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Bullying: Bullies, Victims, and Witnesses

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Abstract

This study examines bullying by focusing on bullies, victims, and witnesses. In an effort to examine long-term correlates of bullying, we asked university students about their experiences with bullying in middle school. We administered a 65 question survey to 191 college students from several university campuses. The survey was made up of the Handling Bullying Questionnaire (Bauman, Rigby & Hoppa, 2008), the Bullying Prevalence Questionnaire (Rigby & Slee, 2003), the Revised Pro-Victim Scale (Rigby, 1997), and 13 researcher created questions which dealt with the participants' experiences with bullying. We hypothesized that rates of bullying would be high and that the long-term correlates of witnessing bullying would be the same as those for being a victim of bullying. Most of the participants reported witnessing acts of bullying and being victims of bullying in middle school. Very few participants reported bullying others. We found non-violent forms of bullying to be the most common. Bullies and witnesses, but not victims, were more likely to say they would intervene to stop a case of bullying. Otherwise, witnesses and victims responded similarly.

Keywords: bullying, witnesses, bully-victims, vicarious trauma

Introduction

Bullying is a problem that has received a great deal of attention in recent years. Bullying is characterized by repetitive abusive behavior, either physical or verbal, that occurs due to an imbalance of power (Connors-Burrow, Johnson, Whiteside-Mansell, McKelvey, & Gargus, 2009). Bullying can be a serious threat to social and cognitive development during the adolescent years (Veenstra, Lindenberg, Oldehinkel, Dewinter, & Verhilst, 2005). The U. S. Department of Education published a report in 2011 on the rates of bullying in the 2008-2009 school year. That report stated that 7,066,000 students between the ages of 12 and 18 had been victims of bullying. This was reported to be 28% of the students in that age range. The report also found that bullying decreased with enrollment size of school and that nonviolent bullying such as name calling, being made fun of or being the subject of rumors were most common (U.S.

Department of Education, 2011). The widespread nature and potential harm of bullying has been taken seriously by lawmakers. According to another U. S. Department of Education report published in 2011, 46 states have bullying laws and another three states (Hawaii, Montana, and Michigan), have "model policies". Additionally, the number of bills related to bullying that have been enacted or amended has risen steadily from 1999-2010 (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, 2011).

Many studies have focused on the effects of bullying on the victims. Less attention has been paid to how bullying affects other individuals. Bullying impacts not only the victim, but also the bully and those who witness acts of bullying. Connors-Burrow et al. (2009) discussed four groups involved in

bullying: bullies, victims, bully-victims, and witnesses.

Bullies are sometimes seen as simple-minded children. However, this may be an unfair assessment because children who are bullies typically have some goal in mind when they bully (Connors-Burrow et al., 2009) and use intelligence to achieve their goals (Gini, 2006). Bullies may act the way that they do as a way of maintaining control (Veenstra et al., 2005). Research has also shown that there may be a sub-group of bullies called passive bullies. These children will engage in bullying but will not initiate the act (Swearer, Song, Cary, Eagle, & Mickelson, 2001).

Bullies tend to show low levels of empathy for their victims (Cranham & Carroll, 2003). Contrary to popular belief, bullies tend not to have low self-esteem. They are impulsive and tend to have a positive attitude about the violence that they commit (Swearer et al., 2001). Research has also shown that being a bully could be a sign of depression, for both boys and girls. For example, Kaltiala-Heino, Frojd, and Marttunen (2010) found that depression could be an underlying problem for bullies. Also, students who are bullies have reported greater levels of unhappiness while at school (Swearer et al., 2001). Other researchers, however, have found that there is no difference between the levels of depression in bullies and victims (Frisen, Jonsson, & Persson, 2007). Bullies tend to be easily accepted by their peers (Connors-Burrow et al., 2009). In fact, they are fairly popular with other students (Swearer et al., 2001).

Not surprisingly, many unfortunate characteristics are associated with being a victim of bullying. Research has shown that victims tend to be depressed, socially isolated, withdrawn, and anxious (Connors-

Burrow et al., 2009). They report being the least liked group of children and that they have few friends. Other children tend to see victims as the most rejected group of children (Connors-Burrow et al., 2009). Victims of bullying often have poor social skills and can have a serious demeanor, lack a sense of humor, and have trouble relaxing (Fox & Boulton, 2005). Because victims have poor social skills, they have trouble making friends. They do not know how to handle the various problems that arise in their friendships. When victims do make friends they tend to become friends with other victims. As a result, even together the children cannot stop the abuse from their bullies (Holt & Espelage 2007). Victims of bullying are typically not violent or aggressive. They have trouble trying to assert themselves among other children (Cranham & Carroll, 2003). Research has shown that low self-esteem may be a cause for the victimization of certain children (Swearer et al., 2001). Children who are bullied may be frequently absent from school as a result of learning to implement avoidance behaviors (Batsche & Knoff, 1994, Nabuzoka, Ronning, & Handegard, 2009).

Being a victim of bullying has been tied to higher levels of depression in children (Swearer et al., 2001). Depression is brought about by victimization and research has shown that being depressed can increase a child's odds of becoming a victim of bullying (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2010). Children who are victims have trouble reaching out to others for social support. One study found that children who had been bullied for more than four weeks had more trouble seeking help than those children who had only experienced bullying for a short amount of time (Holt & Espelage, 2007). Another important concern for children who are victims is that they are at a greater risk

of becoming bullies themselves (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2010).

Bully-victims are children who are both bullies and victims. These children face unique challenges. Bully-victims suffer from a combination of impairments that are typical of both bullies and victims. These children tend to suffer from hyperactivity, negative emotionality, reactive aggression, and have greater problems socially than either pure bullies or pure victims (Marini et al., 2006). They also face rejection from their peers and a lack of close friendships. In addition, the parents of bully-victims tend to be less involved in the life of the children (Marini et al., 2006). Bully-victims are less liked and have fewer friends than children who are pure bullies. Other students and even some teachers believe that the bully-victims deserve the abuse that they receive (Connors-Burrow et al., 2009).

Finally, many children are witnesses to acts of bullying. Research has found that bullying can impact witnesses and that the effects of witnessing bullying can often be very similar to the effects of being a victim. For example, witnesses tend to have the same level of repression of empathy and desensitization to bullying as do victims (Janson, Carney, Hazler, & Oh, 2009). Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, and Österman (1996) discussed four distinct subgroups of witnesses. A witness can be an assistant, reinforcer, outsider, or defender. Assistants do not start acts of bullying, but if they see a child being bullied they will join in and help the bully. Reinforcers do not physically join the bullying, but they will supply the bully with positive feedback for their actions. Outsiders are the children who see acts of bullying taking place and avoid getting involved. Defenders will intervene on behalf of the victim and try to stop the bully. Research suggests that social

acceptance of witnesses depends on the subgroup to which they belong. Boys were more accepted when they acted as reinforcers, assistants, and defenders, and tended to be rejected when acting as outsiders and sometimes as defenders (Salmivalli et al.).

As stated above, some children are both bullies and victims. Since most children probably witness at least some instances of bullying, it is likely that there are many children who are bullies, victims, and witnesses at different times. This can complicate the process of studying the effects of bullying, victimization, and witnessing bullying. It can also make it more difficult to help children who have been negatively affected since their experiences with all three facets of bullying can result in complex issues with which professionals have to deal.

Gender is an important factor in bullying. Male students are more often reported as being bullies (Batsche & Knoff, 1994, Chapell, Haselman, Kitchin, Lomon, MacIver, & Sarullo, 2006). While both males and females can be bullies, they tend to use different methods. Male students tend to hit others and threaten violence, while gossiping and the stealing of personal belongings are favorite forms of bullying for female students (Veenstra et al., 2005). Using such techniques may allow female bullies to gain the things they want by upsetting the social relations of rival females (Marini, Dane, Bosacki, & Ylc-Cura, 2006). Both male and female bullies may use social isolation, purposely omitting a person from a group or activity (Veenstra et al., 2005). While both genders are often victims, boys tend to report acts of bullying more frequently than girls (Chapell et al., 2006).

Age is also an important factor when looking at who is liable to be a bully or a victim. Bullies tend to pick victims who are younger than them (Frisen et al., 2007). One report found that bullying decreased with grade level, with 39.4% of 6th graders and 20.4% of 12th graders reporting being bullied (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Children at the elementary school level tend to report the most victimization (Scheithauer, Hayer, Peterman, & Jugert, 2006). Chapell et al. (2006) found that students who were bullied in elementary school are at risk of being bullied in middle school and high school. Regardless of school level, victims are usually younger than their bullies, with the youngest students being most at risk of becoming a victim (Batsche & Knoff, 1994).

A major focus of this study is to determine how bullying is viewed years later by bullies, victims, and witnesses. Because of this, our participants were college students who were surveyed about their experiences with bullying several years prior to their participation in this study. This method has obvious limitations such as the likelihood of participants being unable to accurately remember their experiences. However, the method we used was necessary in order to find out about how bullying is viewed after some time has passed. Further, whether the participants' memories are accurate or not, we will still have information on how participants currently view events from several years earlier. Put another way, this study allows us to investigate what may be long-term effects of bullying. Another aim of the current study was to attempt to present a clearer image of the variables correlated with witnessing bullying. Also, we used multiple previously published measures in addition to original questions in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the correlates of engaging in,

being a victim of, and witnessing bullying. We hypothesized that a high percentage of our participants would report experiencing bullying, that witnessing bullying would be correlated with many of the same variables correlated with being a victim of bullying, and that participants who reported being bullies, victims, or witnesses would respond differently than those who did not.

Method

Participants

We recruited participants through a mass email sent to students at several campuses of a multi-campus university in the Southeastern United States. The email included a brief description of the study and a link to an online survey. No incentive was offered for participation. Our 191 participants included 37 males and 153 females and one individual who did not respond to the gender question. Freshmen and graduate students made up 4.2% and 20.9% of the sample, respectively. The remaining 74.4% of the participants were sophomores, juniors, or seniors. One person did not provide their classification.

Materials

The online survey consisted of 65 questions including the Handling Bullying Questionnaire (Bauman, Rigby & Hoppa, 2008), the Bullying Prevalence Questionnaire (Rigby & Slee, 1993), the Revised Pro-Victim Scale (Rigby, 1997) and 13 researcher created questions, which dealt with demographics and the participants' experiences with bullying. The Handling Bullying Questionnaire is made up of a scenario which involves an act of bullying and 22 different actions that can be taken. These include responses that involve others, such as ensuring the bully was punished, responses directed toward the victim, such

as telling the victim to stand up to the bully, and responses directed toward the bully, such as telling the bully their behavior will not be tolerated. The questionnaire includes five subscales. These are ignoring the incident, dealing with the bully, dealing with the victim, enlisting other adults, and ignoring the incident. The Bullying Prevalence Questionnaire is made up of 15 items regarding bullying behaviors, attitudes towards bullying and questions regarding social behaviors. It is composed of three different scales, the Bully Scale, Victim Scale, and Pro-Social scale. These scales are designed to indicate one's tendency to be a bully, a victim, or to be more social. The questionnaire includes such items as "I enjoy upsetting wimps", "I get picked on by others", and "I like to help people who are being harassed". Participants respond to each item by choosing "never", "once in a while", "pretty often" or "very often". The Revised Pro-Victim Scale consists of 10 items, regarding how respondents feel about the actions of bullies. Some items from this scale are "A bully is really a coward" and "Nobody likes a wimp". Participants choose "agree", "unsure", or "disagree" for each item. Higher scores on the Revised Pro-Victim Scale mean that the person is more sympathetic towards victims and less accepting of bullying.

Procedure

We sent a recruitment email to students at one university. After clicking the link in the recruitment email, participants viewed an informed consent document. Once they indicated their consent by clicking the appropriate button, they began the survey. After reading the Handling Bullying Questionnaire scenario, participants responded to the related items and the other survey questions. We estimated that most

participants likely completed the survey in less than 20 minutes.

Results

Only 15 participants (7.9%) reported bullying others and only 12 participants (6.3%) reported being both a bully and a victim, whereas 124 participants (64.9%) reported being victims and 175 (91.6%) participants reported witnessing bullying.

We asked participants questions about the frequency and types of bullying they committed, were victims of, or witnessed. We specifically asked about hitting, pushing, and name calling. For frequency, we gave participants the following choices: every day, a few times each week, a few times each month, and less than once a month. The percentages reported in table 1 are out of the total sample. For example, 9.1% of all participants reported bullying others with name calling. We reported percentages this way so the reader can see the overall rates of bullying while still being able to compare the relative frequencies of the various patterns of bullying. Bullies, victims, and witnesses all agreed that name calling was the most common type of bullying, followed by pushing and then hitting. The most commonly reported frequency of bullying among witnesses and victims was a few times each week. Among bullies, the most commonly reported frequency was less than once a month.

We conducted a multiple regression analysis of the data to determine which of our variables might be predictive of scores on the Bully Scale, Victim Scale, Pro-Social Scale, and Revised Pro-Victim Scale. The following variables were used for multiple regression analysis: gender, Revised Pro-Victim scale, Pro-Social Scale, Victim Scale, Bully Scale, whether the person was a

bully, whether the person was a victim, whether the person was a witness, current academic classification, number of students in graduating high school class, whether they bullied others by pushing, whether they bullied others by hitting, whether they bullied others by name-calling, whether they witnessed pushing, whether they witnessed hitting, whether they witnessed name-calling, whether they were a victim of pushing, whether they were a victim of hitting, whether they were a victim of name-calling, how often they bullied others, how often they were bullied, and how often they witnessed bullying.

Taken together, the variables predicted scores well, with the percent of variance accounted for ranging from 71.2% to 88.6% ($r^2 = .712$ to $.886$). The best predictor for the Bully Scale was how often the person witnessed bullying, $b = -3.35$, $t(157) = -2.44$, $p = .045$. Beta is negative because scoring was reversed on the questionnaire regarding how often one witnessed bullying, such that higher numbers were associated with witnessing bullying less frequently. So, the more often a person witnessed bullying, the higher their score on the Bully Scale and the more often they bullied others. The best predictor for the both the Victim Scale and the Pro-Victim scale was how often the person bullied others. Bullying others more often was associated with higher Victim Scale scores, $b = -2.41$, $t(167) = -2.31$, $p = .044$, and with lower scores on the Revised Pro-Victim scale, $b = 6.06$, $t(160) = 2.85$, $p = .025$. Finally, the best predictor for the Pro-Social scale was gender, with females scoring higher than males, $b = 4.54$, $t(161) = -2.30$, $p = .05$. Other than those listed above, none of the individual variables significantly predicted scores on the Bully Scale, Victim Scale, Revised Pro-Victim Scale, or Pro-Social Scale.

When we conducted independent-samples t-tests, we discovered that witnesses scored higher on the Victim Scale, $t(18.159) = 2.80$, $p = .012$, victims scored higher on the Victim Scale, $t(183.909) = 9.01$, $p < .001$, and bullies scored higher on the Bully Scale, $t(181) = 4.06$, $p < .001$. No other significant relations were found between witnessing bullying, being a victim, or participating in bullying and any of the scales.

Scores on the Bully Scale were positively correlated with scores on the Victim Scale, $r(180) = .27$, $p < .001$, and negatively correlated with scores on the Pro-Victim scale, $r(172) = -.62$, $p < .001$. The Pro-Victim scale scores were also negatively correlated with the Victim Scale scores, $r(176) = -.24$, $p = .002$, and positively correlated with scores on the Pro-Social scale, $r(167) = .24$, $p = .002$.

We analyzed the results from the Handling Bullying Questionnaire in terms of its five subscales. These were ignoring the incident, working with the bully, working with the victim, enlisting other adults, and disciplining the bully. For each subscale, participants received a numerical score with higher scores indicating a greater tendency to engage in the respective action. Multiple regression analysis indicated that the model (comprised of the previously mentioned variables used for multiple regression) as a whole did an excellent job predicting scores on the subscales. The variance accounted for was 72.9% for working with the victim. For the other subscales, the variance accounted for ranged from 98.2% to 99.5%.

While the model as a whole provided strong predictions, none of the individual variables were significant predictors of the subscales, with one exception. Enlisting other adults was predicted by being male, b

= -4.13, $t(159) = -2.82$, $p = .048$, being in a larger graduating class, $b = 2.71$, $t(158) = 7.57$, $p = .002$, having not witnessed pushing, $b = -5.06$, $t(160) = -5.24$, $p = .006$, being a victim of hitting, $b = 8.12$, $t(160) = 5.62$, $p = .005$, and having higher scores on the Bully Scale, $b = 1.28$, $t(154) = 3.67$, $p = .022$.

We conducted independent-samples t -tests as another check of whether bullies, witnesses, and victims scored differently on the Handling Bullying Questionnaire subscales. Bullies scored significantly lower than non-bullies on the ignoring the incident subscale, $t(176) = -3.14$, $p = .002$, but scored significantly higher on working with the bully, $t(174) = 2.50$, $p = .013$, working with the victim, $t(22.579) = 2.07$, $p = .050$, enlisting other adults, $t(173) = 2.09$, $p = .038$, and disciplining the bully, $t(180) = 2.23$, $p = .027$. Victims and non-victims did not differ on any of the subscales. Witnesses of bullying scored higher than non-witnesses on working with the bully, $t(174) = 2.83$, $p = .005$, working with the victim, $t(14.707) = 2.23$, $p = .042$, and disciplining the bully, $t(179) = 2.04$, $p = .043$. Witnesses and non-witnesses did not differ on ignoring the incident and enlisting other adults.

Finally, males scored higher on working with the bully, $t(175) = 2.19$, $p = .030$, enlisting other adults, $t(174) = 3.33$, $p = .001$, and disciplining the bully, $t(181) = 2.59$, $p = .010$. Males and females did not differ on ignoring the incident or working with the victim.

Discussion

Frequency of Bullying

The results of this study provide information about the frequency and types of bullying. We also investigated long-term

correlates of bullying among bullies, victims, bully-victims, and witnesses. Not surprisingly, the data show that bullying is common. The most commonly reported frequency both for being victimized and for witnessing bullying was a few times each week. More than 60% of the participants said that they had been victims of bullying. This was more than double the 28% from the previously mentioned study of children aged 12-18 (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). More than 90% of our participants said that they had witnessed bullying. Together, these numbers suggest that bullying was a more common experience among our participants. This could be due to several factors. First, the earlier study asked about bullying in the 2008-2009 school year. Our study effectively asks about bullying in the school years from approximately 1994 to 2005. Second, our participants were college students reporting on acts of bullying from middle school. The rates may have been overestimated or underestimated as a result of this. Third, all of our participants attend a university in the southeastern U. S. Thus, our sample is limited to individuals who went on to college and who lived, and for the most part likely attended middle school, in the same region of the country. Finally, our sample was made up of self-selected participants who were responding to an online survey. It may be the case that individuals who had experiences were bullying were more likely to respond.

Types of Bullying

An earlier national study found that nonviolent forms of bullying were most common (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Our participants also reported having experienced nonviolent forms of bullying more often. Bullies, victims, and witnesses all stated that name calling was the most common form of bullying, followed by

pushing, then hitting. Approximately 10% of participants reported either hitting others or being hit. However, 47% of participants reported witnessing hitting. In fact, for all three types of bullying we found more witnesses than victims or bullies. This probably means that many acts of bullying were public and viewed by at least several people.

Correlations

We used several scales to measure possible factors related to bullying. These included the previously mentioned Bully Scale, Victim Scale, Pro-Social Scale, and Revised Pro-Victim Scale. We found a positive correlation between scores on the Bully Scale and Victim Scale. This means that one's tendency to be a bully rises with one's tendency to be a victim. Thus, we might expect many individuals to be both bullies and victims. Among our participants, 12 of the 15 bullies were also victims. We also found a positive correlation between scores on the Pro-Social Scale and Revised Pro-Victim Scale. This indicates that individuals with greater social skills are likely to be more sympathetic to victims of bullying. We found a negative correlation between the Victim Scale and the Revised Pro-Victim Scale. We also found a negative correlation between the Bully Scale and the Revised Pro-Victim Scale. These results indicate that both bullies and victims are likely to be less sympathetic towards victims of bullying. This is consistent with previous findings (e.g., Cranham & Carroll, 2003).

Predictors

Together the variables we used are good predictors of scores on the scales, accounting for much of the variability. The variables did an especially good job of predicting scores on the Bully Scale and

Victim Scale. Gender was not a significant predictor of being a bully, victim, or witness, although a slightly higher, non-significant percentage of women reported being victims and a slightly higher, non-significant percentage of men reported being witnesses and bullies. In one of the previously mentioned national studies, females were slightly more likely to be bullied than were males (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). We found no gender differences among the types of bullying committed, witnessed, or of which the person was a victim, with the exception that males were more likely to have witnessed bullying in the form of pushing than were females. Both males and females reported name calling to be the most common form of bullying, followed by pushing, and then hitting. This was true for bullies, victims, and witnesses.

Past bullying was not related to current Victim Scale scores and past victimization was not related to current Bully Scale scores. Past bullying and victimization were also not related to Pro-Social and Revised Pro-Victim scores. This shows that some correlates of bullying were either not long lasting or at least were limited to specific areas. That is, bullies had higher current Bully Scale scores and victims and witness had higher current Victim Scale scores but no other relationships were found.

Another interesting result was that our data revealed many victims and witnesses but very few bullies. There are a few possible explanations for this. It may be the case that bullies tended to have many victims. It may also be the case that bullies do not recognize that they are bullies (an act is seen as bullying by others but not by the bully), that participants did not want to admit to being bullies, or that bullies chose not to respond to the survey.

The Handling Bullying Questionnaire provides a measure of how witnesses react to a hypothetical case of bullying. As stated earlier, the questionnaire contains five subscales. These are ignoring the incident, working with the bully, working with the victim, enlisting other adults, and disciplining the bully. We found that by using several variables we were able to predict with a great degree of accuracy the tendency to engage in the actions indicated by the subscales, at least as measured by answers to the questionnaire. Our results indicated that an increased tendency toward enlisting other adults was associated with being male, being from a relatively large school, witnessing bullying in the form of pushing, being a victim of bullying in the form of hitting, and being a bully. Males also scored higher on disciplining the bully. Males and females did not differ on ignoring the incident or ignoring the victim. This is in contrast to the results of another study that found that girls were more likely to act to stop bullying (Trach, Hymel, Waterhouse, & Neale, 2010).

A major goal of this research was to use various measures to further investigate possible similarities between victims and witnesses of bullying. Our analysis revealed important relationships between witnesses and victims. Both victims and witnesses had higher victims scale scores, suggesting that being a victim or witness was associated with a tendency to behave in ways that might contribute to future victimization. Victims and witnesses did not differ regarding enlisting other adults and ignoring the incident. Witnesses, but not victims, scored higher on working with the bully, working with the victim, and disciplining the bully. Together these mean that witnesses were more likely than victims to work to end bullying by interacting with

those actually involved in the bullying. The same was true for bullies. In fact, bullies scored higher than non-bullies on all of the subscales except ignoring the incident. The results of the Handling Bullying Questionnaire for our sample indicate that being a bully is positively correlated with one's chance of getting involved to end bullying. Being a witness was positively correlated with the chances of getting involved directly with the bully or victim. Being a victim was not related to the likelihood of taking action to end bullying. Further analysis reveals that the type of bullying experienced may be important. Although witnesses and victims as a whole did not differ from others regarding enlisting other adults, witnesses of bullying in the form of pushing and victims of bullying in the form of hitting both received higher scores for the enlisting other adults subscale.

Our research has important implications for school counselors, school psychologists, educators, and others who are concerned with children and young adults who may be exposed to bullying. Perhaps most importantly, our data reveal many similarities between victims and witnesses of bullying. In fact, with the exception of taking certain actions to end bullying, victims and witnesses produced very similar results. Although these data are correlational, this may indicate that the effects of bullying on victims and on witnesses are very similar. A recent study of workplace bullying by Persson et al. (2009) also identified important similarities and differences between the potential effects of bullying on victims and witnesses. Given the high percentage of children who witness bullying, the fact that witnesses may experience the same effects as victims becomes a critical issue. There are likely millions of witnesses who may not have received appropriate attention or treatment.

This is especially troubling since we found that witnesses may behave in ways that make them more likely to become victims.

The lack of gender differences regarding types of bullying committed, victim of, or witnessed is important in that professionals may not need to focus too much attention on gender issues when crafting interventions. However, it is important to remember that our sample included few male participants, so this may account for the lack of significant findings related to gender. One important gender difference we did find is that males may be more likely to act to stop bullying. The important implication here is that professionals should consider focusing on programs to increase the willingness of female students to take appropriate actions to end bullying.

The current study, which includes several scales within one sample of students, provides a useful starting point from which future studies can further investigate the similarities and differences between characteristics associated with past experiences with bullying among victims and witnesses in educational settings. There are still many questions that need to be answered in regard to how witnessing bullying affects children. One way our research could be extended is to include a focus on cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying is the use of the internet as a way to cause harm or discomfort to a person or group of people and can also involve the use of text messages, emails, social networking sites and other electronic means to bully other people (Ang & Goh, 2010). The U. S. Department of Education reported that 1,521,000 students between the ages of 12 and 18 reported being victims of cyber-bullying during the 2008-2009 school year (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). The education codes of 36 states prohibit cyber-bullying (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy

Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, 2011). More research is needed to see what effect, if any, reading these texts, emails, and social networking posts has on people who are not the recipients but are witnesses. One way that cyber-bullying is different from other types of bullying is that the bully and the victims are usually not in the same place. Thus, a witness might see in person only the bully or the victim. Further, the witness might see only the activity of the bully, the victim, or both. The research could look at how witnesses on the receiving end and the sending end are affected by the bullying.

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Table 1

	Frequency and types of bullying		
	Bullies	Witnesses	Victims
Frequency of bullying			
Every day	1.0%	20.4%	11.5%
A few times each week	2.1%	40.8%	21.5%
A few times each month	3.7%	26.2%	16.2%
Less than once a month	9.4%	7.3%	18.3%
Type of bullying			
Name calling	9.9%	90.6%	67.5%
Pushing	3.7%	66.0%	19.9%
Hitting	2.1%	47.6%	11.0%

Note. Percentages are based on total number of participants. For example, 1.0% of all participants indicated that they bullied others every day.