Bullying Among School-Aged Children

Alfreada Brown-Kelly

Old Dominion University

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BULLYING AMONG SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

by

Alfreada Brown-Kelly
B.S. May 2010, Old Dominion University

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

BULLYING AMONG SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Alfreada Brown-Kelly
Old Dominion University, 2013
Director: Dr. Randy Gainey

This thesis investigates the relationship between gender, race and strains. Using data collected from the 2005-2006 Health Behavior in School-Aged Children, the study examined children’s outlooks and experiences relating to an extensive range of health related activities and lifestyles. Specifically, this study examined the ways in which males and females bully and if black students bully more than white students. Furthermore, the study examined race and gender differences in bullying, and the impact of strains on these relationships. It was found that both race and gender are significant predictors of bullying when controlling for measures of strains and other demographic variables. The study also found that males were more likely to bully than females and blacks were more likely to bully than whites. The three measures of strain that were utilized were all significant predictors of all three types of bullying except for the relationship between life strain and indirect bullying.
This thesis is dedicated to my family members who are watching me in heaven applauding my completion of this thesis.

Junius Reado

Victoria Butler-Reado

Oliver Brown

Kenneth Brown Sr.

Clarence Brown Sr.

Mary Elizabeth Kelly
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Bullying is an omnipresent problem found in schools universally (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton and Scheidt 2001; Nolin, Davies, & Chandler, 1996; Olweus, 1993). Bullying can affect a school’s atmosphere, generating fear among children, hindering their capability to learn and consequently leading to disruptive behavior (Center for School Mental Health Assistance, CSMHA 2002). Children who bully want to feel powerful and in charge, get pleasure from hurting others, have no compassion for their targets, and are insolent towards grown-ups. Additionally, bullies are not sociable and are less likely to obey school regulations (CSMHA 2002).

Bullying behaviors can be documented back to the 1530’s (Harper 2008). Bullying includes at least two people, a bully and a victim (Donegan 2012). Dan Olweus (1993) has been identified as the father of bullying studies and his results go back to the 1970’s in Sweden and Norway. His definition of bullying is commonly used and accepted. He defines bullying as a precise type of aggression, which is deliberate, recurring and contains an inequality of power among victims and perpetrators (Olweus, 1993).

The majority of school violence and aggression comprises schoolchildren bullying their classmates (Boulton 1999). The bully mistreats the injured party physically, orally or in other ways to acquire a sense of dominance and control and these acts may be direct or indirect (Donegan, 2012). Wang, Iannotti and Nansel, (2009) describes physical bullying, for example, as striking, shoving and kicking and verbal bullying, such as calling names and joking in a cruel way, are believed to be a direct type of bullying. The
most common form of bullying is direct verbal aggression. Direct bullying increases
during elementary school, peaks during middle and junior high school, and descends
during high school. Wang et al. (2009) describe indirect bullying, as social segregation
and spreading untruths.

Wade and Beran (2011) reported that the overall community has joined the school
community in identifying a new type of bullying called cyberbullying. Cyberbullying,
also called online bullying, is defined as “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the
medium of electronic text” (Patchin and Hinduja 2006:152). The main ways in which
cyberbullying occur include private computers connected to the Internet and cellular
phones (Patchin and Hinduja 2006). As the popularity of electronic devices grows among
young people, cyber or electronic bullying will rise (Wang et al 2009). Patchin and
Hinduja (2006) noted that bullying can transpire any place. Previously, communication
involving direct contact was essential for harassment to take place (Patchin and Hinduja
2006). Due to the increasing prevalence of the Internet, private computers and cell
phones, that is not the situation today (Patchin and Hinduja 2006).

Patchin and Hinduja (2006) investigated cyberbullying and studied the possibility
of cyberbullying becoming as commonplace as traditional bullying. Bullying is
happening online and is influencing children with hurtful behaviors such as dissing
individuals, name calling, or having others gossiping about them. (Patchin and Hinduja
2006). Nearly 30 percent of the teenagers in the Patchin and Hinduja (2006) study
claimed to have been targets of online bullying.

Moreover, bullying viewed in reference to gender and race has received increased
attention. Research examined by Carbone-Lopez, Esbensen and Brick (2010) notes that
gender is one of the most vital aspects of bullying and there are key gender differences between direct and indirect forms of bullying behaviors. Boys are more likely to be involved in direct forms of bullying (e.g. shoving or pushing), while girls are more likely to participate in indirect forms of bullying (e.g. spreading untruths). Sawyer, Bradshaw and O’Brennen (2008) showed that among elementary school children, African Americans, in contrast to whites had greater odds of involvement in direct physical and indirect types of bullying victimization.

Recent statistics on bullying illustrate that bullying is an offense that is widespread. Every day 160,000 children are absent from school due to the terror of being bullied. Statistics also show that one out of seven children in kindergarten through 12th grade has bullied or been a target of bullying. Every so often a child who has been a victim becomes the bully as a means to get revenge. About 56 percent of all children have observed someone being bullied at school. Fifteen percent of these child witnesses reported that they did not report the incident to school officials due to fear of being bullied themselves. Seventy-one percent of children reported that bullying is a continuous problem. Additionally, ten percent of children stop attending school or relocated to another school because of persistent bullying. Bullying occurs more often in the 4th through 8th grade than in earlier grades. (Bullying Statistics 2010).

Because bullying occurs when adults aren’t present or in the presence of adults who fail to intervene, bullying is an expected and irrepressible element of growing up (CSMHA 2002). Since the shootings in Colorado at Columbine High School in 1999 and in California at Santana High School in 2001, bullying at school has been in the public
view and under the microscope of the media. In both cases, there were accounts that bullying may have played a part in those shootings (CSMHA 2002).

Holland (2010) notes that bullying is a problem of pandemic magnitude. Li (2007) reports approximately one in three children bully other children in traditional ways and about fifteen percent bully others by means of cell phones and the internet. By investigating the relationship between bullying, gender and race, this study may give us a better comprehension of the ways in which males and females bully and if black students have a greater propensity to bully than white students. This research focuses on bullying in relationship to gender and race. Specifically, it examines whether minority students are more likely to be bullies than white students. Additionally, this study explores whether there are gender differences in the types of bullying behaviors.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents an overview of literature that has examined bullying. It begins with a discussion of bullying, followed by a brief description of the concept of bullying, the three types of bullying and the impact of gender and race on bullying. This chapter concludes with a summation of the literature review.

BULLYING

Bullying is repetitive and regular harassment and assaults on others. It consists of a variety of behaviors committed by children or a group of children, ranging from explicit and direct (e.g., physical aggression, verbal mocking, calling names) to more understated, indirect types of aggression (e.g., coercion, intimidation, segregation from the peer group). The chief factor of bullying is physical or mental threats that occur repetitively over time. Additionally, bullying includes power differences (CSMHA 2002).

Bullying Statistics (2010) found that 71 percent of students experience bullying and it is an ongoing problem. As a result, one out of 10 students' drops out or changes schools because of repeated harassment and bullying. This report also states that 90 percent of the students were bullied in the 4th through 8th grades while in grades kindergarten through 12th grade, one in seven students has bullied others or been a victim of bullying.
GENDER

The CSMHA (2002) reports that the forms of bullying and harassment are disparate for males and females and furthermore, males are more likely to report that they engage in bullying behaviors. Likewise, the CSMHA (2002) also states that female victims are bullied predominantly by males. As males are more likely to be culprits of antagonistic physical and oral bullying, they are similarly more likely to be its victims (CSMHA 2000).

Gropper and Froschl (2000) studied the position that gender plays in children ages five through eight when bullying at school. They found that one of the most reliable findings in the literature relates to the higher occurrence of bullying in males compared to females. They also found that males are more likely to become repeated victims of bodily aggression and other explicit, direct types of bullying. In contrast, females engage in more secret and indirect types of bullying such as social isolation and deliberate segregation from a group. Gropper and Froschl (2000) also found that gender plays a role in children’s teasing and bullying behavior. They found that males and females were both more physical than verbal in their instigation of bullying, but observed a difference in the reactions of the students that were being bullied. Males were more physical when interacting with other males, and females were found to be more verbal when interacting with males (Gropper and Froschl 2000).

A study by Wade and Beran (2011) suggests that cyberbullying, like school bullying, is a rampant problem. They questioned whether males and females experience different types of cyberbullying at dissimilar rates (Wade and Beran 2011). The purpose of their investigation was to determine the extent of cyberbullying among children by
gender and age. Their findings indicated that cyberbullying is happening among almost 25 percent of children. While females were at a greater danger for harassment, both males and females targeted others at comparable rates with the greatest occurrences in the seventh grade. As a consequence, cyberbullying and traditional bullying are multidimensional, complex behaviors that exhibit unique patterns, some of which are based on gender habits and proclivities (Wade and Beran 2011).

Carbone-Lopez, Esbensen and Brick (2010) found in recent research that bullying has gathered public attention. With respect to offenders and victims, gender is one of the most vital aspects of bullying, with males at a greater risk of both offending and victimization. However, as stated earlier, there are significant changes in gender when differentiating direct and indirect types of bullying victimization; males are continuously recognized to be at a greater risk of direct types of bullying, while females have the propensity to be more involved in indirect types of bullying (Carbone-Lopez et al. 2010). This study showed that there are gender dissimilarities in indirect bullying victimization, proposing the necessity for gender explicit attempts to decrease this type of victimization.

Bullying as observed on schoolyards (CSMHA 2002) is most widespread through the junior high/middle school period (National Center for Education Statistics, 1995). Li (2006) investigated the type and extent of adolescent cyberbullying with emphasis on participation by gender. Cyberbullying is a unique experience resulting from the progression of new forms of electronic communication methods (Li 2006). Unlike traditional bullying, cyberspace is remote and as a result students feel they can express themselves any way they want (Li 2006). Nelson (2003) also claimed that females are more prone to indulge in this type of bullying.
Li’s (2006) study focused on gender and the degree of student involvement in cyberbullying. In this investigation the researcher found significant differences in the proportion of male and female youngsters who described being bullied or cyberbullied (Li 2006). Furthermore, the study found males had the propensity to both bully and cyberbully others more than females (Li 2006).

Erdur-Baker (2010) found bullying is being transformed by “information and communication technologies (ICT) progress” (p. 109) and furthermore, noted that gender appears to be a vital component in comprehending the experiences of cyber and traditional bullying. Prior research has shown conflicting results in reference to gender differences (Erdur-Baker 2010). A number of researchers asserted that girls are more likely to become involved in cyberbullying because it is a type of relational or verbal violence (Keith and Martin 2005; Nelson 2003). Still other researchers failed to discover gender differences (Patchin and Hinduja 2006).

Erdur-Baker’s (2010) study examined whether cyberbullying is linked with traditional bullying and explored the role gender plays in the link between traditional and cyberbullying. The outcome of this investigation on gender differences is similar to prior investigations carried out in Turkey. In comparison to males, females are less likely to participate in cyberbullying either as a cybervictim or bully (Erdur-Baker and Kavsut 2007; Topcu, Erdur-Baker and Capa-Aydin 2008).

Slonje and Smith (2008) found few noteworthy gender differences. Girls were more likely to be targets of email rather than text message and phone calls; and males have a propensity to become more involved in cyberbullying, notable for text message bullying.
When Slonje and Smith (2008) asked victims who had cyberbullied them, males were mentioned more frequently than females.

Vandebosch and Cleemput (2009) also found that cyberbullying has become more prevalent. Although Aricak, Uzunhasanuglu, Saribeyogly, Ciplak, Yilmaz, Memmedov, (2008), Li (2006), and Slonje and Smith (2007) reported more males among cyberbullied, other researchers (Patchin and Hinduja 2006; Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell and Tippett 2008) did not find gender dissimilarities. In a study by Kowalski and Limber (2007) cyberbullying by females exceeded males. This could be due to the indirect and impersonal atmosphere of cyberbullying (Griffin and Gross 2004; Berger 2007).

RACE

Carbone-Lopez, Esbensen and Brick (2010) reported it is undetermined if bullying varies by race; however, there is evidence that race and gender work together to influence bullying risk. In contrast, Sawyer, Bradshaw and O’Brennen (2008) showed that among elementary school children, African Americans, in contrast to whites, had greater odds of involvement in direct physical and indirect types of bullying victimization. Additionally, Sawyer et al. (2008) reported that in middle schools, African American and Hispanic females were more likely to suffer direct physical victimization than were white females. However, only males of different races/ethnicities had higher odds of direct physical victimization than white males. Furthermore, Hanish and Guerra (2000) found that attending racially integrated schools was connected to a higher threat of harassment for white students but a lower threat for black students; however, integration was not connected to risk among Hispanic students.
In Canada, Larochette, Murphy and Craig (2010), investigated whether students and school-level effects predicted racial bullying and racial harassment. The outcome of this investigation suggests that racial bullying and harassment are predicted by factors such as ethnicity and gender more than by school level factors (Larochette et al. 2010). Unquestionably, African-Canadian students took part in racial bullying and harassment more than European-Canadian students and males took part in racial bullying and harassment more than females (Larochette et al. 2010). School involvement reduced racial bullying significantly but not racial harassment (Larochette et al. 2010).

Fitzpatrick, Dulin and Piko (2007) examined the prevalence of bullying among African American youth and the risk factors linked to participation (Fitzpatrick et al. 2007). A question posed in this study was “Is there something unique about aggression and bullying among African American sample?” (Fitzpatrick et al. 2007:21). Levels of bullying in this study seemed to be greater than those in nationwide samples; and in the majority of studies, greater than those between other racial subcategories (Fitzpatrick et al. 2007).

Spriggs, Iannotti, Nansel and Haynie (2007) devised a study to investigate the links between bullying and relationships in schools for Hispanic, black, and white students. Black and Hispanic children were oversampled to offer greater representation for these groups. Bullying and harassment varied considerably by race/ethnicity, with a lesser occurrence of harassment reported by black students than white and Hispanic students. The results indicated that for black students’ family, peer and school influences were less likely linked to bullying participation than for white students. (Spriggs et al. 2007). School issues were unconnected to bullying activities for black students, with the
exclusion of bullies’ lesser school fulfillment (Spriggs et al. 2007). Additionally, they found that bullies who were white were less likely to reside with both parents and the parents were more likely not to participate in school events. Moreover, the researchers in this investigation found that as with white and black students, bullies who were Hispanic were less isolated and targets were more isolated. Both targets and aggressors reported poorer school relationships (Spriggs et al. 2007).

GENERAL STRAIN THEORY

Agnew’s (1992) General Strain Theory (GST) provided a significant theoretical development. He defined strain as “negative or aversive relations with others” (p.61), which has three types: “strain as the actual or anticipated failure to achieve positively valued goals, strain as the actual or anticipated removal of positively valued stimuli, and strain as the actual or anticipated presentation of negative stimuli” (p.59). The theory suggests that strain leads to negative attitudes that generate deviant behavior as a corrective action for imbalanced emotions (Agnew 1992).

While bullying has been extensively studied as a source of strain (Patchin and Hinduja 2007); no study has identified the act of bullying as a direct result of strain. Bullying behaviors, traditional and nontraditional, may be committed by youth in order to counteract the strain of stressful life events (Patchin and Hinduja 2010). GST and its description of strain have always included being the victim of bullying (Agnew 1992). An example of bullying that has been neglected as a type of strain is “peer abuse” (Agnew 2001 p. 346) and should be considered relevant since it satisfies the four component strains. Agnew (2001) stated that
“Bullying should be relevant because it satisfies four conditions that should characterize relevant strains: (1) It should be perceived as unjust (because bullying will often violate basic norms of justice), (2) it should be perceived as high in magnitude (because peer relations often are central in the lives of the adolescents), (3) it should not be associated with conventional social control (because bullying often will occur away from the adult authority), and (4) it should expose the strained individual to others—the bullies themselves—who model aggressive behavior (Hay, Meldrum and Mann 2010).”

Broidy and Agnew (1997) noted significant ways in which gender moderated strain-crime relationships. Several empirical studies substantiate their position (Piquero & Sealock 2004). The degree to which bullying is experienced by gender and reacted to accordingly is uncertain (See Espelage, Mebane & Swearer, 2004). However, as stated by Broidy and Agnew, males tend to present an external response whereas females are more likely to present an internal response. Boys will act out more directly and girls will act out more indirectly.

With regards to racial and ethnic groups, GST theory may define African American behavior that is the result of racism and poverty (Hagan and Peterson, 1995). Groups such as this have higher levels of violence due to extreme levels of strain resulting in dysfunctional behavior (Agnew 1999).

Findings from a number of studies propose the relevance of components to GST to the bullying experience. Browne and Falshaw (1996) studied youth in a treatment center and found bullies were more likely to suffer bodily and emotional mistreatment in their early days. Batsche & Knoff (1994) found that childhood experiences of physical punishment, mistreatment, and rejection by their classmates, instructors, and peers are linked to bullying. Additionally, Bosworth, Espelage and Thomas, 1999 and Espelage et al., 2000 found that anger has a positive effect on bullying. These conclusions are reliable when considering GST as a justification because they show that children who
experienced physical punishment, mistreatment, rejection and anger are more likely to participate in bullying activities.

In summary, the literature reviewed in this study indicates that bullying among school age children is prevalent. Three types of bullying include, direct, indirect and cyberbullying. Additionally, gender and race likely play a significant role in bullying among school age children. The literature suggests that boys are more physical and girls are more verbal in the way they bully. The literature also suggests that African American children are more likely to be the perpetrator of bullying. Furthermore strains placed on children may at least partially explain race and gender differences in levels of bullying. The current study tests the following four hypotheses:

H1: Black students are more likely to be bullies than white students;
H2: Males are more likely to directly bully;
H3: Females are more likely to indirect bully;
H4: Strains effect bullying and may explain race and gender effects.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology that will be used in this study. A discussion of the research design and variables in this study and the type of statistical analyses that will be used are discussed.

DATA SOURCE AND SAMPLES

Data for this study come from the 2005-2006 Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (HBSC) survey from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Data Archive (SAMHDA). The United States in association with the World Health Organization, participated in this HBSC survey. The project was intended to explore children’s outlooks and experiences relating to an extensive range of health-related activities and lifestyles. The survey measured similarities and dissimilarities in behavior relating to the health of adolescents. The survey inquired about diet, exercise, aggression, bullying, associations with relatives and friends, support for children who have been bullied, and the use of drugs.

The HBSC study gathered data on a variety of health activities and issues that influenced them. The predictors were features of the children themselves, including their mental attributes and individual situations, their apparent social surroundings, and their family relations, their peer-group connections, school atmosphere and their social and economic position.
In the original sample frame, 529 schools were chosen and asked to take part in the HBSC survey. Out of the 529 schools, 202 did not reply, so 227 schools were eligible out of the 327 schools that initially provided information. Over 10,500 students were asked to take part in a survey. A total of 9,227 students took part in this survey yielding a response rate of 87 percent. A total of 785 students were absent on the day the survey was given and another 565 chose not to take the survey. However, 216 of the students who were absent on the day the survey was given, took the survey days later upon returning to school (HSBC). A total of 8,093 children completed the survey.

MEASUREMENT OF VARIABLES

The survey defined bullying incidences as a situation where a student, or a group of students, say or do nasty or unpleasant things to another student repeatedly while having an unequal level of power and strength. Students were asked if they had been bullied and if they had bullied others in several different ways. The current study focuses only on active bullying by the respondent rather than victimization. General bullying behavior is measured by ten bullying items on a 5 point scale with higher numbers indicating more bullying. Value 1 “I haven’t bullied another student in this way”, 2 “Only once or twice”, 3 “2 or 3 times a month”, 4 “About once a week: and 5 “Several times a week”. The ten bullying items included name calling and teasing, being left out of things, hit, kicked or pushed, told lies about a person, bullied for your race or color, religion, made sexual jokes, using a computer or a cell phone. See Table 1 for a complete list of bullying items. Among those there were two items that appear to measure direct bullying including name calling and teasing and hit, kicked or pushed. There were four
items that measured indirect bullying including students purposely being left out of things, lies, used a computer or email and using a cell phone to bully. There are also three items that measure general forms of bulling including bullying others for their race or color, their religion and making sexual jokes to them.

The primary independent variables in this study are gender, race and measures of strains. The variable gender was measured using the question “Are you a boy or a girl?” Gender was coded as 1 for males and 0 for females. Race was measured using the question, “What do you consider your race to be?” Race was coded as 1 for black and 0 for white. In addition, there were five control variables: age, present feelings about school, parental /guardian support, the adult who is primarily responsible for your care and the life satisfaction scale. Age is measured in years ranging from 11-17 years of age. The question that was asked for the variable present feelings about school was “How do you feel about school at the present?” The variable was renamed school strain. It was coded 1- 4 with 1 as liking school a lot and 4 as not liking school at all. The question that was asked for the variable parental support was “Does my parent/guardian helps me as much as I need?” It was Parental support was renamed lack of support. It was coded 1 - 3 with 1 as the parents almost always supported the child to 3 as the parents almost never supported the child. The variable adult responsible for your care it is renamed as the variable intact. It was coded as 1 for both mother and father and 0 as others. For the variable life satisfaction there was a scale from 0-10 with 0 as least satisfied and 10 as highly satisfied. Life satisfaction scale is renamed as life strain.
DATA ANALYSIS

This section of the thesis presents the statistical analyses that were employed in this study. Table 1 presents the variables and how they are operationalized. In this study, statistical quantities (such as mean, range, and standard deviation) were used to initially describe the data (Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black 1998).

Correlation analyses were utilized to summarize the relationship between continuous or interval variables (Sweet and Martin 2008). Multivariate analyses were used to account for the potential impact of spurious relationships and allow for the inclusion of control variables. Several regression analyses were used in this study. First, there was a model looking at the effect of the variables on bullying in general; second, a model examined the effect of the variables on direct bullying and third; a model looking at the effect of the variables on indirect bullying. Ordinary least-squares (OLS) regression is a generalized linear modeling technique that may be used to model a single response variable which has been recorded on at least an interval scale. The technique may be applied to single or multiple explanatory variables and also categorical explanatory variables that have been appropriately coded.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scales</th>
<th>Scale Items</th>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Bullying</td>
<td>How often have you bullied another student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Calling names and teasing them;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. By purposely leaving them out of things;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Hitting, kicking or pushing someone;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Told lies on a child;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Bullied for their race or color;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Bullied for their religious preference;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Made sexual jokes to someone else;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Lied using a computer or email;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Bullied using a cellphone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Participated in a physical altercation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Bullying</td>
<td>How often you got bullied calling names, teasing, hitting, and kicking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pushing another student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. I haven’t bullied another student (s) at school;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. It has only happened once or twice;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. 2 or 3 times a month;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. About once a week;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Several times a week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Bullying</td>
<td>How often you got bullied coercion, intimidation, spreading untruths, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>segregation from the peer group?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I haven’t bullied another student (s) at school times a week”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. It has only happened once or twice;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. 2 or 3 times a month;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. About once a week;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Several times a week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (Male)</td>
<td>Are you a boy or a girl?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. 1 for “male”;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. 0 for “female”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (Black)</td>
<td>What do you consider your race to be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. 1 for “Black or African American”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. 0 for “White”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other races were excluded because the focus of this survey was on black and white participants.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages</td>
<td>How old are you? Age is coded in years ranging from 11-17.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Present Feelings About School | Present feelings about school were renamed as school. How do you feel about school at present?  
1. I like it a lot;  
2. I like it a bit;  
3. I don't like it very much;  
4. I don't like it all. |
| Lack of Parental Support | Parental support was renamed as the variable lack of parental support. Do my parents support me as much as I need?  
1. Almost always;  
2. Sometimes;  
3. Almost never. |
| Intact Family            | Adult responsible for your care was renamed as the variable intact. Identifies the adult(s) primarily responsible for the respondent's care in the main home.  
1. Both mother and father;  
0. Others. |
| Dissatisfaction          | Life satisfaction scale was renamed life strain. Response categories range from 0 “Worst possible life to 10 “Best Possible Life. |
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

SAMPLE

The purpose of this study was to examine bullying and its relationship to gender, race and strain. Past research has shown that bullying is a problem that is prevalent in schools (Nansel et al 2001). The current study utilized data from the HBSC 2005-2006 survey. There were a total of 5,722 students in this survey. The primary focus in this analysis was to compare white students to black students, so the data was restricted to only white (n = 4005; 70%) and black (n= 1717; 30%) students. The sample included 51% females and 49% males. The mean age of the sample was 13.5 years (SD = 1.54) and ranged from 11 to 17 years of age. Additionally, of interest to this study, 54% of the students resided in intact families.

MEASURES

Several scales were developed in this study. Scales included: lack of parental support, general bullying, direct bullying, and indirect bullying (see Table 2). The standardized Cronbach’s alpha for the lack of parental support variable was .76 which suggests the four items have relatively high internal consistency. To achieve a higher alpha the items were standardized before they were scaled. The lack of parental support scale had a mean of -.0020 (SD = .71), and scores ranged from -1.01 to 2.51. School strain had a range from 1 (I like it a lot) to 4 (I don’t like it at all) and had a mean of 2.18 (SD = .90). The mean for life strain was 2.51 (SD = 1.88) and ranged from 0 to 10. The
overall general bullying scale had 10 items and a Cronbach's alpha of .89 demonstrating good reliability. The mean for this scale was 1.27 (SD = .53) and ranged from 1 to 5. The direct bullying scale had 3 items and had a Cronbach's alpha of .74 representing acceptable reliability. The mean for this scale was 1.36 (SD = .68) and ranged from 1 to 5. The indirect bullying scale had 4 items, with possible scores from 1 to 5 and had a Cronbach's alpha of .79, indicating acceptable reliability. The mean for this scale was 1.21 (SD = .53) and ranged from 1 to 5.
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Bullying</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Bullying</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Bullying</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intact</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Support</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>-1.01</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Strain</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Strain</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARIABLES

In line with scale construction of general bullying, the correlation between its two subscales, indirect bullying and direct bullying ($r = .70$, $p < .001$), indicated a strong positive relationship. The correlations between race and indirect bullying ($r = .09$, $p < .01$), direct bullying ($r = .11$, $p < .01$), and general bullying ($r = .11$, $p < .01$) indicated that blacks were more likely to bully than whites. The correlation between gender and indirect bullying ($r = .06$, $p < .01$), direct bullying ($r = .11$, $p < .01$), and general bullying ($r = .10$, $p < .01$) indicated that male students were more likely to bully than female students. Students from intact families were more likely to bully indirectly ($r = -.05$, $p < .01$), and less likely to bully directly ($r = -.07$, $p < .01$) or in general ($r = -.07$, $p < .01$). The impact of the three measures of strain on the three measures of bullying was relatively small and statistically significant ranging from .11 to .16. Correlations between age and bullying are not significant even though the literature suggests that bullying is reduced as student’s age.
Table 3. Correlation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>gen-bully</th>
<th>dir-bully</th>
<th>indir-bully</th>
<th>black</th>
<th>male</th>
<th>intact</th>
<th>age</th>
<th>lac-sup</th>
<th>sch-str</th>
<th>lif-str</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Bullying</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Bullying</td>
<td>.90*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Bullying</td>
<td>.90*</td>
<td>.69*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.09*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>.10*</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.06*</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intact</td>
<td>-.07*</td>
<td>-.07*</td>
<td>-.05*</td>
<td>-.31*</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.02*</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack Support</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.09*</td>
<td>-.09*</td>
<td>-.23*</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Strain</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>-.06*</td>
<td>.10*</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Strain</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.08*</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>-.04*</td>
<td>-.12*</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.48*</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.01
REgression predicting bullying

Linear regression was used to examine the predictive power of gender and race on the three measures of bullying. Each linear regression analysis controlled for age, intact family, and lack of parental support, school strain, and life strain. When examining general bullying, race and gender remained statistically significant even after controlling for the other variables in the model. However, race ($\beta = .10, p < .001$) and gender ($\beta = .11, p < .001$) were similarly equally as effective as lack of parental support ($\beta = .10, p < .001$) and school strain ($\beta = .11, p < .001$) in the prediction of general bullying.

Similarly, when examining direct bullying, race and gender remained statistically significant even after controlling for the other variables in the model. Although race ($\beta = .10, p < .001$) and gender ($\beta = .11, p < .001$) were still significant predictors, lack of parental support ($\beta = .09, p < .001$) and school strain ($\beta = .12, p < .001$) provided similar power to predict direct bullying. When examining indirect bullying, race and gender remained statistically significant even after controlling for the other variables in the model. Race ($\beta = .10, p < .001$) and gender ($\beta = .11, p < .001$) were similarly effective as lack of parental support ($\beta = .10, p < .001$) and school strain ($\beta = .11, p < .001$) in the prediction of general bullying. Table 4 shows that in all three regression models (general, direct and indirect bullying), blacks and males are more likely to bully than whites and females. However, for indirect bullying, the regression shows that age is a significant predictor such that the older children are less likely to bully indirectly, but this is a weak effect. Also, whether a family is intact is not a significant predictor in any of the analyses. School strain, life strain and lack of support are significant predictors in all three types of bullying, except for the relationship between life strain and indirect bullying.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>gen-bully</th>
<th>dir-bully</th>
<th>indir-bully</th>
<th>black</th>
<th>male</th>
<th>intact</th>
<th>age</th>
<th>lac-sup</th>
<th>sch-str</th>
<th>lif-str</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Bullying</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Bullying</td>
<td>.90*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Bullying</td>
<td>.90*</td>
<td>.69*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.09*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>.10*</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.06*</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intact</td>
<td>-.07*</td>
<td>-.07*</td>
<td>-.05*</td>
<td>-.31*</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.02*</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack Support</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.09*</td>
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<td>-.23*</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Strain</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>-.06*</td>
<td>.10*</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Strain</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.08*</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>-.04*</td>
<td>-.12*</td>
<td>.07*</td>
<td>.48*</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.01
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS

Using data collected from the 2005-2006 Heath Behavior in School-Aged Children survey this study examined children’s outlooks and experiences relating to an extensive range of health related activities and lifestyles. Specifically, this study focused on the relationship between race, gender, measures of strain and bullying. The results of this study indicate that both race and gender matter in bullying and are significant when controlling for measures of strains and other demographic variables. Furthermore, the influence of race and gender are on par with the three measures of strain surrounding school, life in general and lack of parental support. In this study, the correlation between gender and bullying indicated that males were more likely to bully than females. These findings were consistent with Gropper and Froschl (2000) who found that when males are compared to females, males had a higher occurrence of bullying. These findings were also consistent with Carbone- Lopez and colleagues (2010) who found that gender is one of the most important predictors of bullying, with males at a greater risk of both offending and victimization. As stated earlier, Erdur-Baker (2010) conducted a study in Turkey to explore the role gender plays in the link between traditional and cyberbullying and found that in comparison to males, females are less likely to participate in cyberbullying either as a cybervictim or bully.

The current study also found a correlation between race and bullying, showing that blacks were more likely to bully than whites. Consistent with the findings in this study, Sawyer and colleagues (2008) found that blacks in contrast to whites had greater odds of
involvement in bullying and Spriggs and colleagues (2007) found that bullying varied considerably by race with a smaller chance of harassment reported by black children. Spriggs et al. (2007) also found that bullies who were white were less likely to live with both parents. In this study, it was shown that children who are in an intact home are less likely to bully and if they did bully, they would participate in indirect ways of bullying.

In a Canadian study, Larochette et al. (2010) found that African-Canadian students participated in bullying behaviors more than European-Canadian students. The current study also revealed a similar racial difference when examining bullying on all three levels except for the relationship between life strain and indirect bullying.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The majority of violent behavior that is displayed at school includes children bullying their peers (Boulton 1999). At one time, bullying actions were restricted to communications where children confronted each other nose-to-nose. More recently, however, due to the advancements in technology bullying is more perilous and harder to control (Donegan 2012). Bullying can be diminished if school programs held anti-bullying interventions. Gropper and Froschl (2000) argue that administrators and parents have an important role in changing the school atmosphere so that bullying is not as rampant in early grades and children view adults as individuals who will help put an end to bullying.

Bullying prevention programs are being implemented in schools nationwide. Therefore, comprehending which aspects influence bullying in school-age children is significant in addressing the bullying dilemma. Anti-Bullying strategies must be
implemented that concentrate on not only gender and race but other factors as well.

Broidy and Agnew (1997) methodically argued that males and females vary in their stages of exposure and responses to strain. They presented two important hypotheses: 1) in comparison to females, males are open to crimonogenic strains at higher stages and 2) Because of gender dissimilarities when coping with stress, males' responses to strains are favorable to external responses, whereas females have responses more favorable to internalizing responses. The communications linking school support and teacher diversity to racial bullying demonstrate the necessity of taking an ecological viewpoint in studying bullying (Larochette et al. 2010). Whereas boys and girls bully differently, it indicates that the type and significance of evocative behavior can have diverse purposes for boys and girls (Coie & Dodge, 1998). These gender differences are important for psychologists and educators who wish to deal effectively with bullying behaviors of children.

The last decade has seen a rise in zero tolerance school punishment strategies. Depending mostly on school exclusion and security methods, zero tolerance strategies discipline incidents to “send a message” that it is not acceptable to behave inappropriately (Skiba & Peterson 2000). By adding a wide range of programs that improve general school climate and decrease negligible disturbances, schools may lower the peril of more grave violent events that seem to be linked with the advanced stages of minor disturbances (Skiba & Peterson 2000).

LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations to consider in this thesis. One limitation of the study
is that it targeted black and white children only. Future research should include other races/ethnicities such as Hispanics and bi-racial children who are becoming the new majority. The ages of the children in this study are between 11 and 17 but more and more research is finding that bullying starts at earlier ages than 11. Next, secondary data rely on available questions. For example there were no measures of cyberbullying in this data. Additionally, there were no tests for interaction effects. Black males may have the highest rates of bullying but this was not tested. Furthermore, the effects of strain may be more or less important for certain demographic groups (e.g. gender or social groups.)

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research is necessary to address measures of strain and education concerning cyberbullying. Education in relation to cyberbullying related problems should be a combined effort of learning institutions, families, neighborhoods and society in general (Morrison 2002). Additional research is also needed to address populations that need unique bullying prevention programs. The number of LGBT children that are bullied is increasing. Also, research on the effectiveness of dealing with the bulling victim and experimental designs to test the effects of bullying are needed. It is imperative that we dig further below the surface when we are dealing with bullies. Research continues to show that many children who bully have been bullied themselves and it is important to disentangle this relationship.
REFERENCES


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Center for School Mental Health Assistance 2002, Health Resources and Service Administration, Department of Health and Human Services Retrieved September 22, 2012 (http://csmh.umaryland.edu/Resources/ResourcePackets/files/Bullying.pdf)


VITA

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- CASA, October 2009 February 2011

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- Alpha Phi Sigma, April 2009

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- American Sociological Association

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- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), October 2009
- Certificate on College Teaching, November 2012; Virginia Tidewater Consortium for Higher Education, Norfolk, Virginia

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- The Skin I Am In, 2010
- Transformation of The Mind, Body & Soul, 2008