

**School Bullying: The Discrepancy Between  
Students' and Staff Members' Reports**

**By**

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**A Thesis Submitted in  
Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of**

**Education Specialist  
School Psychology**

**At**


**The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire**

**August, 2014**

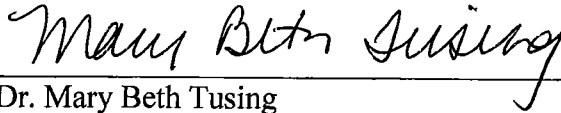
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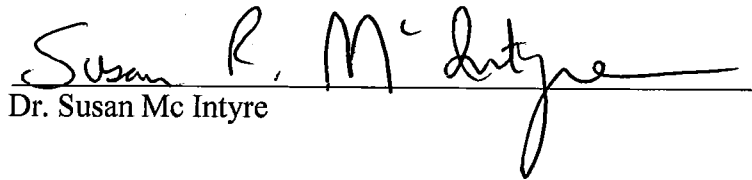
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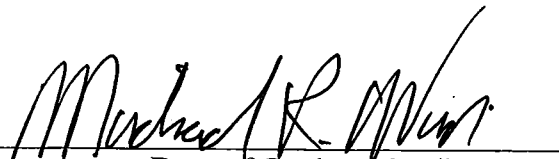
  
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School Bullying: The Discrepancy Between  
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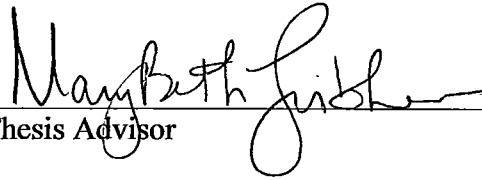
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The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 2014  
Under the Supervision of Dr. Mary Beth Leibham

While many studies support the fact that bullying is a concern for school staff members and students alike, few studies have examined the potential discrepancies between staff members' and students' perceptions of bullying. This cross-sectional study investigated middle school staff members' and students' perceptions of bullying at a Midwestern middle school in order to better understand the similarities and/or differences between staff members' and students' perceptions of bullying. This study also explored gender differences and grade-level differences in students' perceptions of bullying. A total of 571 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and 57 school staff members provided information regarding their perceptions of the frequency of specific forms of bullying, the locations where bullying occurs, who students report bullying behaviors to, the effectiveness and frequency of reporting bullying behavior, and the characteristics of the bullying victims and perpetrators. Results revealed statistically significant differences between students' and staff members' reports in all areas assessed. Staff members generally perceived more student involvement in specific bullying behaviors than did students, but they overestimated both the number of students who report bullying

incidents to staff members and the efficacy of reporting such behaviors. Additionally, there were significant gender and grade-level differences in students' perceptions of bullying. The current study contributes to the existing literature on bullying and highlights the need to address both students' and school staff members' knowledge of and attitudes towards bullying.

  
Thesis Advisor

7.24.14  
Date

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis advisor and professor, Dr. Mary Beth Leibham, for her tremendous guidance, patience, and expertise throughout this process. Her continuous support and positivity has been instrumental in the completion of my thesis.

I would also like to thank my parents, parents-in-law, and close friends for their encouragement and assistance during this journey. These wonderful people were always willing to help out in any way to allow me precious work time.

Finally, I would like express great appreciation to my husband for his endless support and encouragement, even in times of doubt. His optimism, thoughtfulness, understanding, and flexibility kept me positive and driven.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Bullying in the forms of physical, verbal, and relational aggression is a concern for students, school staff, and parents alike. Studies consistently demonstrate short- and long-term consequences of both being bullied and engaging in bullying behaviors, and school practitioners often view bullying as a pervasive issue that impedes academic performance (Cornell, Gregory, Huang, & Fan, 2012; Konishi, Hymel, Zumbo, & Li, 2010; Nishina, Juvonen, & Witkow, 2005). Further, bullying incidents are more commonplace than many people realize, with 1 in 4 students reporting they have been bullied at school (DeVoe & Bauer, 2011). Given the concerns and the prevalence of bullying in school settings, it is important to understand students' and staff members' perspectives of bullying and whether or not they perceive bullying to be as pervasive as researchers often report.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite programs and interventions aimed to reduce bullying behavior, bullying is still a pervasive problem in U.S. schools and consequently, an important area of research (Bradshaw, O'Brennan, & Sawyer, 2008; Kennedy-Shriver, 2008; Spriggs, Iannotti, Nansel, & Haynie, 2007; Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009). While much of the research examining bullying focuses on students' viewpoints, staff members' perceptions have been examined less often. Further, little is known about the variation in students' and staff members' perspectives and whether or not students and staff members perceive similar levels and types of bullying occurring. The few studies done in this area suggest that there may be discrepancies between students' and staff members' perceptions of

bullying (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007; Houndoumadi & Pateraki, 2001; Mitchell, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2010; Newman & Murray, 2005; Waasdorp, Pas, O'Brennan, & Bradshaw, 2011). These discrepancies, in turn, can inhibit the implementation of effective bullying interventions, particularly if staff members do not perceive bullying incidents to be as pervasive as students perceive them to be.

### **Purpose of the Study**

In an attempt to learn more about potential discrepancies between students' and staff members' perceptions of bullying, this study explored middle school students' and staff members' reports of bullying. Within this study, bullying was conceptualized as repeated aggression that is intentional and is characterized by a power imbalance (Olweus, 1993). Three different forms of bullying were addressed: physical (the act of physically harming someone), verbal (the practice of name-calling, teasing, or making threats to harm someone), and relational (the act of teasing behind someone's back, exclusion, urging someone to exclude another person, or spreading rumors/gossip; Olweus, 1993; Sullivan, 2000). It was predicted that students would report more witnessed bullying than staff members, as well as being less likely to report bullying to staff members than what staff members perceived. Further, it was predicted that students would perceive the reporting of bullying incidents to staff members as less effective than what is perceived by staff. In addition to exploring differences in students' and staff members' reports of bullying, differences across grade level and between genders were also examined. It was predicted that bullying reports would decrease in frequency with increased grade level, and more boys would report involvement with physical bullying while more girls would report involvement in relational bullying.

Since school psychologists are often asked to consult with teachers, students, and parents about school-related bullying and victimization, it is essential that they understand the general reports and perceptions of bullying and whether or not students and staff members are reporting and/or perceiving comparable levels of bullying. Understanding potential discrepancies between students' and staff members' perceptions of bullying will allow school psychologists and other school staff members to target specific areas for staff training and resources.

### **Research Questions**

1. Do students' and staff members' reports of bullying characteristics (e.g., forms of bullying, locations of bullying) differ?
2. Are there gender differences in students' self-reports of bullying?
3. Do students' self-reports of bullying differ across grade levels?

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Given the time that children and adolescents spend in a school setting, it is imperative that the school environment is a place where they can thrive, achieve, and feel safe. Consequently, it is important to understand the correlates of all forms of bullying as well as the prevalence rates and effective interventions so that students have a greater likelihood of success in school (Cornell et al., 2012; Konishi et al., 2010). One method to understand bullying is to gather information about various aspects of bullying from students and school staff members (Bradshaw et al., 2007; Bradshaw et al., 2008; Cornell et al., 2012; Houndoumadi & Pateraki, 2001; Mitchell et al., 2010; Newman & Murray, 2005; Waasdorp et al., 2011). Another method to learn about bullying is to obtain retrospective reports from individuals who either engaged in bullying behaviors during their youth or were victimized by bullies in their younger years (Bogart et al., 2014; Menesini, Modina, & Tani, 2009). There is currently an extensive body of literature on bullying, some of which has been based on current students' and staff members' reports and others which stems from individuals' retrospective reports. The following literature review will address the effects of bullying, the general descriptives of bullying in the school system (e.g., prevalence rates, types of bullying witnessed and perceived effectiveness of reporting bullying incidents to others), perceptions of victims and bullies, and the discrepancies between students' and staff members' perceptions of bullying. Due to the nature of this current study, this literature review focuses primarily on studies from the secondary school level.

## **Effects of Bullying**

Many studies have demonstrated the negative consequences of bullying, both for the victims and for the perpetrators. These consequences include negative academic, health, and psychological outcomes. One of the most notable consequences of bullying is the psychological and emotional impact it has on those involved (Esbensen & Carson, 2009; Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, & Coulter, 2012), including depression, anxiety (Menesini et al., 2009), and even thoughts of self-harm and suicide (Espelage & Holt, 2013). Espelage and Holt (2013) studied 661 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and found a strong association between bullying involvement and suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Out of all of the participants, approximately 60% of those identified as both a bully and a victim (bully-victims), 43% identified as bullies, and 37% identified as victims had suicidal thoughts in the past 6 months. More concerning was the fact that 43% of bully-victims, 36% of bullies, and 26% of victims indicated that they tried to hurt or kill themselves during the same time period. Uninvolved youth had a much lower rate of both self-harm thoughts (12%) and acts (8%; Espelage & Holt, 2013). Menesini et al. (2009) found that self-identified victims of bullying reported significantly more internalizing problems than did bullies, including depression, anxiety, somatic complaints and withdrawal. Bullies, on the other hand, displayed more externalizing symptoms than victims including delinquent and aggressive behaviors. Bully/victims reported both externalizing and internalizing symptoms (Menesini et al., 2009).

Other research supports the idea that bullying is associated with poorer health (Bogart et al., 2014; Copeland et al., 2014). Copeland et al. (2014)'s longitudinal study analyzed short-term C-reactive protein (CRP) levels in children and adolescents ages 9-

16, and long-term CRP levels into adulthood (ages 19 and 21) after testing the 1,420 participants as many as nine times. CRP signifies low-grade inflammation and is considered a risk factor for health problems that can include metabolic syndrome and cardiovascular disease. Individuals in the study were characterized into three groups: victims of bullying, the bullies, and those who were both victims and bullies. Researchers found that CRP levels rose for all groups as they entered into adulthood. Victims of childhood bullying had much higher CRP levels as adults than the other groups, while those who had been both bullies and victims as children had CRP levels similar to those not involved in bullying, and bullies had the lowest CRP. Similarly, Bogart et al. (2014) found that bullying was correlated with poorer health, especially among those who experienced bullying in the present and in the past. More specifically, decreased psychological health (e.g., depression) and physical health were found in those currently being bullied, had been bullied in the past or were bullied both in the past and present compared to those who had not been bullied.

Involvement in school bullying has also been linked with lower academic performance (Cornell et al., 2012; Hymel et al., 2006; Konishi et al., 2010; Nishina et al., 2005). Konishi et al. (2010) found that higher levels of school bullying were associated with lower math and reading achievement scores. More specifically, students enrolled in schools at which principals reported higher rates of bullying were more likely to have lower math and reading achievement than students in schools with lower bullying levels (Konishi et al., 2010). Like academic achievement, bullying involvement appears to be correlated with high school drop-out rates. Cornell et al. (2012) examined 9<sup>th</sup> grade students' and teachers' perceptions of school climate and safety conditions in Virginia

public high schools. The results revealed that the bullying incidents reported by both 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and teachers were related to the drop-out rate. Specifically, a one standard deviation increase in the prevalence of teasing and bullying was correlated with a 20.6% increase in dropout counts. Schools with below average prevalence rates of teasing and bullying had approximately 5.7% of their 9<sup>th</sup>-grade cohort drop out by the end of high school, whereas schools with above-average prevalence rates of teasing and bullying had approximately 10.2% of their 9<sup>th</sup>-grade cohort drop out (Cornell et al., 2012).

### **Prevalence of Bullying**

**Overall Prevalence.** The reported frequency of bullying varies greatly and ranges from roughly 10% to almost 50% of students being involved in bullying (Nansel et al., 2001; Schneider et al., 2012). Schneider et al. (2012) found that 25.9% of the 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in their study reported being a victim of bullying in the 12 months prior to survey administration, and 15.8% reported being a victim of cyberbullying. Kennedy-Shriver (2008) found that nearly 11% of school-age children in their study reported bullying or being victimized at least twice within a 2-month period.

Other studies reveal even higher prevalence rates of bullying (Bradshaw et al., 2008; Carlyle & Steinman, 2007; DeVoe & Bauer, 2011; Wang et al., 2009). The 2009 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (DeVoe & Bauer, 2011) revealed that 28% of students (approximately 7,066,000 students) between the ages of 12 and 18 reported being victims of bullying at school in the previous six months. In addition, self-report data collected from 7,508 6<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> grade adolescents attending 230 secondary schools revealed that approximately 36% of students reported being victimized at least once in the last two months, while 13.3% of the total sample

reported bullying others during that time period (Wang et al., 2009). In comparison, another study that examined the discrepancy between staff and student perceptions of bullying behaviors and attitudes found that over 49% of children reported being bullied by other students at school at least once during the past month, and 30.8% reported bullying others during that time (Bradshaw et al., 2008).

The prevalence of bullying as it relates to gender has shown mixed results. It appears that boys may be at a greater risk of both offending and being victimized than girls (Carbone-Lopez, Esbensen, & Brick, 2010; Carlyle & Steinman, 2007; Spriggs et al., 2007; Wang, Iannotti, Luk, & Nansel, 2010), although other research shows more girls than boys identifying as victims (DeVoe & Bauer, 2011). For example, the 2009 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey found that 26.6% of males reported being bullied, while 29.5% of females reported being a victim (DeVoe & Bauer, 2011).

Research suggests that bullying peaks during middle school as children enter adolescence (Bettencourt & Farrell, 2013; Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005; Hazler, 1996; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993; Pellegrini, 2002) and may decrease from middle to high school (DeVoe & Bauer, 2011; Nansel et al., 2001; Pepler et al., 2006; Schneider et al., 2012). The 2009 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (DeVoe & Bauer, 2011) found that the prevalence of bullying dropped incrementally from 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade (from 29.9% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders reporting being a victim to 20.4% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reporting being a victim). Additionally, Schneider et al. (2012) found that the overall prevalence of bullying decreased by approximately half from 9<sup>th</sup> to

12<sup>th</sup> grade (32.5% to 17.8%), and cyberbullying also decreased from 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade (17.2% to 13.4%).

**Forms.** Bullying can take on many aggressive forms, including physical (physically harming someone), verbal (name-calling, teasing, or making threats to harm someone), and relational (teasing behind someone's back, exclusion, urging someone to exclude another person, or spreading rumors/gossip; Olweus, 1993; Sullivan, 2000). Students more frequently report experiencing verbal and relational bullying as opposed to the physical forms of bullying (Bradshaw et al., 2007; Carbone-Lopez et al., 2010; Goldweber, Waasdorp, & Bradshaw, 2013; Trach, Hymel, Waterhouse, & Neale, 2010; Wang et al., 2009). Wang et al. (2009) collected self-report data from 7,508 6<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> grade adolescents attending 230 secondary schools who were participating in the Health Behavior School-aged Children (HBSC) study in the United States. They found that verbal and relational bullying were most pervasive within the last two months. More specifically, 53.6% of student respondents reported having been a victim and/or bully by verbal aggression, 51.4% by social (relational) aggression, 20.8% by physical aggression, and 13.6% by electronic (cyber) aggression. The two most common behaviors reported by identified bullies were name calling and social isolation, while the two most common types of acts endured by victims were name calling and rumor spreading (Wang et al., 2009).

Similarly, Carbone-Lopez et al. (2010) argued that indirect (verbal and relational) forms of bullying were more prevalent than direct (physical) bullying behaviors within their sample of middle school students. Their study, which examined 1,222 students across 15 schools found that approximately 37% of the students reported repeated

experiences of indirect bullying during the course of the study, while less than 10% of students reported repeated direct or physical bullying. Carbone-Lopez et al. (2010) also found gender differences in student reported bullying experiences. Boys were more likely to experience direct forms of bullying (6.8% males, 3.7% females), similar to other research (Wang et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2010) while girls were more likely to report being a victim of indirect bullying (26.9% males, 37.0% females) which is also similar to other studies (Bradshaw et al., 2008; Harris & Petrie, 2002; Trach et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2010). Although the majority of boys (63.8%) and girls (70.3%) reported they were never physically attacked or threatened, boys were more likely to report being intermittent and repeat victims of direct bullying than were girls. In contrast, girls were significantly more likely to report experiencing indirect forms of bullying and reported repeated experiences of indirect forms (Carbone-Lopez et al., 2010).

More variability in data exists as it relates to cyberbullying. Schneider et al. (2012) found that while the prevalence rate of traditional bullying (physical, verbal, and relational) was similar across genders (25.1% for girls, 26.6% for boys), cyberbullying was higher among girls than boys (18.3% vs. 13.2%; Schneider et al., 2012). In contrast, data from a 2005 study of 6<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> graders in the United States found that boys were more involved in cyberbullying (Wang et al., 2009). Furthermore, Bettencourt and Farrell (2013) found that 6<sup>th</sup> graders were more likely than 8<sup>th</sup> graders to be classified as aggressive-victims, or a class of people frequently engaging in physical and nonphysical aggression and experiencing overt victimization.

**Reporting.** Although bullying is now discussed more openly in schools, research suggests that students may not always report bullying incidents to school staff members

as once assumed (Bradshaw et al., 2007; Dowling & Carey, 2013; Eliot, Cornell, Gregory & Fan, 2010; Oliver & Candappa, 2007). Although 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in one Australian study rated teachers as the group of people most likely to stop bullying and get the bully in trouble, 78% of students sought out a parent when bullying occurred, as parents were the group of people believed to be most concerned. The second most frequently reported individual students reported bullying to was a close friend (72%), indicating that they were easiest to talk to, followed by reporting to a classmate (49%). Less than half of the surveyed students reported telling a teacher (45%) or a staff member (19%, Dowling & Carey, 2013).

Oliver and Candappa's (2007) looked at children's understanding and experiences with bullying, their responses to bullying, and their views concerning adult responses to bullying. Participants were from six primary and six secondary schools in England. Findings revealed that the majority of the participants felt that it was important to deal with the situation on their own when being bullied. In general, the students perceived the act of "standing up for themselves" when being bullied as the most effective method, while telling a friend was viewed as the second most important thing to do when being bullied. Only a third of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students reported that they would find talking to a teacher about bullying "quite easy" or "very easy" compared with just over half of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students (Oliver & Candappa, 2007).

Trach et al. (2010) found significant gender and grade level differences in student responses to and reporting of witnessed bullying. Out of the 9,397 4<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> grade students in the study, female students at all grade levels were more likely than boys to report that they helped the victim, asked friends to help solve the problem, and reported

to another peer when witnessing bullying. Although boys were less likely to report to another peer, they were more likely to distract the bully and ignore or avoid the bully when witnessing bullying. Additionally, both girls and boys in higher grades were more likely than students in lower grades to report indirect bystander strategies that included walking away, getting friends to get back at the bully, and doing nothing when witnessing bullying. Younger students, however, were more likely than older students to report more direct action against the bully including telling the bully to stop, helping the victim, or talking to an adult either at home or at school (Trach et al., 2010).

### **Bullies' and Victims' Characteristics**

Cook, Kirk, Guerra, Tia, and Sadek (2010) completed a meta-analysis on the predictors of three bully status groups (bullies, victims, and bully victims) across grades K-12. Findings revealed the most predictive factors of being a victim of bullying were low peer status and deficient social skills. Other predictors included demonstrating internalizing symptoms (e.g., withdrawal, depressive responses, avoidant behavior) and engaging in externalizing behaviors (e.g., defiant and aggressive responses, disruptive behavior), having negative thoughts about themselves, experiencing difficulty resolving problems with others, and coming from a community, family, and school environment characterized as negative in nature (Cook et al., 2010). Students who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender were more likely than those students who identified as heterosexual to be bullied (Berlan, Corliss, Field, Goodman, & Austin, 2010; Swearer, Espeleage, Vaillancourt, & Hymel, 2010). Additionally, physical weakness (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993), presentation (e.g., the way one looks, talks, and dresses), socioeconomic status (Sawyer et al., 2007), being overweight, having a disability

(Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993; Rose, Monda-Amaya, & Espelage, 2011; Zablotsky, Bradshaw, Anderson, & Law, 2012) and being a racial or ethnic minority (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2009; Sawyer, Bradshaw, & O'Brennan, 2008) were also identified as risk factors for being a victim of bully aggression.

Bradshaw et al. (2008) found that students who were frequently involved with bullying behavior (victim, bully or bully/victim) perceived the bullies at their school to be more popular and intimidating than those who were less involved in bullying behavior (Bradshaw et al., 2008).

### **Discrepancy Between Students' and Staff Members' Reports**

Although it has been demonstrated that both students and staff members report being concerned about bullying at their schools, some research suggests that there are discrepancies between students' and staff members' perceptions of the prevalence rates and types of bullying occurring at their schools (Bradshaw et al., 2007; Bradshaw et al., 2008, Houndoumadi & Pateraki, 2001, Mitchell et al., 2010; Newman & Murray, 2005; Waasdorp et al., 2010). Bradshaw et al. (2007) found that 33% of middle school students and 23% of high school students reported being bullied by others at least once during the past month, and school staff members estimated that only 10% or less of their students were bullied during this period of time. However, staff members did not differ significantly from students in their reported levels of concern about bullying. Additionally, significantly more staff members than students indicated that a student had reported telling a staff member after having been bullied during the past month (Bradshaw et al., 2007).

Bradshaw et al. (2007) also found that students perceived school staff members as negatively impacting the situation during intervention, while the vast majority of staff members believed they exhibited effective strategies for handling these situations. Fewer than 7% of all staff members surveyed believed that things got worse when they tried to intervene in a bullying situation, and over 86% of all staff surveyed endorsed the statement "I have effective strategies for handling a bullying situation." In contrast, almost 34% of the surveyed middle school students and 26% of the surveyed high school students believed that school staff members did nothing to follow up with the reports. This is similar to Bradshaw et al. (2008)'s finding that youth who reported involvement with bullying (18% as a victim, 12% as a bully, and 8% as a bully/victim) were significantly more likely than those who did not report involvement with bullying to believe that the adults at their school were not doing enough to prevent bullying (Bradshaw et al., 2008).

Waasdorp et al. (2011)'s examination of 11,674 students, 960 parents, and 1,027 staff at 44 schools also showed several discrepancies between adults' and youths' reports of witnessed bullying and feelings about safety and belonging at their schools. Results showed that staff members were 4.6 times more likely than students to feel safe, 2.4 times more likely than students to feel a sense of belonging to their school, and approximately 5.7 times more likely than students to report witnessing bullying.

It has been suggested that discrepancies in reports may exist because of staff members' lack of training in or knowledge about bullying (Charmaraman, Jones, Stein, & Espelage, 2013; Houndoumadi & Pateraki, 2001). Charmaraman et al. (2013) found that school staff reported a general lack of consistent, mandatory, and long-term training and

administrative support on both bullying and harassment. Many were also unaware of the policies designed to protect students from bullying experiences (Charmaraman et al., 2013).

### **Overview**

A growing number of studies have documented that bullying in the forms of physical, verbal, and relational aggression has various short- and long-term consequences for all of those involved including psychological, health, and academic effects. Despite numerous efforts at interventions and prevention strategies, various studies show that bullying is still occurring at problematic levels with between 10% and 50% of students reporting bullying involvement. More concerning is the low number of students who report bullying situations to school staff members.

One way to lower this prevalence rate of school bullying is to understand the nature of such aggression so that appropriate bullying intervention and prevention strategies can be put in place. For example, it is important for school staff members to recognize the common characteristics of bullies and victims and be knowledgeable about gender and grade level differences in the reports and perceptions of bullying. Furthermore, it is imperative that school staff members understand discrepancies between students' and staff members' reports and perceptions of bullying. Although little research exists in this area, a few studies have documented discrepancies between students' and staff members' perceptions of the prevalence rates and types of bullying occurring, and perceptions of the frequency and effectiveness of reporting to a staff member.

The present study addresses this gap in literature by examining the discrepancies between middle school students' and school staff members' reports of bullying. In

addition, it examines possible gender and grade level differences in student reports of bullying.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

#### Participants

Approximately 74% of the enrolled students and 56% of the staff at a Midwestern public middle school participated in this study. Specifically, 571 students (304 females, 265 males, two participants did not identify their gender) and 57 staff members (37 females, 16 males, four participants did not identify their gender) completed surveys. Specific demographic information pertaining to ethnicity and age was not obtained, although it is likely that the current sample represented the school population with approximately 92% of the participants being Caucasian. Refer to Table 1 for more specific demographic information.

Table 1

*Number of Male and Female Participants by School Role*

<u>School Area</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Students	100	105	205
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Students	86	113	199
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Students	79	83	162
Teaching Staff	13	24	37
Non-Teaching Staff	3	13	16

*Note.* Five student participants did not identify their grade level. Four staff participants did not identify their school employment status.

#### Measures

Perceptions of bullying were assessed using a 64-item student survey and a 37-item staff survey. These materials were adapted from the *My Experiences with Classmates at Schools, Revised* (MECS-R; Davidson & Kilpatrick-Demaray, 2007) survey. The MECS-R was designed to investigate how different definitions of bullying change prevalence rates.

In the original MECS-R, victims reported how often they experienced specific forms of bullying behavior (physical, verbal, and relational), bystanders reported how often they witnessed specific forms of bullying, and bullies reported how often they bullied others. All respondents rated the perceived intentionality of such behaviors. The survey also asked participants to report the locations of the bullying incidents (e.g., classroom, restroom), who they talked to about the bullying incidents (e.g., teachers, parents, friends), and why they thought it happened (e.g., race, weight, clothes, disability). The perceived popularity, strength, and intelligence of bullies and victims, as well as the overall prevalence of bullying within the last month and the last year were also assessed. The victim scale had an internal consistency reliability estimate of .85 for frequency questions and .80 for intent questions. On the bully scale, there was an internal consistency reliability estimate of .87 for the frequency questions and .84 for the intent questions (Davidson & Kilpatrick-Demaray, 2007). A copy of the MECS-R is included in Appendix A.

For the purpose of the current study, several modifications were made to the MECS-R. First, the survey distributed to students asked for demographic information that included gender, grade level, and academic grades. Next, in order to increase the reliability of answers, a definition of bullying was included at the beginning of the survey. More specifically, the following definition was included: "We say bullying is when another student, or group of students, intentionally says or does nasty or unpleasant things to someone else. It is also bullying when a student repeatedly teases, hurts, or leaves out another student on purpose. But it is not bullying when two students of about the same strength, intelligence, and/or popularity quarrel or fight." Finally, the items in

the current survey were organized into multiple sub-scales. Below is a description of each subscale.

**Forms.** The Forms subscale was comprised of three items, all of which came from the MECS-R. Physical, verbal, and relational forms of bullying were examined. Students responded to one question assessing personal victimization, one question assessing bullying perpetration, and one question assessing witnessed bullying. For each question, respondents were asked to determine the frequency of the following behaviors: cyberbullying, name-calling, teasing, mean things being said behind someone's back, threats, physical harm, rumors/gossip, other's urged to exclude someone, and exclusion. The frequency of these behaviors was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (0 = *Never* to 4 = 2 + *Times per Week*).

**Location.** The Location subscale was comprised of one item which came from the MECS-R and assessed the location of bullying. Using a 5-point Likert scale, (0 = *Never* to 4 = *Always*) students were asked to rate how often they witnessed bullying at various locations including the classroom, hallway, cafeteria, bathrooms, locker rooms, on the bus, and going to and from school.

**Reporting.** The Reporting subscale was comprised of three items, one of which came from the MECS-R and two of which were written for the purpose of the study. These items assessed the nature and perception of reporting bullying. Students' frequency of reporting was assessed and rated on a 5-point Likert scale (a = *Never talk to someone* to e = *I always talk to someone*). Students were asked who students report bullying to and to rate the frequency of reporting to a specific individual(s) on a 5-point Likert scale (0 = *Never* to 4 = *Always*). Choices included school personnel (e.g., teachers, school

counselors), peers (e.g., other students/friends), family members (e.g., parents, brothers or sisters) and no one at all. Students' perceptions of the outcomes of reporting were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale (a = *Makes the situation much better* to e = *Makes the situation much worse*).

**Bully and Victim Characteristics.** Students' perceptions of bullies and victims were assessed by seven items, all of which came from the MECS-R. One question examined students' perceptions of why victims are bullied and allowed respondents to check multiple responses (e.g., the way they look, what they wear, how they act). Six subsequent questions assessed respondents' perceived popularity, strength, and intelligence of bullies and victims. Each question was rated on a 3-point Likert scale (a = *More popular than most kids* to c = *Less popular than most kids*).

**Prevalence of Bullying.** The overall perceived frequency of bullying was assessed by asking students to respond to the item 'How often have you been bullied in the past year' and to rate the frequency on a 5-point Likert scale (a = *I haven't been bullied this school year* to e = *Several times a week*).

**Open-ended.** Students were asked an open ended question regarding their thoughts on how to improve any bullying problems at their middle school. A copy of the student survey is included in Appendix B.

The survey distributed to staff members asked for demographic information including gender and employment status (teaching or non-teaching staff). To increase the reliability of answers, a definition of bullying was also included at the beginning of the staff survey. The following definition was included: "We say bullying is when another student, or group of students, intentionally says or does nasty or unpleasant things to

someone else. It is also bullying when a student repeatedly teases, hurts, or leaves out another student on purpose. But it is not bullying when two students of about the same strength, intelligence, and/or popularity quarrel or fight.” Next, the items in the staff survey were organized into multiple sub-scales. Below is a description of each subscale.

**Forms.** The Forms subscale was comprised of one item which came from the MECS-R. Physical, verbal, and relational forms of bullying were examined. Staff responded to one question assessing witnessed student victimization. For this question, school staff members were asked to determine the frequency of witnessing the following behaviors: cyberbullying, name-calling, teasing, mean things being said behind someone’s back, threats, physical harm, rumors/gossip, other’s urged to exclude someone else, and exclusion. The frequency of these witnessed behaviors was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (0 = *Never* to 4 = *2 + Times per Week*).

**Location.** The Location subscale was comprised of one item which came from the MECS-R and assessed the location of bullying. Using a 5-point Likert scale, (0 = *Never* to 4 = *Always*), staff were asked to rate how often they witnessed bullying at various locations including the classroom, hallway, cafeteria, bathrooms, locker rooms, on the bus, and going to and from school.

**Reporting.** The Reporting subscale was comprised of two items, one of which came from the MECS-R and the second was written for the purpose of the study. These items assessed the nature and perception of reporting bullying. Staff were asked who students report bullying to and to rate the frequency of reporting to a specific individual(s) on a 5-point Likert scale (0 = *Never* to 4 = *Always*). Choices included school personnel (e.g., teachers, school counselors), peers (e.g., other students/friends),

family members (e.g., parents, brothers or sisters) and no one at all. Staff members' perceptions of the outcomes of reporting were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale (a = *Makes the situation much better* to e = *Makes the situation much worse*).

**Victim and Bully Characteristics.** Staff members' perceptions of victims and bullies were assessed by seven items that made up the Bully and Victim Characteristics subscale, all of which came from the MECS-R. One question examined staff members' perceptions of why victims are bullied by allowing respondents to check multiple responses (e.g., the way they look, what they wear, how they act). Staff members were also asked six questions aimed at understanding the perceived popularity, strength, and intelligence of bullies and victims. Each question was rated on a 3-point Likert scale (a = *More popular than most kids* to c = *Less popular than most kids*).

**Open-ended.** Staff members were asked an open ended question regarding their thoughts on how to improve any bullying problems at their middle school. A copy of the staff survey is included in Appendix C.

### **Procedure**

The principal of the middle school was contacted for permission to conduct the study and was given a cover letter and consent form (see Appendix D). A copy of the research proposal along with copies of the student, staff, and parent cover letters and consent forms were included in a packet distributed to the principal. In addition, an informational letter to parents and a passive consent form were sent home with every student explaining the purpose of the study and describing the survey (see Appendix E). If parents did not want their child(ren) to participate, they were directed to return the consent form indicating that they did not give consent for their child(ren) to participate.

The anonymous survey was administered during students' Language Arts class by their teacher on one day in October 2008. All participating students completed the survey in their classrooms. Teachers were given detailed instructions to ensure consistent administration of the student surveys (see Appendix F). After distributing the surveys, the teachers read aloud the bullying definition that was provided and reported that the purpose of the anonymous survey was to understand students' reports and perceptions of bullying at their school. In addition, language arts teachers reminded students that student participation was completely voluntary. The students who were not granted parental consent to complete the survey were asked to sit quietly during completion. Those students who were granted passive parental consent were asked to first read the cover sheet explaining the survey (see Appendix G), complete the survey and sit quietly until all student surveys were completed and individually picked up by the teacher. Students were allowed to take as much time as needed for completion with the average time for completion being 8 minutes. The teachers remained in their classrooms during the duration of the student survey to ensure that students were not discussing their answers and/or talking while others were completing the survey.

Staff completed their surveys during the beginning of an after-school staff meeting on the same day as students completed their surveys. The researcher first explained the research project and described the survey, read the bullying definition stated in the survey, and handed out the staff cover letters (Appendix H). Staff members were reminded that the survey was completely voluntary. After the cover letter appeared read by all, the researcher distributed the staff surveys. Staff members were asked to place their completed or uncompleted surveys in the blank envelope located in the front

of the room. Again, staff members were allowed to take as much time as needed for completion; however the staff survey required a mean time of 6 minutes. All surveys were gathered by the researcher at the end of the staff meeting.

### **Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Student and staff responses were entered into the database. Identifying information included in the system consisted of students' gender, grade level, and academic grades in school, and staff members' gender and employment status. Descriptive statistics, one-way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA), and independent samples t-tests were generated.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Research Question 1

**Do students' and staff members' reports of bullying characteristics (e.g., forms of bullying, location of bullying) differ?**

*Forms.* Both students and school staff members perceived verbal forms of bullying as more frequent than physical or relational forms. More specifically, the four most frequently reported forms of bullying were name calling, teasing, saying mean things behind someone's back, and spreading rumors or gossip. Students were significantly more likely ( $M = .90, SD = 1.14$ ) to report witnessing cyberbullying than were staff members ( $M = .25, SD = .64; t(609) = 4.20, p < .01$ ). Staff members' bystander reports of witnessing students being called names ( $M = 2.82, SD = 1.34$ ) and teased ( $M = 2.81, SD = 1.29$ ) were significantly higher than students' bystander reports of name-calling ( $M = 2.33, SD = 1.33; t(608) = -2.67, p < .01$ ) and teasing ( $M = 2.29, SD = 1.33; t(601) = -2.82, p < .01$ ). Refer to Table 2 for bystander reports of bullying categorized by school role.

Table 2

*Bystander Reports by School Role*

<u>Forms of Bullying</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Students</u>		<u>School Staff</u>		
		<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Physical						
Physically Hurt	554	1.36	1.34	56	1.57	1.22
Verbal						
Called names	553	2.33	1.33	57	2.82	1.34**
Teased	553	2.29	1.33	57	2.81	1.29**
Threatened to harm	554	1.19	1.30	56	1.36	1.21
Cyberbullied	555	.90	1.14	56	.25	.64**
Relational						
Teased behind back	547	2.22	1.36	55	2.33	1.31
Excluded	555	1.67	1.38	56	1.63	1.36
Urged exclusion	550	1.42	1.37	56	1.30	1.11
Spread rumors/gossip	551	2.05	1.44	54	1.94	1.28

Note: \*\*  $p < .01$

**Location.** Both students and staff members witnessed bullying most frequently in the hallway, cafeteria, and on the bus. Statistically significant results were found between staff members' and students' reports of witnessing bullying in the classroom ( $t(621) = -5.21, p < .001$ ), cafeteria ( $t(619) = -4.70, p < .001$ ), bathroom ( $t(607) = -3.98, p < .01$ ), locker room ( $t(606) = -5.84, p < .001$ ) on the bus ( $t(566) = -4.98, p < .001$ ), and going to/from school ( $t(602) = -6.08, p < .001$ ). Simply put, staff members more frequently witnessed bullying occurring in all locations. Refer to Table 3 for information regarding bullying locations reported by students and staff members.

Table 3

*Bullying Locations Reported by School Role*

<u>Bullying Locations</u>	Students			School Staff		
	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Classroom	568	1.21	.97	55	1.91	.65***
Hallway	565	2.48	1.02	57	2.68	.67
Cafeteria	557	1.86	1.17	55	2.62	.83***
Bathroom	554	1.12	1.45	55	1.91	.78**
Locker Room	556	1.42	1.42	52	2.46	1.90***
On the Bus	515	1.61	1.36	53	2.57	.91***
Going To/From Bus	549	1.17	1.23	55	2.20	.83***

Note: \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Reporting.** When asked who students report bullying to, “students/friends” and “no one” were rated highest by both students and staff. Staff more frequently rated teachers ( $t(616) = -3.32, p < .01$ ), school administrators ( $t(611) = -2.74, p < .01$ ), and other school staff ( $t(608) = -3.00, p < .01$ ) as people students report bullying to than did students. Students, on the other hand, more frequently rated other students/friends as people students report bullying to than did staff members ( $t(617) = 1.10, p < .05$ ). Refer to Table 4 for student and staff reports of who students report bullying to.

Table 4

*Perceptions of Student Reporting*

<u>Who Students Report To</u>	Students			School Staff		
	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Teachers	562	1.49	1.09	56	1.98	.67**
Other Students/Friends	562	2.81	1.16	57	2.63	.88*
Parents	546	1.77	1.23	57	1.82	.08
Brothers/Sisters	558	1.53	1.16	57	1.77	.08
Other Family	552	1.41	1.13	57	1.63	.09
School Counselors	556	1.65	1.24	57	1.86	.11
School Administrators	556	1.14	1.13	57	1.56	.11**
Police Liaison Officers	560	1.16	1.17	57	1.37	.10
Other School Staff	553	1/14	1/03	57	1.56	.09**
No One	553	2.06	1.26	47	2.00	.13

Note: \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

**Perceived Effects of Telling.** Although both students' ( $M = 2.42, SD = 1.12$ ) and staff members' ( $M = 1.95, SD = .71$ ) mean answer when asked "Telling a school staff member about a bullying incident..." was "makes the situation somewhat better," there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups in that staff members were more likely than students to believe that telling a staff member about a bullying incident was effective ( $t(577) = 2.66, p < .01$ ).

**Characteristics of Victims** Students most frequently reported family ( $M = 1.44, SD = .50$ ), disability ( $M = 1.35, SD = .48$ ), and friends ( $M = 1.34, SD = .48$ ) as reasons why students are bullied. In contrast, staff perceived disability as the most frequent reason for why students are bullied ( $M = 1.31, SD = .47$ ), followed by family ( $M = 1.30, SD = .46$ ) and friends ( $M = 1.28, SD = .45$ ). Significantly more staff members than students perceived what the student wears ( $t(596) = 2.83, p < .01$ ) and their family ( $t(596) = 2.03, p < .05$ ) as reasons why students are victimized. Refer to Table 5 for further perceived victim characteristic information.

Table 5

*Perceived Victim Targets by School Role*

<u>Perceived Victim Targets</u>	Students			School Staff		
	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
How they look	545	1.12	.90	54	1.07	.26
What they wear	544	1.29	.45	54	1.11	.32**
Their family	544	1.44	.50	54	1.30	.46*
Their friends	544	1.34	.48	54	1.28	.45
Their disability	544	1.35	.48	54	1.31	.47
How they act	544	1.17	.38	54	1.17	.38
They are different	544	1.17	.38	54	1.07	.26

Note: \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

Both students and staff members rated victims as less popular and less strong than other kids. Students rated victims as having more intelligence ( $M = 1.74$ ,  $SD = .68$ ) than did staff members ( $M = 2.13$ ,  $SD = .64$ ,  $t(560) = -4.02$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

***Perceived Characteristics of Bullies.*** Students and staff perceived bullies as having comparable levels of popularity, strength, and intelligence compared to other children. Significant differences were found between the students' and staff members' perceptions of bullies' popularity ( $t(577) = -3.22$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and strength ( $t(586) = -2.10$ ,  $p < .05$ ). More specifically, students perceived bullies as less popular and less strong than did school staff members.

## **Research Question 2**

### **Are there gender differences in students' reports of bullying?**

***Forms.*** More boys than girls reported being victimized by name-calling ( $t(560) = 5.72$ ,  $p < .05$ ), verbal threats of harm ( $t(557) = 3.73$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and physical harm ( $t(563) = 4.46$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while more girls than boys reported being victimized by mean things being said behind their backs ( $t(549) = -3.84$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and others being told not to talk/hang out with them ( $t(561) = 2.76$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Additionally, more boys than girls reported bullying others by verbal threats of harm ( $t(543) = 2.27$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and physical harm ( $t(552) = 2.56$ ,  $p < .05$ ) while more girls than boys reported bullying others by spreading rumors/gossip ( $t(551) = -2.67$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and saying mean things behind others' backs ( $t(539) = -4.70$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Boys' bystander reports of witnessing others being threatened ( $t(551) = 2.00$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and physically hurt ( $t(550) = 2.75$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were significantly higher than were girls' bystander reports, and girls' bystander reports of

witnessing a student talking behind another student's back ( $t(543) = -4.02, p < .001$ ), rumors/gossip ( $t(547) = -5.01, p < .001$ ), and exclusion ( $t(551) = -1.92, p < .05$ ) were significantly higher than boys' bystander reports. Refer to Table 6 for experienced forms of bullying by bullying student role and gender.

Table 6

*Experienced Forms of Bullying by Bullying Role and Gender*

<u>Forms of Bullying</u>	<u>Boys</u>			<u>Girls</u>		
	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
<i>Victim Reports</i>						
Physical						
Physically Hurt	265	.88	1.25	300	.47	.94**
Verbal						
Called names	265	1.64	1.48	297	1.39	1.36*
Teased	257	1.41	1.39	295	1.29	1.27
Threatened to harm	263	.75	1.24	296	.42	.86***
Cyberbullied	266	.25	.72	300	..37	.77
Relational						
Teased behind back	260	1.13	1.27	291	1.55	1.26***
Excluded	265	.61	.995	299	.78	1.08
Urged exclusion	264	.46	.93	299	.69	1.04**
Spread rumors/gossip	264	.80	1.13	300	1.10	1.18
<i>Bully Reports</i>						
Physical						
Physically Hurt	262	.37	.83	292	.21	.65*
Verbal						
Called names	259	.85	1.02	292	.82	1.00
Teased	254	.77	1.00	288	.70	.94
Threatened to harm	258	.33	.88	287	.18	.63*
Cyberbullied	262	.09	.37	293	.14	.42
Relational						
Teased behind back	257	.55	.92	284	.94	1.02***
Excluded	260	.33	.71	292	.33	.72
Urged exclusion	260	.23	.694	293	.23	.61
Spread rumors/gossip	260	.37	.78	293	.56	.82**
<i>Bystander Reports</i>						
Physical						
Physically Hurt	261	1.52	1.38	291	1.21	1.28**
Verbal						
Called names	259	2.31	1.35	292	2.36	1.31
Teased	257	2.20	1.37	287	2.37	1.28
Threatened to harm	261	1.31	1.37	292	1.09	1.23*
Cyberbullied	261	.77	1.18	292	1.02	1.10
Relational						
Teased behind back	256	1.98	1.44	289	2.45	1.25***
Excluded	261	1.55	1.39	292	1.78	1.38*
Urged exclusion	257	1.26	1.35	291	1.56	1.37
Spread rumors/gossip	258	1.73	1.47	291	2.34	1.36***

Note: \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

**Location.** Boys were significantly more likely than girls to report witnessing bullying in the locker room ( $t(552) = 5.59, p < .01$ ), while girls were significantly more likely than boys to report witnessing bullying in the cafeteria ( $t(553) = -2.01, p < .05$ ), going to/from school ( $t(545) = -2.79, p < .01$ ), and on the bus ( $t(512) = -2.14, p < .05$ ). Refer to Table 7 for bullying locations reported by student gender.

Table 7

*Bullying Locations Reported by Gender*

<u>Bullying Locations</u>	Boys			Girls		
	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Classroom	264	1.15	.96	302	1.27	.98
Hallway	262	2.44	1.08	301	2.52	.96
Cafeteria	260	1.76	1.66	295	1.96	1.16*
Bathroom	259	1.19	1.73	293	1.05	1.14
Locker Room	261	1.73	1.34	293	1.15	1.11**
On the Bus	246	1.48	1.36	268	1.73	1.35*
Going To/From Bus	257	1.01	1.17	290	1.30	1.26**

Note: \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

**Reporting.** Significantly more girls ( $M = 3.28, SD = 2.11$ ) than boys ( $M = 2.67, SD = 1.08, t(514) = -4.02, p < .001$ ) reported talking to someone else when bullying occurs. Girls ( $M = 3.05, SD = 1.00$ ) were significantly more likely than boys ( $M = 2.53, SD = 1.26, t(558) = 5.46, p < .01$ ) to report talking to other students/friends when bullying occurs. Additionally, girls ( $M = 1.63, SD = 1.13$ ) were significantly more likely than boys ( $M = 1.42, SD = 1.18, t(554) = -2.13, p < .05$ ) to report talking to brothers/sisters. Boys ( $M = 1.27, SD = 1.22$ ) were significantly more likely than girls ( $M = 1.03, SD = 1.04, t(552) = 2.56, p < .05$ ) to report talking to school administrators when bullying occurs.

***Perceived Effects of Reporting.*** Statistically significant results were found between boys' and girls' perceptions of the effectiveness of telling someone about bullying ( $t(534) = -2.43, p < .05$ ). More specifically, girls were more likely to indicate that "Telling school staff members about bullying incidents doesn't do anything about the situation ( $M = 2.53, SD = 1.10$ )" than were boys ( $M = 2.30, SD = 1.13$ ). On the other hand, boys were more likely to indicate that telling school staff members about bullying incidents "makes the situation somewhat better" than were girls.

***Perceived Characteristics of Victims.*** More boys than girls rated the students' clothing ( $t(540) = 4.278, p < .001$ ) and general differences ( $t(540) = 3.33, p < .01$ ) as reasons why victims are bullied while more girls reported victims as less intelligent ( $t(504) = -2.76, p < .01$ ) than what was reported by boys.

***Perceived Characteristics of Bullies.*** Boys were more likely to rate bullies as less intelligent ( $M = 2.52, SD = .60$ ) than were girls ( $M = 2.36, SD = .56$ ). Likewise, boys were more likely to rate bullies as less popular ( $M = 1.70, SD = .78$ ) than were girls ( $M = 1.50, SD = .71$ ). Girls, on the other hand, rated bullies as less strong ( $M = 1.64, SD = .529$ ) than did boys ( $M = 1.37, SD = .58$ ).

### **Research Question 3**

#### **Do students' self-reports of bullying differ across grade levels?**

***Forms.*** A one-way ANOVA found statistically significant differences among grade levels and bystander reports of witnessed cyberbullying ( $F(2,549) = 9.72, p < .01$ ), mean things being said behind others' backs ( $F(2,541) = 5.33, p < .01$ ), threats of harm ( $F(2,548) = 7.95, p < .01$ ), others being physically harmed ( $F(2,548) = 5.04, p < .01$ )

and rumors/gossip being spread about others ( $F(2,545) = 6.13, p < .01$ ). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that 8<sup>th</sup> graders were significantly more likely than 6<sup>th</sup> graders to report witnessed cyberbullying and significantly more likely than 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders to witness rumors/gossip being spread about others. Sixth graders were significantly less likely than 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to report witnessed threats and others being physically hurt.

**Location.** A one-way ANOVA found statistically significant differences among grade levels and reports of witnessed bullying in the classroom ( $F(2, 562) = 5.23, p < .01$ ), cafeteria ( $F(2,551) = 6.79, p < .01$ ), bus ( $F(2,511) = 3.92, p < .05$ ), and going to/from school ( $F(2,545) = 3.83, p < .05$ ). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed 8<sup>th</sup> graders were significantly more likely than 6<sup>th</sup> graders to witness bullying in the classroom and cafeteria, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders were significantly more likely than 7<sup>th</sup> graders to witness bullying on the bus and going to/from school.

**Reporting.** A one-way ANOVA found statistically significant differences among grade levels and the frequency of reporting bullying ( $F(2,512) = 5.08, p < .01$ ). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed 6<sup>th</sup> graders were significantly more likely than 7<sup>th</sup> graders to report bullying incidents to someone else. In addition, statistically significant differences among grade levels and reporting bullying to teachers ( $F(2,556) = 25.30, p < .001$ ), other students/friends ( $F(2,556) = 3.05, p < .05$ ), parents ( $F(2,540) = 32.09, p < .001$ ), other family ( $F(2,546) = 6.57, p < .01$ ), school counselors ( $F(2,550) = 16.04, p < .001$ ), school administrators ( $F(2,550) = 6.78, p < .01$ ), police liaison officers ( $F(2, 554) = 11.54, p < .001$ ), other school staff ( $F(2,547), = 8.26, p < .001$ ), and not reporting to anyone ( $F(2,548) = 7.65, p < .01$ ). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed 6<sup>th</sup> graders were significantly more likely than 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to report bullying incidents to teachers,

parents, other family, school counselors, school administrators, police liaison officers, and other school staff, and were significantly more likely than 8<sup>th</sup> graders to report bullying to students/friends. Seventh graders were significantly more likely than 8<sup>th</sup> graders to report bullying to school counselors when bullying occurs, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders were significantly more likely than 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders to report to no one.

***Perceived Effects of Reporting.*** A one-way ANOVA revealed statistically significant grade-level differences in the perceived effects of telling someone about bullying ( $F(2,534) = 6.66, p < .01$ ). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that 6<sup>th</sup> graders were significantly more likely than 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to believe that telling a school staff member about a bullying incident “Makes the situation somewhat better” ( $M = 2.20, SD = 1.07$ ), while 7<sup>th</sup> graders’ ( $M = 2.59, SD = 1.19$ ) and 8<sup>th</sup> graders’ ( $M = 2.52, SD = 1.06$ ) were more likely to believe that telling a school staff member about a bullying incident “doesn’t do anything about the situation.”

***Characteristics of Victims and Bullies.*** No statistically significant group differences in perceptions of victims’ characteristics were found. As for the perceptions of bullies’ characteristics, a one-way ANOVA revealed statistically significant grade-level differences in perceptions of bullies’ strength ( $F(2,531) = 13.94, p < .001$ ). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that 6<sup>th</sup> graders were significantly less likely than 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to view bullies as weaker than others.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The current study examined middle school students' and staff members' perceptions of bullying in order to understand the possible differences in their perceptions. It also explored gender and grade-level differences in students' perceptions of bullying. The results of this study are important for both students and school staff members because understanding both groups' reports and perceptions of bullying can increase awareness and collaboration within and between these groups. A partnership between youth and adults may be an effective and powerful method for intervening in and even preventing school bullying incidents. In addition, understanding potential discrepancies between students' and staff members' perceptions of bullying will enable school psychologists and other school staff members to target specific areas for staff training and resources. Finally, the results of this study are important because they contribute to the existing literature on bullying, particularly the variability in students' and staff members' reports of such aggression.

#### **Discrepancy Between Students' and Staff Members' Reports**

Not surprisingly, several differences were found in students' and staff members' perceptions of bullying. For instance, significant differences were found between students' and staff members' reports of the forms of witnessed bullying, locations of bullying, who students report bullying to, the effectiveness of reporting bullying incidents, and the perceived characteristics of victims and bullies.

Unlike studies that report that school staff members under-report bullying incidents (Bradshaw et al., 2007; Houndoumadi & Pateraki, 2001), staff members in the

current study generally reported more witnessed bullying in specific areas than did students. Although both groups reported witnessing verbal and relational forms of bullying more often than physical forms, significantly more staff bystanders than student bystanders reported witnessed name-calling and teasing. This is consistent with previous research on the prevalence of different forms of bullying (e.g. Carbone-Lopez et al., 2010; Goldweber et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2009). Results showed that students were more likely to witness cyberbullying than were staff members; however this type of aggression may be easier to disguise from staff or may be occurring off of school property which can account for the significant difference in reports. Even in locations where staff members had fewer opportunities than students to witness bullying (e.g., bus, going to/from school), staff members reported more witnessed bullying. It is possible that staff members' reports originated from personal beliefs and hearsay rather than on direct witnessed accounts. In addition, more witnessed bullying by school staff members suggest that staff members may have a greater exposure to or awareness of bullying characteristics than previously thought (Bradshaw et al., 2007; Olweus, 1993).

Both staff members and students most frequently reported that students report bullying to other students/friends or to no one, which is consistent with research suggesting that students may not report bullying incidents to school staff members as often as one might assume (Dowling & Carey, 2013; Oliver & Candappa, 2007). In fact, staff members were more likely than students to rate teachers, school administrators, and other school staff as people students report bullying to, with more students than staff members indicating other students/friends as people students report bullying to. Additionally, when asked about the outcome of telling a staff member about bullying,

significantly more staff members than students were likely to endorse the idea that telling a staff member about a bullying incident improves the situation. This finding is consistent with research documenting students' perceptions of telling a staff member about a bullying situation as not being very effective (Bradshaw et al., 2007; Oliver & Candappa, 2007).

In the current study, students and staff members had similar perceptions of the reasons why a student is bullied. Both groups believed having a disability was a common reason why someone is bullied, which relates to several previous studies (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993; Rose et al., 2011; Zablotsky et al., 2012). Additionally, the students' friends were another common reason why victimization was thought to occur. Little research has been conducted looking at bullying victimization as it relates to the victim's friendships, which could be another important area of research. Finally, similar to the study conducted by Cook et al. (2010), which indicated a student's family to be a predictive factor of being a victim of bullying, students and staff both perceived the student's family as a reason for victimization. Even though both groups rated the students' family as one of the most frequent reported reasons why a student is bullied, staff members were significantly more likely than students to endorse the idea. As in Sawyer et al.'s (2007) study, staff members were also more likely to believe that the student's clothing related to why they were victimized.

Even though students and staff members had similarities in bullying reports, this study suggests that these two groups perceive bullying differently in some important areas. Understanding both staff members' and students' perceptions of bullying (e.g., what types of behaviors they witness, their beliefs about the effectiveness of reporting

bullying behaviors) is important for addressing problematic issues surrounding bullying. More specifically, it is likely that a school-based intervention program for bullying would require different information and strategies depending on the targeted audience.

### **Gender Differences in Student Self-Reports**

The current study revealed several gender differences in bullying reports. More specifically, significant gender differences were found in the forms of bullying experienced as a victim, bully, and bystander, and gender differences were found in the frequency of reporting bullying, who students report bullying to, the perceived effectiveness of reporting, and perceptions of victim and bully characteristics.

Similar to previous studies, the current study revealed that boys reported being a victim, perpetrator, and bystander of physical bullying more than girls did (e.g., Carbone-Lopez et al., 2010, Wang et al., 2009 and Wang et al., 2010). Additionally, there appeared to be several gender differences in the area of relational bullying, with girls being more frequently involved in relational bullying as a victim (e.g., mean things being said behind their backs) a bully (e.g., spreading rumors/gossip about others), and a bystander (e.g., witnessing students talking behind others' backs) than boys. This finding parallels other research suggesting that girls are more involved with relational bullying than boys (Bradshaw et al., 2008; Harris & Petrie, 2002; Wang et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2010).

Gender differences were also found in the frequency of reporting bullying incidents in that girls more frequently reported bullying than boys. In addition, girls were more likely to report bullying to students/friends and to brothers/sisters, while boys were more likely to report bullying to a school administrator. In addition, boys perceived

telling a staff member about bullying as more effective than girls' perceptions of telling a staff member. It is possible that females' decision to report bullying to non school-related individuals directly relates to their perception of the ineffectiveness of reporting to a school staff member (as found in Trach et al.'s 2010 study). Additionally, more boys than girls may report to school administrators because of the possible nature of their observable and physical experiences of bullying. Perhaps school administrators can provide immediate support and, especially if the bullying is physical, immediate consequences. Girls, on the other hand, may report bullying situations to school personnel less often than boys because of the nature of their bullying involvement which is more often unobservable and, thus, difficult to prove and provide immediate consequences.

Furthermore, there were several gender differences regarding the perceptions of victims' and bullies' characteristics. More boys than girls rated students' clothing and "because they are different than other kids" as reasons why victims are bullied, while more girls reported victims as less intelligent than did boys. With regards to bully characteristics, boys were more likely to rate bullies as less intelligent and less popular than were girls. Girls, on the other hand, rated bullies as less strong. Additional research should be conducted to understand the gender differences in the perceptions of bullies and victims. Understanding the gender differences in such beliefs may provide educators with a greater understanding of bullying and, thus, assist in the support of and intervention with those involved in bullying.

### **Grade Level Differences in Student Self-Reports**

Several grade level differences in the areas of experienced bullying as a victim, bully, and bystander, the witnessed locations, the frequency of reporting bullying, who students report bullying to, the perceptions of reporting to school staff members, and the characteristics of bullies were found in the current study.

Although research suggests that student bullying is more prevalent during the transitional years such as when entering middle school (e.g. Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993; Pepler et al., 2006), the findings of the current study revealed different results. Eighth graders witnessed significantly more bullying behavior in several different areas than did 6<sup>th</sup> and/or 7<sup>th</sup> graders. More specifically, 8<sup>th</sup> graders were more likely than the two lower grades to witness rumors/gossip being spread about others and more likely than 6<sup>th</sup> graders to witness cyberbullying behavior. This is consistent with research showing that more indirect (verbal and relational) aggression increases with age and cognitive skills, with more prevalence among students ages 12 to 15 years old (Nansel et al., 2001; Rivers & Smith, 1994). Furthermore, it is possible that older students have more access to cyber/electronic media, increasing their opportunity for involvement in and observation of this type of aggression.

Eighth graders were also more likely than 6<sup>th</sup> to witness bullying in the classroom and cafeteria. This finding suggests that teachers may need additional training in how to recognize bullying behavior in their classrooms and the necessary steps to deal with this type of aggression. However, it is possible that more relational forms of aggression such as gossiping and rumor spreading occur in the classroom, thus decreasing staff members'

opportunities to witness it if not reported by students. Additionally, increased staff supervision in unstructured settings such as the cafeteria may be needed in schools.

Sixth graders were significantly more likely than 7<sup>th</sup> to witness bullying behavior on the bus and going to/from school; however they were also significantly less likely than the two advanced grades to report witnessing threats and others being physically hurt. This finding is not consistent with research suggesting that bullying and physically aggressive acts are higher in 6<sup>th</sup> grade during transition and adjustment into middle school than in subsequent grades (Bettencourt & Farrell, 2013; Pellegrini, 2002).

Furthermore, 6<sup>th</sup> graders were more likely than 7<sup>th</sup> graders to report bullying. This supports research suggesting that younger middle school students report more bullying and victimization than older students (Varjas, Henrich, & Meyers, 2009). Sixth graders were also more likely than the two advanced grades to report bullying incidents to teachers, parents, other family, school counselors, school administrators, police liaison officers, and other school staff, and were more likely than 8<sup>th</sup> graders to report bullying to students/friends. Additionally, 7<sup>th</sup> graders were more likely than 8<sup>th</sup> to report bullying to school counselors when bullying occurs. Eighth graders, on the other hand, were more likely than 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> to report to no one. Along with grade level differences in the frequency of reporting to others, statistically significant differences were found in the perceived effectiveness of reporting bullying. More specifically, 6<sup>th</sup> graders were more likely than both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> to view reporting to a staff member as effective in making the situation “somewhat” better. This suggests that the decision to report may be based on the belief of the outcome of reporting. Perhaps 6<sup>th</sup> grade students more frequently report bullying incidents to school staff because of the perceived effectiveness of the outcome,

while less 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders report this aggression to school staff because of their general belief that it “doesn’t do anything about the situation.”

With regard to the perceptions of bullies’ and victims’ characteristics, 6<sup>th</sup> graders were less likely than 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> to view bullies as weaker than others. No statistically significant grade level differences were found in the perceived characteristics of bully victims.

The variability in reports by grade level suggests that staff training and resources may need to be grade-level specific, with increased attention placed on 8<sup>th</sup> graders as this study reveals that it may be occurring more than what is suggested in past research (Nansel et al., 2001; Rivers & Smith, 1994). In addition, continued research should be conducted regarding the reasons why students do or do not report bullying incidents to staff.

### **Limitations**

It is important to note the limitations of the current study. First, the population from which data were derived was predominantly Caucasian middle class people from one small rural school; therefore generalizability to other schools and school districts should be done with caution. In addition, data were collected through self-report measures. As such, social desirability may have influenced the responses, particularly those of the staff. For example, students may have underreported their victimization or perpetration to appear in a more positive light, while others may have inflated their answers based on what they believed to be true rather than on their own reports or perceptions. Furthermore, it is unclear whether surveyed students and school staff consistently applied the bullying definition provided at the beginning of each survey

when answering each individual question. It is possible that some students' and staff members' reports were based off of their own perceptions of bullying rather than on the definition provided, affecting reliability in reports.

Approximately half of the staff population did not return a completed survey. The majority of these people included non-teaching staff (e.g., custodians, cooks, para-educators), and it is likely that their observable data could have been very insightful and important to this current research study.

Finally, although the survey was designed at a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading level, there may have been some students with limited reading abilities whom had difficulty reading and/or comprehending the survey if not read out-loud to them. This may have compromised their comprehension of the survey and, thus, affected their reports.

## **Conclusion**

Bullying remains a serious problem in American schools, and therefore everyone must do their part to reduce such aggression. The prevention and intervention of school-related peer victimization requires a better understanding of both students' and staff members' perspectives of bullying. The findings of this study suggest that students and staff perceive the nature of bullying differently. Further, boys and girls, as well as students across different grade levels may have different perceptions of this type of aggression. Thus, all perspectives and reports should be studied when evaluating the issues surrounding bullying.

The results of this study provide important implications for school psychologists and other educators. Considering the long- and short-term consequences bullying has on those involved (e.g., Bogart et al., 2014; Copeland et al., 2014; Espelage & Holt, 2013;

Konishi et al., 2010) and the prevalence of bullying in middle school (e.g., Brown et al., 2005; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993; Pellegrini, 2002) school psychologists and other educators should be well trained in the area of bullying and prepared to deal with bullying situations as they arise. Because school psychologists are often a part of interdisciplinary teams, they also can work with other educators to advocate for, create and/or implement bullying prevention strategies and programs that take into consideration the variability of students' and staff members' perceptions of bullying. Collaboration should also take place between students and school staff to ensure that developed programs and strategies work for all players involved, especially considering the research showing that a stronger teacher-student relationship and higher levels of connectedness appear to buffer the negative consequences of bullying (Konishi et al., 2010). The importance and benefits of telling school staff members and other adults should be thoroughly communicated to students to ensure that they receive the help and support they need when involved in bullying. Additionally, staff should be well-trained in the most effective intervention strategies to use when bullying is reported to them, which may increase student reporting. Finally, school psychologists and other school staff members should also be encouraged to design gender and/or grade-level specific prevention programs or strategies, as both genders and students in different grades likely have different perceptions and experiences with bullying.

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Appendix A

*My Experiences with Classmates at Schools, Revised* (MECS-R) Student Survey

**Circle** your answer for each question below. Please answer honestly.

**HOW MANY TIMES HAVE THESE THINGS HAPPENED TO YOU AT SCHOOL?**

1)... someone left mean messages on your cell phone (or text message), over the internet, or on instant messenger (IM)	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
2)... someone at school called you names	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
3)... someone teased or made fun of you	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
4)... someone said mean things about you behind your back	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
5)... someone stole or broke something that belonged to you	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
6)... someone said that they would hurt you or do bad things to you	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
7)... someone hit, kicked, pushed, attacked, or physically hurt you in another way	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
8)... someone followed you or jumped at you and made you think they might hurt you	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
9)... someone spread rumors spread about you or gossiped about you behind your back	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
10)... someone told others not to talk to you or hang out with you	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
11)... someone wrote bad things about you where other students could see it	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
12)... someone excluded you from a group of students or activity at school	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
<b>13) Were these things done in an intentional way? (was it on purpose to be mean?)</b>		It was almost never mean (just joking)	It was sometimes mean	It was almost always mean	

**HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU DONE THESE THINGS TO SOMEONE ELSE AT SCHOOL?**

14)...left mean messages on someone's cell phone (or text message), over the internet, or on instant messenger (IM)	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
15)...called someone at school names	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
16)...teased someone or made fun of them	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
17)...said mean things about someone behind their back	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
18)...stole or broke something that belonged to someone at school	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
19)...said that you would hurt someone or do bad things to them	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
20)...hit, kicked, pushed, attacked, or physically hurt someone in another way	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week

21)...followed someone or jumped at them and made them think you might hurt them	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
22)...spread rumors about someone or gossiped about them behind their back	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
23)...told others not to talk to someone or hang out with that person	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
24)...wrote bad things about someone where other students could see it	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
25)...excluded someone from a group of other students or an activity at school	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
<b>26) Were these things done in an intentional way? (was it on purpose to be mean?)</b>		It was almost never mean (just joking)	It was sometimes mean	It was almost always mean	

**HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU SEEN THESE THINGS HAPPEN TO ANOTHER STUDENT AT SCHOOL?**

27)...someone left mean messages on another student's cell phone (or text message), over the internet, or on instant messenger (IM)	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
28)...someone at school called another student names	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
29)...someone teased or made fun of another student	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
30)...someone said mean things about another student behind their back	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
31)...someone stole or broke something that belonged to another student	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
32)...someone said that they would hurt another student or do bad things to them	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
33)...someone hit, kicked, pushed, attacked, or physically hurt another student in another way	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
34)...someone followed or jumped at another student and made them think they might hurt them	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
35)...someone spread rumors spread about another student or gossiped about them behind their back	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
36)...someone told others not to talk to another student or not to hang out with them	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
37)...someone wrote bad things about another student where others could see it	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
38)...someone excluded another student from a group of students or activity at school	Never	About Once per Month	2 to 3 Times per Month	About Once Per Week	2 + Times per Week
<b>39) Were these things done in an intentional way? (was it on purpose to be mean?)</b>		It was almost never mean (just joking)	It was sometimes mean	It was almost always mean	

40. Where do things like this usually happen? (Circle ALL that are true)

- (a) In class
- (b) Between classes
- (c) At lunch
- (d) In the restroom
- (e) In the locker rooms
- (f) On the bus
- (g) Going to or from school
- (h) At another place: \_\_\_\_\_

41. Who have you talked to when things like this happen at school? (Circle ALL that are true)

- (a) No one else
- (b) Teachers
- (c) Other students
- (d) Parents
- (e) Brother or Sister
- (f) Other family member
- (g) School Counselors
- (h) School Administrators
- (i) Security Official or other School Staff
- (j) Someone else: \_\_\_\_\_

We say a student is BEING BULLIED when another student, or a group of students, say or do nasty or unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a student is teased repeatedly in a way that he or she doesn't like. But it is NOT BULLYING when two students of about the same "strength" quarrel or fight.

42) How often have you been bullied in school in the past?

1. I haven't been bullied before this school year
2. Once or twice
3. Sometimes
4. About once a week
5. Several times a week

43) How often have you been bullied in school this year so far?

1. I haven't been bullied before this school year
2. Once or twice
3. Sometimes
4. About once a week
5. Several times a week

44) Please write anything else that you would like to tell us about bullying, teasing, and harassment at KWMS (do not use any names):

45) Why do you think kids do hurtful things to other kids? What is it about the kids that get teased, harassed or hurt?? (Check all that are true)

- because of something about how they look (face, weight, height)
- because of what they wear
- because of something about their family (too rich, too poor, brother or sister, etc.)
- because of their friends
- because they have a disability or are in special education
- because of how they act
- because they are different than other kids

46) Think about the people who you saw involved in these events...

**WHO DOES HURTFUL THINGS THE MOST?**

This person (circle one):

- (a) Is more popular than most kids
- (b) Is about the same as most kids
- (c) Is less popular than most kids

This person (circle one):

- (a) Is physically stronger than most kids
- (b) Is about the same as most kids
- (c) Is less strong than most kids

This person (circle one):

- (a) Is smarter than most kids
- (b) Is about the same as most kids
- (c) Is less smart than most kids

**WHO IS HURT THE MOST?**

This person (circle one):

- (a) Is more popular than most kids
- (b) Is about the same as most kids
- (c) Is less popular than most kids

This person (circle one):

- (a) Is physically stronger than most kids
- (b) Is about the same as most kids
- (c) Is less strong than most kids

This person (circle one):

- (a) Is smarter than most kids
- (b) Is about the same as most kids
- (c) Is less smart than most kids

**A. How honest were you in answering these questions? (Check one)**

\_\_\_ Completely honest

\_\_\_ Somewhat honest

\_\_\_ Not at all honest

**B. How much thought and effort did you put into answering these questions? (Check one)**

\_\_\_ A lot of thought and effort

\_\_\_ A little thought and effort

\_\_\_ No thought or effort

**C. I am a (circle one)**

BOY

GIRL

**D. My Grade is (circle one)**

7<sup>th</sup>

8<sup>th</sup>

**E. My Ethnicity/Race is (circle one)**

White      Hispanic/Latino(a)      African American      Asian American

Native American      Biracial \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix B  
Student Survey

## Student Bullying Survey

1. I am a (circle one) BOY GIRL
2. My Grade is (circle one) 6<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> 8<sup>th</sup>
3. My academic grades in school are (circle one)
- (a) Mostly A's    (b) A's and B's    (c) Mostly B's    (d) B's and C's    (e) Mostly C's
- (f) C's and D's    (g) Mostly D's    (h) D's and F's    (i) Mostly F's

**Circle** your answer for each question below. Please answer honestly.

We say **BULLYING** is when another student, or a group of students, intentionally says or does nasty or unpleasant things to someone else. It is also bullying when a student repeatedly teases, hurts, or leaves out another student on purpose. But it is **NOT BULLYING** when two students of about the same strength, intelligence, and/or popularity quarrel or fight.

### 4. HOW MANY TIMES HAVE THESE THINGS HAPPENED TO YOU AT SCHOOL?

	0=Never	1=About Once per Month	2=2 to 3 Times per Month	3=About Once per Week	4=2+ Times per Week
a)...someone left mean messages on your cell phone (or text message), over the internet, or on instant messenger (IM)	0	1	2	3	4
b)...someone at school called you names	0	1	2	3	4
c)...someone teased or made fun of you	0	1	2	3	4
d)...someone said mean things about you behind your back	0	1	2	3	4
e)...someone said that they would hurt you or do bad things to you	0	1	2	3	4
f)...someone hit, kicked, pushed, attacked, or physically hurt you in another way	0	1	2	3	4
g)...someone spread rumors or gossiped about you behind your back	0	1	2	3	4
h)...someone told others not to talk to you or hang out with you	0	1	2	3	4
i)...someone excluded you from a group of students or from an activity at school	0	1	2	3	4

5. HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU DONE THESE THINGS TO SOMEONE ELSE AT SCHOOL?

	0=Never	1=About Once per Month	2=2 to 3 Times per Month	3=About Once per Week	4=2+ Times per Week
a)... left mean messages on someone's cell phone (or text message), over the internet, or on instant messenger (IM)	0	1	2	3	4
b)... called someone at school names	0	1	2	3	4
c)... teased or made fun of someone	0	1	2	3	4
d)... said mean things about someone behind their back	0	1	2	3	4
e)... said that you would hurt someone or do bad things to them	0	1	2	3	4
f)... hit, kicked, pushed, attacked, or physically hurt someone in another way	0	1	2	3	4
g)... spread rumors about someone or gossiped about them behind their back	0	1	2	3	4
h)... told others not to talk to someone or hang out with that person	0	1	2	3	4
i)... excluded someone from a group of other students or an activity at school	0	1	2	3	4

6. HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU SEEN THESE THINGS HAPPEN TO ANOTHER STUDENT AT SCHOOL??

	0 = Never	1 = About Once per Month	2 = 2 to 3 Times per Month	3 = About Once per Week	4 = 2+ Times per Week
a)... someone left mean messages on their cell phone (or text message), over the internet, or on instant messenger (IM)	0	1	2	3	4
b)... someone called them names	0	1	2	3	4
c)... someone teased or made fun of them	0	1	2	3	4
d)... someone said mean things about them behind their back	0	1	2	3	4
e)... someone said that they would hurt them or do bad things to them	0	1	2	3	4
f)... someone hit, kicked, pushed, attacked, or physically hurt them in another way	0	1	2	3	4
g)... someone spread rumors or gossiped about them behind their back	0	1	2	3	4
h)... someone told others not to talk to them or hang out with them	0	1	2	3	4
i)... someone excluded them from a group of students or activity	0	1	2	3	4

**7. HOW OFTEN DOES BULLYING HAPPEN IN THESE LOCATIONS?**

	0 = Never	1 = Rarely	2 = Sometimes	3 = Often	4 = Always
a) In the classroom	0	1	2	3	4
b) In the hallway	0	1	2	3	4
c) In the cafeteria	0	1	2	3	4
d) In the restroom	0	1	2	3	4
e) In the locker rooms	0	1	2	3	4
f) On the bus	0	1	2	3	4
g) Going to or from school	0	1	2	3	4

**8. WHO DO STUDENTS TALK TO WHEN BULLYING HAPPENS AT SCHOOL?**

	0 = Never	1 = Rarely	2 = Sometimes	3 = Often	4 = Always
a) Teachers	0	1	2	3	4
b) Other students/friends	0	1	2	3	4
c) Parents	0	1	2	3	4
d) Brother(s) or Sister(s)	0	1	2	3	4
e) Other family members	0	1	2	3	4
f) School Counselors	0	1	2	3	4
g) School Administrators	0	1	2	3	4
h) Police Liaison	0	1	2	3	4
i) Other School Staff	0	1	2	3	4
j) They don't talk to anyone	0	1	2	3	4

**9. How often do you talk to someone when bullying happens? (Circle ONE)**

- a. I **never** talk to anyone
- b. I **rarely** talk to someone
- c. I **sometimes** talk to someone
- d. I **often** talk to someone
- e. I **always** talk to someone

**10. Telling a school staff member about a bullying incident... (Circle ONE)**

- a. Makes the situation **much better**
- b. Makes the situation **somewhat better**
- c. **Doesn't do anything** about the situation
- d. Makes the situation **somewhat worse**
- e. Makes the situation **much worse**

**11. How often have you been bullied in school in the past year? (Circle ONE)**

- a. I haven't been bullied at all this school year
- b. Once or twice
- c. Sometimes
- d. About once a week
- e. Several times a week

**12. Why do you think kids do hurtful things to other kids? What is it about the kids that get teased, harassed, purposefully left out, or hurt?? (Check all that are true)**

- because of something about how they look (face, weight, height)
- because of what they wear
- because of something about their family (too rich, too poor, brother or sister, etc.)
- because of their friends
- because they have a disability or are in special education
- because of how they act
- because they are different than other kids

**Think about the kids you saw involved in bullying events...**

**13. The bullies are usually...(Circle ONE):**

- (a) More popular than most kids
- (b) About the same as most kids
- (c) Less popular than most kids

**14. The bullies are usually...(Circle ONE):**

- (a) Physically stronger than most kids
- (b) About the same as most kids
- (c) Less strong than most kids

**15. The bullies are usually...(Circle ONE):**

- (a) Smarter than most kids
- (b) About the same as most kids
- (c) Less smart than most kids

**16. The victims are usually...(Circle ONE):**

- (a) More popular than most kids
- (b) About the same as most kids
- (c) Less popular than most kids

**17. The victims are usually...(Circle ONE):**

- (a) Physically stronger than most kids
- (b) About the same as most kids
- (c) Less strong than most kids

**18. The victims are usually...(Circle ONE):**

- (a) Smarter than most kids
- (b) About the same as most kids
- (c) Less smart than most kids

**19. If you could do one thing at this school to improve bullying, what would it be (please do not use any names)?**

**THANK YOU!!**

Appendix C

Staff Survey

## Staff Bullying Survey

1. I am a (circle one)            MAN            WOMAN

2. I am a (circle one)            TEACHER    NON-TEACHING STAFF

**Circle** your answer for each question below. Please answer honestly.

We say **BULLYING** is when another student, or a group of students, intentionally says or does nasty or unpleasant things to someone else. It is also bullying when a student repeatedly teases, hurts, or leaves out another student on purpose. But it is **NOT BULLYING** when two students of about the same strength, intelligence, and/or popularity quarrel or fight.

3. **HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU SEEN THESE THINGS HAPPEN TO ANOTHER STUDENT AT SCHOOL??**

	0 = Never	1 = About Once per Month	2 = 2 to 3 Times per Month	3 = About Once per Week	4 = 2+ Times per Week
a)...someone left mean messages on their cell phone (or text message), over the internet, or on instant messenger (IM)	0	1	2	3	4
b)...someone at school called them names	0	1	2	3	4
c)...someone teased or made fun of them	0	1	2	3	4
d)...someone said mean things about them behind their back	0	1	2	3	4
e)...someone said that they would hurt or do bad things to them	0	1	2	3	4
f)...someone hit, kicked, pushed, attacked, or physically hurt them in another way	0	1	2	3	4
g)...someone spread rumors or gossiped about them behind their back	0	1	2	3	4
h)...someone told others not to talk to them or hang out with them	0	1	2	3	4
i)...someone excluded them from a group of students or an activity at school	0	1	2	3	4

4. HOW OFTEN DO YOU THINK BULLYING OCCURS IN THESE LOCATIONS?

	0 = Never	1 = Rarely	2 = Sometimes	3 = Often	4 = Always
a) In the classroom	0	1	2	3	4
b) In the hallway	0	1	2	3	4
c) In the cafeteria	0	1	2	3	4
d) In the restroom	0	1	2	3	4
e) In the locker rooms	0	1	2	3	4
f) On the bus	0	1	2	3	4
g) Going to or from school	0	1	2	3	4

5. WHO DO YOU THINK STUDENTS TALK TO WHEN BULLYING OCCURS AT SCHOOL?

	0 = Never	1 = Rarely	2 = Sometimes	3 = Often	4 = Always
a) Teachers	0	1	2	3	4
b) Other students/friends	0	1	2	3	4
c) Parents	0	1	2	3	4
d) Brother(s) or Sister(s)	0	1	2	3	4
e) Other family members	0	1	2	3	4
f) School Counselors	0	1	2	3	4
g) School Administrators	0	1	2	3	4
h) Police Liaison	0	1	2	3	4
i) Other School Staff	0	1	2	3	4
j) No one else	0	1	2	3	4

6. Telling a school staff member about a bullying incident... (Circle ONE)

- Makes the situation **much better**
- Makes the situation **somewhat better**
- Doesn't do anything** about the situation
- Makes the situation **somewhat worse**
- Makes the situation **much worse**

**7. Why do you think students do hurtful things to other students? What is it about these students that get teased, harassed, purposefully left out, or hurt? (Check all that are true)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ because of something about how they look (face, weight, height)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ because of what they wear  
 \_\_\_\_\_ because of something about their family (too rich, too poor, brother or sister, etc.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ because of their friends  
 \_\_\_\_\_ because they have a disability or are in special education  
 \_\_\_\_\_ because of how they act  
 \_\_\_\_\_ because they are different than other kids

**Think about the students you saw involved in bullying events...**

**8. The bullies are usually...(Circle ONE):**

- (a) More popular than most kids  
 (b) About the same as most kids  
 (c) Less popular than most kids

**9. The bullies are usually...(Circle ONE):**

- (a) Physically stronger than most kids  
 (b) About the same as most kids  
 (c) Less strong than most kids

**10. The bullies are usually...(Circle ONE):**

- (a) Smart than most kids  
 (b) About the same as most kids  
 (c) Less smart than most kids

**11. The victims are usually...(Circle ONE):**

- (a) More popular than most kids  
 (b) About the same as most kids  
 (c) Less popular than most kids

**12. The victims are usually...(Circle ONE):**

- (a) Physically stronger than most kids  
 (b) About the same as most kids  
 (c) Less strong than most kids

**13. The victims are usually...(Circle ONE):**

- (a) Smarter than most kids  
 (b) About the same as most kids  
 (c) Less smart than most kids

**14. If you could do one thing at this school to improve bullying, what would it be (please do not use any names)?**

**THANK YOU!!**

Appendix D

Principal Cover Letter and Consent Form

Dear Dr. Michael Erickson,

I am a school psychology graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. I currently am working on my thesis and would like to ask your help in having your middle school students and staff members fill out the enclosed surveys. I am studying students' and teachers' reports and perceptions of bullying, and will analyze any discrepancy between these reports. I hope to include all 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, along with all of the school staff members at South Middle School. Students will receive an envelope with the survey inside during their Language Arts class. The students will be instructed not to write their names on the survey. All staff members will receive the survey that morning and asked to fill it out by the end of the day.

The survey asks students and teachers to answer questions in regards to their reports and perceptions of bullying at South Middle School. Also, to ensure anonymity, students will only be asked questions regarding their sex and grade level, and grades in school. In addition, school staff will only be asked their sex and if they are teaching or nonteaching staff. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to fill out. Your students' participation in this research project is completely voluntary and it is not a condition for being the recipient of any benefits or services from the middle school. The identity of the students will not be asked on the survey. The decision to incorporate this study into your larger bullying awareness program could help to better understand the prevalence and impact of bullying to students' and teachers' at South Middle School.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me, Kelley O'Connell, at (920) 562-1733. If you have any questions or concerns as a result of this study, please contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects chair.

Dr. Don Bredle  
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects  
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs  
168 Human Sciences and Services Building  
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire  
Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004  
Telephone: (715) 836-2373

When my work is completed, I would be happy to give you a copy of my thesis and/or a copy of my survey for your school's future use. I will also present my findings if those at South Middle School are interested. Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

---

Kelley M. O'Connell – Student Researcher  
School Psychology Graduate Student  
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

## CONSENT FORM

Kelley O'Connell, a second-year school psychology graduate student, is interested in helping South Middle School learn more about students' and teachers' reports and perceptions of bullying at my school. I understand that the purpose of Ms. O'Connell's study is to assess the prevalence of bullying at South. The study will also assess the discrepancy between middle school students' and school staff's perceptions and reports of bullying on the core elements which include negative behaviors (name-calling, hitting, and excluding) power differentiation, intent to harm, and repetition. I understand that, to gather data, Ms. O'Connell will ask all willing students and school staff to complete an anonymous, paper-based survey. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes for students and 10 minutes for school staff to complete.

**I understand that, to ensure anonymity among participants, students will only be asked their sex, grade, and academic grades in school, and school staff members will only be asked questions regarding their sex and if they are a teaching or non-teaching staff member. All participants will be asked to refrain from including any self-identifying information (i.e., name) on their surveys. It will not be possible to trace any survey back to who completed it. If I want to see a copy of the survey or have any other questions I will call or write Ms. O'Connell at 3912 Boardwalk St. Apt 1, Eau Claire, WI, 54701, Telephone (920) 562-1733, Email [oconnekm@uewc.edu](mailto:oconnekm@uewc.edu).**

I am aware that my students' and staff members' participation in this study will provide beneficial information about their perceptions and reports of bullying. Participation may also provide information that can be used in our school-wide bullying awareness program. Risk from participation is considered to be rare; however, students exposed to excessive bullying may experience negative emotion when filling out the survey. School counselors and the school psychologist will be informed of when students will be filling out the survey. In addition, teachers will remind the students that school counselors and the school psychologist will be available if any student is in need of consultation. There is no foreseeable risk for school staff.

I understand that that the distribution of the surveys has been approved by the Eau Claire Area School District as well as the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. If I have any concerns about the treatment of human subjects in this study, I may call or write:

Dr. Don Bredle  
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects  
168 Human Sciences and Services Building  
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire  
Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004  
Telephone: (715) 836-2373

I understand that all students' and staff members' inquiries will remain anonymous, and will be kept in the strictest of confidence. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that participation in this study for all students and staff is voluntary. **I also understand that I and all student and staff participants are free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation at any time.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

I, the undersigned, have defined and fully explained the investigation to the above participant.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

Appendix E

Parent Informational Letter and Passive Consent Form

Dear Middle School Parent,

South Middle School is interested in learning more about students' and teachers' reports and perceptions of bullying at their school. Kelley O'Connell, a school psychology graduate student, is also interested in this topic and will be working with South Middle School. A total of 775 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will be asked to complete a survey. The survey asks about students' reports and perceptions toward any bullying activity that takes place at South Middle School. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and will be administered during the students' Language Arts class.

**To ensure anonymity among participants, students will only be asked questions regarding their sex, grade level, and grades in school. Students will be asked to refrain from including any self-identifying information (i.e., name) on their surveys. It will not be possible to trace any survey back to who completed it. If you want to see a copy of the survey please feel free to contact South Middle school at 715-852-5200.**

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participation or refusal to participate will not affect your child's access to services provided by the school. If you do not want your child to participate in the study, please fill-out and return the bottom of this letter. You do not need to return anything to school if you consent for your child's participation in this study.

Your child's participation in the study will help us to learn more about specific information regarding bullying at South Middle School. It will also give them information they can use for their school-wide bullying awareness program. The distribution of the surveys has been approved by the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. If you have any concerns about this study, please contact:

Dr. Don Bredle  
 Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects  
 Office of Research and Sponsored Programs  
 168 Human Sciences and Services Building  
 University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire  
 Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004  
 Telephone: (715) 836-2373

-----

I, \_\_\_\_\_ do not want my child, \_\_\_\_\_ to  
 participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

Appendix F  
Teacher Directions

## Teacher Directions

Please give the following directions to your students:

1. "Some of you will be asked to take a survey about your views of bullying at South Middle School"
2. "The survey is completely voluntary. You can chose at any time to not fill out the survey."
3. "These surveys are completely anonymous, meaning that no one will be able to trace your survey back to you."
4. "Those of you who are not able to take the survey or chose not to have to remain in your seats, quietly, until the students are done."
5. "You must NOT put your names or anyone else's name on the survey."
6. "School counselors and school psychologists know that students will be filling out this survey and they will be available if anyone would like to speak with them."
7. "I am now going to pass out the surveys and cover letters. The cover letter explains the survey in more detail."

Pass out the cover letters/surveys to all students able and/or willing to participate

8. "Please read the cover letter to yourselves, and begin filling out the survey after you are completed. Please don't put your name or anyone else's on the survey. Please put your pencils down and sit quietly when they are completed with the survey. I will come around and pick them up when you are finished."

Please go around and pick up the surveys one by one rather than having students pass them to the front. This will ensure the students that others will not be able to glance at their answers.

Please place the completed surveys in the large envelope and bring it to the student services office. Place them in the box titled STUDENT SURVEYS.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION!

Appendix G

Student Cover Letter and Consent Form

## Cover Letter

Dear Research Participant:

You are invited to participate in a study conducted by Kelley O'Connell, School Psychology Graduate Student, and Mary Beth Leibham, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. The main purpose of this study is to learn more about students' and staff members' perceptions of bullying at the middle school level.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete the survey and answer the questions as honestly as possible. The survey should take approximately 10 to 20 minutes to complete. Participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from filling out the survey at any time. You are not required to participate and declining to participate will not impact you in any negative ways. By answering the questions and returning this survey, you agree and give your consent to be a part of this study.

Your answers will remain confidential, and all surveys will be anonymous. To ensure anonymity among participants, please do not write any names or any identifying information on any portion of the survey. Students will only be asked questions regarding sex, grade, and academic grades in school. Staff members will only be asked questions regarding their sex and job responsibilities.

In this project, there are no known economic, legal, physical, psychological, or social risks to participants in either immediate or long-range outcomes. I understand that it is not possible to identify all potential risks, but I believe that reasonable safeguards have been taken to minimize both the known and the potential, but unknown risks. You may withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time.

The distribution of the surveys has been approved by the Eau Claire Area School District as well as the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. If you have any questions or concerns about your treatment as a participant in this study, please contact Dr. Don Bredle, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, 168 Human Sciences and Services Building, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, WI, 54702-400, (715) 836-2373. If you have any other questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact Dr. Mary Beth Leibham, Department of Psychology, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004, (715) 836-4536.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and participation.

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Kelley M. O'Connell – Student Researcher  
School Psychology Graduate Student  
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Dear Student,

I am a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire. As a part of my Specialist thesis I am interested in learning more about students' and staff members' reports and perceptions of bullying at the middle school level. I also am interested in seeing if there is a difference between students' and staff members' reports and perceptions. Please complete the survey and answer the questions as honestly as possible.

Your answers will remain confidential, meaning that nobody will know how you answered the questions.

Participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw, or stop filling out the survey, at any time. By answering the questions, you agree to be a part of this study. Deciding not to fill out the survey does not impact you in any bad ways.

If you have any questions please raise your hand or quietly go to your teacher. It is ok to ask questions if you do not understand; however it is also important to ask your questions quietly because you do not want to interrupt the thinking of your classmates.

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to finish. After you finish all of the questions, please place your completed survey in the box marked "Survey."

Thank you very much for your cooperation and participation.

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Kelley M. O'Connell – Student Researcher  
School Psychology Graduate Student  
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Appendix H

Staff Cover Letter and Consent Form

Dear Participant:

I am a school psychology graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. For my thesis, I am investigating students' and staff members' reports and perceptions of bullying at South Middle School. I would like to invite you to participate in this study because, as a staff member, you have a unique perspective on such activity at your school.

You are one of 108 staff members at South Middle School that have been asked to participate in this study. If you are interested in participating in this study, please fill out the attached survey honestly and to the best of your knowledge, place it back in the envelope, and return it to the guidance counseling office secretary by the end of the day. Your confidentiality will be ensured by only asking you your sex and if you are a teaching or non-teaching staff member.

If you have any further questions about the purpose of this research study, you may call or write Dr. Mary Beth Leibham, Department of Psychology, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, WI 54702, Telephone (715) 836-4536. You may also call or write Dr. Don Bredle, Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, 168 Human Sciences and Services Building, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, WI. 54702-4004, Telephone (715) 836-2373.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this study. Only 100 South Middle School staff members will be surveyed and it is important to get a good sample of your opinions.

Thank you very much for your time!

Sincerely,

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Kelley M. O'Connell - Student Researcher  
School Psychology Graduate Student  
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

## Staff Consent Form

Kelley O'Connell, a second-year school psychology graduate student, is interested in helping South Middle School learn more about students' and teachers' perceptions of bullying at my school. I understand that the purpose of Ms. O'Connell's study is to assess the prevalence of bullying at South. The study will also assess the discrepancy between middle school students' and school staff's perceptions of bullying on the core elements which include negative behaviors (name-calling, hitting, and excluding) power differentiation, intent to harm, and repetition. I understand that, to gather data, Ms. O'Connell will ask all willing students and school staff to complete an anonymous, paper-based survey. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes for school staff to complete.

**I understand that, to ensure anonymity among participants, I will only be asked questions regarding my sex and if I am a teaching or non-teaching staff. I will be asked to refrain from including any self-identifying information (i.e., name) on my survey. It will not be possible to trace any survey back to who completed it. If data from this study are to be presented or published, my identity will not be divulged in any way. If I want to see a copy of the survey I should call or write Ms. O'Connell at 3912 Boardwalk St. Apt 1, Eau Claire, WI, 54701, Telephone 920-562-1733, Email [oconnekm@uwec.edu](mailto:oconnekm@uwec.edu).**

I am being invited to participate in this study because, as a staff member, I have a unique perspective on bullying activity at my school. My participation in this study will provide beneficial information about my perceptions of bullying, and how they relate to the perceptions of students and other staff members. My participation will also give South Middle School information they can use for their school-wide bullying awareness program. My participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no foreseeable risk for me to participate in this study.

I understand that the distribution of the surveys has been approved by the Eau Claire Area School District as well as the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. If I have any concerns about the treatment of human subjects in this study, I may call or write:

Dr. Don Bredle  
Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects  
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs  
168 Human Sciences and Services Building  
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire  
Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004  
Telephone: (715) 836-2373

I understand that all inquiries will remain anonymous and will be kept in the strictest confidence. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions. **I also understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time.**

