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Running Head: SOCIAL CLIQUES

Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

LIVED EXPERIENCE OF SOCIAL CLIQUES

A clinical dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy

By

Shalen Bishop

June, 2011

Robert Barner, Ph.D. - Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Shalen Bishop

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which, if at all, students' perceptions of their teachers' care of specific types of cliques was related to those students' high school lived experience for the following four main cliques: popularity, Goths, loners, and others. The goal of this study was to shed light on the history of the preceding variables and the current research related to cliques. Furthermore, it was intended to help guide the researcher in illuminating what has been studied previously regarding social cliques, factors within them, and their effects on student social and academic achievement.

The literature review included elements from theoretical, historical, empirical, and popular literature. The literature researched shows that social hierarchies exist among cliques (Adler & Adler, 1995; Cohen, 1999; Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001; Mellor & Mellor, 2009; Thornburgh, 2006; Wiseman, 2002). Furthermore, several sources in the literature have observed that bullying plays an intricate role within and among cliques (Adler & Adler, 1995; Cohen, 1999; DeVoe & Bauer, 2010; Giannetti & Sagarese; Willard, 2007; Wiseman, 2002).

This quantitative research was conducted using a survey that was designed to address the research questions. The survey was given to over 300 participants with 144 returned responses. Participants consisted of individuals over the age of 18 from the researcher's Facebook contacts and currently enrolled students at Pepperdine University.

When examining the research questions, findings showed a statistically significant relationship between the high school lived experience and clique association (Research Question 1). Furthermore, the research conducted identified a possible correlation

between clique association and teachers' care (Research Question 2). However, there was no significant relationship between gender, clique association, and the high school lived experience (Research Question 3).

After analyzing the results, the researcher recommends that further research be conducted on a greater variety of cliques to identify if individuals' high school lived experience impacts their adult lived experience. It is recommended that bullying and clique issues should continue to be addressed within schools. Lastly, graduate schools should offer additional education within educational training programs that enhances awareness of social identity, identifying cliques and providing support for members of various cliques such as Goths and loners.

## Chapter I: The Problem

### Introduction

If one were to walk into a school cafeteria and examine the layout, one would see the social hierarchy of the student body spread around the room. Groups of friends will be easy to identify; groups of athletes will be sitting together, some students will be playing hacky-sack outside, others will stay within their ethnicity, some will be sitting alone on a bench, and others will be with fellow band members or drama enthusiasts. Some of these groups are even known as dropouts (Thornburgh, 2006). Many have seen them and taken part in them-social cliques.

Author Trevor Romain (1998) defines a clique as “a small, closely knit group of people who share things in common” (p. 4). Early adolescence is the prime time for children to form social cliques (Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001; Wiseman, 2002). Children tend to form groups based on desires, needs, and likeability (Adler & Adler, 1995; Clark, 2004; Romain, 1998). Schools have different groups with different interests; these are social cliques that will play a vital role in a student’s education. These cliques establish boundaries and hierarchies.

This social hierarchy of cliques has led to intolerance and bullying (Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001). Students are entering a school climate that is full of peer pressure and, for some, a war zone. Research studies have shown that students are being rejected as early as preschool (Adler & Adler, 1995; Cohen, 1999). This rejection, isolation, and bullying could lead to some serious damage both internally and externally. For example, at Columbine High School two students were frustrated because “they had been shunned by other students at the school. They saw themselves as victims and vowed to get even”

(Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001, p. 54). Those two boys were bullied, and in turn, went on a shooting spree that at that point was the worst killing spree on an American public school campus-killing 12 students and one teacher.

Researchers have made connections between dropping out of school and bullying and social cliques. According to Thornburgh (2006), 30% of American students will drop out of school. For some, being a dropout has become its own clique; a group of people that stuck together because they were outcasts, and one by one slowly started dropping out school. These young men and women who began their educational journeys to becoming productive members of society, ended abruptly in disappointment. These outcasts became known to others in the school as the “dropouts” (Thornburgh, 2006). Researchers Frey and Fisher (2008) linked bullying, dropout rates, pregnancy, and poor school attendance together. Bullying is not the only factor that may lead to a student’s humiliation or frustration with his/her schooling; self-fulfilling prophecies and teacher favoritism can also play an intricate role. Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004) state, “Teachers communicate their expectations of students through verbal and nonverbal cues. It is well established that these expectations affect the interaction between teachers and students and, eventually the performance of students” (p. 534). When teachers are led to believe a student can perform well and those teachers treat the student as if he/she is capable, the student performs better academically than students who are perceived as less intelligent or capable (Campbell & Simpson, 1992). This same philosophy could impact social cliques. When teachers believe in a specific group of people or show favoritism, that clique may perform higher or improve their behavior. Likewise, if teachers show frustrations or lack of interest towards a group it may have a reverse impact.

**Background**

Researchers have found that students begin forming cliques as early as preschool and kindergarten,

Cliques must be one of the earliest forms of social organizations going. They set in during childhood, where 4 or 5 of the better boy athletes or prettier young girls form a group that implicitly keeps out other kids who are not thought qualified to join their group. (Epstein, 2007, p. 161)

According to Rosalind Wiseman (2002), author of *Queenbees and Wannabes*, a clique is “an exclusive group who are friends,” or “a platoon of soldiers who have banded together to navigate the perils and insecurities of adolescence” (p. 19). The social ladder places the popular students at the top and the loners at the bottom. Popularity is something many boys and girls strive for during their adolescence (Adler & Adler, 1995, 1998; Burstein, 2008; Cohen, 1999; Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001; Wiseman, 2002). For some, popularity extends into adulthood (Brown & Klute, 2003). As boys and girls go through the pecking order of life they may gain some new friends, and they lose friends as well. Friends and cliques evolve and their hierarchy and status become known around the school. Some cliques are loved, some are hated, and some stick to themselves. Specific cliques may attract more attention and be influenced and favored by other peers and teachers (Adler & Adler, 1995, 1998; Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001; Romain, 1998). Regardless of one’s feelings about cliques, they continue to exist almost everywhere and at any age. It is in the adolescent years, however, especially in middle school, that the importance of cliques tends to reach its peak (Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001). These cliques and the experience behind them may influence the lived experience of a students’ school experience.

Tolerance is a subject that is taught in many schools across the grade levels and seems to be a simple concept to understand: accept people for who they are. However, some students go to school every day being bullied, feeling vulnerable, isolated and insecure. In fact, some students deliberately target and expose other students' weaknesses and try to make them feel inferior (Adler & Adler, 1995; Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001; Koo, 2007). Students form cliques in an attempt to find their place and establish a hierarchy. This hierarchy, within and between cliques, can cause other verbal and physical social issues. "Every day in every school in every community all across this country, children are cut down. Cliques rule. Bullying is epidemic" (Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001, p. 3). Furthermore, "Research shows that repeated bullying is associated with negative school outcomes such as absenteeism and poor academic performance" (Prevention Researcher, 2004). At times, the bullying is a result of the hierarchy of social cliques. The popular clique vs. the non-popular cliques. This could lead cliques to come closer together.

Human development plays an important role in the development and appropriate need for friends. "Infants and young children need to be loved by their parents because family is their whole world. As children move into early adolescence, their world view expands and they discover the world of peers" (Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001, p. 6). Like their desire to be loved by their parents, children need a desire to be respected by their peers. Psychoanalyst Leon Hoffman states, "all kids need to belong, and if they can't belong in a positive way at the school, they'll find a way to belong to a marginal group like a cult or a gang" (as cited in Cohen, 1999, p. 64).

There are many different types of cliques. Commonly recognized cliques in K-12 settings are: popularity, Goths, jocks, cheerleaders, drama/techies, nerds and even Asians (Cohen, 1999; Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001; Haenfler, 2010; Thornburgh, 2006; Wilkins, 2008; Wiseman, 2002). These groups have established identities and their places within in the school.

Cliques are not only identified and accepted by peers, but also by teachers. According to Fred Clow (2008), author of *Congenial Groups In School*, some teachers openly recognize certain cliques and deliberately foster them within the classroom. Clow notes that “A good teacher smoothes away these barriers and brings the whole room into harmony” (p. 2). Teacher favoritism, along with bullying and the establishment of cliques, can impact students’ lived experience within their school.

### **Problem**

Some students believe that their teachers favor specific cliques. However, teachers are expected to provide a safe and egalitarian classroom. Teachers set the tone, and if favoritism exists within the classroom, students may feel rejected, which may lead to lower academic performance (R. Wiseman, personal communication, February 27, 2009). This type of favoritism can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, which might also have an influence on social cliques. If students feel their peers and teachers believe they are capable of performing well they have a greater chance of performing better academically. However, if they feel rejected or less attention is given to them academically, then they may perform more poorly (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). Much research and professional experience has centered on the role of teacher favoritism. Some teachers naturally favor students and students notice the favoritism. Anecdotal evidence

suggests that favoritism may also have an impact on academic performance in cliques; however, this phenomenon has not been well researched.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which, if at all, students' perceptions of their teachers' care of specific types of cliques was related to those students' high school lived experience in the following four main cliques: popularity, Goths, loners and others.

### **Research Questions**

This study aims to explore the following research questions:

1. What is the high school lived experience of students who belong to four types of cliques (popularity, Goths, loners and others)?
2. Among students who belong to four types of cliques (popularity, Goths, loners and others), to what extent, if at all, are students' perceptions of teachers' care of members of specific types of cliques related to those students' lived experience?
3. What differences, if any, exist between male and female students' lived experience and perceptions of teacher care towards the clique to which they belong?

### **Operational Definitions of Variables and Conceptual Definitions of Key Terms**

**Gender.** According to the World Health Organization (2009), gender is the socially accepted term used to describe the roles and behaviors that are appropriate for men and women. Within this study, the term gender was used to differentiate male and female students, as reported by the participants themselves.



**Academic achievement.** Academic achievement is a measure of scholastic attainment. Within this study, academic achievement was measured using Grade Point Average (GPA), which was provided by the participants themselves.

**Lived experience.** Lived experience is the study of an experience within a given situation and it can be better understood through the structure of experiences within that given situation (Van Manen, 1990). Within this study, lived experiences was defined as individuals' reported experiences within specific cliques and their academic experiences in high school.

**Teacher attitudes.** Teacher attitudes refers to teachers' acceptance, encouragement, and understanding of diverse students without judgment (Gourneau, n.d.). Within this study, participants measured teacher attitudes according to the students' perceptions of their teachers' acceptance, encouragement, and understanding of the students' specific cliques.

**Favoritism.** Favoritism is the efforts to show favor towards someone or a group of people (Princeton University, 2010). Cohen (1999) and Burstein (2008) state that popular students are favored, and Thornburgh (2006) makes the same observation about rich students. According to Burstein, popular kids are well liked and tend to not get in trouble, and Cohen states that jocks and cheerleaders often avoid punishment. Cohen notes that favoritism exists within schools and that even pep rallies center around the talents of jocks and cheerleaders.

**Self-fulfilling prophecy.** Campbell and Simpson (1992) define a self-fulfilling prophecy as "the notion that expectation of an event can make it happen; it starts with a

false belief which causes new behavior; thus, making the false belief become a true positive reality” (p. 21).

**Cliques.** According to Wiseman (2002), “a common definition of a clique is an exclusive group of girls or boys who are close friends” (p. 19). Wiseman says the moment a child joins a clique, he/she starts to identify with it, becoming part of the clique’s traditions and viewing others as outsiders. Furthermore, clique members share secrets and support each other no matter what, unless someone breaks one of the clique’s rules. Giannetti and Sagarese (2001) claim that cliques and peer groups have specific rules about who to hang out with, who not to hang out with, and what to wear or not wear. Thornburgh (2006) adds that individuals associate themselves by cliques and are defined by them as well. When individuals associate themselves by their cliques, it becomes part of their identity.

This study explored the following cliques: popularity, loners, and Goths. For the purpose of this study, the researcher examined specific social cliques by giving surveys to individuals who self-identify as members of one of these four cliques.

**Popularity.** Cohen (1999), Burstein (2008), Giannetti and Sagarese (2001), and Wiseman (2002) all highlight the popularity clique. Cohen states that “while others push through high school, they glide: their exploits celebrated in pep rallies and recorded in the school paper and in trophy cases” (p. 63). Giannetti and Sagarese state that popularity is the measure of likeability. Giannetti and Sagarese observe that popularity is the cool group and make up 35% of the school’s population: the beautiful, the athletic, the charming, and the affluent. Within this study, the popular students consisted of the students that self-identified as popular and/or were identified as popular by their peers.

**Loners.** Loners are the students who sit by themselves, typically have few friends, and wish they had a feeling of belonging (Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001). Giannetti and Sagarese note, “Children who are repeatedly isolated accumulate a great deal of pain. If a child is insulted by more popular peers every day for years on end, he carries around burden of bad feelings” (p. 29). Within this study, loners consist of the students that self-identified as loners and/or were identified as loners by their peers.

**Goths.** According to Cohen (1999), Goths are “mainly people who dress up differently, guys who wear makeup and dress in feminine ways, people who wear black leather and chains” (p. 63). Cohen describes Goths as wearing black, trench coats, pale face powder, Doc Martens, and black eyeliner. Within this study, Goths consist of the students that self-identified as Goths and/or were identified as Goths by their peers.

### **Importance of Study**

This research was designed to shed light on teacher favoritism among social cliques. The data were gathered to provide insight regarding student perceptions about teachers’ attitudes towards social cliques. Since there is little research on this specific area of study, this study aimed to provide further information and, in turn, shed light on areas of further study that could provide further insight into social cliques, such as exploration of specific cliques and gender-related variables. Studying the lived experience of cliques is imperative in order to determine whether specific cliques are favored by teachers and how that favoritism impacts student academic achievement. Furthermore, the study will shed light on the lived experience of members of specific cliques and how self-fulfilling prophecy, bullying, and favoritism impact students’ academic achievement.

**Limitations**

The following limitations should be noted:

- 1) The findings were the result of a case study involving mainly college students in Los Angeles and the researcher's Facebook contacts, thus eliminating generalizations beyond the population used in this study. The validity of the data gathered is limited to the information collected in surveys.
- 2) Students may have failed to indicate being members of a clique even though other students may identify them as such. A student may believe he/she is affiliated with one clique while peers may have identified him/her as belonging to another.

**Assumptions**

In this study, the researcher assumes that all participants provided honest responses. Since the research was conducted using a survey, the researcher assumes that for participants who self-identify with a specific clique, their self-identified group will correspond to the clique to which other students would assign them. Furthermore, the researcher assumes that all students knew the definitions of the various cliques.

The researcher also assumes that students remembered their high school GPA and reported it accurately. Also, the researcher assumes the students provided truthful perceptions about their teachers' attitude towards them.

## **Chapter II: Literature Review**

### **Organization of Literature Review**

The goal of this literature review is to shed light on the history of the preceding variables and the current research related to cliques. Furthermore, it will help guide the researcher in the direction of the chosen topic by illuminating what has been studied previously regarding social cliques and factors within them and to what extent they affect overall achievement. The review is comprised of theoretical, historical, empirical, and popular literature. Popular literature was imperative for this research because these articles and books give readers an inside glimpse of the lived experience of teens and highlights some excellent insights into social cliques, such as, the social hierarchy and personal accounts of the students high school and middle school lived experience. This type of ethnographic research has been done by professionals that have worked with teens and they have had many years of experience working with and studying cliques. Although these professionals may not have an education or psychology background their work has been recognized by educators and psychologist because of their experience of working with teens in the educational setting.

The theoretical framework was based primarily around sociologists Adler and Adler and teen expert Rosalind Wiseman whom had studied the lived experiences of high school teens and cliques. Culture and identity play an intricate part of the high school lived experience of adolescents and the social cliques are a vital component to the adolescent's identity and high school experience. The sense of belonging, status, and interaction can impact the overall experience. The purpose of this study and research questions derived primarily from Adler and Adler (1995, 1998) and Wiseman (2002).

Will the lived experience of social cliques and teachers' care impact a student's academic achievement?

The literature review will begin by looking at cliques and their definition, structure, and hierarchy. The research will then specifically look at four types of cliques that were derived from the researched literature: popularity, Goths, loners, and other. Next, the literature review will explore bullying, its impact on students, and how it factors into the student achievement in schools and the social cliques. The literature review will conclude with an exploration of teacher favoritism and the self-fulfilling prophecy.

### **Cliques**

Author Trevor Romain (1998) defines a clique as “a small, closely knit group of people who share things in common” (p. 4). He states that cliques can make non-members feel unpopular, lonely, unwelcome and angry because cliques leave certain kids out on purpose and pretend they are more superior than other cliques. Common cliques are popularity, jocks, skaters, loners (Cohen, 1999; Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001; Thornburgh, 2006; Wiseman, 2002), Goths (Cohen, 1999; Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001), nerds (Cohen, 1999), punks and gamers (Thornburgh, 2006), and hootchies/promiscuous (Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001).

Cohen (1999) discusses that more types of cliques currently exist in schools than there have been in the past. Furthermore, he states that cliques are more complicated than they used to be because of media, technology, and the stressful increase of high school. Cohen continues to discuss traditional cliques that are practically universal, but explains that there are also special cliques depending on the location, such as California's surfer

cliques and Texas' hicks (students who wear cowboy boots, hats, and huge belt buckles). Certain southern schools even have white supremacists cliques. Cohen states, "Then there are groups like the Straight Edge-Puritanical punkers who are anti-drug, anti-alcohol and anti-tobacco-and they are violent. If you smoke or drink in their presence, some Straight Edgers will attack you with a baseball bat" (p. 64).

Cohen (1999) continues to discuss the tension between certain cliques, which he alleges tends to be most dynamic between jocks and outcasts. He describes this tension as "the spiral of rejection" (p. 64). According to Cohen, sociologists Patti and Peter Adler discovered during their field study of social cliques that some students benefit from tormenting members of other cliques because it raises their social status. Lastly, Cohen feels that there is no way of diminishing cliques; it is simply a part of high school.

Giannetti and Sagarese (2001) discuss that early adolescence is a transitional phase for children. During this time children feel a strong need to be liked by their peers because this is the time when acceptance is most important. According to Giannetti and Sagarese, acceptance helps define students, which in turn leads them to dress alike and have similar music tastes, activities, inside jokes, and rituals.

Adler and Adler (1995) and Giannetti and Sagarese (2001) claim that cliques and peer groups have specific rules about who to hang out with and who not to hang out with and what to wear or not wear. Thornburgh (2006) adds that they arrange themselves by cliques (jocks, preps, dorks, etc.) and are defined by their clique, or some may simply have a "shared obsession with Yu-Gi-Oh! Cards" (p. 30).

According to Wiseman (2002), "a common definition of a clique is an exclusive group of girls or boys who are close friends" (p. 19). Wiseman states that the moment

children join a clique; children start to identify themselves with it, becoming part of their traditions and viewing others as outsiders. Furthermore, they share secrets and support each other no matter what, unless a member breaks one of the rules. Similarly, cliques are circles of friends that travel in a group, establish rules, have a leader, and have a dress code and are connected with similarities such as race, interest, and status (Adler & Adler, 1995; Clark, 2004, Romain, 1998).

Teen experts Elizabeth and Ken Mellor (2009) claim that “peer groups with definite cultures offer the chance to belong to a body of people with a definite identity and [give] ‘strength in numbers’” (p. 48). Romain (1998) continues to say that “experts say that some cliques behave like this [cliquey] to feel stronger and more powerful” (p. 6). Romain does mention that not all cliques negatively impact a child; rather, some cliques can give students security, protection, and a sense of belonging. In addition, Romain claims, they “help you learn to get along with others, give you a chance to do projects together, be social, have fun, and let you become close to other kids, learn about each other, and trust each other” (p. 51). Romain continues by adding, “Cliques exist because everyone, no matter what age, wants to have friends. People like to feel they belong” (p. 23).

In Desetta’s (2005) compilation of true stories from high school students, a student mentions that some cliques don’t like it when a member associates with other cliques and has to follow their rules, while another student discusses that she realizes that being in a clique doesn’t determine her identity and self-worth. Psychologists Levine and Moreland (2006) discuss small groups and their relationship with social identity. According to Levine and Moreland, “Social identity reflects those aspects of the self that



involve group memberships, which link people together” (p. 69). Levine and Moreland claim that social identity theory is imperative to understanding group behavior.

Furthermore, small groups are linked to social comparison theory. Levine and Moreland state, “Everyone wants a positive social identity (just as they want a positive personal identity). In other words, they want to belong to the best group(s). Social comparison is used to decide which groups are best” (p. 69).

Chap Clark (2004) studied high school students across the nation, but specifically in Los Angeles, California. As a participant-observer Clark set out to research the social issues and settings that face the majority of American high schools, concluding that many students face more social obstacles and emotional pain than today’s adults did during their high school days. Clark refers to cliques as “clusters” (p. 79). According to Clark, a cluster is “a group of adolescents who identify themselves as defined relational unit” (p. 79). Clark adds that the group can range from four to ten students who spend a majority of their time together. He states that clusters share common goals and beliefs, tend to be loyal to the members and have established rules and norms for their group, both spoken and unspoken. From previous research, Clark shares that clusters form because adolescents “have no choice but to find a safe, supportive family and community, and in a culture of abandonment, the peer group seems to be the only option they have” (p. 79).

Over the span of a decade, Adler and Adler (1995, 1998) used observations and interviews to study the dynamics and peer power of social cliques. The majority of their subjects were from predominately Caucasian, middle class neighborhoods and ranged from elementary to high school students. Their research concludes that peer culture influences the setting and content of students’ values and norms. Adler and Adler (1995)

note that cliques begin in early adolescence and elementary school, and the characteristics of cliques differ in middle and high school. They also state that boys' and girls' groups interact differently, but boys were interviewed and observed and found to be "no less skilled at intricate emotional woundings and manipulation than were the girls" (159). From clothes to hobbies to ways of speaking, Adler and Adler's (1998) later ethnographic study discusses how cliques create shared experiences amongst their members. Members of cliques have shared social objects, behaviors, and experiences. Adler and Adler state, "These works emphasize the importance of play and peer relations for socialization and the development of interactional competence" (p. 13). Another aspect of their eight-year study involved exploring distinguished roles within cliques, the most crucial of which was the leader. Adler and Adler report, "The leader had the power to set the clique boundaries, include or exclude potential members, raise or lower people in favor and set the collective trends and opinions" (p. 77). The researchers also note a status hierarchy among cliques, comprised of four main groups: the high status (popular cliques), the wannabes, the middle group, and the lower rank. The high status cliques included the popular students. The wannabes included the followers of the popular groups who usually had some interaction with them. The middle group included the unpopular students. Adler and Adler state, "The middle rank comprised people who were considered nonpopular who didn't try to be cool or to be accepted by the cool people" (p. 84). However, at times, members of the middle group expressed some jealousy of the popular group. According to Adler and Adler, the low rank group was comprised of social isolates, also known as the loners.

Another aspect of Adler and Adler's (1998) research was their findings regarding gender differences between cliques. Adler and Adler noted, "Research has been well-documented in the literature: boys have been found to play in large, competitive, athletically oriented groups, while girls lean toward small, intimate, and nurturant groups" (p. 195). Furthermore, Adler and Adler state that boys' and girls' cliques tended to have different places where they hung out and different activities in which they participated. Due to the playground, lunchrooms, and the likelihood of gender groups forming, the differences are more evident in the younger ages than in middle and high school.

Psychologists B. Bradford Brown and Christa Klute (2003) call attention to the last 30 years of studies of friendships among young people and adults. Brown and Klute report four major finds: (a) equality and reciprocity are common amongst groups of friends when forming cliques; (b) adolescents tend to join groups of peers that are closely like themselves; (c) friends will likely be in same-gender groups; and (d) girls tend to demonstrate more intimacy within friendships than boys. Another find was that African American students in primarily white neighborhoods have a harder time choosing between white friends that have similar personalities and friends with the same racial background. Brown and Klute also point out that friends do influence one another, but it isn't just about the friend, it's also about the process:

It is easy to overestimate that influence, however, by simply looking at the degree of similarity between friends and ignoring the effects of friendship selection processes. Moreover, a comprehensive assessment of the degree of friend influences must be mindful of the structure of adolescent peer relationships,

paying attention to the multiple, nested levels of peer relationships that adolescents negotiate, rather than assuming that all influence emerges from dyadic relationships with close friends. (p. 336)

Brown and Klute found that researchers are interested in exploring whether adolescents with solid friendships tend to do better with their behavior and emotions. Brown and Klute state, “Not surprisingly, investigators also have found significant associations between the quality of preadolescent relationships and friendship quality in adolescence” (p. 337). Brown and Klute note that friends can have both a negative influence and positive influences as well. Friendships also tend to involve a network of friends, a social group: a social clique. Brown and Klute indicated that cliques are, at times, difficult to study because they are hard to identify:

There are three major ways of defining and assessing cliques: social network analyses that employ nominations of friends from all participants in a social context to identify the major clusters of individuals that comprise each friendship group; information from selected informants about who interacts with whom; or systematic direct observations of adolescents in their natural context, using ethnographic methods. (p. 339)

According to Brown and Klute, schools are a natural area for cliques to form, but not every adolescent belongs to a clique. “Isolate” is a term used to describe a person who does not have adequate friends to form a clique since cliques are typically comprised of three to ten members, five being the average number. Cliques tend to remain exclusive throughout the year, not changing members often, and they tend not to dissolve if a member leaves the group. Instead, they get someone new to replace the missing clique

member. Brown and Klute state that “The impact of a friendship clique is undoubtedly conditioned by members’ dyadic relationships within and beyond the clique itself” (p. 343). Therefore, it is difficult for adolescents to change a group of friends and/or enter a new clique in the middle of the year. Brown and Klute mention research that adolescents can give mutual influence, influencing their friends while simultaneously being influenced by the clique members.

### **Lived Experience**

Creswell (2009) defines lived experience as a phenomenological research approach that captures the essence of human experiences as described by the participants. Ethnographer Greg Dimitriadis (2003) researched the lived experience of two African American boys over a 5-year period, studying how they blended in within their school and community. Along with a couple of cousins, the boys formed a clique for social and personal support. According to Dimitriadis, “Though fragile, this large familial network was very important to one of the boys, Rufus, providing him with a sense of solidarity as well as informal protection in the neighborhood” (p. 25). Dimitriadis noted that several members of this clique had trouble with the law, but one continued to do well in life, balancing his allegiance within the clique while remaining dedicated to school and even becoming a favorite of his teachers. According to Dimitriadis, one reason the boys formed the clique was to distance themselves from the gang networks and relieve the pressure of physical harm or getting into legal trouble. Dimitriadis said,

For these young men, “the clique” was an informal term they used to label this group, to give it some shape and coherence, while also distinguishing it from local gangs. The clique, however, was rooted more clearly in the specificities of

neighborhood pride, and also, by extension, a sense of southern community. (p. 31)

For these two boys, this clique became an alternative and safe group opposed to their gang-life; it became their family and support structure. Dimitriadis observed that it was basically a young male-dominant clique and many of the conversations were geared around romantic relationships in which involved relational input and teasing. Hudd (2010) discusses how students' lived experience became more complex during the transition to middle school, where cliques are more prevalent and important among students.

**Lived experience and popularity.** Adler and Adler (1995, 1998), Cohen (1999), Burstein (2008), Giannetti and Sagarese (2001), and Wiseman (2002) all highlight the popularity clique. According to these authors, popularity is everything to many students. Adler and Adler (1998) state, "One of the strongest dimensions of life that preadolescents wrestle with is popularity. They are forever talking about who is popular, who is unpopular, and why they are popular" (p. 38). Cohen states that jocks and cheerleaders reign over the school; "while others push through high school, they glide: their exploits celebrated in pep rallies and recorded in the school paper and in trophy cases" (p. 63). While Cohen says that by kindergarten children know who is popular among their classmates, Giannetti and Sagarese state that popularity is the measure of likeability, noting that popular children belong to the cool group and make up 35% of the school under study's population: the beautiful, the athletic, the charming, and the affluent.

According to Giannetti and Sagarese (2001), popularity is a competition and the popular "opt for control to ensure they have friends around, reaching for popularity's

golden ring by knocking down the competition” (p. 6). Giannetti and Sagarese state that popularity is a game and children win by stacking the deck and choosing who gets dealt cards, thereby determining who will win or lose the game. Giannetti and Sagarese continue by noting that popular students “envision themselves as the kings and queens of the social parade” (p. 62).

Wiseman (2002) describes popularity as enchanting and an “illusory sense of power” (p. 20). According to Wiseman, schools have a Queen Bee and the group will follow her every decision. Wiseman states, “Through a combination of charisma, force, money, looks will and manipulation, this girl reigns supreme over the other girls and wakens their friendships with others, thereby strengthening her own power and influence” (p. 25). Adler and Adler (1995) studied how the leader of the clique holds power and maintains control. They discovered, at times, that inclusionary techniques such as invitations reinforced the clique and drew people towards them, however, members usually only allowed new candidates to enter via invitation. During their study Adler and Adler found that “most individuals felt that an invitation to membership in the popular clique was irresistible” (p. 149).

Romain (1998) mentions that many kids want to become popular. Romain states, “Being popular can be fun. You might feel important and well liked. Popularity can make you feel like you belong and have lots of things to do” (p. 83). However, popular kids, like others, still have problems, worries, and other typical teenage issues. He continues by stating that many kids want to become popular because they want to feel better about themselves. He concludes by stating that “popular people aren’t better than everyone

else” and “popularity isn’t about making other people feel unpopular” (p. 95). Basically, some popular students are nice to everyone.

In Desetta’s (2005) collection of true stories from high school students, one student mentions that “popular kids and their parents believe they’re so perfect that they can’t see their own faults” (p. 11). Another student discusses how some popular students feel that being popular means picking on others. Furthermore, Adler and Adler (1995) state, “these groups mobilize powerful forces that produce important effects on individuals” (p. 145). For example, when a popularity clique brings in a new member he/she achieves instant popularity because he/she has gained the approval of the clique’s leader.

In their later research, Adler and Adler (1998) found that the popular students have the most active social lives both in and out of school compared to the other cliques. They also found more gender crossover (interaction) in the popularity clique than other cliques. In their research they enumerated the typical roles found in the popularity clique: the leader, second-tier clique members who are the next in line and second in charge (one or two people), and the followers (majority of members). According to Adler and Adler, followers were “connected to the group by their relation to one or more central members and occupied positions that varied in status” (p. 78).

**Lived experience and Goths.** Cohen (1999) mentions that all schools have some sort of outsiders. Cohen states, “The outcasts are mainly people who dress up differently, guys who wear makeup and dress in feminine ways, people who wear black leather and chains” (p. 63). Goths are one category of outcasts common to American high schools. Clark (2004) defines Goths as having multiple piercings, black (dyed or natural) hair, and



black clothing. Cohen (1999) notes that they also sometimes wear trench coats, face powder, Doc Martens, and black eyeliner. In Desetta's (2005) compilation of true stories from high school students, a student notes that Goths wore dark clothes and sat in the back of the classroom. Clark (2004) states, "They weren't interested in school and they didn't talk much (p. 11). Although Cohen (1999) describes Goths' behavior as a "mass cry for attention" (p. 64), and they do tend to stand out as if seeking attention, according to Clark (2004), they often across as intuitive and expressive. Lastly, Goths have a similar profile as punks and may transition into punks as their identity and interests shift and transform.

According to Hodkinson (2002) and Wilkins (2008), Goths emerged from the punk movement in Britain in the 1980s. Haenfler (2010) claims that since their first appearance, Goths have been misunderstood and misconstrued. Haenfler states, "Just as the hippies, skinheads, and metalheads mystified their elders and came to symbolize everything wrong with society, so current subcultures like Goth signify the decline of decency and moral values" (p. 83). Wilkins (2008) states that Goths are often considered to be greater "freaks" (p. 28) than loners simply because they are more visible. Wilkins continues by adding that

freakness is a means of accessing some of the valorized social visibility of cool by carving out a space and image that is exciting, even notorious, without integrating its long-term socioeconomic disadvantage. The transformation from geek to freak moves Goths out of the shadows they occupied as geeks. (p. 28)

Little studies exist on Goths and their high school experiences. However, after the 1999 Columbine High School tragedy and in hope of preventing school violence, the state of

Missouri gave a \$273,000 grant to Blue Springs, Missouri to study Goths because the two young gunmen were dressed in black clothing and wore trench coats (Haenfler, 2010; Wilkins, 2008) and fit the stereotype of Goths. Although the holders of the grant, Youth Outreach Unit, didn't complete their research, they identified a Goth growth and how self-mutilation and animal sacrifices were connected to the Goth culture. Even though the research was not completed, the study brought forth insight and, Youth Outreach Unit was able to begin training school staff and youth service agencies in identifying and relating to Goth students (Johnson, 2004).

Many cultural phenomena and icons have influenced Goth culture, including: horror films and fiction; singer Siouxsie Sioux, with her black hair and dark makeup; and music groups like The Damned, The Cramps, and The Misfits, with their skull iconography, dark clothing, dark eye makeup, and song lyrics that deal with murder (Haenfler, 2010; Wilkins, 2008). Haenfler states, "Goths are perhaps most known for their dark, grim style characterized by black clothing, black hair, black eyeliner, and well, pretty much black everything" (Haenfler, 2010, p. 84). Haenfler reports that Goths are most prominent in Western cultures and their wardrobe focuses on death and dark clothing (Haenfler, 2010; Hodkinson, 2002). Haenfler continues, "Goths have been stigmatized for their grim appearances and macabre interests and occasionally have been used as modern-day folk devils, pieces of a culture of fear around youth violence" (p. 93). Goths believe their unique taste creates a simultaneously fun and dark side to living. Goths tend to reject popular culture and mainstream and can be known as "freaks" to outsiders (Haenfler, 2010; Wilkins, 2008). Although most Goths' apparel and accessories feature similar iconography, such as spiders, pentagrams, pagan symbols, and inverted

crosses, both Haenfler and Wilkins point out that there are different types of Goths, such as: Romantic Goths who dress in Victorian dresses and corsets; Cyber Goths, who are influenced by the future and science fiction movies like *The Matrix*; Tuesday Goths, who dress up in Goth clothing and makeup for Tuesday night clubs; Industrial Goths, who are inspired by 90s bands like Nine Inch Nails and dress in Doc Marten's boots and metal clasps; and Fetish Goths, who dress in bondage gear, rubber pants, and dog collars. Although Goths can vary in appearance, tastes, and beliefs, they all tend to feel like outsiders. Haenfler and Wilkins note that Goths are pretty equally divided between men and women, observing that Goth women are more independent and sexually driven than non-Goth women. Goths tend to recognize other Goths easily and readily connect with Goths when encountering them in a different city or country.

**Lived experience and loners.** According to Giannetti and Sagarese (2001), loners are the students who typically do not fit in socially and have no friends; about 10% of students fall under this category. Giannetti and Sagarese write that loners sit by themselves and walk alone in the hallway, wishing they belonged. These Giannetti and Sagarese state that "children who are repeatedly isolated accumulate a great deal of pain. If a child is insulted by more popular peers every day for years on end, he carries around burden of bad feelings" (p. 29).

Mellor and Mellor (2009) discuss the fundamental importance of acceptance, and how 13 is an important age for students to learn how to make and keep friends. Stephen Demuth (2004), a researcher of social causes related to delinquency and crime, defined loners as individuals who don't have a lot of close friends. In his research, he found that loners were less likely to be delinquent than those who were categorized as non-loners,

but there are negative aspects of being a loner, such as isolation, lack of social competency, and not having a solid peer group (Demuth, 2004). Along the same line, researchers Tolone and Tieman (1990) found that students who didn't have a peer group (loners) were less likely to get involved in drugs and delinquency.

In Desetta's (2005) collection of true stories by teens, a student discusses how the popular group of kids would exclude students that had appearances or manners that were labeled as "strange" (p. 7). In reference to loners, according to Adler and Adler (1998), "People called them names, started fights with them, made fun of their clothing and appearances and talked about them having cooties" (p. 90). They also stated in their research that even though loners spent a great deal of time alone, they also tended to hang out with others of lower status (other loners) because they were unsuccessful at gaining inclusion into higher-rank cliques. The lower status students were referred to as the "social isolates" (p. 90) by the higher-rank cliques. Although they tended to spend a great deal of time alone, the loners wanted to be included, participate in activities, and interact with other peers. According to Adler and Adler's research, oftentimes when loners would try to include themselves into other groups' conversations or games, they would be made fun of and/or laughed at. Many groups teased the loners because they were "alone" and there was no one to defend them; the people who made fun of them didn't care about their feelings:

While isolates spent much of their time alone, they drifted in and out of some relationships and sought out people in lesser positions whom they could more safely befriend. Social isolates could be found drifting by themselves in the

playground or being taunted and teased by more socially successful people. (p. 90)

Due to this common pattern of rejection and frustration, Adler and Adler observed that loners didn't even want to try to build friendships with other isolates. Adler and Adler state, "Such encounters often led loners to retire further into seclusion and cease interacting with people" (p. 90). Adler and Adler's research showed that loners tended to be at the low end of the social hierarchy; they end up sitting by themselves at lunch and inventing games at recess to play alone with themselves. Furthermore, their researched showed that loners were excluded when groups were forming because the loners didn't have friends and no one wanted to pick them; "They were different; they did not fit in with the others. Something about the way they looked or the way they acted deviated from the norm" (p. 88).

### **Lived Experience and Bullying**

**History of bullying.** Koo (2007) discusses the history of bullying. In the 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century bullying was directly related physical harassment that resulted in death, isolation or extortion. Today, bullying is related to physical and verbal harassment and can include cyberbullying. According to Koo, bullying is more psychological than physical and includes gossiping, rumors, mean gestures, and other nonverbal threats like facial expressions. Koo talks about bullying as an aggressive behavior that involves intentional harm to others of lesser power, usually motivated by external characteristics and/or personality. Also, according to Koo, bullying has been seen and studied across the globe in diverse regions such as Japan, the United Kingdom, Korea, and Scandinavia. However, the topic of bullying was not researched much prior to 1970 because it was

simply viewed as part of human life (Koo, 2007). Koo states, “Bullying was largely seen as misbehavior in direct physical aggression and verbal taunting until around 1950” (p. 112). Koo mentions that exclusion became part of bullying in the late 1980s. Koo discusses how bullying relates to the four Ps: power, pain, persistence, and premeditation. According to Koo, bullying has broadened and diversified over time, and the attitude towards bullying has been changing: from a normal part of growing up to a serious problem that needs to be studied, controlled and prevented.

**Bullying and cliques.** Cohen (1999), Giannetti and Sagarese (2001), and Wiseman (2002) all discuss bullying in relation to cliques. This form of rejection begins as early as pre-school (Cohen, 1999; Wiseman, 2002) and peaks during middle school years (Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001; Wiseman, 2002). Research has also shown that four to sixteen percent of students are bullied on an everyday basis and some research has suggested that male bullies are more common than female bullies (Janauskeine, Kardelis, Sukys & Kardeliene, 2008; Olweus, 1991; Roland & Galloway, 2004; Sapouna, 2008). In contrast, some researchers have found no difference between male and female bullies, but note that boys tend to do physical bullying while girls’ bullying is more verbal and relational (Adler & Adler, 1995; Bradshaw, O’Brennan, & Sawyer, 2008; Stockdale, Hangaduabmo, Duys, Larson, & Sarvela, 2002).

Cohen (1999) notes that the popular students often bully the outcast students, and that athletes often initiate the bullying. Traditional bullying often targets unpopular individuals (Willard, 2007). Clique members pick on and harass unpopular kids simply because they feel it is fun to do. Cohen (1999) notes that “Kids who feel powerless and rejected are capable of doing horrible things” (p. 64).

Bradshaw et al.'s (2008) research shows that about less than 10% of the 70% of elementary staff surveyed believed students were victims of bullying on a frequent basis. In contrast, a little over 30% of students reported being bullied frequently. Another similar study suggested that teachers thought verbal and exclusion occurred more often than the parents and students, but the teachers believed aggressive victimization occurred less often than the parents and students did (Stockdale et al., 2002). However, both researchers agreed that teachers, over parents and students, felt specific locations, such as hallways and lunchrooms, were prime areas for bullying (Bradshaw et al., 2008; Stockdale et al., 2002).

Giannetti and Sagarese (2001) define bullying as when one or more students physically, emotionally, or verbally abuse a peer to make his/her life unpleasant. Giannetti and Sagarese discuss how school can be a miserable place because of bullying. According to Giannetti and Sagarese, "power-hungry types capitalize on their peers' insecurities" (p. 6) and that "bullying has reached epidemic proportions in our schools and current trends contradict our previous perceptions. Bullies are no longer just boys, perhaps the biggest change has been that the bully no longer acts alone" (p. 63). Giannetti and Sagarese state that bullying affects over 5 million elementary and middle school students and 25% of those students reported academic difficulties because of peer abuse.

In Desetta's (2005) book of true stories by teenagers, a student mentions that the cafeteria is the worst place for bullying because there is a lack of supervision, which offers more opportunities for students to choose whom to hang out with and whom to bully. Another student discussed how feeling alone made it difficult for him to focus academically; "I just couldn't focus, it's not that I didn't want to learn" (p. 20). The

bullying and environment intimidated students and made learning difficult to achieve. Another student said that her clique turned on her and as a result she felt she couldn't trust anyone. Being ousted, students feel vulnerable and, sometimes, isolated. Another student was afraid to be creative and show his talents out of a fear of being ridiculed. According to Bagwell, Coie, Terry, and Lochman (2000), rejection by peer groups can lead to delinquency; research suggests that rejection can also cause students to feel lonely and victimized. Mellor and Mellor (2009) mention how parents should be concerned if their child has no or few close friends, if their child is being bullied, or if their child is a bully him or herself.

In their research, Adler and Adler (1995) found that "clique leaders enhanced their elite positions by disdain and deriding others lower in the prestige hierarchy both inside and outside their cliques" (p. 153). According to Adler and Adler, this behavior helps leaders maintain their status and power. Adler and Adler state, "Sophisticated clique members not only treated outsiders badly, but managed to turn others in the clique against them" (p. 153). Adler and Adler noted that when popular students shun outsiders, the outsiders have a hard time finding a new group of friends because their group may get bullied by the popular clique.

**Bullying statistics.** According to Dinkes, Kemp, and Baum (2009) of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), there were 27 homicides and eight suicides in U.S. K-12 schools in 2007 linked to bullying. The report listed many other statistics as well. During the 2006-07 school year, 1.7 million nonfatal crimes were committed by children between the ages of 12-18. During the 2007-08 school year, 4% of students (12-18 years old) reported being victimized while 2% claimed violent



victimization. Ten percent of males and 5% females in high school were threatened or injured on school premises. Members of different ethnicities reported different rates of bullying. Dinkes et al. state, “Higher percentages of black students (ten percent) and Hispanic students (nine percent) reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property than White students (seven percent) and American Indian/Alaska Native students (six percent)” (p. 5). Dinkes et al. suggest that even teachers are bullied and victimized. In the 2003-04 school year, 10% of city schoolteachers were threatened, while 6% of suburban school teachers, 5% of town school teachers, and 5% of rural school teachers reported being victimized, bullied, and/or threatened. According to their report, there was even a difference between bullying of secondary and primary teachers:

A greater percentage of secondary school teachers (eight percent) reported being threatened with injury by a student than elementary school teachers (six percent). However, a greater percentage of elementary school teachers (four percent) reported having been physically attacked than secondary school teachers (two percent). (p. 5)

During the 2005-06 school year, Dinkes et al. stated there was a 24% report of daily or weekly student bullying along with 18% of public school principals reporting disrespect towards teachers and 9% reporting verbal abuse by students towards teachers. During the same year, Dinkes et al.’s research showed that middle schools reported a larger percentage in daily or weekly student bullying and sexual harassment among students than did high schools. The same report claimed that

in 2007, 32 percent of students ages 12-18 reported having been bullied at school during the school year. Twenty-one percent of students said that they had

experienced bullying that consisted of being made fun of: eighteen percent reported being the subject of rumors; eleven percent said that they were pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on; six percent said they were threatened with harm; five percent said they were excluded from activities on purpose; and four percent of students said they were tried to make do things they did not want to do or that their property was destroyed on purpose. (p. 6)

Dinkes et al. (2009) reported that in 2007, 12% of high school students reported having been in a fight at school or on its property. Sixteen percent of males and 9% of females reported being in a fight on school property. Dinkes et al. state, "In 2007, approximately 5% of students ages 12-18 reported that they were afraid of attack or harm at school, and 3% reported that they were afraid of attack or harm away from school" (p. 7). In 2007, 4% of White students and 2% of Asian students reported being afraid of being attacked by peers at school, compared to 9% of African American students and 7% of Hispanic/Latino students reporting the same fear. Along the same lines, in 2007, 7% of students in middle and high school claimed they didn't attend a school activity because they feared being harmed or attacked. Six percent of middle and high school students avoided specific places in school because they feared being attacked or harmed (DeVoe & Bauer, 2010; Dinkes et al., 2009).

Through the NCES, DeVoe and Bauer (2010) reported that student victimization is a major concern for educational stakeholders; understanding the factors associated with bullying is key to addressing issues of school crime. According to DeVoe and Bauer, school climate can contribute to bullying with factors such as gangs, drugs, and alcohol problems. The schools studied reported a higher percentage of victims of bullying (38%

vs. 22.6%). DeVoe and Bauer state, “Student bullying and cyberbullying are areas of concern for school authorities, as bullying behavior may be associated with more significant events of criminal victimization and offending behavior” (p. 10). According to DeVoe and Bauer’s research, in the 2006-07 school year, students who reported being bullied also reported being a victim of a crime at school (62%), while students who were not victims of crime (30.4%) reported being bullied via traditional means (rumors, made fun of, threatened with harm, pushed, forced to do something they didn’t want to do, being excluded, or having property destroyed).

**Bullying and humiliation.** Frey and Fisher (2008) interviewed middle school students and teachers and noted the link between bullying and humiliation. The researchers created anecdotal evidence of humiliation and its connection to bullying, dropout rates, pregnancy, suicide, and poor school attendance. Linking to bullying and social cliques, Thornburgh (2006) reported that 30% of American students will drop out of school. Cenkseven and Fulya (2008) reported that stronger students persecuted weaker ones in an attempt to harm or humiliate them. Cenkseven and Fulya state, “Bullying is defined as one or more stronger students persecuting or attempting to persecute in order to harm, injure, disturb, or disgrace weaker students repeatedly and over time” (p. 822). Cenkseven and Fulya added that students identified as bullies tended to have families with poor problem-solving and communication skills. Furthermore, they noted that bullies’ fathers tended to show more dominance over their mothers in the homes. Bullies also tended to have more of a negative outlook on their family life than non-bullies. The researchers also reported that understanding family characteristics, such as parental roles

and feelings towards family members, would further today's understanding of the characteristics of bullying.

**Bullying and teacher intervention.** Studies by Dedousis-Wallace and Shute (2009), Ellis and Shute (2007), and Yoon (2004) suggested a positive correlation between indirect bullying (damaging of self-esteem or social relationships), empathy, and intervention. In a Melbourne, Australia university, Dedousis-Wallace and Shute (2009) investigated the change on teachers' perceived seriousness of bullying and their likelihood of intervening. Through a qualitative approach utilizing a 28-item scale, Dedousis-Wallace and Shute found that empathy and intervening did one increase. Furthermore, Dedousis-Wallace and Shute state, "teachers' pre-existing general disposition to empathize and help someone in need, rather than specifically victims of indirect bullying" (p. 12) were indicators of teachers' likelihood of intervening in bullying. These factors are imperative to understanding teachers' thoughts about bullying and to provide adequate training to deal with bullying (Dedousis-Wallace & Shute, 2009).

Newgent et al. (2009) compared teacher, student, and parent perceptions of bullying over an entire school year. The purpose of the study was to explore the phenomenon of school bullying. Through interviews and observations, Newgent et al. collected data from fourth and fifth grade students, along with school personnel and parents, across four elementary schools in the mid-south U.S. over a span of a year. The researchers found a differential perspective from the core subject groups and students reported a decline in victimization after the transition to middle school took place. During the first and second semesters, students felt that relational victimization was the most

common form of bullying and physical bullying was the least common. Over the three semesters (fall, spring, and following fall), students reported a drop, in bullying especially those who made their way into the middle school the following year. Newgent et al. state, “There was a significant reduction in student reported victimization between Time 2 (spring) and Time 3 (fall of next year) when considering grade” (p. 11). The report also reported a decline in student report of verbal victimization. Contrasting with student reports, parents claimed verbal bullying was the most recurrent and physical bullying was the least recurrent. Newgent et al. add, “Overall, parents reported higher levels of peer victimization for all three types during Time 1 than students or teachers” (p. 13). Similarly, teachers stated that verbal victimization was more common and physical victimization was the least common form of bullying. However, overall, Newgent et al. state, “teachers reported lower levels of peer victimization for all three types during Time 1 than parents and similar levels of peer victimization to students, with the exception of verbal victimization” (p. 15).

According to Newgent et al.’s (2009) research, school counselors and principals recognized bullying as a problem, but not a major one. Rather, they viewed bullying as an occasional occurrence, noting that some bullying behavior might be unintentional. The researchers accounted for this contrasting viewpoint by noting that teachers and parents handled more of the bullying issues than school counselors.

Newgent et al. (2009) also explored the perception of bullying over time.

Results of student perceptions of victimization indicate that there is a general decrease in victimization over time. Within a single academic year, this decline

was evident only with respect to relational victimization; across academic years, the decline was found for all three types of victimization. (p. 16)

Newgent et al. reported that teachers' ratings of bullying declined over the three periods of time except for physical bullying. According to Newgent et al.'s research the parents differed over all the students and teachers and "Parent ratings of victimization were higher on all three types of victimization than student ratings. Teacher ratings of victimization were generally consistent with students' ratings, with the exception of verbal types of victimization, which were slightly higher for teachers" (p. 17). One of the most interesting findings was the difference between how students, parents, and school officials viewed bullying issues. Newgent et al state,

The current study also revealed discrepancies in how students, parents, and school personnel understood or viewed the spectrum of bullying behavior. Of particular concern is that students rated relational bullying as the most prevalent form of bullying at each time point, but teachers reported verbal bullying as most frequent. (p. 19)

Newgent et al. claim this discrepancy could lead to students feeling they are not protected and that school officials are not working to solve the problem of bullying.

**Lived experience and cyberbullying.** With the advancement of technology, a new form of bullying came into play: cyberbullying (Wright, Burnham, Inman, & Ogorchock, 2009). According to Wright et al., cyberbullying includes emails, texts, online game-rooms, chat rooms, and messaging. Until recently, lack of information prevented much research from being conducted on this subject (Li, 2006). Modern researchers are concerned about the impact of cyberbullying (Beale & Hall, 2007;

Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Li, 2006). Even though cyberbullying and traditional bullying have similar characteristics (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Li, 2006), there are some differences. For example, cyberbullying impacts peers everywhere, meaning students can be bullied anywhere, not just in school or on the bus (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). According to Beale and Hall, the anonymity of cyberbullying renders it even more hurtful, creating the potential for many more students to become victims. While cyberbullying does occur in elementary school, it occurs most frequently during middle school, declining in high school; the greatest impact occurs in eighth grade (Beale & Hall, 2007; Kowalski & Limber, 2007). Although boys partake in cyberbullying too, it tends to be more evident as a form of bullying for girls (Beale & Hall, 2007; Li, 2006). However, Wright et al. (2009) found that 36% of the male participants reported they were victims of cyberbullying while only 25% were females. Sixteen percent of the male participants claimed they were cyberbullies and about 14% of females claimed they were cyberbullies. According to Wright et al., almost half of the 114 students that participated in their study were aware of cyberbullying. According to the participants, about 53% claimed they were victims of cyberbullying through MySpace and a little over 70% reported having cyberbullying someone through MySpace. About 75% of the respondents to the survey recalled only being cyberbullied fewer than four times, 12% four to 10 times, and 12% more than 10 times. About 82% indicated they participated in cyberbullying fewer than four times, about 12% four to 10 times, and about 6% more than 10 times. Subrahmanyam and Greenfield (2008) discuss the advancement of social networks such as Myspace and Facebook and the increase of communication through these networks. According to Wright et al. (2009), youths are more aware of

cyberbullying, especially with the advancement of Facebook and online avatars.

Therefore, educators need to create opportunities to teach teachers, parents, and students about cyberbullying and the impact it has on everyone. In turn, awareness, through time, will bring forth prevention.

In Dilmac's (2009) study of a large group of undergraduate students in Turkey, he investigated the relationship between psychological needs and cyberbullying. Dilmac asked questions regarding demographics, participation, and exposure to cyberbullying. Dilmac states, "Results indicated that aggression and succorance positively predict cyber bullying whereas intraception negatively predicts it. In addition, endurance and affiliation negatively predict cyber victimization" (p. 1307). Dilmac refers to endurance as the persistence of undertaking a task while affiliation relates to the seeking of personal friendships. Dilmac states, "Non-bully-victims reported more endurance than pure-victims and bully-victims. Endurance was the only variable that predicted exposure to cyber bullying" (p. 1319). Dilmac recognizes that technology plays an important role in the lives of teenagers, especially text messaging and instant messaging. Dilmac states, "Reports on the prevalence of cyber bullying and victimization have been increasing regularly every year" (p. 1308). Dilmac states that affiliation has relevance in his findings and "Non-bullying victims reported more affiliation than bullying-victims. Affiliation predicted exposure to cyber bullying (victimization) and the possibility of engaging in cyber bullying in the future" (p. 1320). Dilmac argues that affiliation provides protection for bullying and victimization. Hinduja and Patchin have been studied cyberbullying intensively. Hinduja and Patchin (2008) report that cyberbullying is a growing concern. Hinduja and Patchin (2006) claim that 30% of their youth participants in the study



reported being victims of cyberbullying, ranging from being called names to having rumors spread about them to being threatened. In 2008, Hinduja and Patchin found that 32% of boys and 35% percent of girls claimed they had been victims of cyberbullying.

**Lived experience, bullying, and the workplace.** Bullying goes beyond schools and technology. The workplace is another common location for bullying, whether it occurs between co-workers or superiors. D’Cruz and Noronha’s (2010) phenomenological study of bullying in the workplace suggested that the 10 participants across 59 call center agencies in Mumbai and Bangalore, India experienced confusion in the workplace related to bullying. Through interviews, D’Cruz and Noronha completed a data analysis and found common themes of being professional and a sense of sociological control. According to the study, the victims didn’t realize they were bullied at first and it was the continuation of the bullies’ behavior that made the victims aware of it. D’Cruz and Noronha state,

Since the work environment was very demanding, participants believed that this experience emerged as a result of the pressures to perform and deliver and hence was common to all participants. They responded to it professionally, in keeping with their internalized professional identity, and stepped up their performance in order to ensure individual, team, process and organizational success...over time, the bully’s behavior made it hard for participants to completely ignore it. (p. 517)

The acts of bullying experienced ranged from isolation to verbal threats to task-related difficulties. Although the participants tried to maintain professionalism for the sake of their jobs, D’Cruz and Noronha state, “they concluded the basic motive behind their superiors’ bullying was a sense of threat and discomfort with their superior performance”

(p. 520). As time progressed, participants in the study tried to resolve their issues directly with their supervisors, choosing to view the situation as a learning opportunity and maintaining appropriate work ethics. All 10 participants went to a HR manager and D’Cruz and Noronha state, “in all instances, the HR personnel reassured the participant that their problems would be sorted out” (p. 521). However, after a month, there was no resolution or response from HR and the bullying continued. Again, they went to HR and HR responded by stating that sensitive issues take time to be resolved, but a month later, there was still no response. D’Cruz and Noronha state,

When senior managers did meet them, they expressed disbelief at participants’ experiences and blamed participants for the situation, insinuating either that the participant had done something wrong to invite such behavior from his/her superior(s) and/or that the participant was unable to cope and adjust. (p. 523)

Therefore, the participants felt a double victimization, an increase in anxiety and depression, an increase in their supervisors’ bullying, and a sense of hopelessness and helplessness. According to this study, the bullied employees eventually left their organization and the findings

show that the exit response blurs the distinction between problem-focused and emotion-focused, active and avoidance, adaptive and maladaptive, and constructive and destructive coping strategies. While it does not resolve the bullying situation, the exit response is nonetheless an active strategy that provides a solution. (p. 531)

By leaving the organization, the victims in this study were able to regain control and hope.

### **Teacher Care**

**Teacher care, favoritism, and academic achievement.** Teachers' perceptions of the intensity of bullying can predict the level of intervention (Ellis & Shute, 2007; Yoon, 2004). Cohen (1999) and Burstein (2008) stated that teachers favor popular students, and in a study discussed by Thornburgh (2006), high school dropouts complained that principals and teachers treat the "rich kids" better. Cohen (1999) states, "The rich kids always knew how to be good kids, so I guess it's natural the schools wanted to work with them more than with the rest of us" (p. 34). In Desetta's (2005) compilation of true stories by teenagers, a student mentions that the popular kids were sometimes the worst behaved, but the teachers and police would smile proudly because they viewed these students as perfect. Through observation and interviews, Clark (2004) found that many students cheat because they feel teachers are unfair. According to Burstein (2008), unpopular kids feel that popular kids get away with everything; Cohen (1999) states that jocks and cheerleaders often avoid being punished by authority figures. Cohen continues by adding that inclusiveness exists among the popular students and schools and even school-sanctioned activities such as pep rallies center around the talents of jocks and cheerleaders.

**Teacher care and self-fulfilling prophecy.** Campbell and Simpson (1992) define a self-fulfilling prophecy as "the notion that expectation of an event can make it happen; it starts with a false belief which causes new behavior; thus, making the false belief become a true positive reality" (p. 21). Yoon's (2004) study of empathy and teacher perception of bullying suggested that teachers showing empathy towards victims of bullying helped the students by intervening. The purpose of the study was to find the

teacher characteristics that caused the teacher to intervene with bullying. Through surveys and interviews, Yoon studied teachers across 98 elementary schools and found that behavioral management, perceived seriousness of the situation, and empathy toward the victims were important factors in likelihood of intervening during a bullying situation. Furthermore, teacher empathy and perception of how serious the teacher felt the bullying reflected on the act of intervention and impacted the student's perception of whether the teacher cared for them or not. Dedousis-Wallace and Shute's (2009) study demonstrated that seriousness (self-fulfilling prophecy) of bullying was increased through awareness of indirect bullying but that teacher empathy for the victims did not increase. Dedousis-Wallace and Shute (2009) state, "The role of teachers is recognized in recent theoretical approaches to bullying within the psychology literature" (p. 2).

Campbell and Simpson (1992) found that during employee trainings the person who was being trained performed accordingly to the expectations of and treatment by the instructor. Furthermore, trainees performed according to what they believed were required of them. When the instructors' expectations were high, the trainees' performance was high. From this, Campbell and Simpson concluded, "Consciously or not, we tip trainees off as to our expectations. We exhibit verbal and non-verbal cues and they pick up on them" (p. 45). Their investigation underscores several key principals of self-fulfilling prophecies. First, expectations are communicated via verbal and non-verbal cues. Second, students or trainees adjust their behaviors to the cues that leaders/teachers give, making leaders/teachers' expectations reality. Lunenburg and Orenstein (2004) state, "Teachers communicate their expectations of students through verbal and nonverbal cues. It is well established that these expectations affect the interaction

between teachers and students and, eventually, the performance of students” (p. 534).

Campbell and Simpson (1992) report that when teachers were led to believe that certain students were capable of performing well, those students performed better than the students that were not perceived to be high-achievers because the teachers treated them differently. Campbell and Simpson suggest that climate and feedback both play a role in the social and psychological processes that impact a student’s expectations and achievement. Campbell and Simpson suggest that recognizing achievement is an important way to enhance self-esteem and positively impact students’ thinking. Teachers can do this by listening carefully, showing that they are listening, giving constructive criticism, providing feedback, and giving complete and sufficient directions and performance standards. When the teacher gives less attention, time, praise, and specific demands, the self-fulfilling prophecy becomes a negative expectation. However, when the teacher focuses on strengths, listens more, gives positive feedback and expectations, and gives encouragement, the self-fulfilling prophecy becomes a positive expectation. Campbell and Simpson speak of the importance of communication (both verbal and nonverbal), training, and giving clear expectations, emphasizing that teachers’ actions can profoundly impact a student’s sense of self-worth.

Whelan and Teddlie (1989) studied 5,829 third grade students and 250 teachers in 76 Louisiana public schools. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact student achievement and socio-economic status had on student and teacher expectations. Using a LISREL analysis, they found a relationship between a student’s socio-economic status and his/her idea of responsibility, which in turn impacted the student’s academic achievement. A finding in the Whelan and Teddlie research was that the higher the socio-

economic status, the lower the teacher expectations for a student to achieve. There was no linkage between socio-economic status and teachers' expectations. Basically, the higher a student's socio-economic status, the less likely socio-economic status would impact expectations to succeed. Another finding was if a teacher links socio-economic status to achievement, they feel a sense of helplessness because they believe they believe they have no control over how their students perform academically. Furthermore, teachers in the study linked socio-economic status to academic achievement but not to teacher responsibility. Whelan and Teddlie state, "This could mean that teachers perceive socio-economic status to be the main factor affecting achievement, thus they do not have to take personal responsibility for student achievement" (p. 16).

Pryor (1994) explored gender differences in curriculum and the confidence that it gives students to achieve academically. Pryor writes that the way children think about their intellectual skills impacts their achievement. According to Pryor, even well-trained teachers tend to "undermine girls' confidence, but with a change in approach they can play the much more positive role of defending that confidence against the odds" (p. 1). He continues to write about how specific subject areas that are traditionally seen as male dominant had a positive impact on both genders when the atmosphere fostered equal opportunity to succeed.

Tauber (1998) discusses the power of self-fulfilling prophecies. He states that a first impression can last a long time and the self-fulfilling prophecy will be whether that student perceives what the teacher thinks of them personally and academically. Tauber states,

The basis of the self-fulfilling prophecy is that once a student has been pegged ahead of time as, say, a “trouble maker,” “nonscholar,” or “likely to be self-centered,” the chances are increased that our treatment of this student will, in effect, help our negative prophecies or expectations come true. On the other hand, we could peg a student as “cooperative,” “a scholar,” or “likely to be a self-starter,” thus increasing the chances that our treatment of him or her will convey these expectations and, in turn, contribute to the student living up to our original positive prophecy. (p. 3)

According to Haenfler (2010), many schools have created uniforms and dress codes that are specifically geared towards Goths because of the tragic incident of Columbine. However, such policies avoid addressing the real problem of school violence. Haenfler states,

...blaming Goths or the much-maligned Marilyn Manson for school shootings takes the focus off of the preponderance of guns in U.S. society and a general uneasiness about the deficiency of social support. Goths, having relatively little individual or collective power, make easy scapegoats, serving as folk devils in a culture of fear. (p. 87)

Wilkins (2008) also documents the desire for Goths to overcome fear and how adults tend to feel threatened around Goths. Tauber (1998) claims that self-fulfilling prophecies are a two-way street; teachers form opinions and expectations of students, and students form expectations of teachers. However, the expectations can determine the success of both parties.

**Conclusion**

With the limited number of studies conducted regarding specific cliques, the literature review demonstrated the need for further studies on specific cliques and their relationship with schools. There was a great deal of literature on certain variables, such as bullying. The research on bullying revealed a diversity of perceptions among teachers, students, and parents about this behavior. Some of the research was very helpful because it linked bullying to specific cliques. Much of the existing research had been conducted on popularity cliques, and there was a lack of research on Goths and loners. The literature review showed the importance of this research because these groups and their behavior greatly impact schools and students.

This literature review was critical to understanding schools and social cliques within them. The literature review revealed numerous key points. First and foremost, cliques play an intricate role in a student's school experiences, especially middle school (Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001; Wiseman, 2002). Middle school is the peak for cliques and bullying. Bullying can be linked to social cliques and bullying did impact social and academic experience of individual students. Another find was that, undoubtedly, cliques and teachers demonstrate favoritism towards specific cliques (Clark, 2004; Cohen, 1999; Thornburgh, 2006). Popular students seem to be the ideal and favored group by students and teachers and the popular students are the high end of social ladder. In addition, the self-fulfilling prophecy impacts a student's education (Campbell and Simpson, 1992; Dedousis-Wallace, & Shute, 2009; Lunenburg & Orenstein, 2004; Whelan & Teddlie, 1989). Students may be impacted by the verbal and nonverbal cues teachers give out. The final main point is the need for further examination of social cliques and how academic



achievement (Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001) and favoritism (Thornburgh, 2006) play into the hierarchy of social cliques.

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

#### **Overview**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which, if at all, students' perceptions of their teachers' care of specific types of cliques was related to those students' high school lived experience in the following four cliques: popularity, Goths, loners and others. This study aimed to explore the following research questions: (a) What is the high school lived experience of students who belong to four types of cliques (popularity, Goths, loners, and others)? (b) Among students who belong to four types of cliques (popularity, Goths, loners, and others), to what extent, if at all, are students' perceptions of teachers' care of members of specific types of cliques related to those students' lived experience? (c) What differences, if any, exist between male and female students' lived experience and perceptions of teacher care towards the clique to which they belong? This chapter lays out the research design and analytical methods that were utilized to investigate the formerly mentioned research questions. The literature review provided insightful research that has guided the research methods and survey questionnaire.

The theoretical framework was based primarily around sociologist Adler and Adler (1995, 1998) and Teen expert, Rosalind Wiseman (2002) whom had studied the lived experiences of high school teens and cliques. Culture and identity play an intricate part of the high school lived experience of adolescents and the social cliques are a vital component to the adolescent's identity and high school experience. The sense of belonging, status, and interaction can impact the overall experience. The purpose of this study and research questions derived primarily from Adler and Adler and Wiseman. Will

the lived experience of social cliques and teachers' care impact a student's academic achievement?

### **Research Design and Rationale**

This quantitative study compared the differences between the perceptions of students that were in the four types of social cliques: popularity, Goths, loners, and others. The research determined if there was a difference in the lived experience, students' GPA, gender among these social cliques, if student perception of teachers' care differs among these cliques, and the impact this perception had (if any) on academic achievement. Participants' self-identified GPA was used to evaluate their academic performance and a survey created by the researcher was used to identify the participants' lived experience and their perceptions of teacher care regarding social cliques.

The study consisted of a survey designed to make comparisons among the four focused social cliques: popularity, Goths, loners, and other. In addition, the survey helped identify specific clique groupings and perceptions held by their members. Lastly, the survey was designed to describe the lived experience of participants who have been identified by themselves as belonging to a specific clique. The responses gave insight to educational leaders and schools and how the social cliques and teachers' care could impact a students' high lived experience and academic achievement.

### **Setting**

Pepperdine University is a private university in Malibu, California (Los Angeles County). Students that enter Pepperdine typically have high GPAs, and some come from wealthy families. Students come to Pepperdine from all around the world; and highly

represented is California, Washington State, and Texas. It is affiliated with the Church of Christ, but not all students that attend Pepperdine have a religious background.

The researcher also reached out to graduated seniors via Facebook from three high schools: two public schools and one private school. All these students were 18 or older and have completed high school. The graduated seniors were given a link to the survey via Facebook. The private school is located in a wealthy suburban ninth through twelfth grade high school in San Diego that consist of mostly Caucasian students; most of the students attended a 4-year university after graduating. The students are required to wear school uniforms and wear no make-up; therefore, cliques tend to identify themselves based on inner qualities rather than outward appearances. One may not be able to identify someone as a member of the Goth clique because they wear a uniform. For example, Goths usually wear darker clothes and makeup, but since these students must wear a school uniform and no make-up, their Goth style may be somewhat masked. Therefore, they may identify themselves a Goth internally and express their outer Goth-self outside of school. The school had a graduating class of 86 out of a total school population of 300 in 2008.

Unlike the private school, the California public school is a Title I inner city seventh through twelfth grade independent charter school in South Central Los Angeles, California, with a graduating class of 26 out of a total school population of 170. The school belongs to the Los Angeles Unified School District, predominately Hispanic, and has a total school population capacity of 300 students. As with the private school, students are required to wear school uniforms and are not allowed to wear make-up, therefore, certain cliques would be more difficult to identify by outer appearances.

Similar to the California public school, the Alaska public school is a Title I, low-socio-economic school located in a bush-village. This school is a K-12 district school on the coast of the Arctic Ocean. The demographics consisted of mainly Inuipiat at-risk, low-income students. Most of these students don't attend college and typically stay within the village after high school graduation; therefore, most of the participants will still be in their village.

### **Sample**

The targeted participants were students that have completed high school and have been part of a social clique within their high school. The sample consisted of participants 18 and older, who had already completed the high school experience. The first group of participants were students from Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. The second group of participants were graduated students from the researcher's prior schools: a private school in San Diego, public school in Los Angeles and public school in Kaktovik, Alaska. The third group of participants were Facebook contacts from the researcher's Facebook list.

The sample consisted of at least 300 participants from all the pools of participants combined, in hopes to gain at least 75 responses. There were 144 respondents. The sample group from the Pepperdine University and recently graduated high school seniors were youngest in age; therefore, they may have a more detailed memory of high school. The Pepperdine University students come from all across the United States and even internationally. Pepperdine University students have different ethnic, socio-economic, and religious background. The recent graduated seniors consist mainly of Caucasian and Hispanic students. The majority of the Caucasian students come from wealthy families

while most of the Hispanic students come from low socio-economic families. The sample group from the Facebook contacts represented a more variety in demographics: location, age, socio-economics, and ethnicity and will receive the same survey via a link on Facebook, therefore, the results fostered validity, generalization, and reliability.

### **Human Subjects**

There were three main pools of students that the researcher will reach out to: current Pepperdine students, students who graduated from the researcher's prior schools and Facebook contacts from the researchers Facebook contact list. This allowed for a wide-range of age, demographics, and responses. There was no exclusion criteria's for this research; however, the only criteria was that the subject must be at least 18 years of age.

Before gathering data, the researcher completed the IRB application and human subject's educational training, and gained approval from the IRB Board. Participation in the research was conveyed to all students as being voluntary before beginning and all potential candidates were given the opportunity to decline to participate. Confidentiality, age requirement (18 +), and voluntarily participating was conveyed in writing. All students were provided an informed consent. Lastly, all participants had the opportunity to not answer any question they felt uncomfortable or may not have wanted to answer.

The risks of participation were minimal and the benefits to the researcher were substantial. Although there may not have been a direct benefit for the participant, this research could shed light on the educational community and provide insight on the impact of social cliques, the high school lived experience of social cliques and how academic achievement and teacher care play into the lived experience.

The potential risks for the survey were risks to dignity and self-respect as well as psychological, emotional and behavioral risk in recalling memories of the past. In the event they had experience any of these risks, the participant had the right to discontinue their participation in the study or contact the research. As for confidentiality, the researcher was the only one to conduct and examine the survey. The researcher provided a link for which enabled students to complete the survey in a quiet, private area if they don't want to fill out the survey with the researcher. The link guaranteed the participants' anonymity, however, since the researcher will have seen or may have known the participant, there is not complete anonymity. In addition, since the researcher provided a link to the actual survey via Facebook, the results were not posted on Facebook nor were they viewed by others. Facebook was used solely for point-of-contact and interest. Furthermore, if the participant chose to fill out the survey on a provided hardcopy or computer, the researcher or someone would have known they filled out the survey, however, their answers were still confidential and the researcher was not able to link the results to the participant. The researcher will keep all data confidential and does not have any coding or link that will identify the survey with the participant. Although there may not be full anonymity, the researcher will maintain confidentiality and make sure the identity of the participant can not be linked to their survey.

### **Data Collection**

This researcher examined the high school lived experiences of members of four cliques to see the impact, if any, the lived experience and teacher care had on academic achievement and the high school experience. To do so, after obtaining participant permission, the researcher administered an online survey or handwritten surveys. Surveys

were administered via Survey Monkey or a hardcopy provided for them. All participants had the opportunity to access the link to complete the online survey, which was the easiest way to implement, complete, and score the assessment tool. As part of the survey, students self-identified and provided their GPA. The researcher distributed the link to at least 300 students, with the goal of having at least 75 students ultimately complete the online survey. The researcher anticipated that there would be about 75 participants in this study, given that not all participants will be able to participate and some will forget to complete the survey. There were 144 respondents.

The surveymonkey link mainly went to graduated seniors from the researchers' prior schools and the researchers Facebook contact list. As for the participants at Pepperdine, the researcher was stationed at the cafeteria and provided laptops for participants to fill out the survey. The participants completed the survey out on a table that had dividers to prevent others from seeing their answers. If participants would have preferred to fill out a hardcopy survey, it was provided and a secured box was provided for them to place their survey in so the participant will not be linked to their survey. No participant utilized that method. Furthermore, if participants wanted to partake in the survey, however, did not have time at that moment, a link was given to them to fill it out on their own time and in a more private setting. No participant utilized that method.

Once student surveys were collected, the researcher reviewed and evaluated them. This allowed the researcher to gain insight about the participants high school lived experience. The data were sent to an analyst who helped read and analyze the data. Once the data were analyzed the researcher secured all data in a locked file-cabinet and any



electronic data were placed in a password-secured file. The researcher is the only one who has access to the cabinet and secured electronic files.

### **Instrumentation**

The survey (Appendix A), which the researcher created, consisted of questions that addressed students' views of social cliques, their high school experience, perceptions of teacher favoritism, GPA, gender, and perceptions of the lived experience of members of cliques, such as; did you find that specific cliques were favored by other cliques? If so, which ones? Furthermore, the survey included definitions of commonly identified cliques (popularity, Goths, and loners) from literature reviews and in the researcher's stated operational definitions. Students identified the clique to which they belong, if they identify as belonging to a clique. Each participant received an informed consent (Appendix B & Appendix C).

A pilot test was given to 10 random students. The pilot was very informal and results were not counted towards the research. The pilot was designed to facilitate the survey and ensure validity and reliability. Data were not reported. The pilot utilized participants from Pepperdine University. This allowed for freshness and allowed the researcher to adjust any technological errors or unplanned problems that may have occurred before any participants took the survey.

In order to assure the reliability and validity of the research, the pilot group was designed to ensure consistency and replicability amongst the survey being administered. Also, the random selection of students to participate at Pepperdine and the wide range of participants from the Facebook contact list enhanced the validity of the research. The pilot group ensured the internal validity and external validity was represented by the

random selection and the wide-range of participants in which the researcher was reaching out to. This helped foster the generalization of the analyzed results. Before participants take the survey, the researcher read an approved IRB script (Appendix D) and the participant received a participant letter (Appendix E).

### **Analytical Techniques**

The survey was aligned with each of the three research questions. The first survey question (What range did your GPA fall under?) aligned with all three research questions and helped the researcher understand the lived experience and the academic achievement and, if at all, a difference between cliques and their GPA. The second survey question (Which of the following cliques would best describe you: loners, Goths, popularity or others?) was aligned with the first research question and this question helped the researcher compare different cliques. The third survey question (If you did not belong to one of the previously mentioned cliques, which one did you belong to?) helped the researcher see what other cliques there were and this question may lead to further study possibilities. The fourth survey question (What is your gender?) was aligned with the third research question and helped the researcher understand the difference in the lived experience between genders. The fifth survey question (Did you feel like teachers cared about you?) was aligned with the research questions two and three and it will help understand the lived experience and teacher care aspect of the research. The sixth survey question (Do you feel the teachers cared about you clique) was aligned with research questions 2 and 3 and helped the researcher to address teacher favoritism and the self-fulfilling prophecy aspect of the research. The seventh survey and eighth question (Do you feel specific cliques were favored over others by teachers and students? If so, which

ones) were aligned with the first and third research questions because it helped the researcher to understand the lived experience difference, if any, amongst the gender and the cliques. The ninth and tenth survey questions (Do you feel that your academics and grades were positively impacted by your social cliques? Negatively impacted?) were aligned with all three research questions and it helped the researcher understand the difference, if any, in the lived experience among the four highlighted cliques, gender, and teacher care. The eleventh and twelfth survey questions (Do you feel that your personal experience in high school was positively impacted by your social clique? Negatively impacted?) were aligned with research questions 1 and 3 and it helped the researcher understand the high school lived experience of social cliques and gender. The thirteenth and fourteenth survey question (Do you feel that your academics were positively impacted by your teachers care? Negatively impacted) were aligned with research questions 2 and 3 and helped the researcher answer the lived experience of specific social cliques and the impact their experience has on their academic achievement and if gender plays a role in that impact. The fifteenth and sixteenth survey questions (Do you feel that your personal experience in high school was impacted by your teachers care? Negatively impacted?) were aligned with all three research questions and helped understand the difference, if any, amongst the cliques, academic achievement, gender, and favoritism? The seventeenth survey question (Were you bullied in high school?) was aligned with research questions 1 and 3 and will help the researcher understand the difference, if any, of the high school lived experience among gender and cliques. Also, the eighteenth survey question (If you were bullied in high school, did you feel it had anything to do with the clique of which you were a part?) aligned with research questions 1 and 3 and

helped identify the difference, if any, among social cliques and gender. The nineteenth (Did you ever bully anyone) and the twentieth (If you have bullied anyone in high school, did it have anything to do with the clique they belonged to) survey questions aligned with research questions 1 and 3 and helped understand the lived experience of specific clique members and gender differences, if any. The twenty-first survey question (On a scale of 1-5, 5 being the highest, how would you rate your teachers in caring about you and your clique?) and the twenty-second survey question (On a scale of 1-5, 5 being the highest, how would you rate your overall high school experience) were aligned with all three research questions and helped the researcher understand the high school lived experience and the difference, if any, with favoritism, clique lived experiences, and gender. The twenty-third and final survey question (what is your age category) was not directly linked to a research question; however, it could help identify, if any, a difference in generations which could lead to further studies.

The researcher investigated the first research question (What is the high school lived experience of students who belong to four types of cliques (popularity, Goths, loners and others)? using data gathered from the surveys with members of the four cliques under investigation. The first question helped to understand their high school lived experience. The second research question (Among students who belong to four types of cliques (popularity, Goths, loners and others), to what extent, if at all, are students' perceptions of teachers' care of members of specific types of cliques related to those students' lived experience?) was answered using the results from the survey and help addressed cliques' perceptions of teacher favoritism and care. The third and final research question (What differences, if any, exist between male and female students'

lived experience and perceptions of teacher care towards the clique to which they belong?) helped the researcher understand the difference between the perceptions of female clique members and male clique members and if females and males have different lived experiences within the same clique.

### **Bias of the Researcher**

The proposed study was created to minimize the impact of bias in data collection and analysis. The researcher is the principal and had known some of the participants from prior schools, however, the questionnaire was not able to link the participant to the results, therefore, the researcher did not know who had completed the survey and, when analyzing the results, the researcher was not able to identify the participant to the examined result.

### **Summary**

According to research, social cliques and teachers play an intricate role in a student's high school experience. Therefore, it is imperative that research was conducted to examine the positive and negative impact that cliques and teachers may have on specific cliques and their members. The research conducted by the researcher would shed light on the educational setting and the high school lived experience of social cliques.

## Chapter IV: Results

### Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which, if at all, students' perceptions of their teachers' care of specific types of cliques was related to those students' high school lived experience in the following four main cliques: popularity, Goths, loners, and others.

### Research Questions

This study aimed to explore the following research questions:

1. What is the high school lived experience of students who belong to four types of cliques (popularity, Goths, loners, and other)?
2. Among students who belong to four types of cliques (popularity, Goths, loners, and other), to what extent, if at all, are students' perceptions of teachers' care of members of specific types of cliques related to those students' lived experience?
3. What differences, if any, exist between male and female students' lived experience and perceptions of teacher care towards the clique to which they belong?

The population of the study included 300 of the researcher's Facebook contacts and current Pepperdine Seaver students in Malibu, California. The survey link was sent to all Facebook contacts via Facebook email and laptops were provided to current Pepperdine students to complete the survey online. This resulted in a total of 144 respondents in the study's research analysis ( $N = 144$ ). The findings of this study are presented in the following sections.

### Data Analysis

A demographic description of the participants is provided in Tables 1-4. The variables included social clique identification, gender, grade point average, and age.

Table 1 describes the 144 respondents' self-described affiliation with one of the following cliques: loners, Goths, popularity, and other. Of these, 17 (11.8%) were categorized as loners, 10 (6.9%) were Goths, 72 (50.0%) belonged to the popularity clique, and 45 (31.3%) identified themselves as belonging to another clique (Table 1). This table shows the clique representation amongst the participants.

Table 1

*Frequency Counts for Clique Association (N = 144)*

Clique	<i>n</i>	%
Loners	17	11.8
Goths	10	6.9
Popularity	72	50.0
Others	45	31.3

Table 2 describes the gender distribution of respondents. Of the 144 respondents, 64 (44.4%) were males and 80 (55.6%) females. Similar numbers of males and females were in this study.

Table 2

*Frequency Counts for Gender (N = 144)*

Gender	<i>n</i>	%
Male	64	44.4
Females	80	55.6

Table 3 shows the grade point average of the respondents. Of the 144 respondents, 2 (1.4%) had a GPA of below 2.00, 6 (4.2%) had a GPA of 2.00 through 2.49, 15 (10.4%) had a GPA of 2.50-2.99, 35 (24.3%) had a GPA of 3.00-3.49, 62 (43.1%) had a GPA of 3.50-3.99 and 24 (16.7%) respondents had a GPA of 4.00 or higher. Overall, the median GPA was 3.75 (Table 3).

Table 3

*Frequency Counts for Grade Point Average (N = 144)*

Grade Point Average	<i>n</i>	%
Below 2.00	2	1.4
2.00-2.49	6	4.2
2.50-2.99	15	10.4
3.00-3.49	35	24.3
3.50-3.99	62	43.1
4.00 or above	24	16.7

Table 4 indicates the age category of the study's participants. Eleven (7.6%) were 18 or 19 years old, 30 (20.8%) were 20 through 22 years of age, 18 (12.5%) were 23 through 27 years of age, 47 (32.6%) were 28 through 31 years of age, and 38 (26.4%) were the ages of 32 or above. Overall, the median age in the sample was 29.50 years old (Table 4).

Table 4

*Frequency Counts for Age Category (N = 144)*

Age Category	<i>n</i>	%
18-19	11	7.6
20-22	30	20.8
23-27	18	12.5
28-31	47	32.6
32 or above	38	26.4



Table 5 presents the frequency counts for selected variables sorted by highest endorsement. All frequencies were based on the number of respondents who gave a response of “yes.” Out of the 144 respondents, the highest frequencies of yes responses were statement 5 (Did you feel like teachers cared about you?), 131 (91.0%), and statement 13 (Do you feel that your academics were positively impacted by your teachers’ care), 124 (86.1%) respondents said yes. The two smallest frequencies were generated by statement 10 (Do you feel that your academics/grades were negatively impacted by your social clique?) with 15 (10.4%) respondents saying yes and statement 19 (Did you ever bully anyone in high school?) with 11 (7.6) respondents saying yes.

Table 5

*Frequency Counts for Selected Variables Sorted by Highest Endorsement (N = 144)*

Statement	<i>n</i>	%
5. Did you feel like teachers cared about you?	131	91.0
13. Do you feel that your academics were positively impacted by your teachers’ care?	124	86.1
11. Do you feel that your personal experience in high school was positively impacted by your social clique?	116	80.6
15. Do you feel that your personal experience in high school was positively impacted by your teachers care (favoritism, etc)?	108	75.0
7. Do you feel specific cliques were favored over others by teachers and students?	102	70.8
6. Do you feel the teachers cared about your clique?	90	62.5
9. Do you feel that your academics/grades were positively impacted by your social clique	79	54.9

*(table continues)*

Statement	<i>n</i>	%
17. Were you ever bullied in high school?	53	36.8
12. Do you feel that your personal experience in high school was negatively impacted by your social clique?	32	22.2
14. Do you feel that your academics were negatively impacted by your teachers care?	22	15.3
16. Do you feel that your personal experience in high school was negatively impacted by your teachers care?	22	15.3
10. Do you feel that your academics/grades were negatively impacted by your social clique	15	10.4
19. Did you ever bully anyone in high school?	11	7.6

*Note.* Frequencies were based on the number of respondents who gave a response of a *Yes*.

Table 6 identifies the frequency of the overall rating of the participant and his/her clique regarding teacher care (5 being the greatest). Only 2 (1.4%) participants rated their teachers as a 1 (My teachers didn't care about me, or my clique, at all and they made a point to show it, they made my high school experience even worse). However, 71 (49.3%) respondents gave their teachers a rating of a 4 (I felt my teachers cared about my progress, experience and my peers in my clique), while 35 respondents (24.3%) gave their teachers a rating of a 5 (My teachers were awesome and I truly felt they cared about me, and the others in my clique, as a person and student and they showed it).

Table 6

*Frequency Counts for Ratings of Teacher Caring about the Participant and their Clique (N = 144)*

Rating Option	<i>n</i>	%
1. My teachers didn't care about me, or my clique, at all and they made a point to show it, they made my high school experience even worse.	2	1.4
2. I didn't feel my teachers liked me, or my clique, but I was able to withstand it.	7	4.9
3. They were alright, not too many complaints.	29	20.1
4. I felt my teachers cared about my progress, experience and my peers in my clique.	71	49.3
5. My teachers were awesome and I truly felt they cared about me, and the others in my clique, as a person and student and they showed it.	35	24.3

Table 7 presents the participants' overall rating of their high school (5 being the highest rating). Ten (6.9%) participants gave their high school a rating of 1 (I didn't like it at all). However the highest frequency counts were the highest ratings of a 4 and 5. Forty-two (29.2%) respondents ranked their overall experience as a 4 (I enjoyed it) while 44 (30.6) respondents said their high school years were a 5 (It was a great experience and I loved it).

Table 7

*Frequency Counts for Ratings of Overall High School Experience (N = 144)*

Rating Option	<i>n</i>	%
1. I didn't like it at all.	10	6.9
2. It wasn't the worse experience, but I still wish I was somewhere else.	16	11.1
3. It was fine, not too many complaints.	32	22.2
4. I enjoyed it	42	29.2
5. It was a great experience and I loved it.	44	30.6

### **Presentation of Findings**

In this section, the data on social cliques and gender in relationship to their lived experience is presented in Tables 8-11. Although the researcher performed a chi-square tests on 20 cross tabs, only crosstabulations that were statistically significant were presented in a table.

Table 8 shows a chi-squared test indicating the number of males and females per social clique. For example, of the 80 female and 64 male respondents, 9 (52.9%) males and 8 (47.1%) females identified themselves as loners, while the popularity clique, 33 (45.8%) were males and 39(54.2%) were females. As shown in Table 8, there was no significant difference ( $p = .142$ ) between gender and clique association. Furthermore, with a .20 Cramer's V between males vs. females per clique, there is a little association between gender and clique association. This is important when examining research question number three.

Table 8

*High School Lived Experience by Gender and Social Cliques (N = 144)*

Statement	Clique	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
2. Which following clique would best describe you: loners, Goths, Popular, or Other? <sup>a</sup>	Loners	9	52.9	8	47.1
	Goths	7	70.0	3	30.0
	Popularity	33	45.8	39	54.2
	Other	15	33.3	30	66.7

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>  $\chi^2(3, N = 144) = 5.45, p = .14$ . Cramer's  $V = .20$

Table 9 indicates the grade point average (GPA) of specific social cliques during their high school years. As shown in Table 9, 2 (2.8%) popular students fell below a 2.0 GPA while the remainder of the cliques (loners, Goths, and Other) had 0.0 (0.0%). Two loners (11.8%), three Goths (30.0%), one popular student (1.4%) and no others (0.0%) earned a 2.0-2.49 GPA. No loners (0.0%), seven Goths (70.0%), four popular students (5.6%), and four others (8.9%) earned a GPA of 2.5-2.99. Seven loners 7 (41.2%), no Goths 0.0 (0.0%), 18 popular students (25.0%), and 10 others (22.2%) earned a GPA of 3.0-3.49. Six loners (35.3%), no Goths (0.0%), 32 popular students (44.4%), and 24 others (53.3%) earned a GPA of 3.50-3.99. Finally, two loners (11.8%), no Goths (0.0%), 15 popular students (20.8%), and seven others (15.6%) earned a GPA of 4.0 or above. A chi-squared test showed a significant relationship between the social clique and GPA ( $p < .05$ ). The Cramer's  $V$  indicated a value of .42, therefore, 42% could be attributed and explained by the clique association.

Table 9

*Social Cliques by Grade Point Average (N = 144)*

GPA <sup>a</sup>	<u>Loners</u>		<u>Goths</u>		<u>Popularity</u>		<u>Other</u>	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Below 2.00	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	2.8	0	0.0
2.00-2.49	2	11.8	3	30.0	1	1.4	0	0.0
2.50-2.99	0	0.0	7	70.0	4	5.6	4	8.9
3.00-3.49	7	41.2	0	0.0	18	25.0	10	22.2
3.50-3.99	6	35.3	0	0.0	32	44.4	24	53.3
4.00 or above	2	11.8	0	0.0	15	20.8	7	15.6

Note. <sup>a</sup>  $\chi^2 (15, N = 144) = 74.06, p = .001$ . Cramer's  $V = .41$

Table 10 presents the crosstabulation for bullying and clique association. The table is divided into three categories: not a victim (never bullied), was a victim (was bullied), and victim due to clique (bullied because of the clique they belonged to). Each category is broken down into cliques. Five (29.4%) loners, one (10.0%) Goth, 53 (73.6%) popular students, and 32 (71.1%) others identified themselves in the “not a victim” category. Three (17.6%) loners, one (10.0%) Goth, 12 (16.7%) popular students, and eight (17.8) others identified themselves as being bullied (in the “was a victim” category). Nine (52.9) loners, eight (80.0%) Goths, seven (9.7%) popular students, and five (11.1%) others identified themselves as being bullied due to their clique. With a crosstabulation and a chi-square value of 42.12 ( $p = .001$ ) and a Cramer's  $V$  of .38, the data collected in Table 10 show a significant relationship between cliques and bullying.

Table 10

*Crosstabulation for Victim Category and Clique (N = 144)*

Victim Category	Clique	<i>n</i>	%
Not a Victim	Loners	5	29.4
	Goth	1	10.0
	Popularity	53	73.6
	Others	32	71.1
Was a Victim	Loners	3	17.6
	Goth	1	10.0
	Popularity	12	16.7
	Others	8	17.8
Victim Due to Clique	Loners	9	52.9
	Goth	8	80.0
	Popularity	7	9.7
	Others	5	11.1

*Note.*  $\chi^2(6, N = 144) = 42.12, p = .001$ . Cramer's  $V = .38$

Table 11 reports the respondents' high school lived experience categorized by social cliques. Although the researcher ran 20 crosstabulations, the statements that are reported on the table show value and significance. The table is divided by the statements from the survey and broken down by cliques. There were four standout statements: 5, 13, 14, and 16.

In response to statement 5, did you feel like teachers cared about you, all 17 (100.0%) loners responded yes. Eight (80.0%) Goths said no while the other two (20%) said yes. Three (4.2%) popular students said no while 69 (95.8%) popular students said yes. For others, two (4.4%) said no and 43 (95.6%) said yes. The chi-square test showed a value of 66.24 ( $p = .001$ ) and a Cramer's  $V$  of .68. There was a significant relationship

( $p = .001$ ) between perception of teacher care and clique association. Furthermore, a 68% of reason could be explained and accounted for by teacher care and clique association.

In response to statement 13, do you feel that you academics were positively impacted by your teachers' care, one (5.9%) loners responded no and 16 (94.1%) responded yes. Nine (90.0%) Goths said no while only one (10.0%) said yes. Seven (9.7%) popular students said no while 65 (90.3%) popular students said yes. For others, three (6.7%) said no and 42 (93.3%) said yes. The chi-square test showed a value of 52.36 ( $p = .001$ ) and a Cramer's  $V$  of .60, indicating a significant relationship between positive impact on academics and clique association.

In response to statement 14, do you feel your academics were negatively impacted by your teachers' care, all 17 (100.0%) loners responded no. Only one (10.0%) Goth said no while 9 (90.0%) said yes. Sixty-seven (93.1%) popular students said no while five (6.9%) popular students said yes. For others, 37 (82.2%) said no and 8 (17.8%) said yes. The chi-square test showed a value of 50.28 ( $p = .001$ ) and a Cramer's  $V$  of .59, indicating a significant relationship between negative academic impact and clique association.

Table 11

*High School Lived Experience by Social Cliques (N = 144)*

Statement	Clique	<u>No</u>		<u>Yes</u>	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
5. Did you feel like teachers cared about you? <sup>a</sup>	Loners	0	0.0	17	100.0
	Goths	8	80.0	2	20.0
	Popularity	3	4.2	69	95.8
	Other	2	4.4	43	95.6

(table continues)



Statement	Clique	<u>No</u>		<u>Yes</u>	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
6. Do you feel the teachers cared about your clique? <sup>b</sup>	Loners	7	41.2	10	58.8
	Goths	10	100.0	0	0.0
	Popularity	18	25.0	54	75.0
	Other	19	42.2	26	57.8
7. Do you feel specific cliques were favored over others by teachers and students? <sup>c</sup>	Loners	2	11.8	15	88.2
	Goths	0	0.0	10	100.0
	Popularity	22	30.6	50	69.4
	Other	18	40.0	27	60.0
11. Do you feel that your personal experience in high school was positively impacted by your social clique? <sup>d</sup>	Loners	11	64.7	6	35.3
	Goths	0	0.0	10	100.0
	Popularity	7	9.7	65	90.3
	Other	10	22.2	35	77.8
12. Do you feel that your personal experience in high school was negatively impacted by your social clique? <sup>e</sup>	Loners	9	52.9	8	47.1
	Goths	10	100.0	0	0.0
	Popularity	58	80.6	14	19.4
	Other	35	77.8	10	22.2
13. Do you feel that your academics were positively impacted by your teachers' care? <sup>f</sup>	Loners	1	5.9	16	94.1
	Goths	9	90.0	1	10.0
	Popularity	7	9.7	65	90.3
	Other	3	6.7	42	93.3

(table continues)

Statement	Clique	<u>No</u>		<u>Yes</u>	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
14. Do you feel your academics were negatively impacted by your teachers' care? <sup>g</sup>	Loners	17	100.0	0	0.0
	Goths	1	10.0	9	90.0
	Popularity	67	93.1	5	6.9
	Other	37	82.2	8	17.8
15. Do you feel that your personal experience in high school was positively impacted by your teachers' care? <sup>h</sup>	Loners	1	5.9	16	94.1
	Goths	9	90.0	1	10.0
	Popularity	12	16.7	60	83.3
	Other	14	31.1	31	68.9
16. Do you feel your personal experience in high school was negatively impacted by your teachers' care? <sup>i</sup>	Loners	17	100.0	0	0.0
	Goths	1	10.0	9	90.0
	Popularity	66	91.7	6	8.3
	Other	38	84.4	7	15.6
17. Were you ever bullied in high school? <sup>j</sup>	Loners	5	29.4	12	70.6
	Goths	1	10.0	9	90.0
	Popularity	53	73.6	19	26.4
	Other	32	71.1	13	28.9
18. If you were ever bullied in high school, did you feel it had anything to do with the clique of which you were a part? ( <i>n</i> = 60) <sup>k</sup>	Loners	4	30.8	9	69.2
	Goths	1	11.1	8	88.9
	Popularity	14	66.7	7	33.3
	Other	12	70.6	5	29.4

*(table continues)*

Statement	Clique	<u>No</u>		<u>Yes</u>	
		<i>n</i>	%	Statement	Clique
19. Did you ever bully anyone in high school? <sup>1</sup>	Loners	14	82.4	3	17.6
	Goths	10	100.0	0	0.0
	Popularity	64	88.9	8	11.1
	Other	45	100.0	0	0.0
20. If you have bullied anyone in high school, did it have anything to do with the clique to which they belonged? ( <i>n</i> = 21) <sup>m</sup>	Loners	3	100.0	0	0.0
	Popularity	7	58.3	5	41.7
	Other	6	100.0	0	0.0

Note. <sup>1</sup> $\chi^2(3, N = 144) = 48.89, p = .001$ . Cramer's *V* = .58

<sup>j</sup> $\chi^2(3, N = 144) = 25.08, p = .001$ . Cramer's *V* = .42

<sup>k</sup> $\chi^2(3, n = 60) = 12.53, p = .006$ . Cramer's *V* = .46

<sup>l</sup> $\chi^2(3, N = 144) = 8.19, p = .04$ . Cramer's *V* = .24

<sup>m</sup> $\chi^2(2, n = 21) = 4.92, p = .09$ . Cramer's *V* = .48

### Summary

In summary, specific variables, such as teachers' care and social clique association, did have a significant relationship with high school students' personal and academic lived experience. These data will be discussed in chapter 5 along with a summary of findings, implications and recommendations for future research, and potential implementations for schools and higher education institutes.

## **Chapter V: Discussion**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter literature and findings will be compared, contrasted, and synthesized. Additionally, the researcher will recommend further potential research questions, in addition to offering policy and practitioner recommendations. Lastly, a summary will be given.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which, if at all, students' perceptions of their teachers' care of specific types of cliques was related to those students' high school lived experience in the following three main cliques: popularity, Goths, and loners.

### **Research Questions**

This study aimed to explore the following research questions:

1. What is the high school lived experience of students who belong to four types of cliques (popularity, Goths, loners, and other)?
2. Among students who belong to four types of cliques (popularity, Goths, loners, and other), to what extent, if at all, are students' perceptions of teachers' care of members of specific types of cliques related to those students' lived experience?
3. What differences, if any, exist between male and female students' lived experience and perceptions of teacher care towards the clique to which they belong?

**Key Findings**

In attempting to examine the research questions and analyzing the data, some fascinating findings were revealed. Research question 1 asked, what is the high school lived experience of students who belong to four types of cliques (popularity, Goths, loners, and others)? The majority of Goths (90%) and loners (70.6%) reported that they were bullied in high school. Of those who were bullied, 88.9% of the Goths and 69.2% of the loners said it was because of their clique. Forty one point seven percent of the popularity respondents said they bullied others because of their affiliation with a specific clique. Nine (52.9%) loners and eight (80.0%) Goths reported that they were bullied due to their clique association. Interestingly, respondents' personal experience of high school was impacted by association with a social clique; 100% of Goths, 90.3% of popularity, 77.8% of others said their high school experience was positively impacted due to their association with social clique while 64.7% loners said no to a positive impact. All the cliques (88.2% of loners, 100% of Goths, 69.4% of popularity, and 60% of Other) identified specific cliques being favored over other cliques. Popularity students were identified as the most favored clique.

Research question 2 asked, Among students who belong to four types of cliques (popularity, Goths, loners, and others), to what extent, if at all, are students' perceptions of teachers' care of members of specific types of cliques related to those students' lived experience? Significant differences were found between social cliques. Regarding the perceived impact of teachers' care, 94.1% of loners, 90.3% of popularity, and 93.3% of others reported that their teachers impacted their lived experience while 90% of Goths said teachers did not impact them. In fact, 90% of Goths said their personal experience in

high school was negatively impacted by their teachers' care. All 10 (100%) of the Goth participants fell below a 3.0 GPA. Thirty percent of the group fell below a 2.5 GPA. Fifteen (88.2%) loners, 65 (90.2%) popular students, and 41 (91.1) of other respondents reported a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Although about 95% of popularity and other respondents and 100% of loner respondents felt their teachers cared about them, 80% of Goths didn't feel their teachers cared about them. Furthermore, 100% of Goths felt their teachers didn't care about their clique while 75% of popularity respondents felt teachers cared about their clique. All the cliques (88.2% of loners, 100% of Goths, 69.4% of popularity, and 60% of other) identified specific cliques being favored over other cliques. With 110 responses to question 8 (If yes to question 7, which group do you feel was favored?), the popularity clique was identified as the most favored clique. Fifty-seven responses (51.9%) claimed the popularity clique was the most favored while 30 (27.3%) identified athletes, 13 (11.8%) reported nerds/smarties, 5 (4.5%) claimed leadership/involved students and 5 (4.5%) were miscellaneous (the pretty, the wealthy, the good students or the students that have been around since middle school).

Research question 3 asked, what differences, if any, exist between male and female students' lived experience and perceptions of teacher care towards the clique to which they belong? Due to the close split of males and females per clique, no significant findings were related to this research question.

### **Literature that Agrees with Findings**

An analysis of the research revealed that a majority of participants identified popular students as the favored clique (57%). This result is similar to the findings of

Adler and Adler (1995, 1998) who asserted that popular students are the ones about whom others talk. Furthermore, Adler and Adler stated that popularity is one of the strongest dimensions in a preadolescent's life.

Findings show that Goths did not enjoy their high school lived experience compared to the other cliques. This result is similar to Clark's (2004) finding that Goths were not interested in school and found their high school lived experience unenjoyable. Findings also suggest that Goths, due to the clique to which they belonged, felt their lived experience was impacted negatively by other social cliques and teachers. Similarly, Haenfler (2010) found that Goths have been misunderstood and misconstrued, and Giannetti and Sagarese (2001) stated that students who are insulted by other peers tend to carry bad feelings

The literature shows that loners and Goths are often bullied and insulted (Adler & Adler, 1998; Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001; Haenfler, 2010; Wilkins, 2008). Similar, this research showed (Table 10) that both Goths and loners were targeted by other cliques and most claimed that the bullying occurred because of the clique to which they belonged. Along the same lines, Cohen (1999), Giannetti and Sagarese (2001), Willard (2007) and Wiseman (2002) all discussed bullying in relation to clique association.

Academically, the literature stated that some students felt it difficult to focus academically when bullied (Clark, 2004; Desetta, 2005). Similarly, the findings showed that members of some cliques felt their academics were impacted negatively due to other cliques that bullied them and teacher favoritism towards those other cliques. Research also showed that Goths did the poorest academically out of the cliques studied (Table 9); the majority of Goth participants stated that their teachers did not care about them. Both

Pryor (1994) and Tauber (1998) showed that students' perceptions of their intellectual skills impacted their academic achievement. Teachers have the ability to utilize the self-fulfilling prophecy and have a positive impact on students' academics.

The literature review found that teachers favored popular students (Burstein, 2008; Cohen, 1999). This study showed that many students reported that teachers favored popular students over members of other cliques. Fifty-seven percent of participants that claimed teachers favor specific cliques identified popular students as the most favored clique.

### **Literature that Disagrees with Findings**

Almost all respondents claimed that their clique membership had a positive influence on their high school lived experience, however, Brown and Klute (2003) found that friends can have both a negative influence and positive influence on their peers. Another interesting finding (Table 8) was the consistency of males and females per clique. This finding was different from Adler and Adler's (1998) research showing that there was more gender crossover (male verses female ratio) in the popularity clique than in other cliques. Another difference between literature and the current research was favoritism. Although Burstein (2008) stated that the unpopular kids felt that popular kids tended to be favored, the research conducted showed that popular students (64.9%) identified themselves as being favored too.

### **Synthesis and Summary of Literature**

Although there are differences between the literature and the current research, there are many factors to take into account. For example, although Brown and Klute (2003) show both negative and positive influences of social cliques and their impact on a



student's lived experience, a possible explanation for this difference could be that the current research was conducted over a period of a month but Brown and Klute's research was conducted over a 30-year span. Similarly, Adler and Adler (1998) found a higher gender crossover in the popularity clique in comparison to other cliques, while the current research did not show much of a difference between male and female. A possible explanation could be that Adler and Adler examined elementary, middle, and high school students while the current research was conducted using adults who reflected on their high school experience. Lastly, Burstein (2008) discussed that unpopular students feel that popular students are favored, however, the current research showed that even popular students identified themselves being favored, however; it is unclear if Burstein surveyed popular students, unlike the current research that was conducted.

Overall, the literature tends to correlate with the research that was conducted. Adler and Adler (1998), Giannetti and Sagarese (2001), and Wiseman (2002) all discussed the personal and academic impact social cliques have on students, which correlates with the findings of this research. Likewise, the literature discussed how students perceive teacher favoritism of certain cliques (Clark, 2004; Cohen, 1999; Thornburgh, 2006)) and this study also showed that students perceive favoritism to exist among teachers and the popular students.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

Understanding cliques and their interrelationships with one another and the school environment is imperative to the education world. As the literature and current research have shown, the high school lived experience can be impacted by peers, cliques, and teachers. Academically and personally, cliques and their members are being impacted by

the atmosphere they and the school have created. Educators should strive to understand, respect, and empower each student to be successful. Furthermore, educators should understand the stereotypes and characteristics of cliques and embrace them and gear tolerance towards each clique.

Bullying was found to be highly connected with cliques in both the literature and the current research. Bullying is an issue that impacts students academically and personally. DeVoe and Bauer (2010) state that student victimization is a concern and understanding it is a key to preventing school crime. Indeed, 30% of American students drop out of school because of bullying (Thornburgh, 2006). When educators understand the factors that lead to bullying, they can begin to build a program that fosters a positive school culture characterized by respect and tolerance.

Another finding that is essential to bring into light is that students feel specific cliques are favored; members of specific cliques feel their teachers do not care about them and, in turn, perceive that this has impacted them negatively. This is a classic illustration of a self-fulfilling prophecy. If a student feels they are not liked and their academics are low, it becomes a perception of their teachers not caring. Also, when a student feels liked by their teacher, they tend to do better. This research has identified that Goths feel their teachers do not like them and, that the popular students were favored by teachers. Although this may not come as a surprise to many, it is an insight that should be highlighted. Some students are feeling a lack of support and that perception is impacting them. Administrators and teachers should examine their schools for factors that are impacting their students both negatively and positively.

Schools are not the only institutions that need to examine the power of social cliques and self-fulfilling prophecy. Teacher training programs have the ability to enhance their curriculum by training and empowering teachers to identify and combat negative perceptions of students and cliques. Furthermore, schools should offer programs that unite cliques and teach them about tolerance and respect, which could work to enhance unity amongst students and teachers. For example, pep assemblies should have representatives from different groups and cliques.

Teachers, parents, and students say that cliques should be eliminated, however, instead of striving to diminish cliques; the educational community should learn to understand them and build off of their strengths. In turn, educators could strive to create schools that focus on their student diversity. Indeed, cliques confer many benefits to their members, giving students a sense of identity, security, and friendship.

The current research has shown that cliques can positively influence their members, but also notes a sense of favoritism among students and teachers. Educators should build off of what they know and seek permanent solutions. Educators should teach, love, and empower students for who they are and what they can accomplish. Teachers are capable of fostering students' education academically, socially, and personally. With that said, the following recommendations could further the knowledge of today's educational environment and could help educate students and teachers about cliques and their impact on the school setting.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

In order to delve more deeply into this field of research, a few areas should be examined further. It would be useful to study social cliques across the nation and

investigate the differences between these cliques more thoroughly, especially exploring how cliques differ in private and public schools. In addition, it would be interesting to explore how nationality and ethnicity plays a part in the lived experience of social cliques. Some students identify with their ethnicity (i.e. Asians) while others identify more with their nationality. Lastly, the researcher would suggest broadening the scope of social cliques examined. After using the self-identified survey (the question that let participants identify to which clique they belonged), the researcher would suggest comparing and contrasting more social cliques and their lived experience beyond the three main ones examined in this study, such as athletes, nerds, Mormons, etc. This would provide a greater insight in the validity of the data and could offer a further look into the socio-economic factors of how cliques develop. It would be interesting to find out if the high school lived experience of social cliques impacts adults' social lived experience.

The researcher would also suggest a few additional methodological tactics for future studies. First and foremost, the researcher would conduct interviews with specific clique members, asking open-ended questions with hopes of gaining more in depth responses. The researcher would also break down bullying more specifically. During the results, the researcher found it interesting that few respondents said they bullied others, yet it would be interesting to find out if there is a lack of knowledge on what bullying entails from verbal comments to exclusion to cyber and physical bullying. Another recommended methodological adjustment would be to take an observation approach and follow specific clique members around, making observations in specific areas such as hallways, classrooms, and the cafeteria. Open-ended questions, ethnographic observations, and expanding the number of social cliques studied could elicit interesting

knowledge and observations on the lived experience of more social cliques, which could enhance the validity and reliability of the data gathered in the current study.

Consequently, the following potential research questions could be explored in future studies:

1. To what extent, if at all, do lived experiences of social cliques differ between private school and public schools?
2. To what extent, if at all, do lived experiences of social cliques differ amongst the interaction between other social cliques?
3. To what extent, if at all, do lived experiences of social cliques differ across nationalities and ethnicities?
4. To what extent, if at all, do lived experiences of social cliques impact adults' lived experience?
5. To what extent, if at all, do diverse forms of bullying, such as cyberbullying vs. verbal vs. physical bullying, exist between cliques?

### **Policy Recommendations**

As a result of the research findings of this study, the researcher would recommend a 2-3 unit class on social dynamics of school-aged students for education majors in college and credential programs, which should coincide with educational psychology. Educators need to be fully aware of social dynamics of cliques, group interactions, and how the social and personal experience of students can be impacted academically and socially. Furthermore, it is vital that educators are educated about bullying, especially cyberbullying, and classroom management strategies that create a safe learning environment.

Given these recommendations, this researcher feels strongly that the state should fully research social clique dynamics and how bullying and academic achievement are impacted by clique interactions. More importantly, the Department of Education should enhance their current state curriculum on bullying and social identity so universities and school districts may implement applicable curriculum that is conducive to their school environment. Educators could benefit from further understanding of the impact that social identity has on students. This acquired knowledge could benefit the educator in understanding the social dynamics of the school and the student personally. In turn, this knowledge could positively impact a students' education. For example, if teachers understood that Goths felt that their teachers didn't care then a teacher could make sure they made a better effort in showing their appreciation and respect for students that identified with Goths.

### **Researcher's Recommendations**

Data from this research show that students that are being bullied is impacting their academics and high school lived experience. Students and teachers should be educated on strategies for managing and minimizing bullying. Teachers should be trained on identifying bullying, social cliques, and social clique rivalry, and should understand the short term and long term implications that bullying and cliques have on students. Furthermore, school should maintain a no-tolerance for bullying; schools need to establish an environment that allows for safe dialogue and acceptance. Lastly, teachers need further insight on the self-fulfilling prophecy and how it relates to social cliques and academics.

Students should be given a strong curriculum regarding bullying and the impact (both negative and positive) that social cliques have on their school experience. In addition, students should build their awareness about cyberbullying and how exclusion contributes to bullying. Students should be provided with strategies for addressing and should learn about different forms of bullying and roles that students play in bullying, such as victim, bully, and bystander. Likewise, parent education should be provided on social cliques within in the schools; it is vital that parents understand the importance of knowing who their child is hanging out with and how their child's friendships could impact his or her middle and high school lived experience.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which, if at all, students' perceptions of their teachers' care of specific types of cliques is related to those students' high school lived experience for the following four main cliques: popularity, Goths, loners, and others. The goal of this study was to shed light on the history of the preceding variables and the current research related to cliques. Furthermore, it was intended to help guide the researcher in illuminating what has been studied previously regarding social cliques, factors within them, and their effects on student social and academic achievement.

The literature review included elements from theoretical, historical, empirical, and popular literature. The literature researched shows that social hierarchies exist among cliques (Adler & Adler, 1995; Cohen, 1999; Giannetti & Sagarese, 2001; Mellor & Mellor, 2009; Thornburgh, 2006; Wiseman, 2002). Furthermore, several sources in the literature have observed that bullying plays an intricate role within and among cliques

(Adler & Adler, 1995; Cohen, 1999; DeVoe & Bauer, 2010; Giannetti & Sagarese; Willard, 2007; Wiseman, 2002).

This quantitative research was conducted using a survey that was designed to address the research questions. The survey was given to over 300 participants with 144 returned responses. Participants consisted of individuals over the age of 18 from the researcher's Facebook contacts and currently enrolled students at Pepperdine University.

When examining the research questions, findings showed a statistically significant relationship between the high school lived experience and clique association (Research Question 1). Furthermore, the research conducted identified a possible correlation between clique association and teachers' care (Research Question 2). However, there was no significant relationship between gender, clique association, and the high school lived experience (Research Question 3).

After analyzing the results, the researcher recommends that further research be conducted on a greater variety of cliques to identify if individuals' high school lived experience impacts their adult lived experience. It is recommended that bullying and clique issues should continue to be addressed within schools. Lastly, graduate schools should offer additional education within educational training programs that enhances awareness of social identity, identifying cliques and providing support for members of various cliques such as Goths and loners.



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## APPENDIX A

## Survey Questions

- 1) What range did your Grade Point Average fall under? (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3)
  - A. Below 2.0
  - B. 2.0-2.49
  - C. 2.5-2.99
  - D. 3.0-3.49
  - E. 3.5-3.99
  - F. 4.0 or above
  
- 2) Which of the following cliques would best describe you: loners, Goths, or Popularity (RQ1)
  - A. Loners
  - B. Goths
  - C. Popularity
  - D. Not Applicable
  
- 3) If you did not belong to one of the previously mentioned cliques, which one did you belong to? (RQ-none—possibly use for future studies)  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 4) What is your gender? (RQ3)
  - A. Male
  - B. Female
  
- 5) Did you feel like teachers cared about you? (RQ2, RQ3)
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
  
- 6) Do you feel the teachers cared about your clique? (RQ2, RQ3)
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
  
- 7) Do you feel specific cliques were favored over others by teachers and students? (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3)
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
  
- 8) If yes on question 7, which clique do you feel was the most favored? \_\_\_\_\_

- 9) Do you feel that your academics/grades were positively impacted by your social clique?  
(RQ1, RQ2, RQ3)
- A. Yes  
B. No
- 10) Do you feel that your academics/grades were negatively impacted by your social clique?  
(RQ1, RQ2, RQ3)
- A. Yes  
B. No
- 11) Do you feel that your personal experience in high school was positively impacted by your social clique? (RQ1, RQ3)
- A. Yes  
B. No
- 12) Do you feel that your personal experience in high school was negatively impacted by your social clique? (RQ1, RQ3)
- A. Yes  
B. No
- 13) Do you feel that your academics were positively impacted by your teachers' care?  
(RQ2, RQ3)
- A. Yes  
B. No
- 14) Do you feel that your academics were negatively impacted by your teachers' care? (RQ2, RQ3)
- A. Yes  
B. No
- 15) Do you feel that your personal experience in high school was positively impacted by your teachers' care (favoritism, etc) (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3)
- A. Yes  
B. No
- 16) Do you feel that your personal experience in high school was negatively impacted by your teachers' care? (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3)
- A. Yes  
B. No

17) Were you ever bullied in high school? (RQ1 and RQ3)

- A. Yes
- B. No

18) If you were bullied in high school, did you feel it had anything to do with the clique of which you were a part? (RQ1 and RQ3)

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Not Applicable

19) Did you ever bully anyone in high school? (RQ1 and RQ3)

- A. Yes
- B. No

20) If you have bullied anyone in high school, did it have anything to do with the clique they belonged to? (RQ1 and RQ3)

- A. Yes
- B. No

21) On a scale of 1-5 (5 being highest) how would you rate your teachers in caring about you and your clique? (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3)

1. My teachers didn't care about me or my clique at all and they made a point to show it, they made my high school experience even worse.
2. I didn't feel my teachers liked me or my clique, but I was able to withstand it.
3. They were alright, not too many complaints.
4. I felt my teachers cared about my progress and experience and my peers in my clique
5. My teachers were awesome and I truly felt they cared about me and the others in my clique as a person and student and they showed it.

22) On a scale of 1-5 (5 being highest) how would you rate your overall high school experience? (RQ1, RQ2, RQ3)

1. I didn't like it at all
2. It wasn't the worst experience, but I still wish I was somewhere else
3. It was fine, not too many complaints
4. I enjoyed it
5. It was a great experience and I loved it.

23) What is your age category?

- a. 18-19
- b. 20-22
- c. 23-27
- d. 28-31
- e. 32 or above

## APPENDIX B

## Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator: Shalen Bishop

Title of Project: Lived Experiences of Social Cliques

1. I \_\_\_\_\_, agree to participate in the dissertation research study being conducted by Pepperdine University graduate student, Shalen Bishop, under the direction of Dr. Robert Barner.
2. The overall purpose of this research is: *to examine the lived experience of social cliques in high school and the factors that impact their academic achievement and social experience.*
3. My participation will involve the following:  
Completing an approximate 10 minute survey that will ask questions regarding the lived experience in high school. I understand that the answers given will not be linked to my name. The location of the survey will be on the Pepperdine's Malibu campus (cafeteria).
4. I understand that there is no direct benefits to me for participating in this study; however my participating may benefit educators and society by bringing forth knowledge on the impacts of social cliques and their high school lived experience:
5. I understand that there are certain risks and discomforts that might be associated with this research. These risks include:  
Potential minimal risks to myself include risks to my dignity and self respect as well as psychological, emotional and behavioral risk in recalling memories of the past. If I experience any of these risks, I can discontinue my participation in the study or I contact the researcher for assistance.
6. I understand that I may choose not to participate in this research.
7. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to participate and/or withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.
8. I understand that the investigator, Shalen Bishop, will take all reasonable measures to protect the confidentiality of my records and my identity will not be revealed in any publication that may result from this project. The confidentiality

of my records will be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Under California law, there are exceptions to confidentiality, including suspicion that a child, elder, or dependent adult is being abused, or if an individual discloses an intent to harm him/herself or others

9. I understand that the investigator, Shalen Bishop, is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact *Dr. Robert Barner at 323-296-6863* if I have other questions or concerns about this research. If I have questions about my rights as a research participant, I understand that I can contact *Dr. Yuying Tsong, Chairperson of the Graduate and Professional Schools IRB, Pepperdine University, 310-568-5753*
10. I understand to my satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have received a copy of this informed consent form which I have read and understand. I hereby consent to participate in the research described above.

No one under 18 may participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX C

## Consent Form Used with a Waiver or Alteration of Informed Consent

(For online survey participants)

My name is *Shalen Bishop*, and I am a student in the Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy graduate program at Pepperdine University, GSEP, who is currently in the process of recruiting individuals for my dissertation study entitled, "*Lived Experiences of Social Cliques*," *The professor supervising my work is Dr. Robert Barner*. The study is designed to investigate *the academic and social experience of social cliques within high school*, so I am inviting individuals who have completed high school to participate in my study. Please understand that your participation in my study is strictly voluntary. The following is a description of what your participation will entail, the terms for participating in the study, and a discussion of your rights as a study participant. Please read this information carefully before deciding whether or not you wish to participate.

If you should decide to participate in the study, you will be asked to *complete a survey via surveymonkey*. It should take approximately *15-20 minutes* to complete the survey you have been asked to complete. Please complete the survey alone in a single setting..

Although minimal, there are potential risks that you should consider before deciding to participate in this study. These risks may include *risks to dignity and self respect as well as psychological, emotional and behavioral risk in recalling memories of the past*. In the event you do experience *any of these risks, you can discontinue your participation in the study or you may contact the research for assistance*.

As a participant, you may not see the direct benefits of the study. However, the study may bring forth insight to the educational setting of high school students and the role social cliques play in their academic and social experience.

If you should decide to participate and find you are not interested in completing the survey in it's entirety, you have the right to discontinue at any point without being questioned about your decision. You also do not have to answer any of the questions on the survey that you prefer not to answer--just leave such items blank.

After one week, a reminder note may be sent to you to complete the survey. Since this note will go out to everyone, I apologize ahead of time for sending you these reminders if you have complied with the deadline.

If the findings of the study are presented to professional audiences or published, no information that identifies you personally will be released. The data will be kept in a secure manner, for example, locked cabinet, for at least five years at which time the data will be destroyed.

If you have any questions regarding the information that I have provided above, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address and phone number provided below. If you have further questions or do not feel I have adequately addressed your concerns, please contact Dr. Robert Barner at 323-296-6863. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact Dr. Yuying Tsong, Chairperson of the Graduate and Professional Schools IRB, Pepperdine University, 310-568-5753.

By completing the survey and clicking “submit”, you are acknowledging that you have read and understand what your study participation entails, and are consenting to participate in the study.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information, and I hope you decide to complete the survey. You are welcome to a brief summary of the study findings in about 1 year.

Sincerely,

Shalen Bishop  
Educational Leadership, Administration and Policy Student  
1460 N. Mansfield Ave Apt 314  
Hollywood, CA 90028  
310-XXX-XXXX

## APPENDIX D

## In Person Study Script

“Thank you for taking the time to participate in this dissertation research study. You may complete the survey online with one of the provided laptops or you may complete a hardcopy survey. If you choose the hardcopy, please don’t include any names or identifiers on the actual survey to maintain anonymity. Once completed, please place your survey in the closed box. If you have any questions throughout this process, I will be over here at the table, feel free to ask. Once again, thank you for your time and participation”



## APPENDIX E

## Participant Letter

March 11th, 2011

Dear Participant,

My name is *Shalen Bishop*, and I am a student in the Educational Leadership, Administration, and Policy graduate program at Pepperdine University, GSEP, who is currently in the process of recruiting individuals for my study entitled, "*Lived Experiences of Social Cliques*," *The professor supervising my work is Dr. Robert Barner*. The study is designed to investigate *the academic and social experience of social cliques within high school*, so I am inviting individuals who have completed high school to participate in my study. Please understand that your participation in my study is strictly voluntary. The following is a description of what your study participation entails, the terms for participating in the study, and a discussion of your rights as a study participant. Please read this information carefully before deciding whether or not you wish to participate.

The research will investigate three main social cliques: popularity, Goths, and loners and the impact that teacher's care and favoritism have on social cliques and individuals' high school lived experience, academically and personally. The findings may bring forth insight to educators and how we can better address social cliques.

I will be conducting a survey on Pepperdine University's campus for those participants who wish to participate there or a *surveymonkey* link will be provided below for those who wish to complete the survey in a more quiet and isolated location. The survey will take about 15-20 minutes of your time. Your participation in this study is important and it will be very much appreciated. Your identity will be kept confidential and all results will be generalized when reported.

All data gathered will be locked away and I will be the only one with access to these notes and data. The data will be locked up for 5 years.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may choose to not participate. At anytime during the process, you may choose to withdraw without any consequences. Furthermore, you are not required to answer every question, especially if it makes you feel uncomfortable. Thank you very much for your consideration, time, and assistance in this research. If you want to view a copy of the dissertation research study before it is submitted for approval, I will more than willing to provide you an opportunity to review it. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at (310) 869-7780.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5LCTC7F>

Respectfully,

Shalen Bishop  
Pepperdine University  
ELAP Doctoral Candidate