



eCOMMONS

Loyola University Chicago  
Loyola eCommons

Dissertations

Theses and Dissertations

2013

# The Student's Perspective: Exploring Ethnic Group Variances in Bullying Behavior Using Mixed Methods Research

Stephanie Grunewald  
*Loyola University Chicago*

## Recommended Citation

Grunewald, Stephanie, "The Student's Perspective: Exploring Ethnic Group Variances in Bullying Behavior Using Mixed Methods Research" (2013). *Dissertations*. Paper 518.  
[http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc\\_diss/518](http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/518)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact [ecommons@luc.edu](mailto:ecommons@luc.edu).



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).  
Copyright © 2013 Stephanie Grunewald

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THE STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:  
EXPLORING ETHNIC GROUP VARIANCES IN BULLYING BEHAVIOR  
USING MIXED METHODS RESEARCH

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

BY

STEPHANIE A. GRUNEWALD

CHICAGO, IL

MAY 2013

Copyright by Stephanie A. Grunewald, 2013  
All rights reserved.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although it is impossible to adequately thank the many people who have made this project a reality, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to several individuals who have assisted me throughout the completion of this project. First, I owe a great deal of thanks to my dissertation chair, Dr. David Shriberg, for all of his time and dedication. His commitment to my success and kind encouragement has helped me throughout this entire process and extends well beyond this project as is evidenced in all the effort he's put forth to promote my success for years to come. I would also like to thank Dr. Pamela Fenning for her endless support from the very beginning. Her compassion and advice have helped to keep me on track and her continued guidance is deeply appreciated. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Kristen Varjas for sharing her expertise and knowledge. Her contributions were vital to the success of this project.

I also want to acknowledge the support of my colleagues and friends. I appreciate the kind words of encouragement as well as the welcomed distractions. Special thanks are due to Kasia Kula for her assistance with the data analysis and so much more.

Most importantly, thank you to my family! I want to extend my endless appreciation for everything you have done to encourage me throughout this process. You were there to reassure me and provide optimism at all times and for this I am forever grateful. Without your continued love and support, I never would have accomplished all that I have.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
ABSTRACT	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	4
Purpose of the Study	4
Significance of the Study	6
Rationale for Using Mixed Methodology	8
Summary	9
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	10
Introduction	10
Definitions of Bullying	10
Definitions of Bullies, Victims, and Bully-Victims	14
Bullies	14
Victims	15
Bully-Victims	16
Intersections of Ethnicity with Definitions of Bullies, Victims, and Bully-Victims	16
Consequences of Bullying	17
Consequences of Bullying Others	18
Consequences of Being Bullied	19
Consequences of Being a Bully-Victim	21
Consequences in the School	22
Current Methods of Measuring Bullying	23
The Prevalence of Bullying	24
Cross-Ethnic Perspectives of Bullying	28
Bullying in Schools	30
Summary	31
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	33
Introduction	33
Research Design	33
Setting	38
Participants	39
Measures	44
Quantitative Survey	45
Qualitative Interview Protocol	46

Procedures for Data Collection	48
Quantitative Data Collection	48
Qualitative Data Collection	49
Role of the Researcher	51
Data Analysis	51
Quantitative Data Analysis	52
Qualitative Data Analysis	54
Summary	56
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	57
Introduction	57
Quantitative Results	57
Research Question One	57
Research Question Two	68
Qualitative Results	74
Central Question	75
Sub-Question One	76
Reasons for being targeted	76
Description of bullies	77
Description of victims	80
Group membership influencing bullying	81
Sub-Question Two	83
Reasons for being targeted	84
Reasons for not being targeted	84
Sub-Question Three	85
Types of bullying	86
Integrating the Results	87
Summary	90
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION	91
Introduction	91
Review of the Study	91
Merging the Data	92
Characteristics of Bullying Behaviors	92
Types of Bullying Behaviors	93
Reasons for Being Targeted	94
Description of Bullies and Victims	95
Variance among Ethnic Groups	96
Factors Influencing Results	100
Limitations of the Study	101
Survey Data	101
Interviews	102
Race versus Ethnicity	103
Methodological Implications	103

Considerations for Future Research	104
Implications for Practitioners	105
Summary and Conclusions	106
APPENDIX A: PARENTAL CONSENT FORMS	107
APPENDIX B: STUDENT ASSENT FORM	112
APPENDIX C: SURVEY INSTRUMENT	114
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL	125
APPENDIX E: INTERVIEWEE DEMOGRAPHIC SHEET	128
APPENDIX F: QUALITATIVE CODEBOOK	130
REFERENCE LIST	135
VITA	141

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. School Demographic Information	38
2. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents	40
3. Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants	43
4. Descriptive Characteristics of Interview Participants	44
5. Principal Axis Factor Loadings for Three Factor Solution	59
6. Frequency of Items in Victimization Factor	61
7. Frequency of Items in Bullying Factor	62
8. Frequency of Items in Cyber Factor	64
9. Total Victimization per Ethnic Group	65
10. Total Bullying per Ethnic Group	66
11. Total Cybervictimization per Ethnic Group	67
12. Total Cyberbullying per Ethnic Group	68
13. Question Items with Significant Differences in Reporting Rates	69
14. Significant Differences in Reporting Rates between Ethnic Groups	71
15. Question Items with Significant Differences in Reasons for Being Bullied	72
16. Frequency of Reasons for Being Bullied	73



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Visual Representation of Explanatory Sequential Design	37
2. Coding Themes	75

## ABSTRACT

Although bullying is a widely recognized problem among school-aged youth, current research has failed to adequately consider whether ethnicity impacts students' involvement in, and perceptions of, bullying behaviors. This study employed a mixed methodology to examine how an ethnically diverse sample of students in seventh and eighth grade described and perceived bullying within their school. Initially, the Student Comprehensive Assessment of Bullying Behavior-Revised (SCABB-R) (Varjas, Henrich & Meyers, 2008a) was administered to students attending a suburban middle school in the Midwest (N = 750; 391 males, 359 females). Individual interviews were then conducted to further explore students' perspectives of bullying (N = 16; 7 boys, 9 girls). The results from the surveys and from the interviews revealed some convergence, but differences did appear. Nonetheless, the findings revealed that ethnicity did impact reported bullying behaviors as well as perceived reasons for being bullied.

**KEYWORDS:** *bullying, mixed methodology, culturally responsive practice, ethnicity*

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years, bullying has become an increasingly common topic of interest within the United States. Many tragedies related to relentless bullying, such as youth suicides and shootings on school campuses (Hazler & Carney, 2010) have gripped the headlines of newspapers and magazines. Stories like that of 14-year-old Jamey Rodemeyer, who killed himself after being bullied both at school and online about being gay (Praetorius, 2011) or 10-year-old Ashlynn Conner, who committed suicide after being relentlessly bullied by her classmates and neighborhood peers (Grimm & Schlikerman, 2011) are tragic examples of how devastating bullying can be. Yet, these tragic reports fail to adequately encompass the countless cases of bullying that go unnoticed every day in schools around the nation.

Although the findings vary from country to country, statistics continue to reveal that bullying is in fact occurring within schools around the world and impacting the lives of students (Cook, Williams, Guerra, & Kim, 2010a; Murray-Harvey, Slee, & Taki, 2010; Scherr & Larson, 2010). As the effects and implications of bullying are more readily known, it becomes more of a national and international imperative (Carney & Merrell, 2001; Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010b; Jimerson & Huai, 2010; Nansel et al., 2001). In fact, “there is no doubt that school bullying and research into its nature, effects, and prevention is now a global endeavor” (Murray-Harvey et al., 2010, p. 35).

Entire textbooks have been devoted to exploring bullying internationally (e.g., *Handbook of Bullying in Schools: An International Perspective* by Jimerson, Swearer, and Espelage, 2010) as well as countless studies. Still, there remains a great deal of ambiguity in the results and implications of such work. The varying types and degrees of bullying reported have left unclear the potential impact of race, ethnicity, immigration status, and culture on international results.

Thus, in addition to the international investigation of bullying in general, studies have also aimed to explore the occurrence of bullying based upon one's ethnicity. A Canadian study revealed that 17% of all elementary students and 17% of all high school students reported that they experienced ethnic bullying while a study in London revealed that 65% of elementary students reported ethnic teasing (Scherr & Larson, 2010). Furthermore, differences were found to exist in the reporting rates of ethnic bullying based upon whether a student was part of the majority or minority population within the school (Scherr & Larson, 2010). Unfortunately, the limited number of studies investigating ethnic bullying coupled with the varying results, which may in part be due to the differing ethnic composition of the participants, makes it difficult to reach any definitive conclusions. Nonetheless, trends can be identified among the studies suggesting that the ethnic composition of the students within a school does contribute to differences (e.g., frequency of incidents, type of incidents, etc.) in bullying experiences (Scherr & Larson, 2010).

Despite several international reports of bullying based on ethnicity, limited research exists examining this factor. Instead, much of the research on bullying has

focused on factors such as gender and age. Still, researchers have investigated the various forms of bullying—including relational, physical, and verbal bullying—for decades (Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993) and recently cyberbullying has become the newest form of bullying under investigation. Regardless of the constructs under investigation (age, gender, geographic location, etc.) the results have indicated time and again that involvement in bullying in any capacity—as a bully, a victim, a bully-victim, or a bystander—has negative short- and long-term implications (Crothers & Kolbert, 2004; Menesini, Modena, & Tani, 2009; Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus 1993, 1995). Thus, additional research is needed to further explore if and how ethnicity may impact one's experience with, and perceptions of, bullying in order better understand this behavior.

With the mounting concern surrounding the impact of bullying, schools have begun developing anti-bullying policies and grievance procedures, as well as implementing prevention and intervention efforts (Murray-Harvey et al., 2010). Creating safe schools that are free from bullying will undoubtedly impact students' overall emotional well-being but it may also help to keep them physically safe as well. A study of 37 school shootings occurring within the United States between 1974 and 2000 specifically mentioned bullying as a factor that may have influenced the attacker's decision to carry out an attack at the school (Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2002). Such alarming findings once again emphasize the need to continue working to address the issue of bullying.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Unfortunately, research pertaining to the implications of ethnicity on bullying behaviors is sparse. Particularly, research investigating the impact of ethnicity on the reported frequency and types of bullying, as well as how bullying is perceived within and across ethnic groups is needed. Such research is believed to be necessary due to the assumption that students' ethnicity impacts their bullying experiences as well as their perceptions regarding what constitutes bullying behavior. Research has even suggested that bullying based on one's ethnic or racial identity may be especially distressing (Scherr & Larson, 2010). Therefore, it is vital that ethnic differences be considered when examining bullying in order to gain a better understanding of the various perceptions regarding what constitutes bullying behavior within and across subgroups so that more effective prevention and intervention efforts can be implemented.

### **Purpose of the Study**

To date, much of the current research stems from Dan Olweus' definition formulated based on a Norwegian population (Olweus, 1993), which is not representative of the ethnic diversity present in the United States. Still, criteria used to measure bullying are based upon his fundamental work (Cornell & Bandyopadhyay, 2010; Swearer, Siebecker, Johnsen-Frerichs, & Wang, 2010). Thus, the purpose of this study is to expand the current research available by examining bullying behaviors and perceptions of an ethnically diverse sample of middle school students. The use of middle school students is based on previous research, which has suggested that bullying is most common in late childhood through middle adolescence (Hazler, 1996). A sequential

explanatory design was used (Creswell, 2009), involving the collection of qualitative data after a quantitative phase to gain greater insight into student's perspectives of bullying. The first, quantitative phase of the study involved the collection of school-wide survey data using the Student Comprehensive Assessment of Bullying Behavior-Revised (SCABB-R) (Varjas, Henrich & Meyers, 2008a) from middle school students in grades seven and eight to examine the frequency of bullying and any potential cross-ethnic variances. The initial collection of quantitative data aimed at investigating how ethnic group affiliation influenced reporting rates of bullying behaviors. This phase aimed to test two research questions: First, which types of behavior were most frequently endorsed as constituting bullying by middle school students? Second, what differences, if any, exist in reporting bullying behaviors among ethnic groups in middle school?

The second, qualitative phase explored how ethnicity impacted perceptions of bullying behaviors and the meanings attached to the term *bullying* by collecting interview data from an ethnically diverse sample of middle school students in seventh and eighth grade. More specifically, the investigation focused on whether or not ethnically diverse students identified the same bullying behaviors and reasons for being targeted.

Interviews were believed to be the most effective means of gaining a comprehensive account from the perspective of middle school students. The overall goal of the interviews was to answer one central question and three sub-questions:

Central Question: How do middle school students perceive bullying?

Sub-questions:

1. Is bullying perceived consistently within and across ethnic groups?

2. Does the type of bullying experienced vary across ethnic groups?
3. Are the behaviors considered to constitute bullying consistent among ethnic groups?

Each of these questions was essential to explaining the specific incidents and behaviors that students perceive as bullying. The overall aim was to combine the data from both phases of the study in order to obtain a more fluid understanding of bullying and to identify possible variables impacting individual perspectives.

### **Significance of the Study**

In creating a more encompassing definition highlighting multi-ethnic perspectives, adaptations can be made to prevention and intervention efforts in an attempt to address the various viewpoints and ultimately produce more effective results.

Expanding the current perceptions and interpretations of this behavior is crucial given that 29.9% of 15,686 school-aged respondents were moderately or frequently involved in bullying behaviors (Nansel et al., 2001). With such alarming prevalence rates, many are left to wonder what can be done to better handle this phenomenon. Therefore, it is imperative that further investigations into this behavior are conducted to inform decisions on how to eliminate bullying and prevent future occurrences. This, in turn, can lead to better mental health and academic outcomes for students by providing a safe environment conducive to learning.

There are many limitations to the current research available pertaining to the implications of ethnicity on the perception of bullying behaviors. The need to appropriately identify bullying behaviors is evidenced in the increasing literature



pertaining to potentially negative short- and long-term consequences of bullying.

However, in order to implement an effective intervention or prevention strategy, every student's needs must be considered. Children from various ethnic groups have distinct needs that must be identified and addressed in order to appropriately create and apply any intervention or prevention techniques. Specifically, students from various racial and ethnic backgrounds may be bullied due to visible differences (Scherr & Larson, 2010). In fact, one study of a large urban school district in California found that 26% of Hispanic students, 22% of Asian students, 18% of multi-ethnic students, and 7% of African American students reported being bullied because of race, ethnicity, or national origin (Lai & Tov, 2004 as cited in Scherr & Larson, 2010). Other factors related to ethnic differences, such as geography, language, and religious affiliation produce cultural variations that may influence what type of bullying happens, how it is perceived, and how an individual reacts to it (Hazler & Carney, 2010).

Although much attention has been given to the topic of bullying, little attention has been given to how to combat bullying using an ethnically sensitive model in middle schools. This may be in part due to the lack of available research investigating the construct of ethnicity in relation to bullying. Many studies have aimed to investigate some portion of the current study, but none have incorporated all components. Some studies have investigated student perceptions of bullying, but have failed to incorporate a cross-ethnic perspective and other studies have relied solely on self-reported survey data. Given that previous quantitative research has indicated discrepancies in reporting rates of specific bullying behaviors among ethnically diverse samples, it is necessary to explore

these findings in more depth using interview questions such as the ones provided (see Appendix D) to investigate if differences do in fact exist and why that may be.

Therefore, using a diverse suburban middle school population to explore bullying behaviors allowed for a more in-depth investigation of bullying. In addition to identifying and exploring possible cross-ethnic differences in reporting rates of bullying, it also provided an opportunity to obtain student perspectives. All of this information was then combined to obtain an integrated view of what was reported as most frequently happening and how the students felt about it.

### **Rationale for Using Mixed Methodology**

As mentioned, few studies, if any, have incorporated the various stages of research included in the current study. A variety of qualitative and quantitative studies investigating bullying currently exist, but there is little available research investigating this topic using a mixed methods approach. Most often, self-report survey data is collected and examined (Cornell & Bandyopadhyay, 2010); few studies involve an evaluative or feedback component to assess students' perceptions of bullying within their school. Combining both techniques will allow for a more comprehensive investigation of bullying. Therefore, this study has the potential to contribute to the literature by providing an understanding of how middle school students conceptualize bullying. This not only provides greater insight into this phenomenon, but also has the potential to educate researchers, teachers, parents, and students alike regarding the defining features of bullying.

Collecting the school-wide survey data first provided an opportunity to explore

the issue of bullying as it occurs within the school as a whole. This was then further explored during the individual interviews, which targeted each individual's perspective of bullying. Both the survey data and the interview data were analyzed to determine whether or not differences existed in what was reported within and across ethnic groups.

### **Summary**

Although bullying is not a new phenomenon, it continues to make headlines and has become an increasing topic of conversation. As the implications of bullying become more readily known, the need to find effective methods of dealing with the behavior becomes increasingly pressing. In order to do so, a better understanding of what constitutes bullying is needed. Additionally, ethnic group membership must be given attention when considering potential prevention and intervention techniques. Therefore, the purpose of this mixed methods study was to obtain information about the prevalence of bullying behavior and obtain perspectives from ethnically diverse students on bullying behaviors.

CHAPTER TWO  
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

**Introduction**

This review of the literature examines the way bullying has traditionally been conceptualized. Specific attention is given to the differing criteria used for defining the act of bullying as well as the role of the bully, the victim, and the bully-victim. Next, the consequences of bullying for all involved parties are discussed as well as consequences specifically within the school setting. The implications of bullying occurring in schools across the United States are then described in an effort to highlight the importance of continuing to expand our knowledge of this behavior and its potential implications. Then, the methodology frequently used to measure the occurrence of bullying is discussed. Finally, the prevalence rates of bullying are highlighted with specific attention given to the estimated variability of bullying among ethnically diverse populations.

**Definitions of Bullying**

The task of defining what exactly constitutes *bullying* has proven to be a complex matter. There are many terms that are frequently used synonymously and the various forms of bullying can be difficult to differentiate. Still, the earliest and most oft cited definition of bullying was provided by Olweus, (1993, 1995) stating “a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students” (p. 9, 197). A negative action was further

specified as "...when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another..." (Olweus, 1993, p. 9).

Although Olweus' (1993, 1995) definition continues to be the most commonly cited definition, a more recent definition aimed at being internationally applicable states that bullying is "...repeated aggressive behavior in which there is an imbalance of power or strength between two parties (e.g., physical size, psychological/social power, or other factors that result in a power differential)" (Jimerson & Huai, 2010). However, "while some researchers emphasise [sic] or even assume the essential commonality of 'bullying' across different cultures, others very strongly assert that bullying in England, ijime in Japan and wang-ta in Korea are fundamentally different" (Smith, Kanetsuna, & Koo 2006, as cited in Murray-Harvey et al., 2010). In addition to the impact culture may have on how bullying is defined and perceived, some researchers suggest that issues of internationally defining the term arise due to the lack of universal vocabulary (Elinoff, Chafouleas, & Sassu, 2004). While much debate still surrounds the best definition of bullying, both the internationally accepted definition and Olweus' (1993, 1995) definition are similar in that both definitions specify characteristics that must be present for an act to be considered bullying.

Many researchers do agree that there are several characteristics that must be present before a behavior can be classified as bullying: (a) aggressive behavior, (Crothers & Kolbert, 2004; Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2001; Jimerson & Huai, 2010; Peskin, Tortolero, & Markham, 2006; Spriggs, Iannotti, Nansel, & Haynie, 2007) (b) repeated or occurring frequently over time, (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007; Cornell &

Bandyopadhyay, 2010; Crothers & Kolbert, 2004; Jimerson & Huai, 2010; Merrell et al., 2008; Murray-Harvey et al., 2010; Nansel et al., 2001; Swearer et al., 2010); (c) involving a power imbalance, (Bradshaw et al, 2007.; Cornell & Bandyopadhyay, 2010; Crothers & Kolbert, 2004; Jimerson & Huai, 2010; Merrell et al., 2008; Murray-Harvey et al., 2010; Nansel et al., 2001; Spriggs et al., 2007; Swearer et al., 2010); and (d) intentionality (Bradshaw et al., 2007; Jimerson & Huai, 2010; Merrell et al., 2008; Nansel et al., 2001; Swearer et al., 2010). In addition to the four criteria listed, some researchers specify that the attack must occur without any prior provocation on the part of the victim (Ma, 2001). Furthermore, duration and frequency have been differentiated in more recent studies (Jimerson & Huai, 2010) whereas in earlier studies both terms were not distinguished. Rather one term would be used to encompass the fact that the behavior needed to occur more than one time.

Several recent definitions of bullying provide examples of how these characteristics continue to be included. For instance, Horne, Stoddard, and Bell (2007) introduced the “Double I-R” definition: *Imbalance of power, Intentional acts, and Repeated over time*, which includes three of the four aforementioned characteristics (i.e., repeated or occurring frequently over time, involving a power imbalance, and intentionality). Bullying can be more broadly defined as “repetitive aggression directed at a peer who is unable to defend him or herself” (Beran & Shapiro, 2005, p. 701); again three of the four characteristics commonly cited (i.e., aggressive behavior, repeated or occurring frequently over time, and involving a power imbalance) were included in this definition. Finally, a definition including all four characteristics defines bullying as

“when someone with more power hurts another person’s body, things, or feelings on purpose and over and over again. Bullying is not an accident; it is mean behavior by one student or several students” (Hughes, Middleton, & Marshall, 2009, p. 219).

Rather than prescribing to predetermined definitions or characteristics, it has been suggested that bullying may not be a specific set of behaviors, but rather that it occurs on a continuum from low to high levels (Elinoff et al., 2004). This idea lends itself to the belief that students may perceive various levels of bullying dependent on what they consider to constitute the behavior (e.g., one harassing text message may be thought of as bullying even though it was only a one-time event and a continuation of harassing text messages may be thought of as a more severe form of bullying).

In addition to the general definition of bullying, a definition for one specific form of bullying—ethnic bullying—has also been created:

This form of bullying may include direct forms of aggression such as racial taunts and slurs, derogatory references to culturally-specific customs, foods, and costumes, as well as indirect forms of aggression, such as exclusion from a mainstream group of peers because of ethnic differences. (McKenney Pepler, Craig, & Connolly, 2006, p. 242)

This definition specifically highlights the potential impact of one’s ethnic background on the definition of bullying. However, it varies significantly from Olweus’ (1993, 1995) definition and many others in that it does not specify how many times or for how long the behavior must occur or even whether or not the bullying individual or group is believed to have more power. Instead, the focus is on the motivation behind the bullying and the potential aspects of the victim(s) being targeted.

Of the many definitions provided, not one seems to encompass the variances that

may exist in how students perceive the different behaviors. While intentionality was included as one of the necessary criteria, it seems difficult to assume that a child would know whether or not the perpetrator meant to inflict harm or was simply “teasing.” There is likely to be an enormous amount of discrepancy between how students would classify the same action. Ethnicity may be one characteristic driving the differences in perception of the behavior. Furthermore, including the need for an act to be repeated multiple times before it can be considered bullying may be a cause for discrepant results. A one-time act, such as spreading a rumor, may be substantial enough to be considered bullying in the eyes of a student and yet it fails to meet the criteria specified above. Online bullying also blurs the line of a power differential, further complicating the issue of accepting definitions of bullying created in an era much different than the technology-driven world we live in today. This is why a more fluid understanding is needed. Putting *bullying* into an operational definition immediately removes a personal component essential to how the act is perceived and whether or not it is considered to be bullying.

### **Definitions of Bullies, Victims, and Bully-Victims**

There are several roles that are often associated with studies on bullying—the role of the bully, the role of the victim, and the role of the bully-victim. However, these roles are not consistently measured or defined throughout current research. Therefore, several definitions are provided to offer insight into the differing criterion currently being used by researchers.

#### **Bullies**

There are a variety of ways researchers have identified bullies. For some, a bully



is someone who participated in at least two bullying behaviors at least three times in the past 30 days (Peskin et al., 2006) while others classified bullies as those who engaged in individual or group bullying one or more times per week (Seals & Young, 2003).

Menesini et al. (2009) identified bullies as those who indicated they took part in bullying once or twice in the past four months, yet others identified bullies as those who reported bully perpetration at least two times per month (Glew, Fan, Katon, & Rivara, 2008; Spriggs et al., 2007). Still others use rating scales and set criteria based upon those scores. For instance, Mouttapa, Valente, Gallaher, Rohr, and Unger (2004) classified students as bullies only if they scored four or higher (out of six total) on aggression and less than four on victimization. Other statistical identification methods may be used as well. For example, students were categorized as bullies if they scored within the top 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of all students on the bullying items (Demaray & Malecki, 2003) or if bully nominations were 0.5 standard deviations above the sample mean with victim nominations below the mean (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003).

### **Victims**

In addition to the various ways of defining a bully, researchers have also developed criterion for identifying victims. Victims were identified as those who reported at least one victim behavior occurring three times in the past 30 days (Peskin et al., 2006) or as those who were bullied by an individual or a group one or more times per week (Seals & Young, 2003). Spriggs et al. (2007) categorized victims if they reported victimization at least two to three times per month whereas Menesini et al. (2009) identified victims of bullying as those who indicated they had been bullied once or twice

in the past four months. Using rating scales to identify categories, Mouttapa et al. (2004) classified victims as those who scored four or higher (out of six total) on victimization and less than four on aggression while Glew et al. (2008) identified victims as children who reported being bullied *always, often, or sometimes* rather than *seldom or never*. Additionally, statistical methods can be used to identify victims. For instance, Demaray and Malecki (2003) classified students in the victim group if they scored within the top 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of all students on the victim items while Juvonen et al. (2003) identified victims as students whose victim nominations were 0.5 standard deviations above the sample mean with bully nominations falling below the mean.

### **Bully-Victims**

Lastly, there is criterion for establishing what constitutes a bully-victim. Often, bully-victims were identified as those who met both criteria for being a bully and a victim (Demaray & Malecki, 2003; Glew et al., 2008; Juvonen et al., 2003; Mouttapa et al., 2004; Seals & Young, 2003; Spriggs et al., 2007). Therefore, both the criterion used for identifying bullies and victims must be met to be classified as a bully-victim. For example, Menesini et al., (2009) identified bully-victims as those who indicated they took part in bullying and were also bullied by others once or twice in the past four months.

### **Intersections of Ethnicity with Definitions of Bullies, Victims, and Bully-Victims**

While there is ambiguity in the ways bullies, victims, and bully-victims are methodologically identified, the current research does suggest trends in the students most often identified. For example, Peskin et al. (2006) found that African American/Black students, when compared to Hispanic/Latino students, were more likely to be classified as

bullies (8% vs. 6.5%), victims (15.3% vs. 10.1%), and bully-victims (8.6% vs. 3.7%). Juvonen et al. (2003) also found evidence suggesting that African American/Black youth were most likely to be classified as bullies and bully-victims. Other findings have indicated that Caucasian/White students are more likely to be classified as victims than Hispanic/Latino students (Hanish & Guerra, 2000; Juvonen et al., 2003) whereas African American/Black students and Caucasian/White students did not differ on their overall level of victimization (Hanish & Guerra, 2000; Seals & Young, 2003). However, Spriggs et al. (2007) found a lower prevalence of victimization was reported by African American/Black adolescents than Caucasian/White and Hispanic/Latino adolescents.

Although discrepancies exist in the preceding studies regarding the reporting rates of Caucasian/White, Hispanic/Latino, and African American/Black students, there seems to be more agreement regarding Asian/Pacific Islander students. Asian/Pacific Islander students were found to be least likely classified as bullies (Juvonen et al., 2003) and were found to be disproportionately victims of bullying (Moultapa et al., 2004). Given the array of results and inconsistency in findings, further investigations into whether or not cross-ethnic differences do in fact exist and why those differences may be present are merited. The current findings may be the result of perceived power imbalances, variances in perceptions of bullying behaviors, or the misapplication of a strict definition.

### **Consequences of Bullying**

There is a great need to intervene with bullying due to the countless negative short- and long-term effects that have been associated with being a bully, being a victim, and being a bully-victim. Plainly stated, “the most extreme consequence of bullying for

victims and the society is violence including suicide and murder” (Aluedse, 2006, p. 41). Several of the main consequences commonly associated with being a bully, a victim, and a bully-victim are provided.

### **Consequences of Bullying Others**

One long-term impact of bullying others is that the behavior will carry on into adulthood and lead to an increased likelihood of a criminal record (Aluedse, 2006; Crothers & Kolbert, 2004; Olweus, 1993, 1995). Conduct problems, (Menesini et al., 2009; Nansel et al., 2001) aggressiveness, (Menesini et al., 2009) attention deficit hyperactive disorders, (Menesini et al.) lack of empathy, (Merrell et al., 2008; Olweus, 1993, 1995) impulsivity, (Olweus, 1993, 1995) and cognitive distortions of perceived threats in their environment (Merrell et al., 2008) are several characteristics that have been connected to bullies. Additionally, students who bully others are likely to engage in substance abuse (Aluedse, 2006; Crothers & Kolbert, 2004) and to develop maladaptive social skills, which are thought to be indicative of poor adult adjustment and subsequently more serious aggression, such as domestic abuse (Elinoff et al., 2004). Furthermore, bullies are likely to have highly aggressive children themselves (Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008).

Bullies also tend to have poorer academic skills and grades (Merrell et al., 2008) and a higher likelihood of academic underachievement (Elinoff et al., 2004). It was also found that bullies tended to suffer from low school bonding and adjustment (Brown, Birch, & Kancheria, 2005) and to have a higher likelihood of disliking school (Nansel et al., 2001). Subsequently, bullies had increased truancy (Brown et al., 2005) and

increased rates of dropping out of school (Elinoff et al., 2004). Lastly, bullies were found to be more likely to carry weapons to school (Elinoff et al., 2004). In sum, Cook et al. (2010a) revealed the traits and predispositions for a bully:

The typical *bully* is one who exhibits significant externalizing behavior, has internalizing symptoms, has both social competence and academic challenges, possesses negative attitudes and beliefs about others, has negative self-related cognitions, has trouble resolving problems with others, comes from a family environment characterized by conflict and poor parental monitoring, is more likely to perceive his or her school as having a negative atmosphere, is influenced by negative community factors, and tends to be negatively influenced by his or her peers. (pgs. 75-76)

### **Consequences of Being Bullied**

There is much debate as to whether the characteristics commonly associated with being a victim are present before the bullying and thus make the person more vulnerable or if they emerge after the bullying began (Crothers & Kolbert, 2004; Demaray & Malecki, 2003; Menesini et al., 2009). Several authors have offered insight into this debate claiming that the characteristics are present prior to bullying but become more pronounced as the bullying continues (Crothers & Kolbert, 2004) while others would argue that these traits are not an indication of a victim profile, but rather are the response to being victimized (Varjas et al., 2008b). The latter claim was supported by findings that internalizing problems increased as a result of being a victim of bullying rather than a precursor to it (Menesini et al., 2009). Furthermore, investigations into whether psychopathological behavior is a cause or a consequence of bullying revealed that it was a consequence rather than a cause (Kim, Leventhal, Koh, Hubbard, & Boyce, 2006).

Regardless of whether the profile is present prior to bullying or arises as a result of the victimization, several characteristics are commonly associated with being a victim

of bullying. Specifically, victims are often described as having low self-esteem, (Aluedse, 2006; Crothers & Kolbert, 2004; Langdon & Preble, 2008; Menesini et al., 2009; Merrell et al., 2008; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993, 1995), having anxiety, (Aluedse, 2006; Beran & Shapiro, 2005; Menesini et al., 2009; Merrell et al., 2008; Nansel et al., 2001) feeling isolated from peers, (Beran & Shapiro, 2005; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008) and being depressed (Aluedse, 2006; Beran & Shapiro, 2005; Elledge et al., 2010; Langdon & Preble, 2008; Menesini et al., 2009; Merrell et al., 2008; Nansel et al., 2001). Furthermore, victims of bullying are more likely to experience loneliness, (Nansel et al., 2001) stress, (Hughes et al., 2009) insecurity, (Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993, 1995) and fearfulness (Aluedse, 2006; Merrell et al., 2008). Students who are victims of bullying are more likely to report physical and mental health problems and contemplate suicide (Aluedse, 2006; Elinoff et al., 2004; Elledge et al., 2010). Elledge et al. (2010) stated that children who experienced bullying in the fall turned to maladaptive coping mechanisms in the spring, thus suggesting that if victimization continues for a prolonged period of time children will begin using any means possible to cope with the experience.

Issues at school also impact victims of bullying. Horne et al. (2007) suggested that bullying led to students feeling so threatened in school that they simply did not complete their education. In fact, victims of bullying were often fearful of school and thus at an increased risk of truancy and dropping out (Carney & Merrell, 2001; Merrell et al., 2008). Victims may become so preoccupied with the bullying and fear of the situation that they lose interest in school altogether (Crothers & Kolbert, 2004). This

consequently can lead to decreased academic performance (Crothers & Kolbert, 2004; Glew et al., 2008; Langdon & Preble, 2008) as well as school adjustment and performance difficulties (Hanish & Guerra, 2000). Langdon and Preble (2008) also found that victims tended to see less value in being a member of the school community. Cook et al. (2010a) concisely states the numerous negative outcomes associated with being a victim of bullying:

The typical *victim* is one who is likely to demonstrate internalizing symptoms; engage in externalizing behavior; lack adequate social skills; possess negative self-related cognitions; experience difficulties in solving social problems; come from negative community, family, and school environments; and be noticeably rejected and isolated by peers. (p. 76)

### **Consequences of Being a Bully-Victim**

Bully-victims are believed to be most negatively impacted of the three groups because of their association with both bullying and victimization (Juvonen et al., 2003; Langdon & Preble, 2008; Nansel et al., 2001). Bully-victims are likely to manifest psychosocial and behavioral problems (Langdon & Preble, 2008), be ostracized by peers, display conduct problems, and report elevated levels of depression and loneliness (Juvonen et al., 2003). Furthermore, bully-victims are at the greatest risk of developing multiple psychopathological behaviors (Kim et al., 2006) including both internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Menesini et al., 2009). Bully-victims are also at the greatest risk of serious psychosomatic disorders, depression, and suicidal thoughts (Menesini et al., 2009). It has also been suggested that bully-victims are the least engaged in school (Juvonen et al., 2003). Cook et al. (2010a) revealed the grim outlook for bully-victims:

The typical *bully victim* is one who has comorbid externalizing and internalizing problems, holds significantly negative attitudes and beliefs about himself or

herself and others, is low in social competence, does not have adequate social problem-solving skills, performs poorly academically, and is not only rejected and isolated by peers but also negatively influenced by the peers with whom he or she interacts. (p. 76)

### **Consequences in the School**

In addition to the consequences of bullying in general, there are consequences specific to the bullying that occurs in the school setting. Bullying is a major cause of fear that keeps children from perceiving school as a safe place. An estimated 160,000 students miss school each day due to the fear of violence (Lee, 1993). More specifically, one in seven students reported being afraid to go to school “once in a while” because of bullying (Brown et al., 2005). Additionally, Glew et al. (2008) found that both bullies and victims were twice as likely as bystanders to say they felt unsafe at school and that bully-victims were more than 2.5 times more likely than bystanders to report feeling unsafe at school. Furthermore, Meyer-Adams and Conner (2008) found that bullying negatively impacted students’ perception of the psychosocial environment of the school, which may in turn lead to the students reacting aggressively (i.e., carrying a weapon to school) or with avoidance (i.e., skipping school).

Regardless of how students perceive bullying, the implications on feelings of school safety remain consistent. Far too many students are avoiding school or distracted while there due to being actively engaged in bullying or the fear of such an event occurring. Therefore, a better understanding of the behaviors responsible for producing this fear is essential in order for schools to take appropriate actions toward prevention and intervention.



### Current Methods of Measuring Bullying

Over the years, both quantitative and qualitative data have been collected to investigate the topic of bullying. Little consistency has been employed in the procedures utilized to assess bullying as there is no agreed upon method for measuring bullying (Swearer et al., 2010). Most frequently, quantitative data methods are utilized to collect information regarding the topic of bullying. More specifically, self-report surveys are typically employed to measure the prevalence of bullying (Cornell & Bandyopadhyay, 2010; Swearer et al., 2010). However, the questions, the definitions, and the cut-off points used on such surveys vary greatly (Cook et al., 2010b; Swearer et al., 2010). Furthermore, the time periods used to elicit responses (i.e., during the last week, 30 days, etc.) varies across studies (Cook et al., 2010b).

There are three main self-report methods used for measuring bullying and victimization rates: (1) “use of a general definition of bullying followed by a specific question which asks students whether they have bullied others or have been bullied by others” (Peskin et al., 2006, p. 478), (2) “providing no definition and then asking students about their participation in general bullying or victimization” (Peskin et al., 2006, p. 478), and (3) “assessing students’ participation in *specific* bullying and victimization behaviors” (Peskin et al., 2006, p. 478). Another commonly used technique for examining bullying is to provide vignettes and either (1) ask the participants to identify what type of bullying is being described or (2) ask the students whether or not the description depicts bullying (Graham, Bellmore, Nishina, & Juvonen, 2009; Newman & Murray, 2005). It is believed that the various ways of assessing the frequency of bullying

behaviors (i.e., providing a definition/example or not providing a definition/example) may contribute to the discrepancies found across studies.

Furthermore, all self-report measures depend on the student's ability to understand the questions being asked and accurately recall information (Cornell & Bandyopadhyay, 2010). Unfortunately, it is believed that students often fail to label aggressive acts as bullying because they lack a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying (Crothers & Kolbert, 2004). Bullying rates also may be severely underestimated because students often do not identify experiences as bullying even when the situation meets the researcher's definition (Hughes et al., 2009). The reverse may also be true in that students felt they were the victim of bullying but their experience did not fit the criteria outlined and therefore did not identify it.

Some of this confusion may arise from the ambiguous definitions provided and further supports the need for deeper investigations into what students perceive to be bullying. These findings also support the use of a mixed methodology to expand upon self-reported surveys via interviews or focus groups in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of what students perceive to constitute bullying. Findings from such interviews may even lead to re-examination of current self-report methods and definitions.

### **The Prevalence of Bullying**

The differing definitions of bullying, the differing criteria for the involved groups, and the various methodologies used to collect data leads to difficulty in comparing results. Hence, the results of current research are mixed and are difficult to compare.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine the extent to which the differing methodological aspects of the studies account for the variation in results and what variation may be due to the population examined.

With the large variance in the collection methods, some researchers have started to question whether the reportedly increasing rates of bullying actually indicate an increase in frequency or if it is simply reflective of methodological differences (Olweus, 1993). As previously mentioned, this may be due to the various techniques used to collect the data, the samples selected, or the lack of a clearly and consistently used operational definition of bullying. Nonetheless, a recent meta-analysis of research investigating bullying reported child and youth involvement in bullying behaviors between 10% and 30%, but indicated that the prevalence rates were dependent upon how the bullying behavior was measured (Cook et al., 2010a). Another study (Sawyer, Bradshaw, & O'Brennan, 2008) revealed differing trends in reported rates of bullying when comparing definition-based questions versus behavior-based questions. It was found that 20% to 30% of the students surveyed reported being frequently bullied when responding to the definition-based single-item questions in comparison to approximately 55% to 80% of students reporting being a victim of bullying on the behavior-based measure (Sawyer et al., 2008). This seems to indicate once again the ambiguity of the definitions provided while also showing that students have a clear idea of the behaviors they perceive to reflect bullying. Investigating a way to incorporate the student views into the actual definition of the behavior will be essential in attempting to obtain accurate assessments regarding the occurrence of bullying.

Further complicating the issue is the belief that self-reported rates of bullying may differ in large part because of ethnic and cultural factors that influence the way the term bullying is perceived (Sawyer et al., 2008). Thus, there is a clear need to investigate if ethnic and cultural factors do in fact impact individuals' perceptions of bullying. This information has failed to be adequately captured via the use of survey methods alone and supports the use of qualitative methods aimed at investigating student insights.

An additional and critical factor that may be influencing the report rates of bullying is the population on which the measure was piloted. For instance, Olweus created a survey and intervention program based on extensive work with Norwegian and Swedish populations (Ross, 1996). This measure and program have since been used throughout the United States with no known studies investigating the validity of using such a measure on diverse populations. Thus, the populations upon which a measure was created and the populations being included in the use of such a measure are sure to influence the results.

Despite the controversy on how data was gathered and whether or not it is truly comparable, one thing is indisputable—the statistics are startling. Brown et al. (2005) reported that “one third of 9- to 13-year-olds reported being bullied *once in a while*, and another 15% said they were bullied at least *weekly*” (p. 385). Likewise, Demaray and Malecki (2003) reported that 60-75% of students were victims of verbal bullying at least one time in the last year. Another study revealed that 61.5% of students were bullied “once in a while” and 10.2% were bullied often or daily (Hughes et al., 2009). Furthermore, 1 in 10 middle school students in the U.S. reported being bullied (Brown et

al. 2005).

Studies in various schools across the United States found that rates of being bullied varied from 9% among 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in Los Angeles (Juvonen et al., 2003) to 12% among 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in Texas (Peskin et al., 2006) to as high of 15% in a large urban school district (Glew et al., 2008). Conversely, the rate of bullying others was consistent across studies with a 7% occurrence rate (Glew et al. 2008; Juvonen et al., 2003; Peskin et al., 2006). However, the rate of being a bully-victim varied from 4% to 6% (Glew et al., 2008; Juvonen et al., 2003; Peskin et al., 2006). Furthermore, in a study of 5<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in rural, suburban, and urban public schools, it was found that 96.6% of the students had observed or experienced bullying at some point (Langdon & Preble, 2008).

In order to expand on one-time data collection, Espelage et al. (2001) sampled sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students (93% of whom were Caucasian) in January and again in May. The results revealed that sixth grade students had a significant increase in bullying behavior from Time 1 to Time 2 whereas seventh and eighth grade students did not. Conversely, Hanish and Guerra (2000) sampled elementary students (40% African American, 42% Hispanic, and 18% Caucasian) twice over a two-year period and found that 16% of the students were classified as victims at Time 1 but only 7% were classified as victims at Time 2. Therefore, occurrence rates of bullying must be read with caution due to the variability throughout the school year.

A national survey including students in sixth through 10<sup>th</sup> grade found that 29.9% of respondents were moderately or frequently involved in bullying behaviors as either a

bully, a victim, or both (Nansel et al., 2001). These results were further broken down according to ethnic groups revealing that 8.5% of White children reported being bullied weekly, 8.3% of Black children reported being bullied weekly, and 10.4% of Hispanic children reported being bullied weekly (Nansel et al., 2001). Although these results do not suggest highly discrepant responses, it does suggest that some cross-ethnic variability exists in the reporting rates of bullying behavior. This variability may be due to how each individual perceives, defines, and labels possible bullying behaviors and thus whether or not it is reported.

### **Cross-Ethnic Perspectives of Bullying**

It must be noted that while the location, size, and composition of the students involved in each study varied, one thing was consistent among them all—they all reported bullying. However, given the complexity involved in considering bullying from a cross-ethnic perspective, it is unlikely that quantitative results alone can provide the full picture of why differences may exist. Discrepancies exist in the frequency of reported instances of bullying across ethnic groups but a clear explanation for this occurrence is lacking. In addition, it is currently unclear if students from various ethnic groups have differing perspectives on what bullying is and how they respond to it. Ethnicity itself may serve as the reason a student is being bullied. In fact, according to Bellmore and Tomonaga (n.d.), 41% of adolescents reported ethnicity-based discrimination experiences, such as name calling and exclusion, by peers.

Of the studies that did investigate ethnicity, most failed to look beyond the frequencies reported on a survey or questionnaire. One study used peer sociometric

ratings – a numerical method for measuring social relationships – to explore the role of ethnicity in predicting victimization and also considered the ethnic composition of the school in relation to the child’s own ethnicity (Hanish & Guerra, 2000). The findings revealed that school composition impacted the reporting rates of ethnically diverse students differently. Specifically, Hanish and Guerra (2000) revealed differences between Caucasian/White and African American/Black students:

White children attending predominantly non-White schools were at a greater risk of being victimized than those attending predominantly White schools. In contrast, African American children were slightly more likely to be victimized in predominantly African-American schools than in predominantly non-African-American schools. (p. 211)

These findings may suggest that bullying is occurring both between and within ethnically diverse groups. It also demonstrates that being part of the predominant culture does not necessarily serve as a defense for bullying, as is evidenced in the African American/Black students reporting more victimization in predominantly African American/Black schools. Conversely, Bellmore and Tomonaga (n.d.) reported that students in the numerical ethnic minority within their schools were those who reported more frequent peer victimization. However, “the presence of diversity in a school building alone does not create an inevitable context for ethnoracial or immigrant bullying, but it can establish a prerequisite condition of asymmetrical power among the various groups of students in attendance” (Scherr & Larson, 2010, p. 225).

Studies that have aimed to explore student perceptions of bullying have focused primarily on forming definitions and describing characteristics of bullies and victims. In a study by Varjas et al. (2008b), the investigators aimed to explore student’s definitions

of bullying, characteristics of bullies and victims, as well as the reasons for bullying and reactions to bullying occurring in a school setting. Four of the six codes identified characteristics associated with both bullies and victims—gender, race, personality, and physical aspects (Varjas et al., 2008b). This finding supports the fact that ethnicity itself can be a contributing factor for being bullied as well as bullying others. It was also found that both bullies and victims perceived themselves as being different from the norm (Varjas et al., 2008b). This finding may relate to previous studies (Bellmore & Tomonaga, n.d.; Hanish & Guerra, 2000) suggesting that bullying may vary depending on the predominant population.

Once again, these findings reveal the need to explore student perspectives in order to understand the potential reasons and implications for cross-ethnic differences. Ample evidence suggests that ethnicity does play a pivotal role in the perception of bullying behaviors but that has not yet been fully explored. In gaining greater insight into why students believe they are targeted, the school is also identifying areas that need to be addressed in intervention and prevention efforts.

### **Bullying in Schools**

Nearly all students are involved in bullying at school in some capacity—as the bully, the victim, or the bystander. In fact, bullying is the most common type of school violence that contributes to negative mental health outcomes for both bullies and victims (Varjas et al., 2008b). It was found that “over 49% of children reported being bullied by other students at school at least once during the past month whereas 30.8% reported bullying others during that time” (Bradshaw et al., 2007, p. 368). In addition to that



finding, a study by Fitzpatrick, Dulin, and Piko (2007) found that 26% of students reported bullying someone else in school at least once in the past year.

There is a great level of variability present in the current research surrounding teacher and student perspectives of bullying. Often, students felt that teachers were unaware of what was happening or failed to do anything about the issue. Frisé, Jonsson, and Persson (2007) reported that adults were not fully aware of the amount of bullying occurring within the school. Furthermore, many students did not report bullying to teachers or counselors for fear of future repercussions (Varjas et al., 2008b). It was also suggested that students did not agree with adults' views regarding the types of behavior that should be considered bullying. This finding suggests a discrepancy not only between student perceptions and that of the current literature, but also between student perceptions and those of the teachers responsible for addressing such behavior. Hughes et al. (2009) and Varjas et al. (2008b) both found that students felt better adult supervision would help to prevent bullying incidents and lead to feeling safer at school.

Therefore, better understanding the students' perceptions of bullying and what they feel is being done and should be done about it may help to inform and prepare teachers, principals and school staff alike. Furthermore, the inconsistent findings across studies and sparse success of intervention and prevention efforts may suggest a need to shift from adult-generated definitions to those guided by student perspectives.

### **Summary**

While there is no clear definition of exactly what constitutes bullying, it is clear that something needs to be done about it. The prevalence of bullying is alarmingly high

and the consequences associated with this behavior for the bullies, the victims, and the bully-victims, are distressing. In fact, the increased attention to the matter of bullying and its many harmful effects have led to federal initiatives such as *No Child Left Behind* identifying school safety and acts of aggression as data collection and reporting targets (Merrell et al., 2008). Still, the discrepancy in the reporting rates among ethnically diverse groups leaves many questions unanswered and ultimately may be influencing the success of intervention efforts for diverse populations. Unfortunately, little attention has been given to why these cross-ethnic discrepancies exist. Furthermore, the current definitions of bullies, victims, and bully-victims do not account for potential ethnic variances. Instead, the current definition of bullying itself and well as those involved in, and impacted by, the behavior are described using blanket definitions. Research thus far has failed to delve deeper into whether discrepancies do exist, determine why they exist, and how such discrepancies may be impacting the effectiveness of prevention and intervention efforts.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine middle school students' perceptions of bullying behaviors. This study aimed to answer both quantitative and qualitative questions. As such, the data collection and analysis were completed in two separate phases. First, the quantitative data obtained from the survey was collected and analyzed. Then, individual interviews with select students were conducted. The interviews were transcribed, coded, and examined for emerging themes and trends. Following is a description of the research design utilized for this study. Next, the setting and the participants are described. The measures, the procedure, and the researcher's role are then discussed. Finally, the quantitative and qualitative data analysis processes are described, respectively.

#### **Research Design**

In determining which research design would best meet the overall aims of the study, several matters were considered. First, consideration was given to the idea of collecting data using a survey format. Creswell (2009) states "a survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (p. 145). In this study, the goal was to obtain the opinions of middle school students by asking students at one particular middle school to

participate. Unfortunately, survey research, along with all research methods, possesses shortcomings. Therefore, careful consideration needed to be given to evaluating the implications of such shortcomings. However, Babbie states "...survey research can be used profitably in the examination of many social topics and can be especially effective when combined with other methods" (1990, p. 40). Thus, further consideration was given to the idea of using a mixed methods design in order to maximize the benefits of both quantitative and qualitative research. In fact, Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) highlight the strength of using mixed methods research in stating "mixed methods research provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research" (p. 9).

After having decided that a mixed methods approach would be the best approach to answer the research questions, attention was then given to which design would provide the most valuable information while simultaneously minimizing shortcomings. Ultimately, it was decided that an explanatory sequential design would be utilized. For this design, quantitative survey data is collected first and then followed with qualitative interviews with a few individuals who participated in the survey to obtain more detail about their responses (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). "This design is most useful when the researcher wants to assess trends and relationships with quantitative data but also be able to explain the mechanism or reasons behind the resultant trends" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2009, p. 82).

The explanatory sequential design consists of two phases: a quantitative phase followed by a qualitative phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). In this study, the first

phase consisted of collecting and analyzing quantitative data using the Student Comprehensive Assessment of Bullying Behavior-Revised (SCABB-R) (Varjas, et al., 2008a) survey instrument (see Appendix C). The survey was administered online to students attending a public suburban middle school in the Midwest. This data was used to answer two quantitative questions: (1) which types of behavior were most frequently endorsed as constituting bullying by middle school students and (2) what differences, if any, exist in reporting bullying behaviors among ethnic groups in middle school? Upon completion of the quantitative phase, a preliminary analysis was completed in order to determine which points were in need of further exploration during the qualitative phase. Then, the qualitative interviews were completed to elaborate on and further explore the results obtained in the first phase. Interviews were conducted with seventh and eighth grade students in order to qualitatively explore bullying. The information obtained in the interviews was used to explore one central qualitative question: How do middle school students perceive bullying? Three additional sub-questions were also explored: (1) is bullying perceived consistently within and across ethnic groups, (2) does the type of bullying experienced vary across ethnic groups, and (3) are the behaviors considered to constitute bullying consistent among ethnic groups? Finally, the two phases were connected during the interpretation and integration of the data.

The rationale for collecting quantitative data initially was to identify key findings, which were then investigated more fully in the qualitative phase. These findings were used to inform which questions would be most beneficial during the qualitative phase. The information gleaned from the survey data was coupled with the aims of the

qualitative phase to create an interview protocol. The interviews were intentionally kept short and open-ended in order to maximize students' ability to openly share their opinions about bullying. The second phase allowed for a more expansive investigation of bullying with particular emphasis on cross-ethnic variances. This level of exploration was not possible with survey data alone. Instead, the interviews allowed for the participants' views to provide a more insightful explanation of the statistical results obtained from the survey (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). As such, combining the structured survey with the focused, yet fluid interviews allowed for student perspectives to be captured. The information obtained from both phases could then be compared for similarities and differences. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the overall research design, the procedures, and the products of each phase.

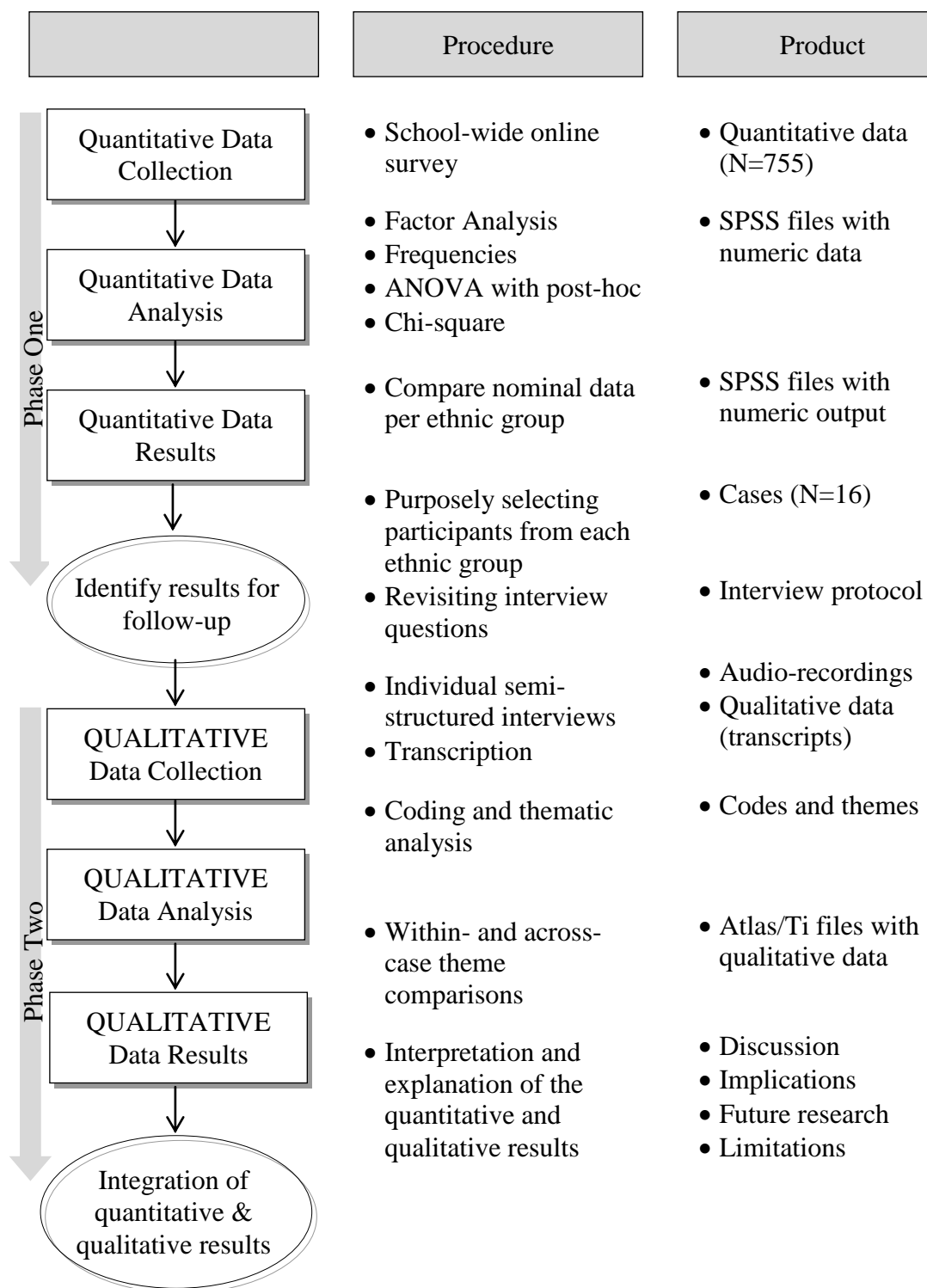


Figure 1. Visual Representation of Explanatory Sequential Design

### Setting

The study was conducted in one public middle school located within a suburban school system in the Midwest. The school system consists of one early childhood center, four buildings serving kindergarten through fourth grade, one school for fifth and sixth grade, one school for seventh and eighth grade, and one school serving kindergarten through eighth grade. The district as a whole collected survey data from students in grades three through eight, but only the building serving seventh and eighth grade was included in this study. Table 1 shows the school demographics at the time the survey was administered, according to admission data provided by the school.

Table 1. School Demographic Information

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	411	51.7
Female	384	48.3
Grade		
Seventh	385	48.4
Eighth	410	51.6
Ethnicity		
Caucasian/White	548	68.9
Hispanic/Latino	143	17.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	45	5.7
Multi-ethnic	30	3.8
African American/Black	27	3.4
American Indian/Alaska Native	2	0.3



At the time the study began, the school had already formed a district-wide anti-bullying committee comprised of professionals from each school within the district. The district was trying to collectively analyze the current rates of bullying within each school, locations where bullying was most prevalent, who was most often contacted in the event of bullying, and the effectiveness of policies in place. Together, this information was going to be used to determine which intervention program would be most effective in combating bullying and making the school a safer place overall. Unfortunately, according to the chairperson of the anti-bullying committee, the survey selected by this committee and implemented in the spring of 2011 (the year prior to this researcher's involvement) did not provide useful information towards identifying effective intervention strategies. The desire for support, as well as a more robust and practical survey led to a partnership between the researcher and the school. It was determined that collecting qualitative data in addition to quantitative data would provide a breadth of information about the current issues within the school and present areas in need of particular attention. Initially, the district had planned on purchasing an intervention program to implement. However, the middle school is now exploring ways to utilize the findings from this study to incorporate prevention and intervention efforts within the *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports* system currently in place.

### **Participants**

All students attending the school were invited to participate in completing the survey. A total of 760 responses were collected. Of those, five surveys were eliminated from analysis because they were left blank. Thus, the total sample included 755

respondents. Of this sample, 750 reported their gender: 391 boys and 359 girls. A total of 746 students reported their grade. The grade-level breakdown of the sample was 363 7th-graders and 383 8th-graders. The ethnic breakdown of the sample was 503 Caucasian/White, 137 Hispanic/Latino, 44 Asian, 27 Multi-ethnic, 22 African American, 2 American Indian/Alaska Natives, 15 other, and 5 who did not respond. Demographic information about the respondents is shown in Table 2. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are consistent with that of the school.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	391	51.8
Female	359	47.5
Grade		
Seventh	363	48.1
Eighth	383	50.7
Ethnicity		
Caucasian/White	503	66.6
Hispanic/Latino	137	18.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	44	5.8
Multi-ethnic	27	3.6
African American/Black	22	2.9
Other	15	2.0
American Indian/Alaska Native	2	0.3

Note. 5 students did not indicate gender, 9 students did not indicate grade, and 5 students did not indicate ethnicity.

The original goal for the qualitative phase was to include a total of 30 participants representative of the ethnic diversity present within the school. Initially, it had been hoped that five students from each of the six ethnic groups present within the school (African American/Black, Caucasian/White, Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Multi-ethnic) would be interviewed. However, it was determined that given the small population size of several ethnic groups that 10 Caucasian/White students, 10 Hispanic/Latino students, and 10 students comprising the remaining ethnicities present within the school (African American/Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Multi-ethnic) would be interviewed. Unfortunately, the school consisted of only two identified American Indian/Alaska Native students, and consent forms were not returned. Thus, this particular group was not represented.

Initially, 39 consent forms were returned for Caucasian/White students, two consent forms for Hispanic/Latino students, one consent form for an African American/Black student, one consent form for an Asian/Pacific Islander student, and one consent form for a Multi-ethnic student. Two forms were returned that were not legible and therefore were not used in the selected sample. The assistant principal collected the consent forms and looked up each student's demographic information. The Caucasian/White student consent forms were divided into four piles: seventh grade females, seventh grade males, eighth grade females, and eighth grade males. A total of 10 forms were randomly selected from each of the four piles in order to equally represent both seventh and eighth grade students as well as males and females. Additionally, all

five of the non-White students who returned consent forms were selected to be interviewed. The participants selected to be interviewed also included an array of special needs, such as a student diagnosed with Asperger Disorder and another who was primarily taught in a self-contained classroom.

The initial interviews were conducted on two separate days. On the first day, all 10 of the selected Caucasian/White students were scheduled to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted in the speech pathologist's office. Upon the initiation of the interview, students were asked to provide assent (see Appendix B) agreeing to participate in the interview and student demographic sheets (see Appendix E) were also completed at the time of the interview. All interviews lasted between 10-15 minutes. However, two students did not report for their interviews that day. On the second day of interviewing, the two students who had not reported and the five non-White respondents were scheduled to be interviewed. One of the Hispanic/Latino students was on a field trip that day and needed to be rescheduled. The six other students completed their interviews—each lasting 10-15 minutes—in a social worker's office.

After completing an initial round of 14 interviews, the interviews were transcribed and the coding process began. However, more participants were still needed. Therefore, the assistant principal ran a list of all non-White students in the school and sent home another consent form in order to increase the likelihood for returned consent forms. One additional consent form was returned. Then, several weeks later, homeroom teachers read a script describing the study and sent consent forms home with the students again. A total of 16 additional consent forms were then returned, but only one form was from a

non-White student. Unfortunately, that student had already been interviewed. Thus, two additional interviews were conducted—one for the student who was absent and one for the newly returned consent form. Both interviews were completed in a social worker’s office and lasted approximately 10 minutes.

In total, consent forms were returned for 54 Caucasian/White students and seven consent forms were returned for non-White students—one was returned twice for the same student. Once all interviews were completed, a total of 16 students were interviewed. See Table 3 for demographic information about all interviewees. The demographic information for each of the 16 interviewed students is listed in Table 4.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	9	56.3
Male	7	43.7
Grade		
Seventh	8	50.0
Eighth	8	50.0
Ethnicity		
Caucasian/White	10	62.5
Hispanic/Latino	3	18.7
African American/Black	1	6.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	6.3
Multi-ethnic	1	6.3
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0.0

Table 4. Descriptive Characteristics of Interview Participants

Participant Number	Gender	Grade	Race
1	Female	7	Caucasian/White
2	Male	8	Caucasian/White
3	Male	7	Caucasian/White
4	Female	8	Caucasian/White
5	Male	8	Caucasian/White
6	Male	8	Caucasian/White
7	Female	8	Caucasian/White
8	Female	8	Caucasian/White
9	Female	7	African American/Black
10	Female	7	Multi-ethnic
11	Male	7	Caucasian/White
12	Male	7	Caucasian/White
13	Female	8	Asian/Pacific Islander
14	Male	7	Hispanic/Latino
15	Female	8	Hispanic/Latino
16	Female	7	Hispanic/Latino

### Measures

A pre-established survey was modified for the quantitative data collection and an interview protocol was created for the qualitative data collection. Much consideration was given to the selection and use of measures. Particular attention was given to maintaining validity. Within a mixed methods design, validity is defined as “...the ability of the researcher to draw meaningful and accurate conclusions from all of the data in the study” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 146).

## Quantitative Survey

The SCABB-R (Varjas et al., 2008a) was completed online. This particular survey has undergone several revisions over the years. Initially, the scale was a 42-item survey; however question items have been added and modified over the years. Currently, the SCABB-R consists of 130 items. However, several changes were made to make the survey more applicable and to reflect the wishes of the school. For instance, a question regarding whether or not a student was born in the United States was removed. A *not applicable* option was added to the questions regarding the Internet and cell phones because members of the anti-bullying committee felt that many students would not have access to such devices and therefore could not attest to being bullied or bullying others via such means. Several items were added to reasons why students may be getting picked on to include “has a disability, has different interests, is mad at a friend, and is fighting with a friend.” Also, the question regarding the auditorium was changed to ask about the locker room because some of the schools in the district do not have auditoriums but several do have locker rooms. Additionally, one more question option was added to include the playground. Lastly, a *not applicable* option was added to questions pertaining to specific locations within the school because several schools varied in terms of having a playground, locker room, etc. With all revisions, the survey consists of 135 total questions.

Survey items asked specifically about physical bullying (e.g., “How often in the past couple of months have you picked on younger, smaller, less popular, or less powerful kids by hitting or kicking them?”), verbal bullying (e.g., “How often in the past

couple of months have you picked on younger, smaller, less popular, or less powerful kids by saying mean things to them?”), relational bullying (e.g., “How often in the past couple of months have you picked on younger, smaller, less popular, or less powerful kids by spreading rumors about them?”), and cyberbullying (e.g., “How often in the past couple of months have you sent a hurtful or mean text?”) as well as physical victimization (e.g., “How often in the past couple of months have older, bigger, more popular, or powerful kids picked on you by pushing you?”), verbal victimization (e.g., “How often in the past couple of months have older, bigger, more popular, or powerful kids picked on you by calling you names?”), relational victimization (e.g., “How often in the past couple of months have older, bigger, more popular, or powerful kids picked on you by leaving you out?”), and cybervictimization (e.g., “How often in the past couple of months have you received a hurtful or mean E-mail?”). Additional sub-scales within the survey assessed coping strategies regarding use and effectiveness, responses to witnessing bullying, reasons students are picked on, and perceptions of school safety.

### **Qualitative Interview Protocol**

For the interviews, a protocol was created (see Appendix D) outlining the interview process and listing the interview questions. The interview questions were based on the research questions being explored and aimed to strengthen the findings of the study by delving beyond quantitative data only. A set of preliminary questions was created by the researcher with the help of the dissertation chair. It was expected that these questions would be revised once the survey data was collected. A preliminary



analysis was performed on the survey data to inform which questions would be pertinent in the qualitative phase.

In order to address the central qualitative question “How do middle school students perceive bullying?” and each of the three sub-questions, several questions were created to address each specific topic:

Sub-question 1: Is bullying perceived consistently within and across ethnic groups?

1. What are some of the main reasons students are bullied at your school?
2. Describe a bully.
3. Describe a victim.
4. Do you think members of certain groups get bullied more than others?
  - a. Do you think non-White students are bullied more or less often? Why or why not?

Sub-question 2: Does the type of bullying experienced vary across ethnic groups?

5. What has been your experience with bullying at school?
  - a. If they've been bullied, why do you think you were targeted?
  - b. If they've been bullied, what types of bullying did you experience?
  - c. If they've not been bullied, why do you think you have not been targeted?
  - d. If they've not been bullied, what types of bullying have you seen others experience?

Sub-question 3: Are the behaviors considered to constitute bullying consistent among ethnic groups?

6. What does bullying mean to you?

7. How do students bully other kids at your school?

### **Procedures for Data Collection**

The study consisted of a school-wide survey followed by individual interviews. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained from Loyola University Chicago prior to any data collection. The procedures for the quantitative and qualitative phase are described, respectively, below.

#### **Quantitative Data Collection**

All students in attendance at the school were invited to serve as respondents to the survey. Passive parental consent (see Appendix A) was obtained, requiring only parents who did not wish to have their child complete the survey return a form to the school indicating their preference. Verbal student assent was also obtained for all students who wished to participate in the school-wide survey, the SCABB-R (Varjas et al., 2008a). The passive consent forms were sent home with all students the week prior to the survey. No forms were returned requesting students not to participate. Therefore, in order to obtain student assent, the teacher asked all students whether or not they wished to participate in the survey. No students declined participation. It should be noted that 35 students were absent, involved in testing, or participating in meetings during the time the survey was administered and thus did not participate.

The SCABB-R (Varjas et al., 2008a) survey instrument (see Appendix C) was taken online during regularly scheduled gym class time. Teams of approximately 25 to 30 students went to the computer lab to complete the survey and then returned to class so

the next team of students could take the survey. All surveys were completed within two days.

As previously mentioned, the district administered the survey to all students in third through eighth grade as part of the anti-bullying committee's initiative. Each building was responsible for arranging the dissemination of the survey. The analysis of the data collected from the other schools in the district was coordinated with the researcher; however, only the data from the middle school with seventh and eighth grader students was included in this study.

Students were asked to complete the SCABB-R (Varjas et al., 2008a) survey online indicating how often they experienced each of the listed bullying behaviors, utilized coping mechanisms, how helpful coping mechanisms were believed to be, reasons why students were picked on, and locations within the school where they felt safe. The surveys were administered anonymously and did not ask for identifying information other than demographics including gender, race, and grade. The survey aimed to address the quantitative questions proposed for this study: (1) which types of behavior were most frequently endorsed as constituting bullying by middle school students and (2) what differences, if any, exist in reporting bullying behaviors among ethnic groups in middle school?

### **Qualitative Data Collection**

After completing the survey, paper consent forms (see Appendix A) were sent home with every student in both English and Spanish requesting their participation in the follow-up interviews. The consent form for the interviews was initially sent home as part

of the students' report card packets. A few weeks later, the consent form was emailed in both English and Spanish to all parents who provided an email address to the school. Finally, consent forms were sent home with all students after their homeroom teachers read a script describing the study. All consent forms for the interviews were collected at the school.

Convenience and targeted sampling was used to select interview participants. In total, 16 students were interviewed: 10 Caucasian/White students, two Hispanic/Latino students, one African American/Black student, one Asian/Pacific Islander student, and one Multi-ethnic student. The Caucasian/White student consent forms were divided into four piles: seventh grade females, seventh grade males, eighth grade females, and eighth grade males. A total of 10 forms were randomly selected from each of the four piles in order to equally represent both seventh and eighth grade students as well as males and females. All non-White students were included in the interviews.

Once participants were selected, arrangements were made with the assistant principal to conduct the interviews in empty offices. The interview process was explained to the student and signed assent was collected (see Appendix B). Then, students completed a brief demographic form (see Appendix E). Students were assigned a participant number, which was later used during the transcription process as an assurance of confidentiality. No names were used; only demographic information such as race, gender, and grade were linked to the number given.

The researcher, a doctoral school psychology candidate, conducted all interviews individually with the students. All interviews were audio recorded using a hand-held

device. A semi-structured interview format was utilized in order to ensure major topics were covered while allowing for flexibility in follow-up probes (see Appendix D for interview protocol). Each interview lasted less than 15 minutes. After each interview, the audio recordings were uploaded onto a secure computer and deleted from the handheld device.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The researcher's role during the interview process was to serve as the sole data collector. While doing so, constant recognition was given to preventing personal biases and preconceptions of the subject matter from influencing the data collection. This was vital given that personal biases are a primary concern for the qualitative data collection. Therefore, care was taken to acknowledge biases and reduce them by actively listening to what was being said, recording responses accurately and completely, and seeking clarification from the respondent on any responses that seemed unclear. Furthermore, controlling for reactivity was done by being aware of facial expressions and body language. Appearing in a nonjudgmental fashion was believed to help reduce the students' need to respond in a socially acceptable manner. Furthermore, the students were asked to respond truthfully and honestly in regard to bullying behavior. In doing so, it was hoped that a candid perspective was gained regarding each student's personal experience.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected from the two phases of the study were analyzed separately. First, the survey results were analyzed. Then, the interview transcripts were analyzed.

The process involved in each stage is described in detail below.

### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

Once the survey data was collected, all data was entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Descriptive information was obtained by computing frequency statistics for the sample to gather basic demographic information regarding gender, grade, and ethnicity. Next, an exploratory factor analysis was run to determine if the survey items could be grouped together to reliably identify scores of bullying and victimization.

The decision to use a factor analysis centered on an underlying assumption regarding the question items in terms of how they would group together based on previous research and the hope was to substantiate this via the use of an exploratory factor analysis. Factor analysis aims to reveal latent variables that may cause covariance among variables and factor analysis has been suggested as the preferable method of extraction (Costello & Osborne, 2005). To avoid inflating estimates of variance, the principal axis factors (PAF) extraction method was selected (Costello & Osborne, 2005). PAF with Varimax rotation was deemed appropriate because the data were considered to be ordinal due to the focus on a continuation of bullying rather than focusing on feelings of agreement. After completing the factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha was run as a measure of internal consistency for each of the survey items loading into each factor component. Cronbach's alpha ranges between 0 and 1. Reliability coefficients of .70 or higher are considered to be acceptable (Lavrakas, 2008). Finally, frequencies were run for the items loading into each of the identified factor components. This was done to

address the first quantitative question: which types of behavior were most frequently endorsed as bullying by middle school students?

Next, a one-way between subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run to address the second quantitative question: what differences, if any, exist in reporting bullying behaviors among ethnic groups in middle school? The ANOVA was selected since it is a hypothesis-testing procedure used to evaluate mean differences between two or more populations (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007). As such, it was hypothesized that ethnicity did impact the reported bullying behaviors.

After completing the one-way ANOVA, post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test were conducted. The post-hoc tests were run to determine specific differences between the ethnicities for question items that were determined to be significant by the one-way ANOVA. The Tukey HSD test was selected because it is commonly used in psychological research to compute a single value to determine the minimum mean difference necessary for significance (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007).

Finally, a chi-square test of independence was performed. This was done to test a hypothesis stating that a relationship existed between ethnicity and reported reasons for being bullied. The survey had 16 items listing various reasons why students were targeted (fat, bossy, wears clothes that many people don't like, has a disability, etc.). Furthermore, reasons for being bullied were explored with the qualitative question "what are some of the main reasons students are bullied at your school?" The chi-square allowed for an examination of differences across ethnic groups in perceived reasons for bullying, which could then be compared to the qualitative data.

## Qualitative Data Analysis

After the interviews were conducted, all responses were transcribed verbatim. Transcription software, Dragon Naturally Speaking 11.5, was utilized to aid the transcription process. The transcribed interviews were imported into ATLAS.ti 6.2 coding software to aid the coding process. This software allowed for the development of code schemes, which were then applied to the transcripts and organized as output data. Steps outlined in Creswell (2009) were used to analyze the qualitative data. All transcripts were read and initial impressions were recorded. They were then reread and more detailed notes of each student's perception of bullying were recorded. Next, all of the responses were organized to reveal both similarities and differences.

Based upon the emerging themes, a codebook was created by the researcher. A school psychology faculty member—who was also a dissertation committee member—assisted in revising the codebook. This codebook was then shared with an outside evaluator, a fellow doctoral school psychology candidate with experience in qualitative research. Together, one transcript was coded to discuss the codebook and any necessary revisions. Then, both the researcher and the outside evaluator used the codebook to independently code two randomly selected interviews. The coded transcripts were then compared and discrepancies were discussed. The initial two transcripts reached the acceptable 80% inter-rater agreement, indicating good qualitative validity (Creswell, 2009). *Inter-coder agreement*, as defined by Creswell (2009), refers to "...two or more coders agree[ing] on codes used for the same passages in the text" (p. 191). Agreement was calculated by dividing the number of agreed upon codes by the number of



agreements plus disagreements and then multiplying by 100. For the initial two interviews, the lowest level of agreement was 83% prior to resolving discrepancies, but reached 100% agreement after resolving discrepancies. Discrepancies were resolved by discussing the content, the codes used by each coder, and what changes would be needed to clarify the most applicable code. Once decisions were made, the codebook was adjusted to reflect any necessary changes. An additional five transcripts were coded individually using the updated codebook and then compared to ensure agreement was maintained. The lowest level of agreement for these five transcripts was 85%. After discussing potential issues, and areas in need of clarification, all of the remaining transcripts were coded by each individual separately. For the remaining transcripts, the lowest level of agreement was 81%. All transcripts reached 100% agreement after resolving discrepancies. The final codebook (see Appendix F) listed each theme along with examples of what was encompassed as well as what was not.

Once agreement was established between the researcher and the outside evaluator, the transcripts were audited by a third person, an undergraduate Loyola student with previous experience in qualitative research. This was done to ensure qualitative reliability, as defined by Creswell (2009) as "...the researcher's approach [being] consistent across different researchers..." (p. 190). The auditor and the researcher initially coded one transcript together—the same transcript coded consecutively with the outside evaluator. The auditor then coded four (25%) additional transcripts to verify reliability by comparing agreement. This coding was compared to the previously established coding and revealed a level of agreement ranging from 82% to 86%.

## **Summary**

The use of both quantitative and qualitative measures enhanced the effectiveness of the current study. Careful consideration was given to minimizing researcher bias and maximizing validity and reliability. The initial survey data were carefully analyzed and provided an opportunity to reveal differences in reporting rates of specific bullying behaviors among ethnic groups. The subsequent open-ended interviews allowed for a further exploration of issues and provided a rich understanding of students' perspectives regarding bullying within their school via the use of an inductive analysis approach. Thus, it was hoped that the true concerns for middle school students were discovered.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### **Introduction**

This study utilized a mixed methodology to conduct a comprehensive examination of bullying behaviors and the various perceptions of bullying behaviors among ethnically diverse students. There were two quantitative research questions, one central qualitative question, and three qualitative sub-questions, which aimed to discover whether or not bullying experiences and perceptions varied among ethnically diverse groups of middle school students. The findings are discussed in three sections. First, the results of the quantitative phase are presented. Then, the themes of the qualitative phase are described in detail. Finally, the two phases of data are integrated to produce a comprehensive description of the experiences and perceptions provided by the middle school students.

#### **Quantitative Results**

##### **Research Question One**

The first step toward exploring the first quantitative question—which types of behavior were most frequently endorsed as bullying by middle school students—was to conduct an exploratory factor analysis to determine if survey items (see pages 2-4 in Appendix C for specific items included in the analysis) could be grouped together to reliably identify scores of bullying and victimization. The scree plot – a visual depiction

of the variance in data that helps the analyst visualize the relative importance of the factors – suggested four or five loadings; however, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test – a measure of the appropriateness of factor analysis – revealed a score of seven. As such, factor analysis was run specifying six, five, four, and three components. It revealed four factor components had the highest loadings. However, the fourth factor component had cross loadings and contained weaker loadings (i.e., 0.30 or less) than the other three factor components. According to Costello and Osborne (2005) “...item loadings above 0.30 with no or few item cross loadings [and] no factors with fewer than three items has the best fit to the data” (p. 3). Furthermore, communalities of 0.40 to 0.70 are more common magnitudes in the social sciences (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Therefore, the fourth factor component was dispersed into the three stronger factor components. All question items included in the analysis loaded into one of these three factors. Table 5 shows the loadings for each of the three factor components.

It had been thought that there would be a minimum of four factors to account for victimization, bullying, cybervictimization, and cyberbullying. However, the cyber questions did not split according to victimization and bullying so those items are listed together in a “cyber” category. The assumption of at least four factors was based on the findings from an earlier study, which used a previous version of the survey. In that study, there were a total of nine factors—physical victimization, verbal victimization, relational victimization, cybervictimization, physical bullying, verbal bullying, relational bullying, cyberbullying, and feelings of safety (Varjas et al., 2008b). Unfortunately, the current findings did not follow the previous factor structure. However, the previous study did

reveal that cybervictimization and cyberbullying were intercorrelated with one another, as was evident in the current findings. Also, feelings of safety had not been included in the current analysis and thus account for that variance.

Table 5. Principal Axis Factor Loadings for Three Factor Solution

Abbreviated Item	Victimization	Bullying	Cyber
Saying mean things to you	.72		
Calling you names	.71		
Teasing you	.68		
Trying to turn friends against you	.64		
Pushing you	.62		
Threatening you	.62		
Spreading rumors about you	.60		
Leaving you out	.59		
Making faces at you	.59		
Hitting or kicking you	.59		
Ignoring you	.56		
Lying to the teacher about you	.51		
Taking things away from you	.47		
Threatening them		.78	
Calling them names		.75	
Hitting or kicking them		.71	
Pushing them		.69	
Saying mean things to them		.69	
Teasing them		.68	
Spreading rumors about them		.64	
Taking things away from them		.63	
Making faces at them		.62	
Trying to turn friends against them		.61	
Leaving them out		.54	
Ignoring them		.48	
Lying to the teacher about them		.41	

Table 5 (Continued)

Abbreviated Item	Victimization	Bullying	Cyber
Sent a hurtful or mean message in a chat room			.90
Sent a hurtful or mean Instant Message (IM)			.88
Received a hurtful or mean Instant Message (IM)			.86
Received a hurtful or mean message in a chat room			.86
Sent a hurtful or mean E-mail			.76
Received a hurtful or mean E-mail			.74
Teased or harassed others on Facebook or Myspace			.71
Been teased or harassed on Facebook or Myspace			.71
Sent a hurtful or mean text			.58
Received a hurtful or mean text			.51

In order to further explore the first quantitative question—which types of behavior were most frequently endorsed as bullying by middle school students—frequencies were also calculated for all of the items loading into each factor component. In each table, responses indicating an item occurred *just once or twice, 2-3 times a month,* and *once a week or more* were grouped together and listed in descending order in the first column. The following columns include the individual percentages of respondents indicating *just once or twice, 2-3 times a month,* and *once a week or more.*

Table 6 shows the frequency of the items loading into the victimization factor. Items in Table 6 had a minimum response rate of 98.3%. For these items, respondents were asked to rate how often in the past couple of months older, bigger, more popular, or more powerful children picked on them in various ways. Responses were selected on a

4-point Likert scale (*not at all, just once or twice, 2-3 times a month, or once a week or more*). As shown in Table 6, the most frequently endorsed behaviors experienced by victims one or more times included “saying mean things to you” (46.8%), “ignoring you” (35.5%), and “leaving you out” (34.2%). Items endorsed less often by victims included “making faces at you” (17.7%), “threatening you” (15.0%), and “lying to the teacher about you” (12.6%). Behaviors reported as happening once or more a week included “saying mean things to you” (7.9%), “calling you names” (6.8%), and “leaving you out” (4.2%). This 13-item scale had a reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) of .89.

Table 6. Frequency of Items in Victimization Factor

Abbreviated Item	One or more times %	Just once or twice %	2-3 Times a month %	Once a week or more %
Saying mean things to you	46.8	30.6	8.3	7.9
Ignoring you	35.5	24.8	7.0	3.7
Leaving you out	34.2	23.4	6.6	4.2
Teasing you	31.7	23.4	4.2	4.1
Spreading rumors about you	30.0	21.7	4.5	3.8
Taking things away from you	27.8	21.6	3.4	2.8
Pushing you	27.3	22.4	3.0	1.9
Calling you names	26.9	15.6	4.5	6.8
Trying to turn friends against you	26.7	18.8	4.9	3.0
Hitting or kicking you	18.9	15.1	2.1	1.7
Making faces at you	17.7	11.7	3.2	2.8
Threatening you	15.0	10.6	2.3	2.1
Lying to the teacher about you	12.6	9.8	1.1	1.7

Note. Prompt included “How often in the past couple of months have older, bigger, more popular, or more powerful kids picked on you by...”

Table 7 shows the frequency of the items loading into the bullying factor, which had a minimum response rate of 98.9%. For these items, respondents were asked to rate how often in the past couple of months they picked on younger, smaller, less popular, or

less powerful children in various ways. Once again, responses were selected on a 4-point Likert scale (*not at all, just once or twice, 2-3 times a month, or once a week or more*).

Table 7 indicates “ignoring them” was the most frequently endorsed bullying behavior done onto others (30.4%), followed by “saying mean things to them” (24.5%), and “teasing them” (20.8%). Behaviors less frequently endorsed included “trying to turn friends against them” (6.3%), “threatening them” (6.2%), and “lying to the teacher about them” (2.6%). Finally, the bullying behaviors done onto others once a week or more included “calling them names” (2.5%), “ignoring them” (2.4%), and “saying mean things to them” (1.9%). This 13-item scale had a reliability coefficient of .90.

Table 7. Frequency of Items in Bullying Factor

Abbreviated Item	One or more times %	Just once or twice %	2-3 Times a month %	Once a week or more %
Ignoring them	30.4	24.4	3.6	2.4
Saying mean things to them	24.5	19.7	2.9	1.9
Teasing them	20.8	17.4	2.1	1.3
Leaving them out	20.6	17.1	2.4	1.1
Calling them names	17.5	13.1	1.9	2.5
Pushing them	14.6	12.8	0.9	0.9
Taking things away from them	13.4	11.8	0.8	0.8
Making faces at them	11.3	9.3	1.1	0.9
Spreading rumors about them	8.2	6.2	1.1	0.9
Hitting or kicking them	8.2	6.6	0.7	0.9
Trying to turn friends against them	6.3	5.3	0.5	0.5
Threatening them	6.2	4.8	0.5	0.9
Lying to the teacher about them	2.6	1.6	0.3	0.7

Note. Prompt included “How often in the past couple of months have YOU picked on younger, smaller, less popular, or less powerful kids by...”

Table 8 shows the frequency of cyber factors—both cyberbullying and cybervictimization. Items in Table 8 had a minimum of 99.6% response rate. For these



items, students responded to two sets of questions: (1) how often in the past couple of months they endured various types of cyberbullying and (2) how often in the past couple of months they participated in various types of cyberbullying. The same 4-point Likert scale used for both the victimization and bullying questions was provided for these question items (*not at all, just once or twice, 2-3 times a month, or once a week or more*); however, a *not applicable* option was also added for students who did not have access to the various means being referred to in the items. As shown in Table 8, receiving a hurtful or mean text was the most frequent behavior reported as happening at least once (23.7%), which was followed by being teased or harassed on Facebook or Myspace (13.0%), and 11.6% of students indicated having received a hurtful or mean Instant Message (IM). Behaviors reported as occurring less frequently included sending a hurtful or mean Instant Message (IM) (4.0%), receiving a hurtful or mean E-mail (3.7%), and sending a hurtful or mean E-mail (1.3%). Behaviors reported as happening most frequently—once or more a week—involved a tie between at 5.7% for “been teased or harassed on Facebook or Myspace” and “received a hurtful or mean Instant Message (IM).” The second most frequently occurring behavior was receiving a hurtful or mean Instant Message (IM) (5.4%), which was followed by sending a hurtful or mean Instant Message (IM) (5.2%). This 10-item scale had a reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) of .93.

Table 8. Frequency of Items in Cyber Factor

Abbreviated Item	One or more times %	Just once or twice %	2-3 Times a month %	Once a week or more %
Received a hurtful or mean text	23.7	18.8	2.9	2.0
Been teased or harassed on Facebook or Myspace	13.0	10.2	0.9	1.9
Sent a hurtful or mean text	12.8	11.3	0.8	0.7
Received a hurtful or mean Instant Message (IM)	11.6	8.6	1.1	1.9
Received a hurtful or mean message in a chat room	9.7	7.4	0.8	1.5
Teased or harassed others on Facebook or Myspace	7.0	6.1	0.5	0.4
Sent a hurtful or mean message in a chat room	4.6	4.2	0.1	0.3
Sent a hurtful or mean Instant Message (IM)	4.0	3.3	0.3	0.4
Received a hurtful or mean E-mail	3.7	2.9	0.3	0.5
Sent a hurtful or mean E-mail	1.3	0.9	0.1	0.3

Note. Prompt included “How often in the past couple of months have you...?”

Each of the three factors (see Table 5 on page 58 for question items in each factor) were further explored with ethnicity as the central variable of interest. Tables 9 through 12 depict the total amount of victimization and bullying reported by each ethnic group. In each table, the first column shows the total number of students from each ethnic group whose responses indicated victimization or bullying. The second column shows the percentage of students within each ethnic group who reported victimization or bullying. The third column shows the percentage of each ethnic group with regard to the total amount of victimization or bullying reported. This allows for a comparison to each ethnic group’s representation within the school overall, as is shown in the fourth column.

First, totals were calculated for all 13 items included in the victimization factor for each ethnic group. Table 9 shows the total number of respondents who indicated being victimized at least once, as well as once a week or more. As is shown in the table, African American/Black students reported the highest level of victimization at least once within their own race (81.8%), followed by Asian/Pacific Islander students (77.3%), and Hispanic/Latino students (75.9%). Caucasian/White students reported the highest occurrence of victimization once a week or more (18.5%) followed by and Hispanic/Latino students (17.5%), and Asian/Pacific Islander students (15.9%). American Indian/Alaska Native students reported no occurrences of victimization (0.0%).

Table 9. Total Victimization per Ethnic Group

Ethnicity	<i>N</i>	% of Own Race Bullied	% of All Kids Bullied	Racial % Within the School
<b>At Least Once</b>				
African American/Black	18	81.8	3.2	2.9
Caucasian/White	372	74.0	66.4	66.6
Hispanic/Latino	104	75.9	18.6	18.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	34	77.3	6.1	5.8
Multi-ethnic	15	55.6	2.7	3.6
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0.0	0.0	0.3
<b>Once a Week or More</b>				
Caucasian/White	93	18.5	68.9	66.6
Hispanic/Latino	24	17.5	17.8	18.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	7	15.9	5.2	5.8
Multi-ethnic	4	14.8	3.0	3.6
African American/Black	2	9.1	1.5	2.9
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0.0	0.0	0.3

Note. 5 students did not indicate ethnicity and those indicating “other” were not included.

Totals were also calculated for all 13 items included in the bullying factor for each ethnic group. Table 10 shows the total number of respondents who indicated

bullying others on any of the 13 items at least once, as well as once a week or more. As is shown in Table 10, Hispanic/Latino students reported the highest occurrence of bullying other at least once (67.2%), followed by Asian/Pacific Islander students (63.6%), and African American/Black students (59.1%). Bullying others once a week or more was indicated most often by Asian/Pacific Islander students (9.1%), followed by Hispanic/Latino students (5.8%), and African American/Black students (4.5%). American Indian/Alaska Native students reported no occurrences of bullying (0.0%).

Table 10. Total Bullying per Ethnic Group

Ethnicity	<i>N</i>	% of Own Race Bullied	% of All Kids Bullied	Racial % Within the School
<b>At Least Once</b>				
Hispanic/Latino	92	67.2	22.2	18.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	28	63.6	6.7	5.8
African American/Black	13	59.1	3.1	2.9
Caucasian/White	259	51.5	62.4	66.6
Multi-ethnic	10	37.0	2.4	3.6
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0.0	0.0	0.3
<b>Once a Week or More</b>				
African American/Black	1	4.5	2.6	2.9
Caucasian/White	22	4.4	56.4	66.6
Hispanic/Latino	8	5.8	20.5	18.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	9.1	10.3	5.8
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Multi-ethnic	1	3.7	2.6	3.6

Note. 5 students did not indicate ethnicity and those indicating “other” were not included.

Although cyberbullying and cybervictimization were grouped together in the factor analysis, totals were calculated for each separately. All five items referring to cybervictimization were totaled for each ethnic group. Table 11 shows the total number of respondents who indicated experiencing cybervictimization on any of the 5 items at

least once, as well as once a week or more. As is shown in the table, Hispanic/Latino students reported experiencing cyberbullying at least once the most (37.2%), followed by Caucasian/White students (30.4%), and Asian/Pacific Islander students (27.3%).

However, Caucasian/White students reported the highest rate of cybervictimization occurring once a week or more (4.4%), followed by Hispanic/Latino students (4.2%), and Asian/Pacific Islander students (2.3%). American Indian/Alaska Native students reported no incidents of cybervictimization (0.0%).

Table 11. Total Cybervictimization per Ethnic Group

Ethnicity	<i>N</i>	% of Own Race Bullied	% of All Kids Bullied	Racial % Within the School
<b>At Least Once</b>				
Hispanic/Latino	51	37.2	22.0	18.1
Caucasian/White	153	30.4	65.9	66.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	12	27.3	5.2	5.8
African American/Black	5	22.7	2.2	2.9
Multi-ethnic	6	22.2	2.6	3.6
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0.0	0.0	0.3
<b>Once a Week or More</b>				
Hispanic/Latino	6	4.4	20.7	18.1
Caucasian/White	21	4.2	72.4	66.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	2.3	3.4	5.8
African American/Black	0	0.0	0.0	2.9
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Multi-ethnic	0	0.0	0.0	3.6

Note. 5 students did not indicate ethnicity and those indicating “other” were not included.

Lastly, all 5 items referring to cyberbullying were totaled for each ethnic group.

Table 12 shows the total number of respondents who indicated cyberbullying someone else on any item at least once, as well as once a week or more. As is shown in Table 12, African American/Black students and Asian/Pacific Islander students reported the same

percentage of cyberbullying others at least once (22.7%). Hispanic/Latino students reported the second highest occurrence other cyberbullying others at least once (21.2%) followed by Caucasian/White students (16.5%). Hispanic/Latino students reported the highest occurrence of cyberbullying once a week or more (0.7%) followed by Caucasian/White students (0.6%). All other ethnicities (African American/Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Multi-ethnic) reported no incidents of cyberbullying others once a week or more.

Table 12. Total Cyberbullying per Ethnic Group

Ethnicity	<i>N</i>	% of Own Race	% of All	
			Kids Bullied	% Within the School
<b>At Least Once</b>				
African American/Black	5	22.7	3.8	2.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	10	22.7	7.6	5.8
Hispanic/Latino	29	21.2	22.0	18.1
Caucasian/White	83	16.5	62.9	66.6
Multi-ethnic	4	14.8	3.0	3.6
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0.0	0.0	0.3
<b>Once a Week or More</b>				
Hispanic/Latino	1	0.7	20.0	18.1
Caucasian/White	3	0.6	60.0	66.6
African American/Black	0	0.0	0.0	2.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0.0	0.0	5.8
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Multi-ethnic	0	0.0	0.0	3.6

Note. 5 students did not indicate ethnicity and those indicating “other” were not included.

### Research Question Two

In order to address the second quantitative question—what differences, if any, exist in reporting bullying behaviors between ethnic groups in middle school—a one-way between subjects ANOVA was run to compare the effect of ethnicity on survey items

related to bullying, victimization, cyberbullying and cybervictimization. The ANOVA was conducted to test the hypothesis stating that ethnicity did impact the reported bullying behaviors. Table 13 shows all of the items revealing significant differences in reporting rates based on ethnicity. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and these results support the hypothesis that ethnicity does impact reported bullying behaviors.

Table 13. Question Items with Significant Differences in Reporting Rates

Items	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Taking things away from them	6	3.22	.004**
Sent a hurtful or mean text	6	2.52	.020*
Ignoring them	6	2.41	.026*
Calling them names	6	2.28	.035*
Received a hurtful or mean text	6	2.24	.037*
Received a hurtful or mean message in a chat room	6	2.15	.046*

Note: \*Significant at  $p < 0.05$  level; \*\* Significant at  $p < 0.01$  level

After completing the one-way ANOVA, post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test were conducted to determine the significant differences between the ethnic groups for specific items. The one-way ANOVA was used to reveal whether or not differences existed between the ethnic groups and the reported bullying behaviors. This was then further examined using post-hoc tests to determine specific differences between the ethnic groups for items that were determined to be significant by the one-way ANOVA. Table 14 shows all of the items revealing significant differences in reporting rates and the specific ethnic groups where the differences were found.

As shown in Table 14, for the item, “sent a hurtful or mean text,” the Tukey showed differences between Asian/Pacific Islander students and Hispanic/Latino students

( $p = .007$ ), as well as between Asian/Pacific Islander students and Caucasian/White students ( $p = .008$ ). In both instances, Asian/Pacific Islander students were found to send hurtful or mean text messages more often than both Hispanic/Latino students and Caucasian/White students. Differences were also found between Asian/Pacific Islander students and Caucasian/White students on the item “taking things from them” ( $p = .010$ ), with Asian/Pacific Islander students reporting this behavior more often. The Tukey test revealed differences between Caucasian/White students and Hispanic/Latino students for “ignore them” ( $p = .011$ ), with Hispanic/Latino students reporting ignoring other more often than Caucasian/White students. For the item, “received a hurtful or mean text,” the Tukey test revealed differences between Asian/Pacific Islander students and Caucasian/White students ( $p = .012$ ), as well as differences between Asian/Pacific Islander students and Hispanic/Latino students ( $p = .023$ ). Asian/Pacific Islander students reported receiving hurtful or mean texts more often than Caucasian/White students and Hispanic/Latino students. For the item, “calling them names,” differences were found between Asian/Pacific Islander students and Caucasian/White students ( $p = .033$ ), with Asian/Pacific Islander students reporting this behavior more often. Lastly, for the item, “received a hurtful or mean message in a chat room,” differences were found between Asian/Pacific Islander students and Caucasian/White students ( $p = .032$ ) as well as between African American/Black students and Asian/Pacific Islander students ( $p = .041$ ). Asian/Pacific Islander students reported this behavior more often than Caucasian/White students and African American/Black students. Thus, all of the significant differences involved Asian/Pacific Islander students reporting behaviors more



often than one or more ethnic group for all but one item (i.e., “ignore them” involved differences between Caucasian/White students and Hispanic/Latino students).

Conversely, Multi-ethnic students and American Indian/Alaska Native students were not found to vary from any other ethnic group on any item.

Table 14. Significant Differences in Reporting Rates between Ethnic Groups

Items	Ethnic Group	<i>p</i>
Sent a hurtful or mean text	Asian/Pacific Islander & Hispanic/Latino	.007**
Sent a hurtful or mean text	Asian/Pacific Islander & Caucasian/White	.008**
Taking things away from them	Asian/Pacific Islander & Caucasian/White	.010*
Ignoring them	Caucasian/White & Hispanic/Latino	.011*
Received a hurtful or mean text	Asian/Pacific Islander & Caucasian/White	.012*
Received a hurtful or mean text	Asian/Pacific Islander & Hispanic/Latino	.023*
Received a hurtful or mean message in a chat room	Asian/Pacific Islander & Caucasian/White	.032*
Calling them names	Asian/Pacific Islander & Caucasian/White	.033*
Received a hurtful or mean message in a chat room	African American/Black & Asian/Pacific Islander	.041*

Note: \*Significant at  $p < 0.05$  level; \*\* Significant at  $p < 0.01$  level

Finally, a chi-square test of independence was performed to examine if there was a relationship between specific ethnic groups and perceived reasons for being bullied. In order to perform the chi-square, responses from the survey were grouped so that *almost never* indicated “no” while *sometimes*, *often*, and *almost always* indicated “yes.” Table 15 shows all of the items revealing significant relationships between reported reasons and ethnicity. Asian/Pacific Islander students reported being bullied due to skin color significantly more than expected by chance alone,  $X^2(1, N = 749) = 5.44, p = .020$ .

Furthermore, Asian/Pacific Islander reported being bullied because a boy acts like a girl

significantly more than expected by chance alone,  $X^2 (1, N = 750) = 5.40, p = .020$ . The relationship between being Asian/Pacific Islander and being bullied due to not being good at things was also significant at  $X^2 (1, N = 744) = 4.42, p = .036$ . With Asian/Pacific islander students reporting not being good at things as a reason for being bullied significantly more than expected by chance alone. Lastly, Multi-ethnic students reported bullying occurring due to being mad at a friend significantly less than expected by chance alone,  $X^2 (1, N = 749) = 4.00, p = .045$ . Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and these results appear to support the hypothesis that specific ethnic group membership impacts the perceived reasons for being bullied.

In addition to the items listed in Table 15, the relationship between being Caucasian/White and being bullied due to skin color was not significant at  $X^2 (1, N = 749) = 3.66, p = .056$  but was very close. Specifically, Caucasian/White students reported this to be the reason for being bullied significantly less than expected by chance alone. Given the proximity to the cut-off for significance, this item is mentioned as it may prove to be significant in future research.

Table 15. Question Items with Significant Differences in Reasons for Being Bullied

Items	$X^2$	$df$	$p^*$
Has a different skin color	5.44	1	.020
Is a boy that acts like a girl	5.40	1	.020
Is not very good at things	4.42	1	.036
Is mad at a friend	4.00	1	.045

Note: \*Significant at  $p < 0.05$  level

Frequencies were also run for survey items asking about reasons for being bullied. Responses indicating an item was the reason for being bullied *sometimes*, *often*, and *almost always* were grouped together in the first column and listed in descending order.

Items in Table 16 had a minimum of a 98.5% response rate. As shown in Table 16, “is not very good at things” was the most endorsed reason for being bullied at least sometimes (74.3%), followed closely by “thinks he/she is better than other kids” (72.2%), and “is fat” (71.2%). The least frequently endorsed reason for being bullied was “has a different skin color” (48.5%). These frequencies represent the responses of all students within the school, of all ethnicities, which can then be compared to the specific responses per ethnic group reported in the abovementioned chi-square results.

Table 16. Frequency of Reasons for Being Bullied

Abbreviated Item	At least sometimes (%)	Almost Never (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	Almost Always (%)
Is not very good at things	74.3	24.2	43.0	19.5	11.8
Thinks he/she is better than other kids	72.2	27.0	35.8	20.3	16.2
Is fat	71.2	28.1	42.8	18.7	9.8
Is small	66.5	32.8	44.4	14.3	7.8
Is not good looking	62.9	36.4	37.2	15.4	10.3
Is bossy	61.5	37.4	39.3	14.0	8.2
Is in special education classes	60.3	38.9	32.7	16.2	11.4
Is a boy that acts like a girl	60.2	39.1	33.8	15.6	10.9
Has different interests	58.3	40.8	36.0	14.7	7.5
Is fighting with a friend	57.8	41.1	35.0	13.6	9.3
Smells and is dirty	56.7	42.5	32.7	15.9	8.1
Is mad at a friend	55.4	43.8	33.8	13.0	8.6
Has a disability	54.1	45.0	30.5	14.3	9.3
Wears clothes that many people don't like	52.4	46.5	32.1	13.5	6.9
Is a girl that acts like a boy	49.5	49.4	28.3	13.5	7.7
Has a different skin color	48.5	50.7	30.6	10.6	7.3

Note. Prompt included “When you see one kid picking on another kid, HOW OFTEN do you think it’s because the kid...?”

## **Qualitative Results**

All transcripts were coded by an outside evaluator, a fellow doctoral school psychology candidate, as well as audited by a Loyola undergraduate student, to establish reliability by calculating agreement. Final agreement of 100% was reached between the researcher, the outside evaluator, and the auditor. Adjustments were made as needed to ensure the codebook accurately depicted responses. Please see Appendix F for the codebook, which includes a description of each code as well as examples of what is and is not included within each code. Once the coding was complete and agreement was established, the data were analyzed for emerging patterns and themes. Various quotes are provided as examples of each code in the discussion that follows—some are characteristic of the overall responses while others offered unique perspectives. Figure 2 also provides a visual representation of the response codes.

Participant demographic information is provided in Table 3 (page 42) and Table 4 (page 43) in Chapter Three. Furthermore, Chapter Three includes a breakdown of interview questions pertaining to each of the three sub-questions (see pages 45-46).

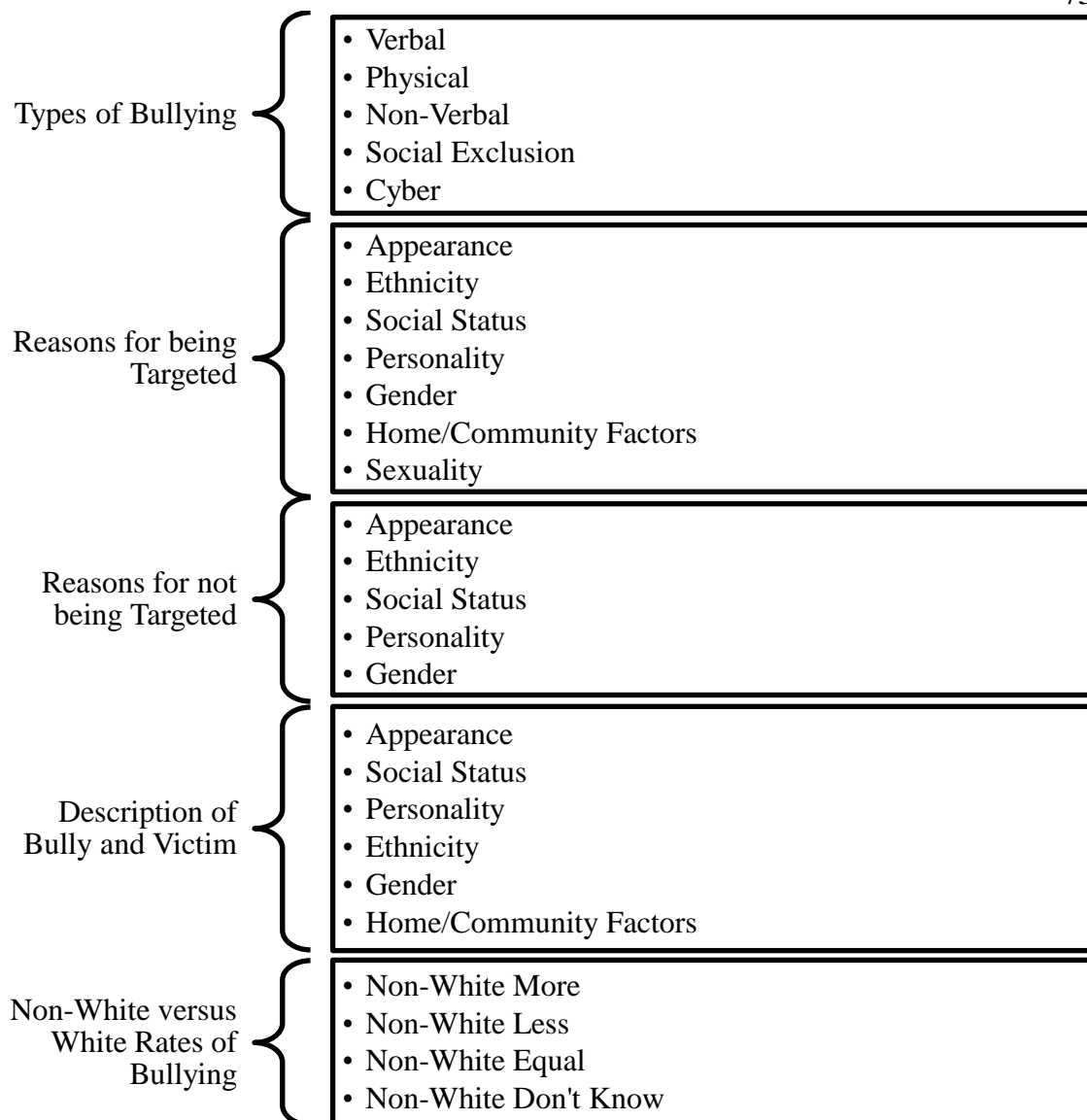


Figure 2. Coding Themes

### Central Question

The aim of the interviews was to address one central question: how do middle school students perceive bullying? This question was explored during the interviews by asking open-ended questions related to what constitutes bullying. This central question was explored through three more specific sub-questions related to the impact of ethnicity

on perceptions of, and experiences with, bullying. A discussion of the three sub-questions follows.

### **Sub-Question One**

The first sub-question—is bullying perceived consistently within and across ethnic groups—was explored by examining responses to questions pertaining to reasons for being bullied, descriptions of bullies and victims, and beliefs about members of particular groups being bullied more or less than others.

**Reasons for being targeted.** Overall, the participant responses suggest that students are most often bullied due to appearance, ethnicity, and social status. Participant 2, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male, summed up the reason students' appearances were targeted in stating "...they don't look as good as other kids." One example of a response indicating a student was targeted due to ethnicity was stated by Participant 4 (an eighth grade Caucasian/White female): "I know like some um African American kids are like, just like, you could say they're frowned upon or something just because of their skin color that they have no control over" while Participant 5, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male, explained why students may be targeted due to their ethnicity in saying "because one race might feel better than the other race." Participant 9, a seventh grade African American/Black female, described being targeted due to social status in saying "um they probably don't have much friends or they don't talk that much in class or like they're goodie-to-shoes or like they answer every question in class and people get annoyed by that."

Other reasons for being the target of bullying include personality, gender, home or

community factors, and sexuality. An example of being targeted due to one's personality was provided by Participant Six, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male, who stated "...[the victims] are kind of annoying to other people" and "how they act" was often mentioned as a reason for being targeted. Gender was not frequently endorsed as a factor alone, but rather was mentioned in conjunction with other factors. For instance, one participant talked about a Hispanic boy was targeted because he was paler than other students in his group of friends while several participants discussed the types of bullying common among girls.

With regard to home or community factors, targeting a person's family, family issues, or the community they come from was commonly mentioned. For example, Participant 10, a seventh grade Multi-ethnic female, highlighted family issues being targeted in saying "...talking about their family; their issues and stuff." Another reason participants felt students were targeted was sexuality. In one example, Participant 10, a seventh grade Multi-ethnic female, mentioned a student being targeted due to her own sexuality "...she's bi and everybody makes fun of her for it" whereas another example stated by Participant 8, an eighth grade Caucasian/White female, mentioned the parents' sexuality being targeted "...if their parents maybe are, not like to be mean or anything, like are gays or something." In addition to the various responses indicating reasons for being targeted, some participants stated that they simply did not know why they, or others, were targeted.

**Description of bullies.** With regard to describing a bully, appearance was most frequently mentioned. Often, the participants indicated the bully was larger or stronger.

One example was provided by Participant 9, a seventh grade African American/Black female, who stated “um tall, kind of big, like, strong, I guess. Like a mean face.” While some participants provided specific descriptions of the bullies, others indicated that the bully could be anyone. For example, Participant 5, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male, concisely stated “they could be small; they could be big; they could be Black; they could be White” and another participant said “he just looks like a normal kid.” Furthermore, Participant 4, an eighth grade Caucasian/White female, provided a description of what bullies do not look like:

Um, I don't know like, in movies you'd see them like big and tough and like kind of like the head of the school. And like TV shows, like you just see them as like “give me your lunch money” or something that's like the typical bully but most of them usually you can't really tell really if they are or not.

Describing the bullies' appearance was followed most often by descriptions of personality and social status. Descriptions of the bullies' personality mainly included some indication of being *mean*. Participant 6, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male, went on to surmise some level of personal enjoyment out of bullying others in stating “I think certain people just get a kick out of making other people miserable.” Several participants indicated that bullies may have been bullied themselves and thus resulted in them engaging in this behavior. For example, Participant 13, an eighth grade Asian/Pacific Islander female, stated “ahh well the bullies have been bullied before so they think it's a good thing to do so they start to pick on everyone else” while Participant 10, a seventh grade Multi-ethnic female, stated “...they're the ones mostly who are insecure 'cause they get picked on because of like they're always the meanest at our school, most of the time.” With regard to the bullies' social status, participants often



spoke about being part of—or not a part of—a group due to the bullying behaviors. Two such examples include “I think they try to be like cool in a sense like they’re part of like the popular group but like really they aren’t because like what they’re doing isn’t cool” (Participant 4, an eighth grade Caucasian/White female) and “...they’re usually not the kids that you’d wanna be friends with ‘cause they’re always, you know, making fun of other kids and um putting other kids down...” (Participant 2, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male).

Participants discussed the bullies’ gender, ethnicity, and home or community factors as well. Gender descriptions were often used to state whether the bully was male or female, but in one case it was used to differentiate the various forms of bullying done by females versus males: “I’ve seen guys, you know, get in fights sometimes but rarely ever. And then girls spreading rumors about each other and just glares and talking about each other behind their backs” (Participant 8, an eighth grade Caucasian/White female). Furthermore, Participant 2, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male, indicated that gender played a role in who was targeted as well: “you don’t usually see boys bullying girls or anything like that. It’s usually boys bullying boys or girls bullying girls.” Ethnicity was often used to describe the group that the bullies belonged to. For instance, Participant 5, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male, who felt the African American/Black population in the school was responsible for the majority of the bullying stated “[the group] who bullies the most is probably the Black race” whereas Participant 10, a seventh grade Multi-ethnic female, who felt that the Caucasian/White population was responsible for the majority of the bullying stated “...it’s normally the White, blonde girl that always

picks on everybody else.” Finally, several participants indicated that there were likely home or community factors that were impacting the bullies. Several examples include “they might usually have like a bad life at home,” (Participant 2, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male) “maybe something’s going on at home,” (Participant 3, a seventh grade Caucasian/White male) “they might have family problems,” (Participant 5, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male) or “someone who maybe gets abused at home” (Participant 8, an eighth grade Caucasian/White female). Additionally, Participant 14, a seventh grade Hispanic/Latino male, mentioned problems outside of school impacting a bully in stating “someone who, yea, um, who have like problems and, and just, like they just, you know, spill it out like anger at school.”

**Description of victims.** Similar to describing a bully, victims were most often described in terms of appearance, social status, and personality. However, the descriptions were often in stark contrast to those offered to describe a bully. Participant 4, an eighth grade Caucasian/White female, described victims’ appearance: “[people] having traits of being ugly or fat or different traits that people would think are un-normal.” One description went beyond the physical attributes of the person: “short, glasses, braces probably. Kinda scrawny, um skinny, not really wearing cool clothes” (Participant 9, a seventh grade African American/Black female). With regard to describing victims’ social status, participants indicated being less athletic and having fewer friends. However, there was discrepancy in whether victims tended to be smarter or struggle academically. For example, Participant 2, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male, stated “...kids that don’t do as well in class or have trouble with some things

usually get bullied” whereas Participant 7, an eighth grade Caucasian/White female, stated “a victim would be someone who’d probably be short, you know, gets good grades in their classes...” Finally, victims were described according to their personality as well. Often, victims were described as quiet or shy, but some participants had varying opinions. For example, Participant 10, a seventh grade Multi-ethnic female, felt that being conceited led to being bullied in stating “...it’s the girl who thinks she’s all that and all her friends.” Several other participants indicated that being nice or respectful were also personality traits that led to being victimized. In all of the descriptions of victims only one participant commented on the impact of being bullied: “um, [victims are] probably scared and scared to come to school ‘cause of what’s gonna happen and just keep everything to themselves” (Participant 15, an eighth grade Hispanic/Latino female).

**Group membership influencing bullying.** A final question aimed at gaining an understanding of how students perceived bullying asked whether or not members of certain groups were bullied more or less often. Participants varied on whom and which groups, but overall felt differences existed. In fact, 10 participants responded *yes* to this question. For those who said *yes*, particular ethnic groups or social groups were mentioned by all. Some participants felt that a particular person *within* a group was targeted. One such example focused on how students in various ethnic groups may be targeted for standing out:

...like in certain groups like in the Mexi- Hispanic boy group, there’s one who’s like really pale and everyone makes fun of him because he’s pale and little but he’s the one out of all of them who gets made fun of. Or like how they spell their name; they make fun of it or they just like they swear at each other in Spanish and everything. And then like there’s other people like if you’re mixed and you’re not dark but your White; there’s this one kid they make fun of him all the time

because he's White and he's not dark. (Participant 10, a seventh grade Multi-ethnic female)

The question of whether or not members of certain groups were targeted more than others was followed with a question asking specifically if non-White students were bullied more or less often. Responses to this question varied and included responses indicating non-White students were bullied *more*, *less*, and *equally*. For participants who indicated non-White students were bullied more, the reasons offered for feeling this way included Participant 1, a seventh grade White female, who stated "because like the different skin color they have" and Participant 8, an eighth grade Caucasian/White female, who stated "because of their ethnicity and skin color." In addition to the color of their skin, the population within the school was also believed to be a factor. With a predominantly Caucasian/White (68.9%) student body, Participant 4, an eighth grade Caucasian/White female, indicated this played a role in the varying levels of bullying between White and non-White students: "I think [non-White students are] bullied more often because the population of um White is greater than all the different races so yea you could probably say that the different races get bullied more." Conversely, participants who believed non-White students were bullied less were not able to provide concrete rationales to support this feeling. Often they simply said "I don't know" when asked why they felt this way. However, some participants felt that White and non-White students were equally bullied. Several participants were not able to offer a rationale for feeling this way, but a few were: "um 'cause most African American students play sports and they're easy to get along with and they don't usually do anything to harm other kids or anything" (Participant 2, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male). Furthermore,

Participant Sixteen, a seventh grade Hispanic/Latino female) said “because you never like, when someone gets bullied never, never, or no one really like mentions the race. They just say like what specifically they don’t like but race doesn’t really come up.” Once again, the demographic composition of the school was believed to play a role. For example, Participant 6, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male, stated “...because there’s about an even division of, between the Whites and other races in this school.”

Responses to the various questions designed to gather knowledge regarding students’ perspectives of bullying seemed to remain relatively consistent across ethnic groups. Several interesting findings were revealed for the non-White participants. For instance, all six non-White participants responded *yes* to the question regarding whether members of certain groups were targeted more than others and all but one non-White participant indicated ethnicity was a reason for being targeted. Conversely, only four of the 10 Caucasian/White participants indicated members of certain groups were targeted more than others. Furthermore, only five of the 10 Caucasian/White participants indicated ethnicity was a reason for being targeted.

### **Sub-Question Two**

The second sub-question—does the type of bullying experienced vary across ethnic groups—was addressed by asking participants about their own experience with bullying at school. For those who were bullied, they were asked to describe the bullying they endured and to surmise why they may have been targeted. For those who did not experience bullying, they were asked to consider why they were not targeted and to describe the types of bullying they witnessed others experiencing.

**Reasons for being targeted.** Overall, eight of the participants (50% of all participants) indicated they felt they had been bullied at some point—three of the six non-White students and five of the 10 Caucasian/White students. The participants who felt they had been bullied believed they were targeted for a variety of reasons. Socioeconomic status was believed to be the reason one participant was targeted (Participant 1, a seventh grade White female). Another participant felt her race and skin color were the reason she was targeted: “like I'm half American Asian so I would have like squinty eyes but I would have like the skin color of an American” (Participant 13, an eighth grade Asian/Pacific Islander female). Participant 6, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male, felt both factors influenced why he was targeted by saying “ah, socioeconomic reasons maybe but I, I don't really know. I was a middle class, White person; Caucasian. And they were um probably lower-class, ah, lower, lower-class Hispanics.” Being targeted due to nonconformity to gender roles was described by Participant 1, a seventh grade White female, as the result of her being more of a “tomboy.” Another participant described the reason she was personally targeted in stating “...I was mostly targeted because of my freckles...” (Participant 4, an eighth grade Caucasian/White female). Finally, Participant 10, a seventh grade Multi-ethnic female, did not feel he had done anything to become a target, but rather it was the motives of the bully themselves: ““cause they think of it as a joke, most of the time; but it's not really a joke, I think.”

**Reasons for not being targeted.** For participants who did not feel that they were bullied, some did not know why they had not been targeted. Participant 5, an eighth

grade Caucasian/White male, simply felt that others were more suitable targets in stating “because there’s other kids out there that are more susceptible to bullying.” Other participants indicated that not being involved in the *drama* of others protected them from being targeted. For example, Participant 2, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male, stated “um, well, I mean I don’t do anything to other people that would make them wanna bully me. Kinda stay outta people’s business. Um, I don’t really know; I’m just not someone that most people target” while Participant 8, an eighth grade Caucasian/White female, said “I’m not sure. It’s like I’m not really necessarily like involved in a lot of drama because I try to stay out of it. And I’ve never had anything against anyone and I don’t really, you know, wanna be involved in any of it either.” Other participants credited the friendships they had, among other things, to protecting them from being targets of bullying: “um because I’m not really mean to anyone; I don’t really, I’m not really annoying as some people might think are. I keep a strong confidence. I don’t like keep my head down in the hallway. I’m not really that quiet. I have friends, so yea” (Participant 9, a seventh grade African American/Black female). Furthermore, Participant 16, a seventh grade Hispanic/Latino female, highlighted the importance of friendships as well: “I guess I just have like good friendships with people and like they know that I’m not like, like I don’t take stuff too seriously so when, people know it doesn’t bother me so it doesn’t affect me.”

### **Sub-Question Three**

The third and final sub-question addressed in the interviews asked “are the behaviors considered to constitute bullying consistent among ethnic groups?” This

question was explored by asking students what bullying meant to them and how other students bullied each other at the school.

**Types of bullying.** Participants offered various definitions of bullying and descriptions of the behaviors. The two most commonly mentioned types of bullying were verbal bullying and physical bullying. In fact, many responses included a description of both verbal and physical bullying. Participant 2, an eighth grade Caucasian/White male, indicated only verbal bullying in stating "...it's usually name-calling or just kinda being sarcastic and stuff like that." Verbal bullying was also shown to include derogatory sexual remarks, as was indicated by Participant 11, a seventh grade Caucasian/White male, who said "well, just, he would like, he could call a lot of people; he just like made fun of them, like, called them faggots and stuff like that. Just to be mean." Another response indicated both verbal and physical bullying: "...like pushing and shoving another one; like physical contact and like making fun of someone" (Participant 1, a seventh grade Caucasian/White female). Finally, Participant 12, a seventh grade Caucasian/White male, indicated only physical bullying in stating "when people like, like are pushing you around and stuff like that. Pushing you, shoving you, throwing you on the ground, and throwing you under the bus; stuff like that."

Other types of bullying that were mentioned by participants included non-verbal bullying, social exclusion, and cyberbullying. An example of non-verbal bullying was provided by Participant 13, an eighth grade Asian/Pacific Islander female, who stated "...people would like make Asian eyes at me." Another participant's response provided a prime example of social exclusion: "...there's always that one person in a group that is



talked about. And maybe they don't know that or they do know that but there's only one, there's always one person that like is excluded" (Participant 16, a seventh grade Hispanic/Latino female). Interestingly, only one participant mentioned cyberbullying:

Um, I've seen a lot of people, like I've seen a lot of cyberbullying. Like a lot of people getting into fights and things on like Facebook and Twitter and like all those different sites. And they kind of like are targeting one person. Like it's like a bunch of people against like one person... (Participant 4, an eighth grade Caucasian/White female)

### **Integrating the Results**

After describing both the quantitative data and the qualitative data separately, this section describes how the results can be integrated in order to provide a comprehensive view of ethnically-diverse middle school students' experiences with, and perceptions of, bullying. First, the frequency statistics for the question items related to victimization revealed that one form of verbal bullying and two forms of social exclusion were the bullying behaviors most frequently endorsed by victims. However, the interviews suggest that verbal bullying and physical bullying were the most reported forms of bullying, with little mention of social exclusion.

For the question items related to bullying, one form of social exclusion and two forms of verbal bullying were most frequently endorsed—specifically “ignoring them,” “saying mean things to them,” and “teasing them.” Conversely, the interviews revealed that both forms of verbal bullying were frequently mentioned but the most frequently rated form of bullying on the survey—ignoring them—was not mentioned at all during the interview process. However, the Tukey HSD test did reveal that Hispanic/Latino students indicating ignoring others more often than Caucasian/White students.

Finally, the frequency data for cyber-related questions indicated forms of being bullied via text and online as well as teasing others using an online medium were most frequently endorsed. However, these percentages were relatively low (i.e., less than 25%). This low frequency was also apparent in the interviews with only one participant mentioning cyberbullying. Nonetheless, the ANOVA, and Tukey HSD, revealed significant reporting differences in cyber-related behaviors. Of those question items, one involved bullying others: “sent a hurtful or mean text;” this item revealed Asian/Pacific Islander students reported sending hurtful or mean texts more often than both Caucasian/White students and Hispanic/Latino students. Conversely, Asian/Pacific Islander students reported *receiving* a hurtful or mean text more often than both Caucasian/White and Hispanic/Latino students as well. Asian/Pacific Islander students also reported receiving a hurtful or mean message in a chat room more often than both African American/Black students and Caucasian/White students. However, the one and only mention of cyberbullying during the interviews was fighting on Facebook and Twitter, which was stated by a Caucasian/White female participant.

The results of the one-way ANOVA also revealed that ethnicity did impact bullying behaviors on three question items unrelated to cyberbullying or cybervictimization. These findings indicated that “taking things away from them” was most significant with Asian/Pacific Islander students reporting this behavior more often than Caucasian/White students. However, this was not mentioned by any of the 16 interview participants—only one of whom identified herself as Asian/Pacific Islander. Finally, for the item, “calling them names,” Asian/Pacific Islander students reported this

behavior more often than Caucasian/White students on the survey, but during the interviews, all but one participant mentioned verbal bullying (an eighth grade Caucasian/White male).

The chi-square also revealed that there was in fact a relationship between specific ethnicities and perceived reasons for being bullied. Specifically, Asian/Pacific Islander students reported being bullied due to skin color, being bullied because a boy acts like a girl, and being bullied due to not being good at things more often than expected. Although only one Asian/Pacific Islander student was interviewed, being bullied due to skin color was mentioned while gender roles and ability were not.

The frequencies run for the various reasons a student may be bullied indicated that the top three reasons students were bullied were not being very good at things (74.3%), thinking he/she is better than others (72.2%), and being fat (71.2%). The interview responses did touch on all three of these topics, but being fat (or another physical feature, such as being short) was most often mentioned. Finally, the reasons for being bullied least endorsed by students on the survey included wearing clothes many people don't like (52.4%), a girl acting like a boy (49.5%), and having a different skin color (48.5%). However, all three of those reasons were mentioned during the interviews. One participant indicated she was bullied herself for being a tomboy while many other participants mentioned wearing clothes that are not accepted by others and having a different skin color as common reasons for being a target of bullying.

## **Summary**

The results of the quantitative survey data confirmed that ethnicity did impact the reported bullying behaviors and also that there is a relationship between specific ethnic groups and perceived reasons for being bullied. The qualitative interviews provided rich descriptions, which expanded upon the survey findings. However, the interview responses also seemed to refute the survey data at times. Nonetheless, the results of this study suggest that ethnicity does impact students' experiences with, and perceptions of, bullying.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### **Introduction**

This final chapter provides an overview of the study. Then, the quantitative and qualitative results are discussed with regard to the convergence and divergence of the findings. Next, the potential implications of the results for practitioners will be provided. Finally, the limitations of the study will be reviewed, as well as methodological implications and suggestions for future research.

#### **Review of the Study**

This study utilized an explanatory sequential design to collect quantitative survey data using the SCABB-R (Varjas et al., 2008a) followed by qualitative interviews with 16 individuals who participated in the survey. Collecting both types of data allowed for a comprehensive examination of the frequency of bullying behaviors as well as the various perceptions of bullying behaviors among ethnically diverse middle school students. There were two quantitative research questions being examined: (1) which types of behavior were most frequently endorsed as constituting bullying by middle school students and (2) what differences, if any, exist in reporting bullying behaviors among ethnic groups in middle school? Additionally, one central qualitative question—how do middle school students perceive bullying—was explored via three qualitative sub-questions: (1) is bullying perceived consistently within and across ethnic groups,

(2) does the type of bullying experienced vary across ethnic groups, and (3) are the behaviors considered to constitute bullying consistent among ethnic groups? Together, these questions aimed to discover whether or not bullying experiences and perceptions varied among ethnically diverse groups of middle school students.

### **Merging the Data**

As was shown in Chapter Four, the data from the survey and the interviews provided a wealth of information regarding middle school students' perceptions of, and experiences with, bullying. Although it is impossible to fully compare the results of the two phases of this study, it is possible to highlight whether the two phases revealed data that was either supported or refuted by the other phase of the study. Several key findings from each phase are discussed. Previous research is also mentioned to compare and contrast previous findings with the findings from the current study.

### **Characteristics of Bullying Behaviors**

As previously discussed in Chapter Two, many researchers (e.g., Bradshaw, et al., 2007; Cornell & Bandyopadhyay, 2010; Crothers & Kolbert, 2004; Espelage, et al., 2001; Jimerson & Huai, 2010; Merrell et al., 2008; Murray-Harvey et al., 2010; Nansel et al., 2001; Peskin, et al., 2006; Spriggs, et al., 2007; Swearer et al., 2010) do agree that there are several characteristics that must be present before a behavior can be classified as bullying—aggressive behavior, repeated or occurring frequently over time, involving a power imbalance, and intentionality. However, the interview participants did not directly mention two of the four requirements at any point: (1) repeated and occurring frequently over time and (2) intentionality. While some responses did seem to imply repeated

occurrences, no participants explicitly mentioned this, which may indicate this was not perceived to be a necessary component in determining what behaviors were deemed to be bullying. Furthermore, intentionality was somewhat ambiguous in the responses since several participants indicated that the perpetrators may not realize they are being hurtful while other participants believed that perpetrators derived pleasure from hurting others. However, aggressive behavior was evident in the interviews when participants described any of the various forms of bullying. Additionally, the idea of a power imbalance was suggested when the participants described bullies as being somehow stronger or bigger. However, it begs the question of whether including these requirements in a definition is helping or hindering the process of gaining accurate insight into students' bullying experiences.

### **Types of Bullying Behaviors**

The results of both phases of this study revealed several interesting findings concerning the most frequently reported types of bullying. With regard to the survey data, verbal bullying and social exclusion were the behaviors most frequently endorsed by both victims and bullies. However, the interviews revealed that verbal bullying and physical bullying were the most reported forms of bullying.

Bellmore and Tomonaga (n.d.) supported the survey findings: “in multi-ethnic school settings, students from all ethnic groups reported ethnicity-based discrimination experiences such as name-calling and exclusion” (para. 2). Furthermore, Frisé, Holmqvist, and Oscarsson (2008) asked open-ended questions asking students what bullying was and why students were bullied. The results revealed that verbal bullying

was the most frequently mentioned type of bullying, which was followed by indirect bullying and then physical bullying (Frisén et al., 2008). Additionally, *indirect bullying* in the Frisén et al. (2008) study involved forms of being socially excluded and thus supports the current findings with social exclusion and physical bullying being the most often reported bullying behaviors. Taken together, the findings from previous studies, as well as the current study, suggest that verbal bullying, indirect bullying (e.g., social exclusion), and physical bullying appear to be very common types of bullying experienced by adolescents around the world—Frisén et al (2008) conducted their study on 13-year-olds in Sweden.

Another finding revealed in both the survey data and the interviews is that forms of cyberbullying were not highly prevalent within this school—or at least forms of cyberbullying were not highly reported. Given the age of the population and the influx in research exploring this form of bullying, it was surprising that the results were not more indicative of such behavior. However, it appears as though other research supports lower report rates of cyberbullying. For example, a study exploring students' (grades 5-8) experiences with cyberbullying during the school year found that only 1.5% of participants were classified as cyberbullies, 3% were classified as cybervictims, and 8.6% were classified as both cyberbullies and cybervictims (Bauman, 2010).

### **Reasons for Being Targeted**

Frisén et al. (2008) examined student perceptions of why people were targeted for bullying. The results indicated eight categories of responses: (1) victims' appearance, (2) bullies' personality, background or motives, (3) victims are different (in ways not



explained), (4) victims' behavior, (5) victims' clothes, (6) other reasons, (7) victims are lonely or socially insecure, and (8) victims' background. Overall, these categories overlap with the findings from the current study. Specifically, this study found that the top three reasons students were bullied were (1) not being very good at things, (2) thinking he/she is better than others, and (3) being fat. The interview responses did touch on all three of these topics, but being fat (or another physical feature, such as being short) was mentioned quite frequently. Additionally, Bellmore and Tomonaga (n.d.) highlighted that observable features—gender, ethnicity, physical strength, and style of dress—led to certain adolescents standing out and thus being at a greater risk of victimization.

Conversely, the reasons for being bullied least endorsed by students on the survey included (1) wearing clothes many people don't like, (2) a girl acting like a boy, and (3) having a different skin color. Several of these reasons also tended to be ranked lower in the findings from Frisé et al. (2008). However, during the interviews, all three of those reasons were mentioned by participants as reasons for being bullied themselves or reasons they say other students were bullied. Although the participants interviewed may hold different views on bullying than the overall majority of the school population, these findings do suggest that online surveys are not sufficient in and of themselves for gaining insight into students' perceptions of bullying.

### **Description of Bullies and Victims**

With regard to describing a bully, appearance was most frequently mentioned. Describing the bullies' appearance was followed most often by descriptions of

personality and social status. Similar to describing a bully, victims were most often described in terms of appearance, social status, and personality. However, the descriptions were often in stark contrast to those offered to describe a bully. An example of such differences found in a previous study stated “provided the requisite personality variables are in place for bully and victim, stronger boys tend to be bullies, and weaker boys are usually the victims” (Carney & Merrell, 2001, p. 367). Furthermore, a previous study investigating student perceptions of bullying revealed that four of the six codes identified characteristics associated with both bullies and victims—gender, race, personality, and physical aspects (Varjas et al., 2008b). Two additional descriptions of victims included wardrobe and other differences (Varjas et al., 2008b). Thus, the current findings indicate similarities with previous research, but social status appears to be a new characteristic emphasized within this school.

### **Variance among Ethnic Groups**

Results suggest differences between and among ethnic groups on several factors. An examination of differences in perceived reasons for bullying revealed that there was in fact a relationship between specific ethnicities and perceived reasons for being bullied. Specifically, Asian/Pacific Islander students were found to report being bullied due to skin color, a boy acting like a girl, and not being good at things significantly more than other ethnic groups. Furthermore, Multi-ethnic students reported bullying occurring due to being mad at a friend significantly less than other ethnic groups. While this was slightly more difficult to confirm via the interviews given that only one Asian/Pacific Islander student was interviewed, one thing was confirmed—she too felt she was bullied

do to her skin color. Unfortunately, only one Multi-ethnic student was interviewed as well, and she may or may not have been representative of other students encompassed within this group given that it is difficult to determine what races were included in this category.

Student interviews did however indicate that ethnic groups often felt other ethnic groups were responsible for bullying within the school. Specifically, one participant (an eighth grade Caucasian/White male) felt African American/Black students were responsible for the majority of the bullying occurring within the school whereas another participant (a seventh grade Multi-ethnic female) felt the Caucasian/White students were responsible for the majority of the bullying. Furthermore, results indicated that different ethnic groups reported different frequencies on six question items: (1) “taking things away from them,” (2) “ignore them,” (3) “calling them names,” (4) “sent a hurtful or mean text,” (5) “received a hurtful or mean text”, and (6) “received a hurtful or mean message in a chat room.” A total of four ethnic groups accounted for the variance among these items: African American/Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, Caucasian/White, and Hispanic/Latino. Asian/Pacific Islander students were found to report these behaviors significantly more on all but one item—ignoring them, which identified Hispanic/Latino students as reporting this behavior more than Caucasian/White students. Unfortunately, only one Asian/Pacific Islander student was interviewed and her responses alone cannot be deemed representative of the entire population within the school. Regardless, the findings from the survey suggest that Asian/Pacific Islander students had different

response rates from other ethnic groups within the school regarding the frequency of victimization and bullying behaviors.

While previous research has not explored these specific question items, ethnic differences have been explored, to some extent. Specifically, Peskin et al. (2006) found that African American/Black students were more likely to be classified as bullies, victims, and bully-victims when compared to Hispanic/Latino students. However, the current study did not reveal any differences on specific question items related to victimization or bullying between these two ethnic groups. Still, differences were found in terms of overall reported victimization and bullying between these two groups. For instance, African American/Black students reported the highest amount of victimization at least once, whereas Hispanic/Latino students were ranked third among the six ethnic groups in terms of reported victimization. This finding refutes the results of Spriggs et al. (2007), which found a lower prevalence of victimization was reported by African American/Black adolescents than Caucasian/White and Hispanic/Latino adolescents.

Conversely, Hispanic/Latino students reported the highest level of bullying others at least once with African American/Black students ranking third. Other findings have indicated that Caucasian/White students are more likely to be classified as victims than Hispanic/Latino students (Hanish & Guerra, 2000; Juvonen et al., 2003). Findings from the current study are somewhat mixed on this. Caucasian/White students did report the highest level of victimization occurring on a weekly basis but were fourth overall in terms of being victimized at least once. Hispanic/Latino students, on the other hand,

reported the second highest level of victimization occurring weekly but were third overall in terms of being victimized at least once.

An interesting finding that emerged during the interviews was that several participants attributed the demographic composition of the school to the bullying present. One participant (eighth grade Caucasian/White male) felt there was an even division between White students and non-White students, which led to feeling that White and non-White students were bullied equally whereas another participant (an eighth grade Caucasian/White female) felt there were more White students present within the school which led to an increase in the likelihood that non-White students would be bullied. This concept has been previously researched with differences reported based on the numerical majority/minority population within the school (Scherr & Larson, 2010).

Specifically, Hanish and Guerra (2000) found that White students were at a greater risk of being victimized in schools comprised primarily of non-White students whereas African American/Black students were more likely to be victimized in schools comprised primarily of African American/Black students. More generally, Bellmore and Tomonaga (n.d.) stated students in the numerical ethnic minority within their schools had higher reported victimization. Interestingly, Asian/Pacific Islander students only comprised 5.8% of the total survey sample; yet, they were found to be among the top three ethnic groups in terms of being victimized at least once as well as weekly. Additionally, Asian/Pacific Islander students were also among the top three ethnic groups in terms of bullying others at least as well as weekly. Thus, the smaller representation within the school and survey sample did not seem to lessen the reported rates of both

bullying and victimization. Previous research has found contradictory statistics regarding Asian/Pacific Islander students' involvement in bullying. Specifically, both Juvonen et al. (2003) and Mouttapa et al. (2004) found that Asian/Pacific Islander students were least likely to be bullies but most often victims.

Taken all together, this data suggests that the results from the present study indicate variation in the reporting rates among ethnic groups. Some of the present findings support previous studies, while others suggest new variability. Many factors must be considered with regard to influences on the results (i.e., age of participants, location of study, school composition, etc.), but attention must be given to the basic fact that different ethnic groups reported different experiences with, and perceptions of, bullying.

### **Factors Influencing Results**

The divergence found between the survey data and the interviews may suggest that the various methods used do not always provide an accurate depiction of the types of bullying most present within a given setting. One factor could be that the survey did not use the word *bullying* at any point. This is believed to be one of the strengths of this particular survey given that it provides descriptions of what exactly the student is responding to (i.e., how often in the past couple of months have older, bigger, more popular, or more powerful kids picked on you by pushing you). However, during the interviews, the participants were immediately informed that they would be asked about their experiences with bullying. As such, the word may have provoked feelings that differed from the descriptions provided on the survey. The fact that the term *bullying*

was used and that participants were talking face-to-face with someone may have increased their likelihood of trying to respond in a socially desirable manner.

### **Limitations of the Study**

As with most, if not all studies, this study also had several limitations. These limitations are associated with the quantitative phase as well as the qualitative phase. Additionally, limitations related to the constructs examined and the methods for doing so have drawbacks.

#### **Survey Data**

A limitation of this research is that all information obtained via surveys and interviews was from a single school. Although close attention was given to balancing age, gender, and ethnicity, generalizability to other settings may be limited given that the ethnic composition of the school and suburban location of the school may have impacted the findings. Therefore, readers should keep in mind that any descriptions and results found may be unique to this particular setting.

An additional limitation of this study is that the survey relied on participant self-report and may not match actual experiences or beliefs. There are several difficulties in relying on such information. First, self-report measures depend on students understanding the questions and also being able to recall accurately how often such events have occurred (Cornell & Bandyopadhyay, 2010). Students may be tempted to overestimate or underestimate bullying, either purposefully or accidentally.

## **Interviews**

Given that interviews were used to further investigate the survey findings, attention must be paid to reasons why results from both phases may differ. Cornell and Bandyopadhyay (2010) found that students were not willing to admit to bullying in an interview as often as they were willing to report it on a survey. Although steps were taken to ensure they students knew they were able to speak freely, the fact remains that the students may have been trying to respond in a socially desirable manner.

Furthermore, the small number of interview participants representative of the various ethnic groups within this school makes it impossible to definitely draw any conclusions based on student ethnicity. Several ethnic groups were represented by only one interview participant and his/her views may have been radically different than those of the majority of students present with the school. As such, there is also always the possibility that despite every effort to get a representative sample of all students present at the school, the students interviewed had a dramatically different perspective than that of the overall student population. Thus, caution must be used when attempting to generalize the viewpoints expressed by the interview participants.

Additionally, the use of qualitative measures often raises concerns of validity, or trustworthiness. However, every effort was made to provide a thorough understanding of the data collection process and analysis, as well as to follow similar procedures when analyzing the final results with outside coders. Thus, it is the hope that the findings provided valuable insight into the perspectives of students in regards to what constitutes



bullying behavior and provoke further investigation into how to meet the needs of the students who experience it.

### **Race versus Ethnicity**

Furthermore, one major limitation of this study was the failure to fully assess *ethnic* differences. Instead, much of the information was based solely on racial information collected. Although a comprehensive explanation of term *ethnicity* is beyond the scope of this argument, it is important to note that researchers have questioned whether or not race and ethnicity are in fact the same thing. Many studies often use only demographic characteristics (i.e., race) to examine the implications of ethnicity, which would imply that race alone can be used to explore ethnicity. However, race and ethnicity have been described as very different constructs. Specifically, race is a term distinguishing skin color, facial features, hair color, and other observable genetic differences (Thomas & Schwarzbaum, 2006) whereas “ethnicity includes three components: cultural values, attitudes, and behaviors” (Thomas & Schwarzbaum, p. 8). However, race and ethnicity both help to explain individual and societal behaviors, as well as attitudes, which can help to explore issues related to bullying (Thomas & Schwarzbaum). Nonetheless, additional measures or questions would have been necessary in order to declare that this study fully explored the notion of *ethnicity* as it relates to bullying.

### **Methodological Implications**

As discussed earlier, previous research has neglected to clearly and consistently define bullying. The result of this methodological flaw has resulted in a body of

literature that is difficult to compare because all of the studies use varying criteria to define bullying in general as well as bullies, victims, and bully-victims. Although this study made every attempt to accurately assess bullying frequency, the findings must be read with caution. Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine the extent to which the differing methodological aspects account for the variation in results and what variation may be due to the population examined.

### **Considerations for Future Research**

Future research could consider whether or not gender differences are equally influenced by ethnic group affiliation. Cultural beliefs, such as cultural values, socialization practices, and social and structural forces could also be explored in the examination to determine whether or not they impact an individual's perception of ethnicity and ultimately bullying.

A longitudinal study assessing an individual's bully or victim status at different times through elementary, middle, and high school would also provide immense insight. It would allow for a deeper exploration of the students who maintained stable bully or victim status over the years and those who were more fluid between the categories. Such a study would provide information on varying trends within and between the phases student's pass through during their time in school. Exploring this in terms of one's acculturation and/or ethnic identity would allow for a deeper examination of the impact of ethnicity on perceptions of bullying. Furthermore, expanding the scope of the research beyond young adolescents would provide an example to explore the impact of social development on one's description, experience, and perception of bullying.

### **Implications for Practitioners**

The findings of this study, in addition to previous research, may have significant implications for school psychologists, teachers, administrators, parents, and students alike. In gaining a better understanding regarding what students' perceptions of bullying entail, more informed decisions can be made on how to combat this ongoing issue. The survey data allowed for an overall assessment of current problems within the school and the additional information gleaned from the individual interviews will allow the school to determine what changes need to be made, as well as what may already be working. Subsequent administrations of the survey also would allow the school to assess progress. However, decisions regarding intervention or prevention programs must consider the impact of ethnic and cultural differences, which dictate the need for culturally-sensitive programs.

In order to address the needs of the students within a school, a clear understanding of those needs must first be obtained. This study has shown that one form of data collection may not be sufficient for gathering enough information to determine how to best meet the needs of students. As such, consideration should be given to how to incorporate various forms of student input prior to implementation as well as feedback to determine program effectiveness. Bellmore and Tomonaga (n.d.) say it best: "knowing which factors make adolescents feel most vulnerable is essential for devising the most beneficial prevention and intervention strategies" (para. 7).

As school psychologists and researchers, it is necessary to explore ways of investigating the presence of bullying and using that information to appropriately respond

to it. In doing so, it is necessary to not only look at the data collected to determine the frequency of the behavior, but whether or not it differs among the groups present within the school. Specifically, the composition of the student body within a school may be a vital factor that the school needs to consider. As previously mentioned, there is research suggesting that bullying may result due to majority/minority status within the school. However, bullying is just as likely to occur within a group as between groups. As such, even schools with a relatively equal distribution of ethnically diverse students need to consider the potential implication of ethnicity on bullying experiences.

Not only is it important to investigate whether differences exist in experiences with bullying, but also what students perceive to be bullying. Often, schools create a definition regarding what constitutes bullying, but this may not be in line with what the students perceive to be bullying. By taking the time to actively explore student perspectives, and implement practices based on the findings, schools will increase their likelihood of having a real impact with anti-bullying efforts.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

In the end, this study set out to explore a concept, which has been long overlooked. The findings suggest that additional research is needed in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of just how much ethnic group membership impacts perceptions of, and experiences with, bullying. Nonetheless, the findings suggest that there is merit in further exploring this issue as differences were evident among the various groups included in this study.

APPENDIX A:  
PARENTAL CONSENT FORMS

## PASSIVE PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT

**Project Title:** The Student's Perspective: Exploring Ethnic Group Variances in Bullying Behavior Using Mixed Methods Research

**Researcher:** Stephanie Grunewald, M.Ed.

**Faculty Sponsor:** David Shriberg, Ph.D.

### **Introduction:**

Your child is being asked to complete an online survey about bullying behavior as part of a district-wide initiative. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to allow your child to participate in the study.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to examine bullying behaviors using an ethnically diverse sample of middle school students.

### **Procedures:**

If you agree to allow your child to be in the study, he/she will be asked to:

- Complete an online survey asking about experiences with bullying with his/her class during physical education.
- The survey will be completed in the Grayslake Middle School computer lab and will take approximately 15 minutes.

### **Risks/Benefits:**

There are no direct benefits to your child for participating in this research project. However, the indirect benefits outweigh the potential risks for participating. The results will be helpful in informing Grayslake Middle School on current bullying behaviors impacting students within the school.

### **Confidentiality:**

- Your child's name will not be given on the survey or used in any manner.

### **Voluntary Participation:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. All students in the school will be asked to take the online survey. If you do not wish your child to be in this study, which will mean that s/he won't complete the online survey, please fill out the form attached to this letter and return it to Mrs. Karen Wiesner, the Assistant Principal. Even if you decide to allow your child to participate, he/she is free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

### **Contacts and Questions:**

If you have questions about this interview, please feel free to contact Stephanie Grunewald at [sgrunewald@luc.edu](mailto:sgrunewald@luc.edu) or the faculty sponsor, Dr. David Shriberg, at [dshribe@luc.edu](mailto:dshribe@luc.edu). If you have questions about your child's rights as a research participant, you may contact the Compliance Manager in Loyola's Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Complete this form and return it to Mrs. Karen Wiesner if you **do not** wish to have your child complete the online survey.

I do not wish for my child, \_\_\_\_\_ to complete the online survey.  
*Print Student's First and Last Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent's/Guardian's Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**Project Title:** The Student's Perspective: Exploring Ethnic Group Variances in Bullying Behavior Using Mixed Methods Research

**Researcher:** Stephanie Grunewald, M.Ed.

**Faculty Sponsor:** David Shriberg, Ph.D.

### **Introduction:**

You are being asked to give permission for your child to take part in a research study being conducted by Stephanie Grunewald for a dissertation project under the supervision of Dr. David Shriberg of the School of Education at Loyola University of Chicago.

Your child is being asked to participate because s/he represents the ethnic diversity present at Grayslake Middle School. All students will be invited to participate and the first ones to return consent will be selected until a representative sample of the school is obtained.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to allow your child to participate in the study.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to examine bullying behaviors using an ethnically diverse sample of middle school students.

### **Procedures:**

If you agree to allow your child to be in the study, he/she will be asked to:

- Participate in individual interviews with the researcher to discuss experiences with bullying at school.
- Your child will be assigned a participant number to ensure confidentiality. No names will be associated with the participant number or used in any manner.
- The interviews will take place in a Grayslake Middle School classroom or conference room and will take approximately one half hour.
- The interview will be recorded on a hand-held recorder.

### **Risks/Benefits:**

Due to the fact that the students will be asked to discuss potentially upsetting experiences, they may experience some emotional discomfort. However, all participants will be informed of the nature of the interview prior to participating and asked to provide verbal assent in addition to signed parental consent.

There are no direct benefits to your child for participating in this research project. However, the indirect benefits outweigh the potential risks for participating. The results



will be helpful in informing Grayslake Middle School on current bullying behaviors impacting students within the school. It is also important to note that audiotapes and transcripts will not be shared with Grayslake school personnel.

**Confidentiality:**

- A participant number will be assigned and will be the only way participants are identified. No names will appear in the transcripts of the interviews.
- Audio recordings will be made during the course of the interview. The recordings will be stored in a secure location where only the researcher has access. All recordings will be deleted at the conclusion of the research.
- The faculty sponsor for this project will be the only Loyola faculty member with knowledge of where the recordings and transcripts will be stored.

**Voluntary Participation:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want your child to be in this study, he/she does not have to participate. Even if you decide to allow your child to participate, he/she is free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

**Contacts and Questions:**

If you have questions about this interview, please feel free to contact Stephanie Grunewald at [sgrunewald@luc.edu](mailto:sgrunewald@luc.edu) or the faculty sponsor, Dr. David Shriberg, at [dshribe@luc.edu](mailto:dshribe@luc.edu). If you have questions about your child's rights as a research participant, you may contact the Compliance Manager in Loyola's Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

**Statement of Consent:**

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to allow your child to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

---

**Parent's/Guardian's Signature**

---

**Date**

---

**Researcher's Signature**

---

**Date**

APPENDIX B:  
STUDENT ASSENT FORM

## STUDENT ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Dear Student:

You are being asked to talk with a student from Loyola University Chicago about your thoughts on bullying. The purpose of this study is to examine bullying behaviors using an ethnically diverse sample of middle school students.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding if you want to do the interview.

If you agree to do the interview, you will be asked to:

- Talk alone with the researcher about your experiences with bullying at school.
- You will be assigned a participant number and your name will not be used at any point.
- The interviews will take place in a Grayslake Middle School classroom or conference room and will take about one half hour.
- The interview will be recorded on a hand-held recorder.

**Your information will be confidential.** This means that your name will not be used during the interview. You will be given a number at the start of the interview and that is the only way you will be identified. The interview will be recorded so it can be listened to again later.

**Your participation in this project is voluntary.** This means that you can decide whether or not you want to do the interview. If you want to stop the interview at any time, you can stop. The audio recording and all the other information from this project will be kept private and secure. The recordings will be stored in a secure location where only the researcher has access. All recordings will be erased after the project is finished. This project won't go on your school record.

If you have questions about the interview, you can email Stephanie Grunewald at [sgrunewald@luc.edu](mailto:sgrunewald@luc.edu) or Dr. David Shriberg at [dshribe@luc.edu](mailto:dshribe@luc.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you can call the Compliance Manager in Loyola's Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

If you would like to do the interview, please print and sign your name here:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, want to be in this research study.  
*Print your first and last name here*

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Sign your name here**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

APPENDIX C:  
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

**This is a survey about your behaviors and feelings, and the behaviors of other students.**

**Please answer questions honestly. You will not get in trouble for your answers and other students will not see your answers. Your surveys will be used to plan programs that will teach students how to get along and make friends.**

**For all the questions on this survey, you will choose only one answer. Here is an example:**

	<b>Almost Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Almost Always</b>
<b>How often do you go to the movies?</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Let's begin! Remember there are no right or wrong answers on this survey. Only YOU can choose the right answers for you.**

<b>How often in the past couple of months have older, bigger, more popular, or more powerful kids picked on you by:</b>	<b>Not at All</b>	<b>Just once or twice</b>	<b>2-3 times a month</b>	<b>Once a week or more</b>
hitting or kicking you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
pushing you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
saying mean things to you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
spreading rumors about you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
threatening you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
taking things away from you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
teasing you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ignoring you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
trying to turn friends against you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
leaving you out	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
making faces at you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
calling you names	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
lying to the teacher about you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<b>How often in the past couple of months have YOU picked on younger, smaller, less popular, or less powerful kids by:</b>	<b>Not at All</b>	<b>Just once or twice</b>	<b>2-3 times a month</b>	<b>Once a week or more</b>
hitting or kicking them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
pushing them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
saying mean things to them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
spreading rumors about them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
threatening them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
taking things from them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
teasing them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ignoring them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
trying to turn friends against them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
leaving them out	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
making faces at them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
calling them names	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These Questions are about the Internet and cell phones. If you do not use the Internet or cell phones, select N/A.

<b>How often in the past couple of months have you ...?</b>	<b>Not at All</b>	<b>Just once or twice</b>	<b>2-3 times a month</b>	<b>Once a week or more</b>	<b>N/A</b>
received a hurtful or mean E-mail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
received a hurtful or mean Instant Message (IM)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
received a hurtful or mean message in a chat room	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
received a hurtful or mean text	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
been teased or harassed on Facebook or Myspace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<b>How often in the past couple of months have you ...?</b>	<b>Not at All</b>	<b>Just once or twice</b>	<b>2-3 times a month</b>	<b>Once a week or more</b>	<b>N/A</b>
sent a hurtful or mean E-mail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sent a hurtful or mean Instant Message (IM)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
posted a hurtful or mean message in a chat room	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
sent a hurtful or mean text	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
teased or harassed on Facebook or Myspace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**These questions are about what YOU do when you are picked on by someone.**

<b>When YOU are picked on, how often <u>DO YOU</u>...?</b>	<b>Almost Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Almost Always</b>
take deep breaths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
try to find a way to make the bully stop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
yell at the bully	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
think of ways to solve the problem	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
think you deserve it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
pretend you don't care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
avoid areas the bully goes to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
try to forget about it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
tell your parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
think it's because of something you did	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
lose your temper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
stay near adults so the bully won't bully you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
talk about how you feel with friends or family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
say something mean to the bully	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ignore the situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
bully the person back	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
go to a quiet place to calm down	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
think it's not that bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
physically attack the bully	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ignore the bully so he/she stops bullying you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
tell the teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
keep friends near you to keep the bully away	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
make a plan of what to do about it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
blame yourself for what happened	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
think about positive things in your life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
think it's your fault	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
walk away from the bully so he/she stops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
keep it to yourself and not tell anyone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
count to 10	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
think you should have done something to stop it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**These questions are about deciding if what YOU do when you are picked on helps.**

<b>When YOU are picked on, how often <i>DOES IT HELP TO...</i>?</b>	<b>Almost Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Almost Always</b>
take deep breaths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
try to find a way to make the bully stop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
yell at the bully	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
think of ways to solve the problem	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
think you deserve it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
pretend you don't care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
avoid areas the bully goes to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
try to forget about it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
tell your parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
think it's because of something you did	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
lose your temper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
stay near adults so the bully won't bully you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
talk about how you feel with friends or family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
say something mean to the bully	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ignore the situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
bully the person back	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
go to a quiet place to calm down	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
think it's not that bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
physically attack the bully	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ignore the bully so he/she stops bullying you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
tell the teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
keep friends near you to keep the bully away	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
make a plan of what to do about it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
blame yourself for what happened	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
think about positive things in your life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
think it's your fault	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
walk away from the bully so he/she stops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
keep it to yourself and not tell anyone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
count to 10	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
think you should have done something to stop it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Sometimes one kid picks on another kid by threatening, fighting, calling names, saying bad things about the kid or leaving them out.**

**When you see one kid picking on another kid, HOW**

**OFTEN do you do the following things?**

	<b>Almost Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Almost Always</b>
I join up with the kid who is being mean	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try to talk it out with the kid to stop him or her from being mean	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I hit the mean kid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tell an adult at school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tell the kids to fight it out	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I make friends with the kid who is being picked on	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I pretend not to see it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I watch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do nothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tell an adult at home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I avoid the mean kid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I avoid the kid that gets picked on	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I walk away	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**These Questions are about why some kids are picked on.**

**When you see one kid picking  
on another kid, HOW  
OFTEN do you think it's  
because the kid...?**

	<b>Almost Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Almost Always</b>
is fat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
is small	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
is bossy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
is a different skin color	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
is not very good at things	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
thinks he/she is better than other kids	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
smells and is dirty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
wears clothes that many people don't like	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
is not good looking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
is in special education classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
is a girl that acts like a boy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
is a boy that acts like a girl	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has a disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has different interests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
is mad at a friend	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
is fighting with a friend	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**These Questions are about SAFETY.**

**Decide HOW SAFE you feel in the following places. If your school does not have one of the locations mentioned, select N/A.**

<b>I feel safe. . .</b>	<b>Almost Never</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Almost Always</b>	<b>N/A</b>
in my classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
in the lunchroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
in the bathroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
going to school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
on the way home from school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
in the gym	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
in the hall at school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
outside on school property	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
in the media center	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
on the playground	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
in the locker room	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Which school do you go to?**

- AVON CENTER SCHOOL
- MEADOWVIEW SCHOOL
- PRAIRIEVIEW SCHOOL
- WOODVIEW SCHOOL
- FREDERICK SCHOOL
- GRAYSLAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL
- PARK CAMPUS

**Are you a:**

- Boy
- Girl

**What grade are you in?**

- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

**Race:**

- African American/Black
- Caucasian/White
- Hispanic/Latino
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Multiethnic
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX D:  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### **Interview Procedures**

1. The interview process will be explained to the student by saying:  
*I am going to ask you questions about bullying at GMS. The interview will be recorded so that I can listen to what was said later and write the information out. You will not be identified on the tape or the written transcripts. Once I have written all of the interview information out, the recording will be deleted.*
2. Students will then be asked if they have any questions.
3. They will be asked to sign an assent form.
4. Then, they will fill out a student demographic form.
5. A participant number will be assigned and written on the demographic form.
6. The recording will begin by stating the date and the participant number.



### Interview Questions

1. What does bullying mean to you? *[If the student has difficulty, they will be asked how they might describe or define it to someone else]*
2. What has been your experience with bullying at school? *[Do they feel they have been bullied themselves or never bullied]*
  - a. If they've been bullied, why do you think you were targeted?
  - b. If they've been bullied, what types of bullying did you experience?
  - c. If they've not been bullied, why do you think you have not been targeted?
  - d. If they've not been bullied, what types of bullying have you seen others experience?
3. How do students bully other kids at your school? *[What kinds of things do they do?]*
4. Describe a bully. *[Ask for specific traits]*
5. Describe a victim. *[Ask for specific traits]*
6. What are some of the main reasons students are bullied at your school? *[Ask for specific examples]*

*At GMS, there are many different students—White, Hispanic, African American, and so on—with many different interests and different kinds of friends. I want you to think for a moment how the different groups of students may be bullied, if they are bullied the same way, and why some groups may be bullied more than others.*

7. Do you think members of certain groups get bullied more than others? Why or why not? *[Ask about ethnic groups, gender, cliques, etc.]*
  - a. Do you think non-White students are bullied more or less often? Why or why not?

APPENDIX E:  
INTERVIEWEE DEMOGRAPHIC SHEET

**Are you a:**

- Boy**
- Girl**

**What grade are you in?**

- 7**
- 8**

**Race:**

- African American/Black**
- Caucasian/White**
- Hispanic/Latino**
- Asian/Pacific Islander**
- American Indian/Alaska Native**
- Multiethnic**
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_**

APPENDIX F:  
QUALITATIVE CODEBOOK

Theme	Topics Included	Topics Not Included
Mention of bullying or non-bullying experience without enough detail to specify type		
General Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General or broad description of bullying that does not fit into a more specific sub-category (i.e., “picking on”)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific types of bullying</li> </ul>
General Non-Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stating that bullying is not experienced or witnessed</li> </ul>	
Description of specific type of bullying behavior		
Verbal Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name Calling</li> <li>• Spreading Rumors</li> <li>• Telling lies</li> <li>• Making fun of...</li> <li>• Putting down</li> </ul>	
Physical Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hitting</li> <li>• Kicking</li> <li>• Pushing/Shoving</li> <li>• Knocking books out of someone’s hands</li> </ul>	
Cyberbullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text</li> <li>• Email</li> <li>• Facebook/Myspace</li> <li>• Twitter</li> </ul>	
Social Exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Left Out of group</li> <li>• Not included</li> </ul>	
Non-Verbal Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pretend “high fives”</li> <li>• Laughing at Others</li> <li>• Dirty looks/glares</li> </ul>	
Reasons for being targeted for bullying		
Targeted Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weight/Size (small or large)</li> <li>• Clothes</li> <li>• Height (short or tall)</li> <li>• Weak(er)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skin color</li> </ul>
Targeted Social Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific mention of a group within the school (athletes, nerds, popular kids, etc.)</li> <li>• Students with disabilities</li> <li>• Socioeconomic Status</li> <li>• Lack of group/friends</li> </ul>	
Targeted Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific mention of an ethnic group within the school (African American, Asian, Hispanic, etc.)</li> </ul>	
Targeted Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of gender as a factor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexuality</li> </ul>

Targeted Personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily angered/Frustrated</li> <li>• How they act</li> <li>• Mean</li> <li>• Easy going/Likeable</li> </ul>	
Targeted Home/ Community Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where they are from</li> <li>• Issues in the home</li> </ul>	
Targeted Sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GLBTQ issues</li> <li>• Mention of sexuality as description/cause</li> </ul>	
Targeted Don't Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertain why they (or others) have been targeted</li> </ul>	
Reasons for NOT being targeted for bullying		
Non-Target Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weight/Size (small or large)</li> <li>• Clothes</li> <li>• Height (short or tall)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skin color</li> </ul>
Non-Target Social Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific mention of a group within the school (athletes, nerds, popular kids, etc.)</li> <li>• Students with disabilities</li> <li>• Socioeconomic Status</li> <li>• Lack of group/friends</li> </ul>	
Non-Target Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific mention of an ethnic group within the school (African American, Asian, Hispanic, etc.)</li> </ul>	
Non-Target Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of gender as a factor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexuality</li> </ul>
Non-Target Personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily angered/Frustrated</li> <li>• How they act</li> <li>• Mean</li> <li>• Easy going/Likeable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Non-Target Home/ Community Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where they are from</li> <li>• Issues in the home</li> </ul>	
Non-Target Sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GLBTQ issues</li> <li>• Mention of sexuality as description/cause</li> </ul>	
Non-Target Don't Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertain why they (or others) have not been targeted</li> </ul>	
Description of the bully		
Bully Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weight/Size (small or large)</li> <li>• Clothes</li> <li>• Height (short or tall)</li> <li>• Strong(er)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skin Color</li> </ul>
Bully Social Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific mention of a group within the</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>school (athletes, nerds, popular kids, etc.)</li> <li>• Students with disabilities</li> <li>• Socioeconomic Status</li> <li>• Lack of group/friends</li> </ul>	
Bully Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific mention of an ethnic group within the school (African American, Asian, Hispanic, etc.)</li> </ul>	
Bully Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of gender as a factor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexuality</li> </ul>
Bully Personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily angered/Frustrated</li> <li>• How they act</li> <li>• Mean</li> <li>• Easy going/Likeable</li> </ul>	
Bully Home/ Community Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where they are from</li> <li>• Issues in the home</li> </ul>	
Bully Sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GLBTQ issues</li> <li>• Mention of sexuality as description</li> </ul>	
Description of the victim		
Victim Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weight/Size (small or large)</li> <li>• Clothes</li> <li>• Height (short or tall)</li> <li>• Weak(er)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skin Color</li> </ul>
Victim Social Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific mention of a group within the school (athletes, nerds, popular kids, etc.)</li> <li>• Mentioning students with disabilities</li> <li>• Socioeconomic Status</li> <li>• Lack of group/friends</li> </ul>	
Victim Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific mention of an ethnic group within the school (African American, Asian, Hispanic, etc.)</li> </ul>	
Victim Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of gender as a factor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexuality</li> </ul>
Victim Personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily angered/Frustrated</li> <li>• How they act</li> <li>• Mean</li> <li>• Easy going/Likeable</li> </ul>	
Victim Home/ Community Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where they are from</li> <li>• Issues in the home</li> </ul>	
Victim Sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GLBTQ issues</li> <li>• Mention of sexuality as description</li> </ul>	
Response to #7 “Do you think members of certain groups get bullied more than others”		
Yes		

No		
Equal		
Don't Know		
Description of White or non-White students being bullied more often, less often, or equally (#7a)		
Non-White More	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicating White students are bullied <b>less often</b> than Non-White students</li> </ul>	
Non-White Less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicating White students are bullied <b>more often</b> than Non-White students</li> </ul>	
White/Non-White Equal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicating White and Non-White students are bullied equally</li> </ul>	
White/Non-White Don't Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicating uncertainty if White students are bullied more or less often than non-White students</li> </ul>	
Indicating whether or not someone responded to an act of bullying		
No Response to bullying Incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignore person/behavior</li> </ul>	
Response to bullying Incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yelling</li> <li>• Switching Groups</li> <li>• Crying</li> </ul>	

## NOTES:

- ALL instances of a code should be coded in each response.
- Do not code a student's response to a prompt if they are only agreeing or disagreeing with what the interviewer said.
- Do code any prompt that offers additional details! Even if the students comments are a continuation of what was being said in the previous statement
- After giving a prompt about the students at GMS, a question was posed asking the students to describe their friends. That does not need to be coded.
- "Victim" codes should only be used for question #5
- For question #7 (Do you think members of certain groups get bullied more than others? Why or why not?) the students can respond by simply saying "yes" or "no" and that needs to be coded. **If they are prompted to say why they feel that way, it should be coded with appropriate themes.**
- For #7a (Do you think non-White students are bullied more or less often? Why or why not?) **their initial answer and the prompt of why they feel that way should be coded with appropriate themes.**



## REFERENCE LIST

- Aluedse, O. (2006). Bullying in schools: A form of child abuse in schools. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 30(1), 37-49.
- Babbie, E. (1990). *Survey research methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Inc.
- Bauman, S. (2010). Cyberbullying in a rural intermediate school: An exploratory study. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 30(6), 803-833.
- Bellmore, A. D., & Tomonaga, A. (n.d.). When kids use ethnicity and gender to bully. Retrieved from <http://www.education.com/reference/article/ethnicity-gender-bullying/>
- Beran, T., & Shapiro, B. (2005). Evaluation of an anti-bullying program: Student reports of knowledge and confidence to manage bullying. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 28(4), 700-717.
- Boulton, M. J. & Smith, P. K. (1994). Bully/victim problems in middle school children: Stability, self-perceived competence, peer perceptions and peer acceptance. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 12(3), 315-329
- Bradshaw, C. P., Sawyer, A. L., & O'Brennan, L. M. (2007). Bullying and peer victimization at school: Perceptual differences between students and school staff. *School Psychology Review*, 36(3), 361-382.
- Brown, S. L. Birch, D. A., & Kancheria, V. (2005). Bullying perspectives: Experiences, attitudes, and recommendations of 9- to 13-year-olds attending health and education centers in the United States. *Journal of School Health*, 75(10), 384-392.
- Carney, A. G., & Merrell, K. W. (2001). Bullying in schools: Perspectives on understanding and preventing an international problem. *School Psychology International*, 22(3), 364-382.
- Cornell, D. G., & Bandyopadhyay, S. (2010). The assessment of bullying. In S. Jimerson, S. Swearer, & D. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (265-276). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Cook, R. C., Williams, K. R., Guerra, N. G., & Kim, T. E. (2010a). Variability in the prevalence of bullying and victimization: A cross-national and methodological analysis. In S. Jimerson, S. Swearer, & D. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (347-362). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cook, R. C., Williams, K. R., Guerra, N. G., Kim, T. E., & Sadek, S. (2010b). Predictors of bullying and victimization in children and adolescence: A meta-analytic investigation. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 25(2), 65-83.
- Costello, A. B., & Osborne, J. W. (2005). Best practices in exploratory factor analysis: Four recommendations for getting the most from your analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 10(7), 1-9.
- Creswell, J. (2009) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J., & Plano Clark, V. (2007). *Designing and conducting Mixed Methods Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J., & Plano Clark, V. (2009). *Designing and conducting Mixed Methods Research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Crothers, L. M., & Kolbert, J. B. (2004). Comparing middle school teachers' and students' views on bullying and anti-bullying interventions. *Journal of School Violence*, 3(1), 17-32.
- Demaray, M. K., & Malecki, C. K. (2003). Perceptions of the frequency and importance of social support by students classified as victims, bullies, and bully/victim in an urban middle school. *School Psychology Review*, 32(3), 471-489.
- Elinoff, M. J., Chafouleas, S. M., & Sassu, K. A. (2004). Bullying: Considerations for defining and intervening in school settings. *Psychology in the Schools*, 41(8), 887-897.
- Elledge, L. C., Cavell, T. A., Ogle, N. T., Malcolm, K. T., Newgent, R. A., & Faith, M. A. (2010). History of peer victimization and children's response to school bullying. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 25(2), 129-141.
- Espelage, D. L., Bosworth, K., & Simon, T. R. (2001). Short-term stability and prospective correlates of bullying in middle-school students: An examination of potential demographic, psychosocial, and environmental influences. *Violence and Victims*, 16(4), 411-426.

- Fitzpatrick, K. M., Dulin, A. J., & Piko, B. F. (2007). Not just pushing and shoving: School bullying among African American adolescents. *Journal of School Health, 77*(1), 16-22.
- Frisén, A., Holmqvist, K., & Oscarsson, D. (2008). 13-year-olds' perception of bullying: Definitions, reasons for victimisation, and experience of adults' response. *Educational Studies, 34*(2), 105-117.
- Frisén, A., Jonsson, A.-K., & Persson, C. (2007). Adolescents' perception of bullying: Who is the victim? Who is the bully? What can be done to stop bullying? *Adolescence, 42*(168), 749-761.
- Glew, G. M., Fan, M.-Y., Katon, W., & Rivara, F. P. (2008). Bullying and school safety. *The Journal of Pediatrics, 152*(1), 123-128.
- Graham, S., Bellmore, A., Nishina, A., & Juvonen, J. (2009). "It must be me": Ethnic diversity and attributions for peer victimization in middle school. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 38*(4), 487-499.
- Gravetter, F. J., & Wallnau, L. B. (2007). *Statistics for the behavior sciences*. (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Grimm, A., & Schlikerman, B. (2011). 10-year-old girl's death stuns small town. Retrieved from: [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-11-17/news/chi-funeral-today-for-girl-10-whose-family-says-killed-herself-because-of-bullying-20111116\\_1\\_death-stuns-classes](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2011-11-17/news/chi-funeral-today-for-girl-10-whose-family-says-killed-herself-because-of-bullying-20111116_1_death-stuns-classes)
- Hanish, L. D., Guerra, N. G. (2000). The roles of ethnicity and school context in predicting children's victimization by peers. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 28*(2), 201-223.
- Hazler, R. J. (1996). *Breaking the cycle of violence: Interventions for bullying and victimization*. Washington, DC: Accelerated Development.
- Hazler, R. J. & Carney, J. V. (2010). Cultural variations in characteristics of effective bullying programs. In S. Jimerson, S. Swearer, & D. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (417-430). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Horne, A. M., Stoddard, J. L., & Bell, C. D. (2007). Group approaches to reducing aggression and bullying in school. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice, 11*(4), 262-271.

- Hughes, P. P., Middleton, K. M., & Marshall, D. D. (2009). Students' perceptions of bullying in Oklahoma public schools. *Journal of School Violence, 8*, 216-232.
- Jimerson, S. R., & Huai, N. (2010). International perspectives on bullying prevention and intervention. In S. Jimerson, S. Swearer, & D. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (571-592). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jimerson, S. R., Swearer, S. M., & Espelage, D. L. (Eds.) (2010) *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Juvonen, J., Graham, S., & Schuster, M. A. (2003). Bullying among young adolescents: The strong, the weak, and the troubled. *Pediatrics, 112*(6), 1231-1237.
- Kim, Y. S., Leventhal, B. L., Koh, Y.-J., Hubbard, A., & Boyce, T. (2006). School bullying and youth violence: Causes or consequences of psychopathologic behavior? *Archives of General Psychiatry, 63*(9), 1035-1041.
- Langdon, S. W., & Preble, W. (2008). The relationship between levels of perceived respect and bullying in 5<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders. *Adolescence, 43*(171), 485-503.
- Lavrakas, P. J. (Ed). (2008). *Encyclopedia of survey research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Lee, F. R. (1993). Disrespect rules. *New York Times*, p. 16.
- Ma, X. (2001). Bullying and being bullied: To what extent are bullies also victims? *American Educational Research Journal, 38*(2), 351-370.
- McKenney, K. S., Pepler, D., Craig, W., & Connolly, J. (2006). Peer victimization and psychosocial adjustment: The experiences of Canadian immigrant youth. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology, 9*(4), 239-264.
- Menesini, E., Modena, M., & Tani, F. (2009). Bullying and victimization in adolescence: Concurrent and stable roles and psychological health symptoms. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology, 170*(2), 115-133.
- Merrell, K. W., Gueldner, B. A., Ross, S. W., & Isava, D. M. (2008). How effective are school bullying intervention programs? A meta-analysis of intervention research. *School Psychology Quarterly, 23*(1), 26-42.
- Meyer-Adams, N., & Conner, B. T. (2008). School violence: Bullying behaviors and the psychosocial school environment in middle schools. *Children & Schools, 30*(4), 211-221.

- Mouttapa, M., Valente, T., Gallaher, P., Rohrbach, L. A., & Unger, J. B. (2004). Social network predictors of bullying and victimization. *Adolescence, 39*(154), 315-335.
- Murray-Harvey, R., Slee, P. T., & Taki, M. (2010). Comparative and cross-cultural research on school bullying. In S. Jimerson, S. Swearer, & D. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (35-47). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Nansel, T. R., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R. S., Ruan, W. J., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviors among US youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. *JAMA, 285*(16), 2094-2100.
- Newman, S. R., & Murray, B. J. (2005). How students and teachers view the seriousness of peer harassment: When is it appropriate to seek help? *Journal of Educational Psychology, 97*(3), 347-365.
- Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do*. Oxford, England: Blackwell.
- Olweus, D. (1995). Bullying or peer abuse at school: Facts and intervention. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 4*(6), 196-200
- Peskin, M. F., Tortolero, S. R., & Markham, C. M. (2006). Bullying and victimization among Black and Hispanic adolescents. *Adolescence, 41*(163), 467-484.
- Praetourius, D. (2011). Jamey Rodemeyer, 14-year-old boy, commits suicide after gay bullying, parents carry on message. Retrieved from: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/20/jamey-rodemeyer-suicide-gay-bullying\\_n\\_972023.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/20/jamey-rodemeyer-suicide-gay-bullying_n_972023.html)
- Ross, D. M. (1996). *Childhood bullying and teasing: What school personnel, other professionals, and parents can do*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Sawyer, A. L., Bradshaw, C. P., & O'Brennan, L. M. (2008). Examining ethnic, gender, and developmental differences in the way children report being a victim of "bullying" on self-report measures. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 43*(2), 106-114.
- Scherr, T. G., & Larson, J. (2010). Bullying dynamics associated with race, ethnicity, and immigration status. In S. Jimerson, S. Swearer, & D. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (223-234). New York, NY: Routledge.

- Seals, D., & Young, J. (2003). Bullying and victimization: Prevalence and relationship to gender, grade level, ethnicity, self-esteem, and depression. *Adolescence*, 38(152), 735-747.
- Sijtsema, J. J., Veenstra, R., Lindenberg, S., & Salmivalli, C. (2009). Empirical test of bullies' status goals: Assessing direct goals, aggression, and prestige. *Aggressive Behavior*, 35(1), 57-67.
- Spriggs, A. L., Iannotti, R. J., Nansel, T. R., & Haynie, D. L. (2007). Adolescent bullying involvement and perceived family, peer, and school relations: Commonalities and differences across race/ethnicity. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 41(3), 283-293.
- Swearer, S. M., Siebecker, A. B., Johnsen-Frerichs, L. A., & Wang, C. (2010). Assessment of bullying/victimization. In S. Jimerson, S. Swearer, & D. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (305-327). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Thomas, A. J., & Schwarzbaum, S. (2006). *Culture and identity: Life stories for counselors and therapists*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Varjas, K., Henrich, C. C., & Meyers, J. (2008a). *The Student Comprehensive Assessment of Bullying Behavior-Revised (SCABB-R)*. Atlanta, GA: Center for Research on School Safety, School Climate, and Classroom Management, Georgia State University.
- Varjas, K., Meyers, J., Bellmoff, L., Lopp, E., Birckbichler, L., & Marshall, M. (2008b). Missing voices: Fourth through eighth grade urban students' perceptions of bullying. *Journal of School Violence*, 7(4), 97-118.
- Vossekuil, B., Fein, R. A., Reddy, M., Borum, R., & Modzeleski, W. (2002). *The final report and findings of the safe school initiative: Implications for the prevention of school attacks in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Department of Education, Safe and Drug Free Schools Program, and National Threat Assessment Center.

## VITA

Stephanie Grunewald is a graduate from the doctoral School Psychology program at Loyola University Chicago. Prior to attending Loyola University Chicago, she earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay with a dual major in Psychology and Human Development in 2008. From 2008 to 2010, she attended Indiana State University where she earned a Master's of Education degree in School Psychology.

While at Loyola University Chicago, Stephanie served on several research teams, producing multiple publications and national presentations. Her research interests include investigating an array of issues through the lens of cultural diversity, bullying behavior, alternatives to suspension, and supervision in school psychology. Stephanie completed an Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Candidates (APPIC) accredited internship.

