Parents' Self-reported Changes in Concern about Children's Bullying – *Fall ConsumerStyles* and *Estilos* Surveys, United States, 2020

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Abstract

Bullying is a type of youth violence and an adverse childhood experience that can result in trauma and have immediate and long-term consequences for all involved. It can happen at school or elsewhere — including online entertainment and social and learning environments. Some children are at increased risk for bullying victimization, such as those targeted because of their racial/ethnic background or cultural identity. This study assessed U.S. parents and caregivers' self-reported changes in concern about their children's involvement in bullying during Fall 2020 compared to the prior year, which was marked by extraordinary historical circumstances (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic, heightened awareness of racial inequities, schools transitioning to virtual learning). Secondary analyses of data from the 2020 Fall ConsumerStyles and *Estilos* online panel surveys — designed to be representative of U.S. adults overall and U.S. Hispanic adults, respectively — were conducted. Differences by children's type of school attendance (i.e., physically at school or not) and parents' sociodemographic characteristics were explored. While findings suggest that U.S. parents' concern for their children being bullied during Fall 2020 compared to the prior year did not change, significant differences were found by the children's type of school attendance and the parents' race/ethnicity — with increased concern among parents of children who physically attended school, non-Hispanic Black parents and Hispanic parents. Among parents who reported being less concerned during Fall 2020 about their children being bullied compared to the prior year, not being physically at school is noted as the main reason why. Parents who reported being more concerned frequently noted racism as the reason why. It is imperative to understand what parents think about bullying, to best inform efforts to support their key role in bullying prevention.

Keywords

Bullying; Youth Violence; Cultural Contexts

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INTRODUCTION

Bullying is defined as "any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated" (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger et al., 2013). Common types of bullying include physical, verbal, relational/social, and damage to property, and may also occur through technology (i.e., cyberbullying). In the United States (U.S.), analyses of the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey estimate that 19.5% of U.S. high school students were bullied on school property and 15.7% were bullied electronically or cyberbullied during the past 12 months (Basile, Clayton, DeGue et al., 2020). Similarly, a 2020 probability-based nationally representative study found that 15% of 9–12-year olds in the U.S. have ever been cyberbullied (Patchin & Hinduja, 2020).

Parents play a key role in bullying prevention. Beyond their care, parents can help prevent bullying by providing family environments that support healthy development, to helping strengthen youth skills, and contributing to creating protective community environments (David-Ferdon, Vivolo-Kantor, Dahlberg et al., 2016). Furthermore, positive relationships with parents and other caring adults can protect youth from involvement in crime and violence (Kim, Gilman, Hill et al., 2016; Lösel & Farrington, 2012).

Analyses of the 2009–2010 Health Behavior in School-Aged Children survey found that that higher levels of adolescents' perception of their father's awareness (i.e., of their friends, money spending habits, afterschool, and other free time activities) was positively associated with lower bullying victimization, particularly among White and Hispanic adolescents. Furthermore, adolescent's perceptions of their father's awareness were found to moderate the positive association between bulling victimization and psychosomatic symptoms among Hispanics (Hong, Valido, Espelage et al., 2021). Beyond parental awareness, understanding and perceptions about bullying (Matsunaga, 2009; Sawyer, Mishna, Pepler et al., 2011), the importance of parents' active involvement in bullying prevention efforts has also been widely noted in the literature (e.g., Fekkes, Pijpers & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005). In fact, it is imperative to understand parents' concern about children's bullying, as well as consider their attitudes and beliefs about it; parents' views and experiences may differ from that of students (Waasdorp, Pas, O'Brennan et al., 2016) and impact the effectiveness and of bullying prevention efforts (Shea, Wang, Shi et al., 2016).

As a form of youth violence and an adverse childhood experience (ACE; CDC, 2019), bullying can result in trauma, and have immediate and long-term consequences for all involved. Exposure to bullying and cyberbullying has been associated with children experiencing anxiety, depression, paranoid thoughts, and cognitive disorganization (Hamm, Newton, Chisholm, et al., 2015; Singham, Viding, Schoeler et al., 2017). It has also been associated with suicidal ideation and behaviors (Holt, Vivolo-Kantor, Polanin et al., 2015; Takizawa, Maughan & Arseneault, 2014), alcohol dependence (Takizawa et al., 2014), obesity (Takizawa, Danese, Maughan et al., 2015) and other health and socio-economic outcomes (e.g., Brimblecombe, Evans-Lacko, Knapp et al., 2018; Wolke, Copeland, Angold et al., 2013). ACEs are not limited to bullying and other forms of violence. These also

include additional types of potentially traumatic events that can undermine children's sense of safety, stability and bonding, be distressing or emotionally painful, and have lasting effects on their health, behaviors and life potential (CDC, 2019).

Given its unprecedented impact on our society, the COVID-19 pandemic may have affected many children's exposure to bullying and other ACEs due to its significant social impact and disruptions at multiple levels (ASTHO, 2020). Beyond them or their loved ones getting sick or dying from COVID-19, many children's daily activities were – and may still be – affected by the pandemic and its mitigating strategies, such as social distancing and stay at home orders (Shen, Yang, Wang et al., 2020) – including moving from in-person to fully virtual learning environments.

Whether it is for virtual learning, entertainment, or socialization, spending more time physically away from school, extended family, friends, congregations, group sports and recreational activities has likely contributed to increases in internet-connected screen time among youth. During the COVID-19 pandemic, increases of 20 to 40% in broadband internet traffic in the U.S. overall were reported (Brake, 2020), yet reliable data on children's internet-connected screen time during this period is scarce. Across all age groups, video streaming made up much of this traffic. In fact, 7.46 billion hours of livestreaming were reported across live streaming platforms (i.e., Twitch, YouTube Gaming, Facebook Gaming) during July-September 2020 – a 91.8% increase compared to the same period in 2019 (3.89 billion hours) (May, 2020).

The internet is accessible to children through multiple devices and platforms (Anderson & Perrin, 2018), yet the internet access and connectivity required for virtual school/learning is not equitably distributed across racial/ethnically diverse households. While the U.S. Census Bureau (2020) estimates that 92.6% of U.S. children under 18 years have a computer at home with a broadband internet subscription, a 2018 Pew survey found that Black (25%) and Hispanic (17%) teens more frequently report lacking reliable computer or internet connection at home, compared to White teens (13%) (Anderson & Perrin, 2018; Pew Research Center, 2018).

While beneficial for continuity of learning and connectedness, increased online activity can also result in increased risk for online harms, like cyberbullying (UNICEF, 2020). Bullying is not limited to school grounds, and cyberbullying can happen in any online community environment – while on social media, playing online video games, or on a virtual learning environment. However, most bullying prevention interventions and research has historically focused on schools (e.g., Fraguas, Díaz-Caneja, Ayora, et al., 2021; Gaffney, Farrington & Ttofi, 2019), with limited to no distinction on whether these refer to physical and/or virtual school grounds.

Some population subgroups are at increased risk for bullying victimization, including sexual minority youth, overweight/obese youth, and youth with disabilities (National Academies, 2016). In recent years, other groups have been identified to be at heightened risk, including those targeted because of their ethnic background or cultural identity (Arens & Visser, 2020; Hoglund & Hosan, 2013; Hong, Peguero, Choi et al., 2014; LaRochette, Murphy &

Craig, 2010; McKenney, Pepler, Craig et. al, 2006). In fact, when bullying is based on sex, disability, religion, race or ethnicity, national origin or color, schools are legally obligated to address it as a form of harassment according to the Civil Rights Act (1964).

Notwithstanding, research on bullying's differential impact on racially and ethnically diverse youth remains limited (National Academies, 2016). A recent multidisciplinary systematic literature review found that studies measuring differences in bullying prevalence across racial and ethnic groups are inconclusive (Xu, Macrynikola, Waseem et al., 2020), frequently due in part to methodological differences across studies and differential impacts of contextual risk factors (Hong, Espelage & Sterzing, 2017; National Academies, 2016; Swearer & Hymel, 2015; Xu et al., 2020). Although youth from different races and ethnicities may similarly experience bullying overall, youth from minority racial/ethnic backgrounds have been found to experience more racist or bias-based bullying due to being perceived as a foreigner or outsider (Atwal & Wang, 2019; Qin, Way & Rana, 2008; Wang, Wang, Zheng et al., 2016; Xu et al., 2020) or being different from the expected or stereotypical norm (Peguero & Williams, 2013; Wang et al., 2016).

It is imperative to understand and address parents' concerns and needs regarding bullying (Sawyer et al., 2011), for them to be best prepared to engage in its prevention. It is also important to consider contextual factors related to their concern about bullying (e.g., racial/ethnic population group affected by racism, virtual learning environments, inequitable internet access across racial/ethnically diverse households).

Study Purpose

Recent U.S. history has been marked by extraordinary circumstances that resulted in or evidenced longstanding trauma across many communities, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and heightened awareness of racial inequities. Furthermore, many schools transitioned to virtual learning environments during one or more school terms, to help prevent and mitigate the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. The purpose of this study was to assess parents and caregivers' (hereafter referred to as parents) self-reported changes in concern about their children's involvement in bullying (as the one bullying others, being bullied or witnessing the bullying) during Fall 2020 compared to the prior year. Differences by children's type of school attendance, and parents' self-reported race and ethnicity were explored.

METHODS

Study design

This study was conducted as a secondary analysis of data from the *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles* and *2020 Estilos* surveys. *ConsumerStyles* is an annual survey conducted by Porter Novelli Public Services via KnowledgePanel® – the oldest and largest probability-based online panel in the U.S. (Porter Novelli, n.d.-a), which is designed to produce representative estimates of the non-institutionalized, adult U.S. population ages 18 or older living in the 50 states and Washington, DC, with respect to broad geodemographic characteristics (Ipsos, n.d.-a; Ipsos, n.d.-b; Ipsos, 2020; MacInnis, Krosnick, Ho & Cho,

2018; Yeager, Krosnick, Chang et al., 2011) (also Deanne Weber, PhD/Porter Novelli Public Services, written communication, April 2020). With about 60,000 members (Ipsos, 2020), KnowledgePanel® employs an address-based sampling (ABS) patented methodology, based on probability proportional to size procedures (Ipsos, n.d.-a). Respondents are provided with internet access, if needed (Weber & Fridinger, 2021). Upon completion of each survey, KnowledgePanel® members are eligible for a modest incentive (worth about $5-$10), special raffles and/or sweepstakes, as incentive for participation (Ipsos, n.d.-a; Porter Novelli, n.d.-a).

Estilos is the Hispanic people-only version of Porter Novelli's *ConsumerStyles* survey, administered annually in Spanish via Offerwise's *Que Opinas* Panel© – the largest online Hispanic people panel in the U.S. (Porter Novelli, n.d.-b). Fielded nearly parallel to Fall *ConsumerStyles* during October each year, *Estilos* consists of a 1,000 adult sample drawn from the top 5% most active 220,000 members of Offerwise's online panel, recruited nationally through English and Spanish network television. The survey is administered in English and in Spanish, and is designed to produce representative estimates of the U.S. Hispanic population. Data is weighted by 8 factors – 7 socio-demographic factors to match the U.S. Census American Community Survey proportions among U.S. Hispanic people (i.e., gender, age, household income, household size, education, census region, country of origin), and one Offerwise-provided acculturation measure – based on years living in the U.S., language spoken at home, cultural self-identification, and use of Spanish language media – with weights set to match the overall panel composition (Porter Novelli, n.d.-b; Weber & Fridinger, 2021). Participants receive cash-equivalent reward points (about $15 value) (Porter Novelli, n.d.-b).

This study consists of the secondary analysis of 2020 Fall *ConsumerStyles* (N=3,625) and 2020 *Estilos* (N=1,000) de-identified survey data. 2020 Fall ConsumerStyles survey had a response rate of 79.7% (Styles 2020 Methodology, 2020). *2020 Estilos* is not subject to response rates, given it ends data collection after reaching its 1,000-participant quota/cap amongst the 2,524 invitations released during 2020 (Estilos 2020 Methodology, 2020). Given the purpose of this study was to assess parental changes in concern about their children's bullying involvement, analyses focus only on data from respondents who self-identified as a parent/caregiver of a child ages 10–17 years in the *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles* (N=470) and *2020 Estilos* (N=449) surveys. While *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles* data analyses allow for comparisons across different racial/ethnic populations (including Hispanics), *2020 Estilos* data analyses are also presented in this study to demonstrate how more detailed assessments across racial/ethnic groups are possible and may be warranted.

Study Measures

Respondent parents were described in terms of their age and sex (i.e., female, male). *Fall ConsumerStyles* survey participants were also described in terms of their race/ethnicity (i.e., non-Hispanic White person, non-Hispanic Black person, Hispanic person, non-Hispanic person of another race); all *Estilos* survey participants self-identify as a Hispanic person. Given only a subsample of all *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles* participants self-identified as parents/caregivers and were eligible for this secondary data analysis in this study,

stratification by respondent's socio-demographic characteristics were not always statistically appropriate due to small sample size.

Based on parents' report, children who attended school during the Fall 2020 semester in-person only or during a portion of the semester (i.e., started online, then in-person; started in-person, then online), or who followed a hybrid format (i.e., having both in-person and online school attendance throughout each week) were categorized as 'physically at school.' Those who had only online/virtual, homeschooling or did not attend school were categorized as "not physically at school".

Specific to bullying, parents reported on their current concern about their child(ren) being involved in bullying, either by being the one bullied (i.e., physically attacked or hurt by another child, the target of rumors or gossip, verbally harassed/embarrassed at school, verbally harassed/embarrassed online, made fun of or left out by other children), the one bullying others, or witnessing bullying (i.e., around when other children are bullied). They were also asked to self-report how their concern about their child(ren) being bullied now compared to last year (i.e., more concerned, equally concerned, less concerned, not concerned last year or now). Parents who reported being more concerned were asked if this was due to racism, more time on social media/video games, more time on virtual learning environments, wearing face masks or other reasons (e.g., him/her having had COVID-19, not wearing face masks, other reason). Parents who said they were less concerned were asked if this was due to children not being physically at school, people being more aware about racism, the fact we are all being affected by COVID-19, children have limited online time, children not on social media, or other reasons (i.e., family does not have internet access, none of the above).

Statistical analysis

2020 Fall ConsumerStyles (N=470) and *2020 Estilos* (N=449) survey data were independently analyzed using SAS® software, Version 9.4 (2015), employing sample weights provided by KnowledgePanel® and Offerwise designed to produce national estimates of the non-institutionalized U.S. population and for the U.S. Hispanic population, respectively. Bivariate crosstabulation analyses were conducted to investigate the relationship between different categorical variables within each survey's data; statistically significant differences were assessed using Chi-square tests at p<0.05. Missing values on items related to bullying were excluded from the analyses.

RESULTS

Parents' socio-demographics characteristics

Based on *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles* (N=470) survey, about 56.3% of U.S. parents self-identified as a non-Hispanic White person, followed by 19.3% as a Hispanic person, 14.1% as a non-Hispanic Black person, and 10.2% as a non-Hispanic person of Other race[1] (i.e., a non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaskan Native person, a non-Hispanic Asian person,

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[1]All distributions reported are based on weighted numbers.

a non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander person, a non-Hispanic person of another race, and a non-Hispanic person with race unknown). Over half of parents were 30–44 years old (53.8%), and there were more females (60.3%) than males. Similarly, half of parents who participated of the *2020 Estilos* survey (N=449) were 30–44 years old (50.8%) and there were more females (54.2%) than males; they all self-identified as Hispanic persons.

Children's type of school attendance during Fall 2020

More than half of parents reported similarly for both *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles* survey (59.3%) and *2020 Estilos* survey (69.8%) that their child(ren) did not physically attend school during the Fall 2020 semester, but instead engaged solely in virtual/online learning, homeschool, or no school. Conversely, 40.7% of U.S. parents overall and 30.2% of U.S. Hispanic parents reported that their child(ren) physically attended school, solely or during a portion of the Fall 2020 semester. About 12% of parents overall and 22% of U.S. Hispanic parents did not answer this question.

Concern about child being involved in bullying

Analyses of *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles* survey data suggest that overall, parents in the U.S. are most concerned that their children may be verbally harassed/embarrassed at school (39.4%), made fun of or left out by other children (37.4%), and verbally harassed/embarrassed online (31.0%). Statistically significant differences were found by race and ethnicity of the parent, with Hispanic parents expressing most concern that their child(ren) be physically attacked, the target of rumors or gossip, and verbally harassed/embarrassed at school relative to the other racial and ethnic groups (all p's <0.01). Compared to other parent groups (i.e., non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, and non-Hispanic Other parents), non-Hispanic White parents expressed the most concern for their children being made fun of or left out by other children (p<0.0001) and being verbally harassed/embarrassed online (p=0.0015) (Table 1).

Analyses of *2020 Estilos* data provide more insight into U.S. Hispanic parents' concerns about their children's involvement in bullying. Almost two-thirds of Hispanic parents said they are concerned their children may be physically attached or hurt by another child (61.2%), Also, more than half (51.4%) of U.S. Hispanic parents are concerned that their children might be verbally harassed/embarrassed at school. Of note, *2020 Estilos* data analyses estimated that 36.4% of U.S. Hispanic parents are concerned about their children bullying others (Table 1).

Concern about child being bullied now compared to last year.

Overall, most U.S. parents are equally concerned (33.4%) or not concerned (33.5%) about their children being bullied now compared to last year, as suggested by *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles* data analyses (Table 2). Less than a quarter of parents said they were less concerned (22.4%), while 10.7% said they were more concerned now than last year about their child being bullied. Statistically significant differences (p<0.0001) were found by race/ethnicity of the parent, with a larger proportion of Hispanic parents (21.2%) saying they are more concerned about their children being bullied now compared to last year,

followed by 15.7% of non-Hispanic Black parents, 6.6% of non-Hispanic White parents, and 6.4% of parents reporting some other racial group (Table 2). Additionally, statistically significant differences (p<0.0001) were found by the type of school attendance of the child. A larger proportion of parents whose children did not physically attend school during Fall 2020 said they were less concerned about their child being bullied now compared to last year (29.7%) – more than double the proportion of reports from parents of children who physically attended school during the same school term (14.2%) (Table 3).

On the other hand, analyses of *2020 Estilos* data suggest that most U.S. Hispanic parents (69.7%) are equally or more concerned about their children being bullied now compared to last year (Table 2). Similar to data analyses for U.S. parents overall (*2020 Fall ConsumerStyles*), analyses of *2020 Estilos* data found statistically significant differences by type of school attendance among U.S. Hispanic parents (p=0.0196).

A notably higher proportion of U.S. Hispanic parents (36.7%) whose children physically attended school during Fall 2020 said they are now more concerned about their children being bullied compared to last year – nearly double the proportion of U.S. Hispanic parents whose children did not physically attended school (21.4%). Furthermore, 42.7% of U.S. Hispanic parents whose children did not physically attended school during Fall 2020 said they are equally concerned about their children being bullied now (Table 3).

Reasons for being more concerned now about bullying.—Among U.S. parents who said they were <u>more concerned now</u> about their child(ren) being bullied (*2020 Fall ConsumerStyles*), the most frequently reported reasons were racism (42.5%), more time on social media or video games (28.8%), and wearing face masks (25.2%); 40% said they were more concerned due to unspecified other reasons. Analyses of *2020 Estilos* data suggest that the main reasons why U.S. Hispanic parents are now more concerned about their children being bullied include racism (60.1%), children spending more time on social media or video games (43.9%), and more time on virtual learning environments (25.7%) (Table 4).

Reasons for being less concerned now about bullying.—Among U.S. parents who said they were *<u>less</u> concerned now* about their child(ren) being bullied on the *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles* survey, the main reason was that children are not physically in school (63.2%). Analyses of the *2020 Estilos* data suggest similar findings – most U.S. Hispanic parents that say they are less concerned about their children being bullied now compared to last year report children not being physically at school as a main reason (52.1%). Notably, nearly half of all U.S. Hispanic parents (42.3%) said they are less concerned now because we are all being affected by COVID-19 (Table 4).

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to estimate U.S. parents and caregivers' self-reported changes in concern about their children's involvement in bullying during Fall 2020, compared to perceptions of the prior year via the secondary analyses of data from the *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles* and *2020 Estilos* online panel surveys. While data suggest that U.S.

parents' concern generally did not change, significant differences were found by the children's type of school attendance and the parents' race/ethnicity.

Not physically attending school was associated with parents being less or not concerned about their children being bullied. Analyses of *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles* data revealed that significantly more U.S. parents whose children did not physically attend school during Fall 2020 said they were less concerned now about their children being bullied compared to last year – nearly double the proportion of U.S. parents whose children physically attended school during the same period. This is concerning and warrants further insight into U.S. parents' knowledge and beliefs about bullying, as it may generally suggest that U.S. parents consider bullying to mostly be a physical school-grounds problem and not a public health problem that can happen anywhere. While type of school attendance plays a role in parents' level of concern about their children being bullied, it is not the only factor determining how concerned their parents are about it.

In most regards, racial/ethnic minority parents in the U.S. – especially, Hispanic parents – were the ones who reported the greatest concern about their children being involved in bullying. Hispanic parents also accounted for the highest proportion of parents who said they were more concerned about their child being bullied now compared to last year, followed by non-Hispanic Black parents. These findings are consistent with prior research that found significant variations in parents concern about their children being bullied or bullying others online by parents' race/ethnicity – highest for Hispanic and non-Hispanic Asian parents (Boyd & Hargittai, 2013).

2020 Estilos survey data analyses also found not physically attending school was associated with U.S. Hispanic parents being less concerned about their children being bullied. Furthermore, *2020 Estilos* data analyses suggest over a third of U.S. Hispanic parents whose children physically attended school were more concerned now about their children being bullied compared to last year. This finding warrants further insight into U.S. Hispanic parents' knowledge and beliefs about bullying. It may suggest that U.S. Hispanic parents consider bullying to mostly be a physically-at-school problem (i.e., not something that can happen at anywhere – including online) or that they consider their children to be more socially isolated from peers due to the virtual learning environment, or that they think schools are generally not safe. Considering bullying to be mostly a physically-at-school problem could also be related to limited internet connectivity and access to virtual learning environments (e.g., school is only possible in-person). Additional research is needed to understand how pandemic-related factors may have differentially affected parents' concern about bullying across race/ethnicity.

Two main contextually significant circumstances in the U.S. could have impacted parents' concern about their child(ren) being bullied or involved in bulling now compared to last year – not being physically at school due to COVID-19 mitigation/prevention efforts, and perceived racism. Not being physically at school was the most frequently reported reason why U.S. parents overall and U.S. Hispanic parents said they are now less concerned about their children being bullied. Surprisingly, spending more time online for learning and/or socialization during this time was not the most frequently reported reason why they

are concerned about their children being bullied even though as time online increases, so could children's risk of being exposed to online harms, like cyberbullying (UNICEF, 2020). This contrasts with media, research, and other reports of increases in cyberbullying among children during the pandemic (e.g., Jain, Gupta, Satam & Panda, 2020; Karmakar & Das, 2020). It also suggests that while we know the effectiveness of bullying prevention strategies employed during in-person learning contexts (Fraguas, Díaz-Caneja, Ayora, et al., 2021; Gaffney, Farrington & Ttofi, 2019), there is a need to assess how novel- and/or evidence-based bullying and other violence prevention strategies have or can be applied to virtual learning contexts (Nikiforos, Tzanavaris & Kermanidis, 2020; Sumner, Ferguson, Bason, et al., 2021).

Analyses of both *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles* and *2020 Estilos* survey data identified racism as the most frequently reported reason why U.S. parents overall and U.S. Hispanic parents are more concerned about their children being bullied. To the authors' knowledge, this is the first study based on nationally representative online panel survey data to identify racism as a reason for U.S. parents' increased concern about their children being bullied.

LIMITATIONS

At least eight limitations have been identified for this study. First, even though the *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles* and *2020 Estilos* surveys were designed to produce national estimates of the non-institutionalized U.S. population and U.S. Hispanic population, people who agree to participate in online survey panels could be systematically different from others (e.g. interest and ability to respond to online inquiries). Second, the study relies on the secondary analysis of self-reported survey data, data could be affected by social desirability bias. Third, differences by the age and other characteristics of the children are unknown and could have affected the reasons why parents expressed being more/less/equally concerned about their children being involved in bullying. Given there known differences in bullying by age, gender and other child characteristics, it is possible that parents' concern could relate to how frequent they consider bullying to be a problem among children that share their child(ren)'s characteristics. Fourth, it is unclear how perceived racism contributed to parents being more concerned about their children being bullied in Fall 2020 compared to the prior year as such concern may stem from children being bullied because of their race/ethnicity, for their beliefs about racism, for standing up against racism, for being perceived as racist, or other reasons. Fifth, the study did not consider differences in parents' concerns regarding different types of bullying (i.e., physical, verbal, relational/social, damage to property, cyber), nor how parent characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity) could influence concern about different types of bullying. Sixth, there could have been other reasons for parents' change in concern about bullying that were not reflected in the survey data available for this analysis. Seventh, differences in the proprietary methods of the two online survey panels considered for this secondary data analysis (i.e., KnowledgePanel® and Offerwise's QueOpinas for the *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles* and *2020 Estilos* surveys, respectively) could have affected the proportional differences found across U.S. Hispanic parent respondents for both surveys, limiting the researchers' ability to make statistical comparisons across surveys.

Finally, while it was possible to assess racial/ethnic differences in U.S. parents' concern about their child(ren) being bullied via *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles*, small sample sizes did not allow for reliable estimates of racial/ethnic differences in the reasons why parents' report being more or less concerned now compared to last year. To account for this, findings from U.S. parents overall and U.S. Hispanic parents from two separate nationally representative online panel surveys with similar methodologies and implementation timeframe (i.e., *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles* and *2020 Estilos*, respectively) are presented and discussed.

CONCLUSIONS

Parents play a key role in strategies to prevent bullying like promoting family environments that support healthy development (David-Ferdon, Vivolo-Kantor, Dahlberg et al., 2016). Therefore, it is imperative to understand what parents think about bullying to inform efforts on how to address it. While parents' concern about their children being bullied can vary across time and contexts, it is important to remember that not one isolated factor leads to bullying (David-Ferdon et al., 2016). As with other forms of violence, bullying is influenced by the interaction of risk and protective factors at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels of the social ecology. Furthermore, bullying can act as a developmental precursor to other forms of violence and risk behaviors across the lifespan (e.g., sexual violence, dating violence, delinquency, and crime) (Espelage, Ingram, Hong & Merrin, 2021; Loeber & Hay, 1994). Additional research is needed to understand how parents' perceptions about children's bullying affect their and their children's response to it, as well as more in-depth investigation into the role that racial inequities, racism, and cultural differences can play in bullying across different racial/ethnic groups, and how parents can help prevent it.

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Table 1.

Parent/caregiver's concern about their child(ren) being involved in bullying

I am concerned that my child(ren) might be...	Total (N=470)	2020 Fall ConsumerStyles				X^2 (p-value)	2020 Estilos (N=449)
		NH White (N=319)	NH Black (N=44)	Hispanic (N=58)	Other* (N=49)		
	%	%	%	%	%		%
physically attacked or hurt by another child	20.4	15.9	23.3	31.3	20.0	13.8 (0.0033)	61.2
the target of rumors or gossip	29.6	29.9	12.3	38.8	34.5	18.3 (0.0004)	30.6
verbally harassed/embarrassed at school	39.4	41.4	20.1	47.2	40.5	17.5 (0.0006)	51.4
verbally harassed/embarrassed online	31.0	34.1	13.1	33.5	33.7	15.4 (0.0015)	38.0
made fun of or left out by other children	37.4	44.8	15.8	32.5	36.5	27.1 (<0.0001)	42.3
the one bullying others	12.1	11.7	7.2	14.3	16.8	3.9 (0.2702)	36.4
around when other children are bullied	21.3	22.3	14.7	20.5	26.6	3.6 (0.3128)	21.2

Notes: Multiple responses allowed. Percentages and Chi-square test value shown are based on the weighted sample. No statistical comparisons across surveys were performed. NH=Non-Hispanic.

*
"Other" includes self-reporting to be a NH American Indian or Alaskan Native person, a NH Asian person, a NH Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander person, a NH person of another race, and a NH person with race unknown.

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Table 2.

Parent/caregiver's concern about their child(ren) being bullied now compared to last year

How concerned are you about your child being bullied now compared to last year?	Total (N=469)	2020 Fall ConsumerStyles [*]					2020 Estilos (N=449)
		NH White (n=318)	NH Black (n=44)	Hispanic (n=58)	Other [**] (n=49)		
	%	%	%	%	%		%
More concerned	10.7	6.6	15.7	21.2	6.4		27.3
Equally concerned	33.4	37.4	18.2	34.7	30.3		42.4
Less concerned	22.4	22.6	24.7	14.9	32.0		12.3
Not concerned last year or now	33.5	33.4	41.4	29.2	31.3		18.0

Notes: No statistical comparisons across surveys were performed. NH=Non-Hispanic. Percentages shown are weighted. Missing values were excluded from analysis.

[*] Differences by race/ethnicity of the parent/caregiver are statistically significant (Chi-Square=37.2, p<0.0001).

[**] Other includes self-reporting to be a NH American Indian or Alaskan Native person, a NH Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander person, a NH Asian person, a NH person of another race, and a NH person with race unknown.

Table 3.

Parent/caregiver's concern about child being bullied now compared to last year, by type of school attendance during Fall 2020

How concerned are you about your child being bullied now compared to last year?	Child(ren)'s Type of School Attendance* during Fall 2020						
	2020 Fall ConsumerStyles (N=416)**			2020 Estilos (N=352)**			
	Physically at school (N=185)	Not physically at school (N=231)	X^2	Physically at school (N=107)	Not physically at school (N=245)	X^2	
	%	%	(p-value)	%	%	(p-value)	
More concerned	9.8	8.5	30.5 (<0.0001)	36.7	21.4	9.9 (0.0196)	
Equally concerned	45.2	25.8		40.1	42.7		
Less concerned	14.2	29.7		13.2	13.9		
Not concerned last year or now	30.7	36.0		10.0	22.0		

Notes: Percentages and Chi-square test value shown are based on the weighted sample. Missing values were excluded from analysis. No statistical comparisons across surveys were performed. X^2=Chi-Square.

*
"Physically at school" refers to in-person (solely or during a portion of the semester) or hybrid forms of school attendance. Hybrid is defined as having both in-person and online school attendance throughout each week. "Not physically at school" includes fully online/virtual learning, homeschooling, and not attending school).

**
Data for parents with a missing value in school attendance (n=54 for *2020 Fall ConsumerStyles*; n=97 for *2020 Estilos*) is not presented.

Table 4.

Reason parent/caregivers' concern about their child(ren) being bullied is different now compared to last year

I am more **concerned** about my child(ren) being involved in bullying now compared to last year because...	2020 Fall ConsumerStyles (N=41)	2020 Estilos (N=119)
	%	%
Racism	42.5	60.1
More time on social media, video games	28.8	43.9
More time on virtual learning environments	16.6	25.7
Wearing face masks	25.2	21.8
Other reasons	40.0	34.2
I am less **concerned** about my child(ren) being involved in bullying now compared to last year because...	2020 Fall ConsumerStyles (N=104)	2020 Estilos (N=54)
	%	%
child(ren) are not physically in school	63.2	52.1
people are now more aware about racism	7.1	27.7
we are all being affected by COVID-19	17.4	42.3
my child(ren) has limited online time	17.6	20.0
my child(ren) is not on social media	31.0	7.1
Other reasons	18.9	16.9

Notes: Multiple responses allowed. No statistical comparisons across surveys were performed. Percentages shown are based on the weighted sample.