determined


8/28/25, 6:54 PM IRB-FY25-26-88 - Initial: Exempt from Further Review - Marcia Adams - Outlook
 your research is exempt from further review under 45 CFR 46.104, which means you will not need to renew your study and may begin your study effective immediately. However, if you find the need to change your study in any way, you will need to submit a modification to the IRB prior to implementing the changes. This will allow the IRB to determine if the study still meets exemption criteria.

Please review your Post Approval Responsibilities here: [Approved Documents Guidelines](#). For any questions regarding your protocol, please reach out to the IRB at irb@nu.edu.


Sincerely,



Dr. Joseph Marron, IRB Chair



Dr. Brianne Mongeon, Director, HRPP & IRB



Jenessa Eberhardt, Associate Director, HRPP & IRB