
HANDBOOK OF BULLYING IN SCHOOLS

AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

EDITED BY
SHANE R. JIMERSON
SUSAN M. SWEARER
DOROTHY L. ESPELAGE



Handbook of Bullying in Schools

The *Handbook of Bullying in Schools: An International Perspective* provides a comprehensive review and analysis of what is known about the worldwide bullying phenomena. It is the first volume to systematically review and integrate what is known about how cultural and regional issues affect bullying behavior and its prevention. It draws on insights from scholars around the world to advance our understanding of:

- Theoretical and empirical foundations for understanding bullying
- Assessment and measurement of bullying
- Research-based prevention and intervention methods

Key features include the following:

Comprehensive—41 chapters bring together conceptual, methodological, and preventive findings from this loosely coupled field of study, thereby providing a long-needed centerpiece around which the field can continue to grow in an organized and interdisciplinary manner.

International Focus—Approximately 40% of the chapters deal with bullying assessment, prevention, and intervention efforts outside the USA.

Chapter Structure—To provide continuity, chapter authors follow a common chapter structure: overview, conceptual foundations, specific issues or programs, and a review of current research and future research needs.

Implications for Practice—A critical component of each chapter is a summary table outlining practical applications of the foregoing research.

Expertise—The editors and contributors include leading researchers, teachers, and authors in the bullying field, most of whom are deeply connected to organizations studying bullying around the world.

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Dedicated to

our families and special persons who remind us of the importance of our efforts and make us smile everyday:

Gavin & Taite Jimerson

Kathryn O'Brien

Catherine & Alexandra Napolitano

Scott Napolitano

MacKenzie Hardesty

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and to the professionals who engage in activities to prevent bullying, as well as the scholars who advance our understanding of bullying, including conceptual foundations, appropriate measurements, and the development and evaluation of bullying prevention programs. It is our hope that the contributions of scholars from around the world will provide invaluable insights and serve as a catalyst for future scholarship that will advance our collective understanding and efforts to promote healthy peer relationships.

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International Scholarship Advances Science and Practice Addressing Bullying in Schools

SHANE R. JIMERSON, SUSAN M. SWEARER, AND DOROTHY L. ESPELAGE

Bullying is commonly defined as repeated aggressive behavior in which there is an imbalance of power or strength between the two parties (Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993). Bullying behaviors may be direct or overt (e.g., hitting, kicking, name-calling, or taunting) or more subtle or indirect in nature (e.g., rumor-spreading, social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or cyberbullying; Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 2002). Notably, bullying has been documented and studied in countries around the world (e.g., Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United States). To date, studies in all countries in which bullying has been investigated, have revealed the presence of bullying. Indeed, the study of bullying at school is decidedly international, with seminal scholarship originating in Sweden, Norway, England, Japan, and Australia.

Recent literature has focused explicitly on considering international perspectives on interventions to address bullying in schools (Smith, Pepler, & Rigby, 2004; Ttofi, Farrington, & Baldry, 2008). Scholars have also attempted to understand the phenomenon of bullying through cross-national studies. For example, Smith, Cowie, Olafsson, and Liefoghe (2002) examined the meaning of bullying in 14 different countries to explore how the use of specific terms (e.g., bullying, teasing, harassment, hitting, excluding) may affect estimates of the prevalence of bullying. Despite the recent increase in the amount of research addressing bullying, much remains to be discovered and understood regarding assessment and measurement of bullying, as well as how to design and implement of effective prevention and intervention programs. Considering the extant research that has emerged during the past four decades from around the world, the *Handbook of Bullying in Schools* provides an unprecedented compendium of information and insights from leading scholars around the world.

International Interest in Bullying

Research has revealed that students around the world regularly report witnessing and experiencing bullying (Eslea et al., 2003). Although bullying among children and youth is not a recent phenomenon, it has received increased attention internationally during the past several decades.

For instance, in Australia, it is estimated that 1 child in 6 is subjected to bullying on a weekly basis (Rigby, 2002). Previous studies in Norway and Sweden found that 15% of students reported being involved in bully/victim problems at least 2–3 times per month (Olweus, 1993). Studies in the United States have yielded slightly higher rates of bullying, ranging from a low of 10% for “extreme victims” of bullying (Perry, Kusel, & Perry, 1988) to a high of 75% who reported being bullied at least one time during their school years (Hoover, Oliver, & Thomson, 1993). In a nationally representative study of American students in Grades 6 through 10, Nansel and colleagues (2001) reported that 17% had been bullied with some regularity (several times or more within the semester) and 19% had bullied others.

Bullying is not a part of normative development for children and adolescents and should be considered a precursor to more serious aggressive behaviors (Nansel et al., 2001). It is also clear that bullying can contribute to an environment of fear and intimidation in schools (Ericson, 2001). Furthermore, the culmination of more than a decade of research indicates that bullying may seriously affect the psychosocial functioning, academic work, and the health of children who are targeted (Limber, 2006; Swearer et al., 2001). The persistent prevalence and deleterious consequences associated with bullying have resulted in numerous countries around the world developing national initiatives to address bullying (examples listed in Table 1.1).

Recent Meta-Analyses of International Scholarship Addressing Bullying

A recent meta-analysis (Ttofi et al., 2008; sponsored by The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention) includes the results of a systematic review of 59 reports describing evaluations of 30 school-based bullying prevention and intervention programs implemented and studied around the world. The meta-analysis included four types of research design: (a) randomized experiments; (b) experimental-control comparisons with before and after measures of bullying; (c) other experimental-control comparisons; and (d) age-cohort designs, where students of a specific age after the intervention were compared with students of the same age in the same school before the intervention. Studies considered for inclusion in the meta-analysis included research

Table 1.1 Examples of National Initiatives to Address Bullying and Website Resources

Australian Bullying, No Way	http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au
Australia “National Safe Schools Framework”	http://www.nssf.com.au >
Canada, Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence	http://www.preynet.ca
European Commission CONNECT project on Violence in Schools	http://www.gold.ac.uk/connect
International Observatory on School Violence	http://www.ijvs.org
New Zealand, No Bully - Kia-Kaha	http://www.police.govt.nz/service/yes/nobully/
South Australia, “Bullying, Out of Bounds”	http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/schlstaff/pages/bullying
United States Department of Education	http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/training/bullying/index.html
United States Department of Health & Human Services - Stop Bullying Now	http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp?area=main
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/15plus/aboutbullying.asp
	http://www.sshs.samhsa.gov/initiative/resources.aspx

from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Cyprus, Denmark, England and Wales, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Japan, Malta, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, and the United States. The effect sizes regarding impact on bullying ranged from .77 to 2.52, with a weighted mean of 1.43. Statistical significance varied across the four types of research design, with 1 out of 9 of the randomized experiments yielding significant effect sizes; 6 out of 9 of the before-after experimental control yielding significant effect sizes; 2 out of 4 other experimental control yielding significant effect sizes; and 6 out of 6 of the studies using age-cohort designs yielding significant effect sizes.

Based on the results of the meta-analysis, Ttofi and colleagues (2008) concluded that 12 anti-bullying programs were clearly effective in reducing bullying and victimization: Andreou, Didaskalou, and Vlachou (2007), Ertesvag and Vaaland (2007), Evers, Prochaska, Van Marter, Johnson, and Prochaska (2007), Melton et al. (1998), Olweus/Bergen 2, Olweus/Bergen 1, Olweus/Oslo 1, Olweus/New National, Olweus/Oslo 2, Raskauskas (2007), Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, and Voeten (2005), and Salmivalli, Karna, and Poskiparta (this volume). Moreover, analyses of a systematic coding of program elements revealed the most important program elements associated with a decrease in *bullying* were: parent training, improved playground supervision, disciplinary methods, school conferences, information for parents, classroom rules, classroom management, and videos. The most important program elements associated with a decrease in *victimization* were videos, disciplinary methods, work with peers, parent training, cooperative group work, and playground supervision.

Furthermore, the findings from this recent meta-analysis raise several questions that Ttofi and colleagues (2008) propose. For example; “Why do results vary across different countries? Why do results vary by research design? Why do programs appear to work better with older children? Why are larger and more recent studies less effective than smaller-scale and older studies? Why do results vary with the outcome measure of bullying or victimization?” (p. 73).

Based on their meta-analysis of results included in 59 reports from 1983–2008, Ttofi and colleagues (2008) concluded that, “overall, school-based anti-bullying programs are effective in reducing bullying and victimization. The results indicated that bullying and victimization were reduced by about 17–23% in experimental schools compared with control schools” (p. 6). However, it is not clear whether this reduction results in clinically (versus statistically) meaningful changes that improve student’s perceptions of school safety and prevent further bullying and/or peer victimization over the long haul. The authors also highlight that studies in Norway yielded more favorable results, relative to the studies in the United States.

Another recent meta-analysis, including 16 studies (published between 1994–2003) from 6 countries, of studies focusing on a broad range of interventions to address bullying, found that the majority of the outcomes revealed no meaningful change, either positive or negative (Merrell, Guelder, Ross, & Isava, 2008). Merrell and colleagues also highlighted that school bullying intervention programs are more likely to influence knowledge, attitudes, and self-perceptions, rather than actual bullying behaviors. Given that changes in attitudes need to occur prior to behavioral changes, these findings suggest that the programs as delivered might be too low of a dose and future work should consider how dose and implementation level impacts outcomes.

An examination of dosage issues and treatment fidelity in bullying prevention and intervention programming is vital. Ttofi and colleagues (2008) highlighted that the total number of program components (dose) and the duration and intensity of the programming for students and teachers were significantly linked to reductions in bullying behavior. In a recent study examining teacher adherence to anti-bullying programming, dose effects were also found (Biggs, Vernberg, Twemlow, Fonagy, & Dill, 2008). Results from the implementation of the Creating

a Peaceful School Learning Environment (CAPSLE) program found that the greater number of program components delivered and teacher treatment adherence were both associated with helping peers, greater empathy, and less aggressive bystander behavior among elementary-school students. Treatment fidelity is a critical, yet understudied component of bullying prevention and intervention programming.

These recent studies serve as a reminder of the importance of considering scholarship from around the world, and considering the multitude of variables associated with applied research. Additionally, different types of analyses are necessary to understand the effects associated with bullying programming at individual, peer, school, family, and community levels. These studies also highlight the importance of research design, conceptual foundations, assessment, and measurement used in the empirical work to advance our understanding of “what works” in bullying prevention and intervention programming. Whereas much has been learned about bullying over the past 30 years, we still have a long way to go in order to reduce bullying behaviors in schools across the world.

Handbook of Bullying in Schools

Collectively, the chapters in this volume offer an international analysis of the bullying phenomena, which provides a foundation (conceptually, empirically, and practically) for implementing and examining prevention and intervention programs to reduce bullying behaviors. Recent scholarship has increasingly focused on understanding and preventing bullying. However, despite this recent focus on elucidating correlates and sequelae of bullying behaviors, less is known about how culture and regional issues might affect these behaviors. Thus, the *Handbook of Bullying in Schools* advances the knowledge and understanding of bullying by incorporating valuable information from scholars and practitioners around the world. The information included in the chapters provides fundamental information of interest to scholars, practitioners, and other professionals.

This handbook is intentionally designed to share insights from scholarship around the world, to advance our collective understanding of: (a) theoretical and empirical foundations for understanding bullying, (b) assessment and measurement of bullying, and (c) research-based prevention and intervention for bullying. Leading scholars and practitioners from numerous countries provide information about their attempts to prevent bullying, which in many cases includes innovative approaches to theory, assessment, and intervention. The following provides a brief description of the information that is included in each section of the handbook.

Theoretical and Empirical Foundations for Understanding Bullying Each of the chapters in this section provides important information regarding conceptual foundations related to specific issues, reviews relevant scholarship, and also identifies areas where future research is needed. The information included in this section is essential in establishing a solid foundation for engaging in research as well as implementing bullying prevention and intervention programs around the world.

Assessment and Measurement of Bullying Each chapter in this section identifies and discusses important aspects related to assessing and measuring bullying. Reviewing previous research, including measures used, and identifying convergence and discrepancies as well as related implications are each invaluable in advancing both the science and practice regarding bullying.

Research-Based Prevention and Intervention for Bullying Chapters in this section provide a brief overview of numerous efforts around the globe to implement prevention and intervention programs to address bullying. Authors detail the conceptual foundations underlying the particular programs, delineate the specific strategies incorporated in the program, report results of research related to the effectiveness of the strategies, and identify limitations and areas of need for further scholarship.

In developing the contents of this handbook, it was essential to emphasize an appropriate balance of both breadth and depth, thus, providing information on numerous facets of school bullying. A specific goal of this volume is to spark a comprehensive international discourse of bullying prevention and intervention efforts. A particularly important component included in each chapter is a conclusion or summary table delineating *implications for practice*. It is anticipated that the scholarship emerging during the next decade will build upon the information included here.

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Section I

Foundations for Understanding Bullying

2

Understanding and Researching Bullying

Some Critical Issues

DAN OLWEUS

The Beginnings

A strong societal interest in the phenomenon of peer harassment or victimization/bullying first started in Sweden in the late 1960s and early 1970s under the designation “mobbing” or “mobbing” (Heinemann, 1969, 1972; Olweus, 1973). The term was introduced into the public Swedish debate by a school physician, P.-P. Heinemann, in the context of racial discrimination (Heinemann, 1969). Heinemann had borrowed the term “mobbing” from the Swedish version of a book on aggression written by the well-known Austrian ethologist, Konrad Lorenz (1963, 1968). In ethology, the word mobbing is used to describe a collective attack by a group of animals on an animal of another species, which is usually larger and a natural enemy of the group. In Lorenz’s book (1968), mobbing was also used to characterize the action of a school class or a group of soldiers ganging up against a deviating individual.

The term “mob” has been used for quite some time in social psychology (Lindzey, 1954), and to some extent by the general public in English-speaking countries, to describe a relatively large group of individuals—a crowd or a mass of people—joined in a common activity or goal. As a rule, the mob has been formed by accident, is loosely organized, and exists only for a short time. In the social psychological literature, distinctions have been made between several types of mobs, including the aggressive mob (the lynch mob), the panic-stricken mob (the flight mob), and the acquisitive mob (the hoarding mob). Members of the mob usually experience strong emotions, and the behavior and reactions of the mob are considered to be fairly irrational (see Lindzey, 1954).

At an early point in this debate, I expressed doubts about the suitability of the term, as used in ethology/social psychology, to describe the kind of peer harassment that occurred in school settings (Olweus, 1973, 1978). Generally, with my background in aggression research (e.g., Olweus, 1969, 1972), I felt that the connotations implied in the concept of mobbing could easily lead to inappropriate expectations about the phenomenon of bullying and to certain aspects of the problem being overlooked as exemplified in the next paragraph.

One particular point of concern with the term related to the relative importance of the group versus its individual members. The notion that school mobbing is a matter of collective aggression by a relatively homogeneous group did in my view obscure the relative contributions made

by individual members. More specifically, the role of particularly active perpetrators or bullies could easily be lost sight of within this group framework. In this context, I also questioned how often the kind of all-against-one situations implied in mobbing actually occur in school. If harassment by a small group or by a single individual were the more frequent type in schools, the concept of mobbing might result, for example, in teachers having difficulty identifying the phenomenon of bullying in their classrooms. In addition, the concept of mobbing will almost automatically place responsibility for potential problems with the recipient of the collective aggression, the victim, who is seen as irritating or provoking the majority of ordinary students in one way or another.

Use of the concept of mobbing might also lead to an overemphasis on temporary and situationally determined circumstances: "The mob, suddenly and unpredictably, seized by the mood of the moment, turns on a single individual, who for some reason or other has attracted the group's irritation and hostility" (Olweus, 1978, p. 5). Although I believed that such temporary emotional outbreaks from a group of school children could occur, I considered it more important to direct attention to another kind of possible situation, in which an individual student is exposed to aggression systematically and over longer periods of time—whether from another individual, a small group, or a whole class (Olweus, 1973, 1978, p. 5).

An additional problem was that, at that time, there existed basically no empirical research data to shed light on the many issues and concerns involved in the general debate about the bullying phenomenon. Against this background, in the early 1970s, I initiated in Sweden (I am a native Swede, who has lived in Norway for more than 35 years) what now appears to be the first systematic research project on bullying by peers. Results from this project were first published as a book in Swedish in 1973 (Olweus, 1973). In 1978, a somewhat expanded version of this book appeared in the United States under the title *Aggression in the Schools: Bullies and Whipping Boys* (Olweus, 1978). A key aim of this research was to sketch a first outline of the anatomy of peer harassment in schools and to seek empirical answers to at least some of the key questions that had been in focus in the public Swedish debate.

Taking a retrospective perspective, I think it is fair to say that this project and later research (e.g., Olweus, 1978, 1993, 1994; Farrington, 1993) have shown that several of my early concerns were justified. For example, there is no doubt that students in a class vary markedly in their degree of aggressiveness and that these individual differences tend to be quite stable over time, often over several years, if no systematic intervention is introduced (Olweus, 1977, 1979).

Similarly, the research clearly shows that a relatively small number of students in a class are usually much more actively engaged in peer harassment or bullying than others, who are not directly involved in bullying at all or only in more or less marginal roles (Olweus, 1993, 2001). Reports from bullied students indicate that they are most often mainly bullied by a small group of two or three students (Olweus & Solberg, 1998), often with a negative leader. In addition, a considerable proportion of the victims, some 25–35%, report that they are mainly bullied by a single student (Olweus, 1988; Olweus & Solberg, 1998). Data from researchers in England, Holland, and Japan, participating in the same cross-national project on bully/victim problems, indicate that this is largely true also in other ethnic contexts with (partly) different cultural backgrounds and traditions (Junger-Tas & Kesteren, 1998; Morita & Soeda, 1998; Smith et al., 1999). Further, these and other (e.g., Rigby & Slee, 1991) data also show that a considerable proportion of the students in a class have a relatively negative attitude toward bullying and would like to do, or actually try to do (according to self-reports), something to help the victim.

This research-based picture of peer harassment in schools is very different from what is generally implied in the social psychological or ethological concepts of mobbing. Also, the use of the term "mobbing" (and derivatives of it) by Scandinavians has certainly come to deviate from

both the scientific and the ordinary English root meaning of the term. This is particularly evident when we hear a (Scandinavian) student saying “he/she mobbed me today.” Obviously, the word mobbing has gradually, and, in part on the basis of highly publicized research findings, acquired a new meaning in Scandinavian everyday language, loosely implying relatively systematic, repetitive harassment of an individual (or possibly a group) by one or more other individuals (usually but not necessarily by a peer/peers). This new meaning of the word is well established in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, and in my view, there are no grounds for trying to change this usage.

At the same time, it was clear at an early stage that, for an English-speaking audience, the terms “mob” and “mobbing” are not very useful in describing the phenomenon of bullying; they typically elicit associations in the direction of the social psychological/ethological concepts and the original meaning of the word mob. On the basis of experiences along these lines, I tended to use the term bully/victim (or whipping boy) problems (instead of, or in addition to, mobbing) in my early writings in English (e.g., Olweus, 1978). Currently, the terms “bullying” or “bully/victim problems” seem to have gained general international acceptance (in English-speaking countries) to denote the kind of peer harassment we Scandinavians, somewhat inappropriately from a linguistic point of view, call mobbing.

Definition of Bullying

At the time of initiation of my first research project on bullying, it was not possible, or even desirable, to set forth a very stringent definition of peer harassment or bullying. However, the need for a relatively clear and circumscribed definition became urgent in connection with the government-initiated campaign against bullying in Norway in 1983 (Olweus, 1986, 1993). Specifically, an important part of this campaign was a nationwide registration of bully/victim problems by means of a student questionnaire that I developed. The basic definition of bullying or peer victimization underlying the construction of the questionnaire was the following: A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. This definition emphasized intentionally negative or aggressive acts that are carried out repeatedly and over time. It was further specified that in bullying there is a certain imbalance of power or strength. The student who is exposed to negative actions has difficulty defending himself or herself (for further details, see, Olweus 1993, 1999a). Use of the three criteria of intention, repetitiveness, and imbalance of power for classification of a behavior as bullying seems now to be well accepted among both researchers and practitioners (e.g., Smith & Brain, 2000).

As defined above, bullying is a subset of aggression or aggressive behavior, which, in turn, is generally defined as “behavior intended to inflict injury or discomfort upon another individual” (Olweus, 1972; Berkowitz, 1993). Bullying is thus aggressive behavior with certain special characteristics such as repetitiveness and an asymmetric power relationship. The relation between the concepts of bullying, aggression, and violence is discussed in more detail in another context (Olweus, 1999a).

Measuring Bully/Victim Problems with the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ)

In my first research project on bullying comprising some 900 boys who were 13- to 15-year-olds at the first time of measurement, I used a combination of teacher nominations and peer ratings to classify students as victims (whipping boys), bullies, and control boys (Olweus, 1973, 1978). The project also used a number of other data sources including self-reports, mother reports,

stress hormone data, projective techniques, and psycho-physiological measurements. Although a number of self-report items related to bullying and victimization were included in the project, they were not used in the classification of the students into the various bully/victim categories. However, extensive experience with the questionnaire I developed in the context of the nationwide 1983 campaign against bullying and the associated intervention project from 1983 to 1985 (Olweus, 1991, 2005), convinced me that a carefully constructed questionnaire can be an excellent tool for the measurement of bully/victim problems.

Although the basic definition of bullying (involving the three criteria listed above) has been retained unchanged, the “definition” presented to the students in a revised version of the questionnaire, the *Revised Olweus Bullying Questionnaire* (in earlier writings, often referred to as the *Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire*; Olweus, 1996, 2007), has been somewhat expanded. In the latest version of the questionnaire (Olweus, 2007), this definition reads as follows:

We say a student is being bullied when another student, or several other students,

- say mean and hurtful things or make fun of him or her or call him or her mean and hurtful names
- completely ignore or exclude him or her from their group of friends or leave him or her out of things on purpose
- hit, kick, push, shove around, or lock him or her inside a room
- tell lies or spread false rumors about him or her or send mean notes and try to make other students dislike him or her
- and other hurtful things like that.

When we talk about bullying, these things happen *repeatedly*, and it is *difficult for the student being bullied to defend himself or herself*. We also call it bullying when a student is teased repeatedly in a mean and hurtful way. But we *do not call it bullying* when the teasing is done in a friendly and playful way. Also, it is *not bullying* when two students of about the same strength or power argue or fight (Olweus, 2007, p. 2).

After a general or global question about being bullied in the past couple of months (or bullying other students in a different section of the questionnaire), taking all possible forms of bullying into account, the students are asked to respond to questions about nine specific forms of bullying they may have been exposed to. These various forms of bullying comprise direct physical and verbal (including racial and sexual) harassment, threatening, and coercive behaviors, as well as more indirect or relational ways of harassment in the form of intentional social isolation, having rumors spread, and manipulation of friendship relationships (cf. Björkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Underwood, 2003). There are also some questions on the questionnaire about digital or cyber bullying.

The questionnaire can be and has been administered in both anonymous (e.g., Olweus, 2005) and confidential mode (e.g., Olweus, 1991; Solberg & Olweus, 2003). In the anonymous mode, the students only provide information about their own classroom, grade, gender, and school. In the confidential mode, they also report their names which are then hidden through a code system. In the latter case, individual students can be followed over time. Depending on the research question, this may be less important in certain intervention designs (Olweus, 2005).

To make the measuring instrument more sensitive to change, most of the questions refer to a specific reference period, “the past couple of months.” To call the students’ attention to the fact that they should assess their situation and reactions during this relatively short period and not some longer or undefined time period, the reference period is explicitly mentioned in a number of question texts (e.g., “How often have you been bullied at school in the past couple of

months?”) and usually in at least one of the response alternatives to a question. For most of the questions, the response alternatives are frequency alternatives and they are made as concrete as possible (e.g., “I have not been bullied at school in the past couple of months,” “it has only happened once or twice,” “2 or 3 times a month,” “about once a week,” and “several times a week”). Such specific response alternatives were preferred to alternatives such as “often” or “seldom” which lend themselves to more subjective interpretation and provide more error variance in the measurement.

The questionnaire also contains several questions about the reactions of “others” to bullying, as perceived by the respondents, that is, the behavior and attitudes of teachers, peers, and parents. These questions provide important information about the school’s efforts to counteract bullying and in which areas additional efforts may be particularly needed.

Overview of the Remaining Chapter

With this introduction as a general background, I will now continue with the main themes of my chapter. First, I focus on the issue of power imbalance as one defining characteristic of bullying, after which I make a number of comparisons between the two most common methods of measuring bullying/victimization: peer nominations and self-reports as exemplified by the OBQ. After a presentation of the measurement goals of the two methods and a fairly detailed discussion of why a direct correspondence between them cannot be expected, the methods are compared with regard to prevalence estimation and the measurement of change. The chapter ends with a report on a large-scale empirical study of possible gender differences in the area of bullying, taking into account perpetrator and victim perspectives as well as bullying by same- and cross-gender peers. This self-report study focuses on the question: “Are girls just as aggressive as boys?”

My key aim with this chapter is to elucidate some problems in the field, in particular problems with the peer nomination method, which have not been analyzed nor discussed enough (Espelage, Mebane, & Swearer, 2004; see also Ladd & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2002; and Underwood, Galen, & Paquette, 2001 for interesting discussions of some of the issues) and to provide empirical data on some of these issues. Hopefully, this chapter will contribute to fruitful discussions with and among the many researchers who invest their time and efforts in bullying research and intervention work.

Is the Power Imbalance Important?

In the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire, the power imbalance implied in bullying is introduced through the definition presented to the students. One way of getting at least a rough impression of the extent to which this aspect of the definition is perceived by the students in responding to the questionnaire is to examine the psychological and social adjustment of the victim group as defined by the questionnaire.

In most current empirical analyses, this victim group consists of two subgroups, usually named submissive/passive victims or victims only and provocative/aggressive victims or bully-victims (Olweus, 1978; Solberg & Olweus, 2003; Solberg, Olweus, & Endresen, 2007a). Typically, students who have responded that they have been bullied at least “2 or 3 times a month” in the past couple of months have been classified as victims. The students in this overall group of victims have been further differentiated through their responses to the global question about bullying other students. Those students who have responded that they have also bullied other students “2 or 3 times a month” or more, are classified as bully-victims or provocative victims.

Students who have responded that they have not bullied other students (not at all or only once or twice) are categorized as victims only or submissive/passive victims.

In a number of studies, the submissive/passive victim/victims only have been described as anxious, depressed with negative self-views, socially isolated, and generally non-aggressive (e.g., Olweus, 1993; Hawker & Boulton, 2000). These results strongly suggest that students with such characteristics have been the “underdogs” or victims in interpersonal interactions or relationships characterized by an imbalance of power.

It is somewhat less clear what should be expected with regard to the usually considerably smaller group of provocative victims/bully-victims (Solberg et al., 2007a). However, it is natural to expect that these students, in similarity with the submissive victims, would display elevated levels of internalizing problems and social isolation if they have been the targets of regular bullying by more powerful peers. This is also what has been found in empirical research (Olweus, 1993, 2001; Solberg, Olweus, & Endresen, 2007b). However, this group of students can also be expected to display a good deal of externalizing problems, since they report bullying other students as well, but this is of less relevance from the power imbalance perspective.

Overall, the psychological and social characteristics of these two victim groups are consistent with the assumption that the students have roughly understood the definition of bullying with its emphasis on the power imbalance and responded to the questionnaire in agreement with such an understanding.

In a recent paper, three English researchers have taken a more direct approach to the power imbalance issue (Hunter, Boyle, & Warden, 2007). In their study of approximately 1,400 students in the 8- to 13-year-old range the researchers asked the participants to indicate via self-report how often they had been exposed to a number of aggressive behaviors in the past two weeks. In addition, the participants were asked to indicate if the aggressor(s) in question was more “powerful” as reflected in greater physical strength, higher popularity, or a situation in which the perpetrator was part of a group. In this way, the researchers could identify a relatively large group of students (named peer-victimized students) who had been exposed to recurrent aggression and from this group they separated out a group of students who had been aggressed against in interactions or a relationship characterized by at least one form of power imbalance. Students in the latter group who comprised approximately 40% of the peer-victimized group (and 12% of the whole sample) were named victims of bullying. When comparing these two groups of aggressed against/victimized students, they found several theoretically meaningful differences. The victims of bullying perceived significantly more threat and less control over their situation in addition to being more depressed, engaging in more wishful thinking, and seeking more social support than the other group. In conclusion, the authors emphasized the importance of making a difference between peer-victimized students and bullied students with the presence of a power imbalance as the differentiating criterion. The results of this study clearly suggest that, from the perspective of the targeted students, bullying is a more serious and hurtful form of peer aggression.

These studies and conceptual arguments strongly underscore the importance of differentiating between being bullied, in the context of a power-imbalanced relationship, and being exposed to (recurrent) aggressive acts. In the latter case, it is actually doubtful if one, without further analyses, can regard and name the exposed students as victims. One reason for the importance of differentiating between these two groups of “victims” is that some students who themselves initiate many aggressive interactions are likely to be exposed to aggressive acts from their opponents also when they are clearly the “winners” of the aggressive interaction. These students will then correctly report that they have been exposed to aggressive acts and as a consequence be included in the total group of victims (and bully-victims). However, such students are

not likely to have much in common with students who have been exposed to the aggressive acts in the context of a bullying relationship with a clear power imbalance (Hunter et al., 2007).

To classify such aggressive students as “victims” would result in greater heterogeneity of this group in terms of psychological and social adjustment: It may include both Victims Only, Bully-Victims, and Bullies Only. It would also increase the overlap between bullies and victims as well as the correlation between victimization and aggression/bullying variables in dimensional analyses, possibly leading to unfortunate conclusions to the effect that bullies and victims are largely the same students and have (relatively) similar characteristics (see Solberg et al., 2007a).

In the foregoing discussion, the power imbalance was explicitly introduced in the definition of bullying or directly measured. It should be acknowledged, however, that the power imbalance can also be introduced indirectly through the wording of the descriptors employed in some commonly used peer nomination techniques. Examples include formulations like “Who gets pushed around by other kids?” “Who is put down and made fun of?” “He/she gets beat up by other kids” which formulations suggest that the target student has difficulty defending him or herself. In several of these techniques, however, the descriptors used to measure “the opposite side of the coin” often reflects generally aggressive behavior (“Who starts a fight over nothing?” “He/she calls others mean names.”) rather than bullying behavior specifically. In a recent paper (Solberg et al., 2007a), we have named this approach the “aggression line” in partial contrast to the “bullying line” in which there is an emphasis on the power imbalance.

Victims of bullying are likely to overlap in part with and can be seen as a subgroup of peer-victimized students with special characteristics. Similarly, students who bully others are likely to overlap in part with and can be seen as a subgroup of aggressive students with special characteristics. Although there is a good deal of overlap between the subgroups generated within the aggression line and the bullying line, there are very likely also some important distinguishing characteristics. There is obviously a need for more empirical studies to inform us about the character and importance of these distinctions. At this point in time, it is essential to be clear about these likely differences, to be more precise in describing and interpreting the results of our studies, and not to use the relevant terms as synonymous without empirical support. With regard to the latter point, authors should be careful not to present results as applying to bullying when they actually have measured victimization and general aggression (also see Hunter et al., 2007).

Self-Report and Peer Reports of Bully/Victim Problems

The two most common methods for measuring bully/victim problems or related concepts are self-report and some form of peer report. Sometimes these methods are pitted against one another and some authors have expressed a clear preference for one of the methods. Others have claimed that both methods provide valuable but incomplete information and that the best thing may be to combine information from both data sources. Still others (Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2001) have been more specific in arguing that the two methods tap different constructs: subjective self-views and social reputation. According to Juvonen et al., both methods may provide valid and useful information but for different purposes. They also caution against uncritically aggregating data from the two sources which may actually result in the masking of important associations.

To get a better understanding of the relation between these methods and their characteristics, is important to take a closer look at the kind of information they provide or aim to provide and also to specify in some detail for what purpose(s) the measurements will be used. Although peer nominations and self-report may serve other functions, for this analysis I have chosen the

following three goals all of which may be considered important: (a) measurement of relatively stable individual differences on the relevant dimensions and the selection of extreme groups of involved students (e.g., victims only, bullies only, bully-victims, and non-involved students); (b) prevalence estimation; and (c) measurement of change. In the context of the first goal, I will also examine the degree of correspondence or convergence between data derived from peer and self-reports and highlight some differences which are likely to reduce the expected correspondence. I will largely restrict my choice of methods to my own questionnaire, the OBQ, and to peer nominations. Both these methods are in frequent use. I am also focusing primarily on measurement with students in the age range 10 to 16 years (typically grades 4–10).

In previous sections a good deal of information was provided on the measurement of bully/victim problems with the questionnaire. Therefore, a few words about the peer nomination method of which there are several relatively similar versions is warranted.

Peer Nominations

In a typical peer nomination procedure, students are presented with a roster of the names (and possibly pictures) of their classmates and asked to nominate a fixed number, often three, or an unlimited number of usually same-gender peers in their classroom or grade who fit one or several descriptions of victimization/being bullied and aggression/bullying other students (Who is the kid who ...; He/she is picked on ... Find the names of three classmates who ...). The number or percentage of nominations received is used as the student's score on the relevant dimension. The scores are often standardized within gender, grade, and/or classroom.

Peer nominations can be seen as a special form of rating (Guilford, 1954). By their very nature, peer nominations (or ratings) are aimed at measuring relatively stable, enduring characteristics such as typical behavior patterns that the nominees display or are exposed to (Cronbach, 1970; Guilford, 1954). As detailed by Cairns and Green (1979), in making ratings (nominations) the raters (nominators) usually have to perform a number of complex cognitive operations in which they abstract and integrate a whole series of action patterns, usually with implicit reference to a comparison group of children in the same sex-age range and circumstances. In this way, the raters/nominators are likely to control for or "discount(s) situational, relational, ephemeral sources of variation that may be responsible for the observed behavior" (p. 212).

In terms of generalizability theory (Cronbach, Gleser, Nanda, & Rajaratnam, 1972), the explicit or implicit goal of such nominations is usually to maximize the "person variance component" in relation to the total variance. This will increase the reliability of the measurement which is calculated as the person variance component divided by the total variance (e.g., Cronbach, 1970). This goal is often emphasized by the way the descriptors are formulated (above) including use of the present tense (Who is such and such?). If the nominators have a reasonable level of agreement in their nominations, the aggregate or sum of the nominations will be a highly reliable measure. This suggests that the nominated students are well differentiated on the key dimensions of interest (but see below). In particular, such a sum score (possibly transformed) means that the method permits reliable selection of extreme groups of students who are nominated as being bullied/victimized and/or as bullying/being aggressive against other students.

The aim of the OBQ is also to measure relatively stable individual-differentiating characteristics. However, in contrast with peer nominations, each student is directly assessed (that is, assesses himself or herself) on a graded response scale with regard to how well he/she fits the descriptors (questions) in the questionnaire. With its repeated reference to the time frame of "the past couple of months," the OBQ is clearly designed to measure less stable characteristics than typical peer nominations. The two global questions which have been found to contain

much valid information (e.g., Solberg & Olweus, 2003; Solberg et al., 2007b), aim to provide individual overall estimates of being bullied and bullying other students (taking all possible forms of bullying into account) and seem to be well suited for such a purpose and for the selection of extreme groups of involved students. It is also possible to sum or aggregate the students' scores on the various forms of being bullied/bullying others (verbal, physical, indirect/relational, sexual, racial, bullying etc.), and thereby arrive at highly reliable mean scores, usually with internal consistency coefficients in the .80–.90 range (Olweus, 2006; Kyriakides, Kaloyirou, & Lindsay, 2006).

In sum, important goals in using peer nominations as well as the OBQ are to measure relatively stable individual-differentiating characteristics in being bullied and bullying/aggressing against other students and to select distinct extreme groups of bullied and bullying students. With this discussion as a background and the difference with regard to the reference period being assessed in mind, it is of interest to take a look at the degree of correspondence between data derived from self and peer reports, as documented in empirical studies.

Correspondence Between Self-Report and Peer Reports

There has been no systematic review of studies that have used both the OBQ and some form of peer nominations. For the purposes of the present discussion, I will therefore rely on an unpublished meta-analysis presented at the Society for Research on Child Development symposium in Tampa, Florida, by Card in 2003. Card's careful analysis included 21 studies of the correlation between self and peer reports of victimization. Some of the studies included had used the OBQ. The peer reports were both nominations and ratings. Because of this heterogeneity, these data do not match exactly the purposes of the present analysis, but they will nevertheless provide an empirically based impression of the degree of correspondence that has been typically reported.

The average correlation across the 21 studies was 0.37. Considering the fact that the studies included in the meta-analysis were of varying quality and several of them were not particularly designed to maximize correspondence between data from the two sources, this is a respectable result. This correlation is clearly higher than the average association between self- and peer data reported in a well-known meta-analysis of cross-informant reports on child behavior problems ($r = .26$; Achenbach, McConaughy, & Howell, 1987). This suggests that to be victimized/bullied is something that can be more easily observed and assessed than some other child behavior problems. Still, one may wonder why the average correlation was not larger.

Factors Contributing to Lack of Correspondence

In reflecting on this issue, it becomes obvious that, given the design of the instruments and the way data are typically treated in the two methods, there are a number of reasons why a very close correspondence cannot be expected. Some of these possible reasons are briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

First, a good deal of bullying is of a subtle and somewhat secretive nature which may be difficult for peers to observe but is clearly perceived by the targeted student and accordingly, likely to be reported in the OBQ (cf. Cairns & Cairns, 1986). This may be especially true for situations where the bullying is mainly executed by a single student, which happens relatively frequently (Olweus, 1988). In such cases, the peer group may have little knowledge about what actually goes on, in particular since many victims of bullying typically do not tell anybody about their experience (Olweus, 1993).

Second, in the OBQ the students report on the frequency with which they have been bullied/bullied other students whereas the peer nomination method measures frequency of nominations of “extreme students,” not the frequency or seriousness of the implicated behaviors. It may be reasonable to assume that a score of many, or a high proportion of, nominations which more “extreme” individuals will receive, actually reflects some frequency/seriousness (and maybe degree of visibility) dimension, at least roughly. However, for less extreme individuals, it is not self-evident that an average number of nominations, for example, directly translate into an average level or frequency/seriousness of problem behaviors. Also, in many peer nomination studies a considerable proportion of students receive no nominations at all (e.g., Espelage, Holt, & Henkel, 2003) and individuals with “zero scores” cannot without further analyses be assumed to have identical low levels of the characteristic in question. This lack of discrimination among non-extreme students will very likely reduce the correlation between peer and self-reports. In addition, it can be shown that the variance and distribution of nominations for a classroom (or grade) are substantially influenced by the number of nominators (classroom size) and the degree of inter-nominator agreement. As a consequence, also behaviorally fairly non-extreme students may well be selected into the extreme group (for example, students with a standard score +1 above the mean) from relatively smaller classrooms and/or classrooms with poor internominator-agreement (typically with smaller variance). The effects of such mechanisms, which are not well described and understood, are also likely to reduce correspondence with self-report data.

Third, as has been documented in our studies (Olweus, 1993, 1999b), a good deal of bullying is carried out by older students towards younger ones, in particular in the lower grades (4–6). To be bullied by older students will be captured in the key questions in the OBQ but is less likely to be registered in the peer nominations which typically only refer to students in the nominators’ own classroom or grade.

Fourth, as has also been documented in our studies (Olweus, 1993, 1999b), a good deal of bullied girls report that they are mainly bullied by boys. Such cross-gender bullying will be captured in the key questions in the OBQ but probably not in peer nominations that are restricted to same-gender nominees (which is a fairly common restriction). In particular, girls bullied by boys and boys bullying girls may not be well identified under peer nomination conditions.

Fifth, the common practice of statistically standardizing peer nominations within classroom, gender, and/or grade will often result in the removal of meaningful between-classroom/gender/grade variance. To illustrate, if there is a marked difference in the number/proportion of nominations of bullying (extreme) students for Grade 4 and Grade 5 and these data are standardized within grade, this means that this developmental difference is effectively eliminated. The two distributions of standardized nominations will have the same mean values and standard deviations in spite of the fact that one grade has a much higher level of problems with bullying. As a related consequence, the most extreme students in each grade will receive roughly similar standardized values even if the extreme students in the most aggressive grade have received larger numbers/higher proportions of nominations. Since such differences in the level of problems are likely to be captured in self-reports, also the practice of standardizing may reduce the degree of correspondence between self and peer reports. Results similar to those achieved through statistical standardization are likely to be obtained by procedurally restricting nominations to students of the same category (classroom/gender/grade) in combination with use of a fixed number of nominations (e.g., “Find the three same-gender peers in the class who fit the description...”).

At the same time, it should be noted that the practice of standardization may not be a great problem from the perspective of correspondence, if correlations between self-reports and peer nominations are calculated separately for girls and boys within classrooms for different grades and then averaged (maybe weighted by group size). This is not regularly done, however, and the

likely disturbing effects of statistical and procedural standardizing should be given more consideration and be investigated much more thoroughly than has been done so far.

A more general comment on the reliability of peer nominations also seems warranted. The typically high reliability of many peer nomination dimensions is often regarded as an indication of the validity of the measure. In considering this issue, it is important to remember that the high reliabilities are obtained through summation of the nominations of many nominators. Behind a good reliability estimate of 0.80 for nominations in a classroom of 15 boys (and 15 girls), for example, the average inter-nominator agreement is only 0.20 (using the Spearman-Brown formula “backwards”). If the students are allowed to make cross-gender nominations, the average inter-nominator agreement (among the 30 nominators) behind a reliability coefficient of 0.80 would be as low as 0.12. It is highly questionable if a variable with such a low inter-nominator agreement really measures what it is intended to measure. In standard psychometric textbooks (Cronbach, 1970; Guilford, 1954), it is generally emphasized that to obtain valid nominations/ratings, it is important that the dimensions to be rated are well defined and the nominators/raters know the persons to be nominated/rated well and have observed them in many relevant situations. When the inter-nominator agreement is as low as 0.10–0.20, this is not likely to be the case and it not unreasonable to assume that some kind of general rejection and dislike dimension is an important component of the nomination variable obtained. Such a variable may well correlate substantially with other peer nomination variables of rejection and the like but may not relate strongly to self-reports on relevant specific behaviors/situations.

Summing up the discussion about the correspondence between data from the two methods, a number of studies have obviously found a good deal of overlap, as indicated by the average correlation of 0.37 (Card, 2003). This is a good sign since some degree of overlap or convergence is to be expected. A more detailed examination reveals, however, that there are also clear differences in what the two methods are likely to measure and in how the raw data are used or “transformed” to generate the variables of interest. As detailed in the various points above, it is obvious that several of the reasons why the association between self-reports and peer reports is not stronger than what has been reported so far, are linked to characteristics of the peer nomination method.

Considering the usually painful and somewhat subjective nature of being bullied, it is natural to maintain that the students themselves, rather than their peers, are likely to be the best informants on such experiences at least by the time they have reached the age of 10 or so (see Ladd & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2002). There may, of course, be some bullied students who are not willing or able to acknowledge even to themselves that they are bullied. There may also be some students who for one reason or another provide erratic or misleading answers. But, by and large, it is definitely our experience with the OBQ that the majority of students take the task of answering the questionnaire quite seriously and tend to respond accordingly.

With regard to bullying other students, one cannot completely rule out the possibility that there is some degree of underreporting, at least for some forms of bullying. At the same time, we have been surprised to find quite marked associations with other self-reports on rule-breaking and antisocial behaviors (Solberg & Olweus, 2003; Bendixen & Olweus, 1999; Solberg et al., 2007b), suggesting that students are largely candid in their reporting also of socially undesirable or condemned behaviors. This impression is supported by reviews of self-reports used in delinquency research (e.g., Farrington, 2001).

With an acceptable level of inter-nominator agreement and a large enough group of nominators, peer nomination data are likely to provide reasonably adequate measures of relatively stable, individual-differentiating bully/victim characteristics, at least as regards more visible or “public” forms of bullying and the more extreme students in the peer group. It is likely that the strength of the typical peer nomination method may be more in the identification of distinct

extreme groups than in creating distributions of students roughly arranged/ranked according to frequency or seriousness on the problematic behavior dimensions.

Against this background, it is obvious that peer nomination data cannot be considered some kind of “gold standard” or “ultimate criterion” of the validity of self-reports on bully/victim problems. Given the points discussed, it may seem more natural to switch perspective and raise the question: To what extent can peer nomination data predict self-reports of bully/victim problems and in what ways can such peer nominations be improved to increase the degree of correspondence between the two sources of data? Such a shift of focus of course does not imply that self-report data on bullying problems cannot be made more comprehensive and reliable, for example by aggregating across different forms of bullying, by incorporating information about how long the bullying has lasted and the number of students who have participated in the bullying. It should be emphasized that the previous discussion and conclusions apply to the OBQ, in particular, and cannot be generalized without further analyses to other self-report instruments with possibly different formats and characteristics.

Prevalence Estimation

It is often important for school, political, or administrative decision makers to get an estimate of the level of bully/victim problems in a school or organization (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). A suitable measure can be “a period prevalence estimate” which may be expressed as the proportion or percentage of individuals in the unit of interest who have been exposed to bullying behavior by other individuals (or have bullied other individuals) with some defined frequency within a specified time period (Olweus, 1989; Solberg & Olweus, 2003, p. 240). Such a measure has a clear meaning or interpretation, can be easily reproduced by different researchers, and permits meaningful comparisons between groups and time points.

Both conceptual arguments and empirical research indicate that single variables/items with well-defined response alternatives such as the global questions in the OBQ are suitable for prevalence estimation (e.g., “2 or 3 times a month” or possibly “about once a week” as possible cutoff points; Solberg & Olweus, 2003). Such a prevalence estimate is equal to the mean of the dichotomized distribution (0/1). Also a sum/mean (composite) score derived by summation/averaging across various forms of bullying can function reasonably well. However, since such composite scores can be generated in a number of different ways, they are typically somewhat more abstract and general than an estimate derived from a single variable/item.

There are several problems with peer nominations for the purpose of prevalence estimation. First, as mentioned, the peer nomination method does not directly provide information about the frequency of specific behaviors or conditions but rather the number/proportion of nominations for some kind of problem behavior that students receive. The link between number/proportion of nominations and the frequency/seriousness of the behaviors of interest is not well researched or understood. And because the focus is on the (three or more) extreme students and not every student in the class has been assessed on a graded scale, it is not clear what an average peer nomination value or prevalence estimate actually measures or represents.

A related problem with peer nominations is linked to the fact that the procedures used to arrive at a cutoff point for classifying a student as a “victim” or “bully” are often quite complex, difficult to reproduce, and more or less arbitrary. The prevalence estimates arrived at in a particular study are likely to depend on a number of factors including the number of students/nominators in the classroom, the degree of consensus among nominators, if the number of nominations are fixed or unlimited, if and how the nominations are standardized, and so on. All of this will make it difficult, if not impossible, for different researchers to reproduce the dif-

differentiating criterion employed in a particular study and arrive at prevalence estimates which have basically the same meaning.

In addition, the decision rules used in choosing a relevant cutoff point often seem to be made post hoc and are often somewhat arbitrary. Why does one researcher use a distance of, for example, one standard deviation above the mean as a cutoff point whereas another uses a 0.50 standard deviation? Or why should a researcher require that, say, 20% rather than 35% of the classmates have made certain nominations in order to classify a student as a victim? There may exist some statistical/psychometric and possibly substantive considerations behind such decisions, but from a prevalence perspective, the end result is likely to be quite different depending on which choices are made along the road. Often, the rationale for choosing one alternative rather than another is not discussed at all.

The potential problems of statistical or procedural standardization examined in the previous section of this chapter come into play even more markedly in the context of prevalence estimation. In particular, if the peer nominations are standardized within gender or grade/age group, this will remove or considerably reduce the variance that many developmental psychologists and educators are or should be particularly interested in studying. Also, within-classroom standardization is likely to remove or reduce potentially interesting and valid between-classroom variance (in addition to removing/reducing between-grade variance) which may be explored in multi-level analyses (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002), for example. Generally, with the practice of standardizing within one or more categories/factors and the interpretative problems mentioned in the first point above, it becomes extremely difficult to know what is actually measured and compared in the final analysis. This is likely to hamper meaningful analyses of group differences in prevalence estimates and developmental changes over time. A consequence of the previous arguments is that prevalence estimates derived from common peer nomination methods and often involving some form of standardization must be regarded as largely arbitrary.

There seem to be two major reasons for standardizing nominations: (a) to adjust for different numbers of nominators in different classrooms/grades/nominator groups and (b) to try to make scores on different peer nomination variables, maybe measured in different metric, (more) comparable by expressing them in standard deviation units. Although standardization may be beneficial in some respects, it is clear, in the context of prevalence estimation and in the measurement of change (see below) which also usually implies prevalence comparisons between different grade/age groups and time points, that this practice has some very undesirable effects. Unfortunately, it seems that use of standardized peer nominations for the purpose of prevalence estimation has become something of a convention in the field. It is very important that researchers take a more critical look at this practice.

By suggesting that researchers should adopt a critical view of standardized peer nominations, I do not want to imply that peer nomination data based on nominations of extreme students may not be of some value for a comparison of the relative sizes of different subgroups (e.g., victims only, bullies only, bully-victims) or of their characteristics for example. However, the critical points raised here relate in particular to the size of the group(s) of involved/not-involved students, how the basic cutoff point is determined, its meaning and reproducibility.

Summing up, most peer nomination variants are not well designed for prevalence estimation and many of them use some kind of standardization which is likely to further complicate matters. Prevalence estimates derived from common peer nomination methods do not have a clear meaning, are difficult or impossible to reproduce precisely, and rely on the use of more or less arbitrary cutoff points. Such estimates are poorly designed for comparisons of prevalence estimates across groups and time points. There seem to be few such problems with self-report data derived from the OBQ.

Measurement of Change

Both peer nominations and the OBQ may be used for the measurement of possible effects of anti-bullying interventions, which is to measure change. How do these two methods compare in that regard?

As pointed out in an earlier section, both methods aim to measure relatively stable individual-differentiating characteristics. However, this goal is achieved in different ways in the two methods which is of major importance with regard to their capacity for measuring change.

The very nature of the peer nomination procedure, which in some ways is a kind of “guess who” situation-finding the students who fit a certain description will tend to discount possible changes in the level of problems over time. Even if the overall level of problems has decreased substantially in a school after an intervention, many bullying students nominated 1 year or maybe 6 months before will most likely be nominated again as bullying other students. This is simply because they still are the students who fit the descriptions best even if most of them have considerably reduced their bullying behavior at follow-up. The same will probably apply to students who have been bullied. To a certain extent at least, peer nominations reflect the individual students’ social reputations, as argued by Juvonen et al. (2001), and reputations usually do not change quickly.

The effects of such mechanisms are likely to be accentuated if the students are given instructions to nominate a fixed number of peers, instructions that most students will want to comply with. As previously pointed out, such a format will tend to serve as a kind of standardization within classroom/grade/time point and will largely reduce or eliminate possibilities for registering change. Use of statistical standardization will have similar effects, as explained in previous sections.

In contrast, the self-report questionnaire measures mostly painful subjective experiences of being bullied and if clear changes in the levels of harassment occur, this is likely to be quickly registered by the targeted student. Similarly, also students who bully other students will tend to note if their behavior is questioned, blocked or confronted by teachers or peers, and maybe reported to parents.

Another important difference is that in the questions of the OBQ, it is repeatedly emphasized that the responses concern “the past couple of months.” The absence of such a reference period in peer nomination methods reinforces the focus on stable or typical behavior patterns or situations.

In this context, it is natural to call attention to the often overlooked difference between psychometric and “edumetric” tests or measures (Carver, 1974; Lipsey, 1983). The main goal of psychometric tests is to measure relatively stable individual-differentiating characteristics whereas the main purpose of edumetric tests is to register change when real change has occurred. Many of the considerations that are used in assessing the quality of a psychometric test are largely irrelevant with regard to an edumetric test. The main validity criterion for such a test is the degree to which it can differentiate between a control condition and an intervention condition in which real change is expected or known to have occurred (and, conversely, not to differentiate, when no real change has taken place). The ability of the test to reflect reliable differences across age (growth or gain) is another meaningful criterion (Carver, 1974).

From this perspective, it is obvious that the typical peer nomination technique aims to be a psychometric “test,” while the OBQ has both a psychometric and edumetric orientation. And as documented in a number of studies, items or scales from the OBQ have shown quite marked differences in the expected direction between control and intervention conditions (e.g., Olweus, 1991, 2005). There seem to be very few studies where peer nominations have been able to docu-

ment positive effects of an intervention. Also, meaningful age and gender differences have been consistently registered with the OBQ in many large-scale studies (Olweus, 1993; Solberg et al., 2007a; Smith, Madsen, & Moody, 1999).

From a somewhat different perspective, typical peer nomination methods aim largely to measure “trait” variance, whereas the OBQ has documented sensitivity to both “trait” and “state” variance.

According to the analyses presented in the previous sections, common peer nomination methods are poorly suited for both prevalence estimation and the measurement of change. Such methods may have certain strength in the selection of extreme groups of students such as victims only, bullies only and bully-victims, at least with regard to more visible or “public” forms of bullying. There are, however, considerable interpretative problems with this methodology when it is used for the measurement of stable, individual-differentiating bully/victim characteristics for a whole sample or population. Use of statistical or procedural standardization usually complicates matters further.

Generally, it seems that the value of peer nominations in the area of bully/victim and related research has been somewhat exaggerated and the problems associated with the methodology correspondingly underrated. There is simply a strong need for much more methodological groundwork to find out if at all, and in which cases how, common peer nomination methods can be meaningfully used for prevalence estimation and the study of developmental changes including comparisons of prevalence estimates or mean values across groups and time.

In drawing these conclusions, I have disregarded the possible ethical problems associated with use of peer nominations for socially undesirable behavior patterns including “like least-nominations.” In several countries, including the Scandinavian countries and Australia, many research projects with such peer nominations very likely would be rejected for ethical reasons by the research evaluation committees. Future research should also examine this issue in more detail.

Are Girls as Aggressive as Boys?

It is usually reported that boys are more aggressive than girls (for an overview, see Coie & Dodge, 1998). However, this conclusion has been called into question by research which began to be published in the late 1980s and the 1990s. This research came from Finland with a focus on indirect aggression (e.g., Björkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992; Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, & Peltonen, 1988) and somewhat later from the United States with reference to relational aggression (e.g., Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Crick et al., 1999). In particular, both research groups have argued that the conclusion about boys’ higher levels of aggression is likely to be a consequence of the fact that the aggressive behaviors typically studied in research have been direct physical and maybe verbal forms. Further, if the definition and operationalization of aggression were broadened to include more indirect and subtle forms, this might well result in a different conclusion. Relatedly, even stronger formulations, made by both the Finnish and the US research groups, have stated that girls are just as aggressive as boys. Examples are: “... the claim that human males are more aggressive than females appears to be false” (Björkqvist, Österman, & Lagerspetz, 1994, p. 28), and “... the previously described studies provide strong evidence that gender differences in aggression are minimal (or nonexistent) when both physical and relational forms of aggression are considered” (Crick et al., 1999, p. 99). Although these authors also have expressed themselves more cautiously in later contexts, the view created by these early findings and statements seems still to be quite common.

Although different terms are used, it is obvious that indirect and relational aggression (and

also the term “social aggression”; Cairns, Cairns, Neckerman, Ferguson, & Garipey, 1989; Galen and Underwood, 1997) cover much the same phenomena (see Björkqvist, 2001; Underwood, 2003). The key components seem to be intentional social exclusion, spreading of rumors, and manipulation of friendship relationships. To avoid the discussion of which term is most appropriate, the term, “indirect/relational aggression/bullying” will be used as a summary label in this chapter.

The “Early” Studies of Indirect and Relational Aggression

What is then the empirical evidence for the statement that girls are as aggressive as boys? Although Björkqvist and colleagues in their early studies found that girls by and large scored higher than boys on peer-rated items of indirect forms of aggression (e.g., Björkqvist et al., 1992), and Crick and colleagues obtained similar results with regard to relational aggression (e.g., Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Crick et al., 1999), results from later studies have been inconsistent (for reviews, see Espelage et al., 2004; Underwood, 2003). The evidence available thus far is obviously not conclusive. Before presenting my own results on this issue, I want to take a critical look at the early research which lead up to the suggestion that the common conclusion about gender differences in aggression might have to be revised.

The Björkqvist group constructed a kind of peer rating technique (although they themselves named it peer nominations; Björkqvist et al., 1992, p. 119) in which the students rated all of their classmates of the same gender on a four-point scale (from 0 = “not at all” to 3 = “very much”) on several variables with an aggressive content. These variables included items of physical aggression (“hits,” “kicks”), direct verbal aggression (“yells,” “calls the other names”), and indirect aggression (“tells bad or false stories,” “says to others: let’s not be with him/her”). The format of the technique was: “What does he/she do *when angry* with another boy/girl in the class?” (italics added).

My misgivings about this procedure concern the extent to which it actually measures prevalence/levels of aggressive behavior. The reason for this doubt is that the rater instructions state as a prerequisite that the student is (should be) angry. In my view, the results are then likely to primarily index typical or preferred modes of anger expression by girls and boys rather than measuring how often the various behaviors actually occur in the two genders. It is not the same thing to ask “How often does student X display this particular behavior when angry?” (as the Björkqvist group does) and “How often does student X display this particular behavior?”

In addition, it has been documented that boys, by and large, are more easily emotionally aroused (i.e., quick to anger) than girls (e.g., Knight, Guthrie, Page, & Fabes, 2002; Zillman, 1979), and by using anger as a prerequisite in the rating procedure, possible gender differences in prevalence or levels of aggression are likely to be reduced or eliminated and maybe even reversed. Through this procedure boys and girls are hypothetically placed on an equal footing with regard to degree of anger arousal. This is actually a kind of procedural counterpart to “covariance adjustment” and addresses the question: “How would the girls have reacted *if* they had had the same level of anger arousal as the boys?”

Furthermore, it must be recognized that, given the instructions, the rating task must in many cases have been fairly difficult when the raters had to rate students whom they had never or seldom seen angry. It is difficult to know for sure what strategy the raters actually employed in such cases but probably they chose to rely on some guessing or hypothesizing about what would have happened if the student being rated had been angry. Such guessing very likely would have been influenced by sex stereotypes about typical boy and girl reactions. Thus, since there are more

non-angered girls than boys in an average classroom, this would be more of a problem for girl raters, which might have affected the rating outcome in “favor” of the girls.

All in all, there are some problems and ambiguities with the measurement procedure used in the Björkqvist et al. (1992) study, which should caution against strong conclusions. It is possible that the main results of the study tell us that when or if girls are angry, then they would react with more indirect aggression than boys but they don’t tell us that girls actually do this more often than boys “under normal circumstances.” It is interesting to note that another, more recent Finnish study (Salmivalli & Kaukiainen, 2005) using the Björkqvist et al. instrument did not replicate the earlier findings: “*Across age groups, boys used all three types of aggression [physical, verbal, and indirect] more than girls*” (p. 160; italics in original).

There are actually some similar problems with the Crick and Grotpeter methodology. Also in these studies, being angry is used as a prerequisite in some (two or three out of four or five) of the peer nomination items used to measure relational aggression (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Crick, 1996). “*When mad* [italics added]. gets even by keeping the person from being in their group of friends” is an example (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995, p. 713). Even though the anger prerequisite is not included in the two remaining items, it is not unreasonable to assume that this condition has been present in the minds of the nominators also for these items. It is possible, however, that the complicating effect of use of this prerequisite is less marked with this peer nomination instrument since the goal is to nominate the three most extreme students rather than to rate all same-gender peers (including non-angry students) as was done in the Björkqvist et al. research.

At the same time, the focus on extreme students immediately raises the issue discussed above of whether the number/proportions of nominations can be considered an estimate of the average level of problems in the total groups of boys and girls, an estimate that can be used for meaningful gender and other comparisons across groups and times. Considering the complexities involved in generating a peer nomination variable (pointed out above), it is difficult to know what is actually reflected in the significant gender difference in relational aggression (in “favor” of the girls) reported by Crick and Grotpeter, for example (1995, p. 716). (Here, it is also worth mention that the prerequisite of anger does not seem to have been included in the items on direct physical aggression which might also have affected the results in favor of the girls.) In addition, it seems that the behavioral basis for drawing general conclusions about the relative aggressiveness of the two genders, with one dimension of direct physical aggression and one dimension of relational aggression, is too narrow. There are thus some problems also with the Crick and Grotpeter technique for the measurement of relational (and other) aggression which need to be investigated in much greater detail.

The critical analysis presented in the previous paragraphs is not meant to devalue or reduce the importance of the research of these authors. This research has been important in directing attention to more subtle and less visible forms of aggression, which no doubt exist and needs to be more thoroughly investigated and understood. At the same time, it is essential to analyze critically how results have been obtained and not to jump to premature conclusions which may turn out to be “false leads” in the long run (cf. Underwood et al., 2001). We certainly also need more empirical data on the topic that can inform our research and increase our understanding.

An Empirical Study Examining Bullying and Gender

In a number of our recent studies, we have collected self-report data via the OBQ on several different forms of bullying other students, including both typical direct and indirect/relational forms in a reasonably “fixed” context, the school environment. The results from these studies comprising more than 40,000 students have generally been quite consistent. For ease of reading,

I will focus on one of these studies of some 16,380 girls and boys about evenly distributed over the grade range of 4 through 10 (modal ages 10 through 16; Olweus, 2005; Solberg & Olweus, 2003).

The OBP also provides information about students who have been bullied and if they have been mainly bullied by girls, boys, or a combination of boys and girls. This information permits separate analyses of girls mainly bullied by girls and boys mainly bullied by boys, that is, analyses of same-gender bullying from the perspective of the victims. These analyses give useful information about the kinds and prevalence of various forms of bullying used within each gender. In addition, the data will also shed light on the extent to which there is cross-gender bullying, with girls being bullied by boys and boys being bullied by girls.

The students in this sample were drawn from 143 elementary and junior high schools across Norway who took the questionnaire in the spring of 2003 in the context of a new nationwide initiative against bullying in Norwegian schools (Olweus, 2005), some 4 months before introduction of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) in the schools. The levels of bully/victim problems in this sample were largely representative of the national level of such problems.

In the following analyses we focus on aggressive behavior patterns of an often very mean and malicious kind, which are quite common in our schools (Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993; Solberg et al., 2007a). Much bullying can be seen as a form of proactive aggression (see Coie and Dodge, 1998) with a good deal of self-initiated behavior on the part of the bullying students. However, many bullying students are also easily angered (high on reactive aggression; e.g., Olweus, 1978, 1993). It would seem that the behavior patterns implicated in bullying are very relevant when we want to examine whether or not girls and boys are equally aggressive. The questions for measuring bullying behavior/being bullied are not contingent on some prerequisite like anger (but preceded by the general definition of bullying).

Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1 depict the results in terms of dichotomized prevalence data that is, the percentage of students who have responded "2 or 3 times a month" or more on the various questions. As explained in Solberg and Olweus (2003), "2 or 3 times a month" is a suitable cutoff point for many purposes. However, a number of the analyses have also been carried out on the

Table 2.1 Percentage of Students Who Reported on Various Forms of Bullying Other Students and Being Bullied by Same-Gender and Cross-Gender Peers

	Lower grades (4-7)		Higher grades (8-10)	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Global				
Bullying other students	2.8	7.0	3.5	9.0
Being bullied by same-gender peers	1.8	7.2	1.1	5.7
Being bullied by cross-gender peers	5.2	1.0	3.1	0.4
Verbal				
Bullying other students	2.0	4.6	2.0	7.9
Being bullied by same-gender peers	1.7	6.4	0.9	5.4
Being bullied by cross-gender peers	4.2	0.9	3.2	0.5
Isolation				
Bullying other students	1.6	1.9	2.8	3.8
Being bullied by same-gender peers	1.8	2.5	1.1	1.6
Being bullied by cross-gender peers	1.9	0.5	0.6	0.3
Rumors				
Bullying other students	0.7	0.9	0.7	2.1
Being bullied by same-gender peers	1.7	2.6	1.4	2.0
Being bullied by cross-gender peers	1.7	0.6	1.0	0.4

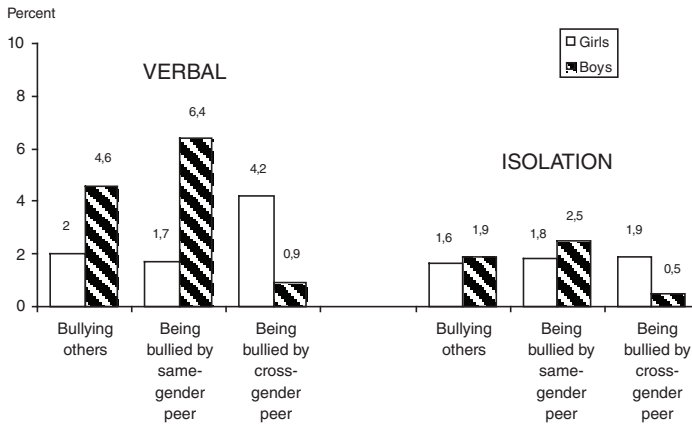


Figure 2.1 Gender differences in bullying other students and being bullied by same-gender and cross-gender peers. Direct verbal and indirect/relational (isolation) forms of bullying. Grades 4–7 (n for bullying other students; girls = 5396, boys = 5755).

same questions with the cutoff point of “only once or twice” with very much the same results (but generally higher percentage values). The same is true when the whole 5-point scale is used. Given the large size of the sample, most of the analyses of theoretical interest are highly significant but, for ease of exposition, such data are not reported in the present context.

The main findings broken down by grade level, 4–7 and 8–10 (which is natural division in Norwegian schools) are presented in Table 2.1. A selection of the results is displayed in Figure 2.1. Results are presented for four main variables: (a) Bullying–global (“How often have you taken part in bullying another student(s) at school in the past couple of months?”); (b) Bullying–verbal (“I called another student(s) mean names, made fun of or teased him or her in hurtful way”); (c) Bullying–isolation (“I kept him or her out of things on purpose, excluded him or her from my group of friends or completely ignored him or her”); and (d) Bullying–rumors (“I spread false rumors about him or her and tried to make others dislike him or her”). The basic contents of the questions/statements on indirect/relational bullying/aggression are very similar to formulations used in the measurement of indirect and relational aggression by Björkqvist et al. (1992) and Crick and Grotpeter (1995), respectively.

The variables in Table 2.1 represent both self-reported bullying behavior, that is, reports from the perspective of the perpetrators (first row in each set), and self-reports on being bullied by other students, that is, data from the perspective of the targeted students (second and third rows in each set). To illustrate, the first row of data in Table 2.1 shows the percentage of girls and boys in lower and higher grades, respectively, who have reported on the global question that they have bullied other students “2 or 3 times a month” or more often (2.8% and 3.5% for girls and 7.0% and 9.0% for boys). The next row presents the percentage of students who have been bullied (globally) by same-gender peers, that is, girls being mainly bullied by girls (1.8% for lower grades and 1.1% for higher grades), and boys being mainly bullied by boys (7.2% for lower grades, and 5.7% for higher grades). The third row displays the percentage of students who have been bullied (globally) by cross-gender peers, that is, girls being mainly bullied by boys (5.2% for lower grades and 3.1% for higher grades), and boys being mainly bullied by girls (1.0% for lower grades and 0.4% for higher grades). The data for the other main variables have the same structure.

The results for one direct form of bullying, Bullying–verbal, and one indirect/relational form, Bullying–isolation, for students in grades 4–7 are presented in Figure 2.1. Bars number 1, 3, and 6 represent verbal bullying where girls have been the perpetrators and bars number 2, 4, and 5

represent verbal bullying with boys as perpetrators. Parallel data for indirect/relational bullying in the form of social isolation are presented in the bars on the right-hand side of the figure: Bars number 7, 9, and 12 with girls as perpetrators, and bars number 8, 10, and 11 with boys as perpetrators.

What Are the Main Conclusions from These Data?

The data for self-reported bullying behavior in Table 2.1 (first row in each group of variables) indicate that boys report higher levels of bullying other students on all variables for both lower and higher grades. The gender difference is very pronounced for global and verbal bullying and less marked for the indirect/relational forms. However, also for the two indirect/relational variables, boys have higher scores than girls and for the upper grades there are fairly clear differences (3.8% vs. 2.8% for isolation and 2.1 vs. 0.7% for rumors). The second row of data in each group of variables shows prevalence data for students being bullied by same-gender peers. Generally, the gender differences from the victim perspective parallel the findings for bullying other students. On all variables, boys mainly bullied by boys have higher values than girls mainly bullied by girls, although the differences between the genders are again less marked for the two indirect/relational variables.

Informative data are also contained in the third rows of the table, concerning students bullied by cross-gender peers. Looking at the Bullying-verbal variable for lower grades, for example, and comparing the percentage of girls bullied by boys (third row: 4.2%; bar number 5 in Figure 2.1) with the percentage for girls bullied by girls (second row: 1.7%; bar number 3 in Figure 2.1), it is obvious that girls are bullied verbally by many more boys than girls, for this variable and grade level, 229 boys versus 93 girls. Expressed in another way, only about 17% of all bullied girls in grades 4–7 have been verbally bullied mainly by girls whereas 42% have been mainly bullied by boys (and the rest mainly by girls and boys in combination). Paralleling these results, 59% of bullied boys have been mainly bullied by other boys and only 9% by girls. Roughly similar results are obtained for higher grades and for the Bullying-global variable.

In examining the two remaining variables, a considerable proportion of girls have been exposed to indirect/relational forms of aggression by boys, that is, through social isolation and rumor spreading. According to the girl victims, they are exposed to such bullying to approximately the same degree by girls and by boys (1.8 % vs. 1.9% for Bullying-isolation and lower grades; bars number 9 and 11 in Figure 2.1; 1.1% and 0.6% for higher grades, for example) In addition, boys use this form of bullying with similar or somewhat higher frequency in relation to other boys (2.5% and 1.6% for the lower and higher grades, respectively; for girls bullying girls, corresponding figures are 1.8% and 1.1%). Similar results are obtained for Bullying-rumors (2.6% and 2.0% for boys, lower and higher grades; for girls, corresponding figures are 1.7% and 1.4%).

Although the numbers/percentages for same-gender and cross-gender bullying students cannot be directly added (because of possible double-tallying of boys, in particular, who may bully both boys and girls), the conclusion drawn on basis of the two latter sets of data is that boys are also involved in indirect/relational bullying of other students to the same or an even greater extent than girls. At the same time, although we do not find a reversal of the gender pattern for any of the variables studied, the difference is clearly less marked for indirect/relational forms of bullying/aggression than for more direct forms. This is partly in line with the findings from Björkqvist et al. (1992) and Crick et al. (1999).

The basic issue can also be assessed with reference to the global being-bullied question which is designed to provide an overall estimate of the total “volume” of being bullied, taking all possible forms of bullying into account.(in our empirical analyses, all nine different forms of bullying

measured in the OBQ correlate substantially with the global variable). In most of our previous research, we have found relatively small gender differences in being bullied globally (e.g., Olweus, 1993; Solberg et al., 2007a); a finding that was replicated in the present sample where the prevalence rate is 10.7% for girls and 11.8% for boys. However, our more detailed analyses have shown that these percentages are generated in very different ways. Of the bullied girls, only about 16% report that they have been mainly bullied (globally) by other girls whereas 46% have been mainly bullied by boys. At the same time, of bullied boys 63% have been mainly bullied by other boys and only 7% by girls.

On the basis of these data, we can obtain an estimate of the total number or volume of victims who have been exposed to some form of bullying by students of either gender. Translated into numbers, the total number of male and female victims (bullied mainly by girls or by boys, and disregarding students bullied by both girls and boys) is 1,123 and of that total, 932 or 83% have been mainly bullied by one or more boys, whereas only 191 or 17% have been mainly bullied by one or more girls. Many more victims are thus bullied by boys than by girls. (Cross-gender aggression/bullying have been largely neglected in peer nomination research. Results showing that a considerable proportion of bullied girls are mainly bullied by boys have been previously reported [Olweus, 1993], but these results have not been frequently cited in the bullying literature; see Rodkin and Berger, *in press*, for an exception.)

Although these data do not permit exact estimation of the number of girls and boys who have actually carried out the bullying (again due to possible double-tallying), they can be used as an estimate of the relative involvement in the bullying of other students by either gender. These figures derived from the victim perspective are in general agreement with the data on self-reported bullying behavior (global) presented in the first row in the first panel of Table 2.1.

Getting back to the basic question of whether girls are just as aggressive as boys, the data presented covering both direct and indirect/relational forms of bullying/aggression, perpetrator and victim perspectives, and same-gender and cross-gender relationships, clearly do not support such a conclusion. Taken together, these analyses show very convincingly, that the male gender is the more aggressive gender, at least as regards the kinds of largely self-initiated behavior patterns involved in bullying which must be considered to be of particular relevance for an evaluation of this issue. The data also show that boys use indirect/relational forms of aggression to about the same or even greater extent than girls. Although girls overall use less aggression than boys as measured globally (taking all forms of bullying into account) as well as with a selection of direct and indirect/relational variables, they are more inclined, in relative terms, to use indirect forms of aggression than boys. But girls also use direct verbal forms of aggression/bullying (see Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1). On the basis of these results, there are no good grounds for designating indirect/relational forms of aggression as a special “female form of aggression,” other than possibly in the relative sense just mentioned.

Overall, the results obtained from a large sample using the OBQ clearly contradict the statement that girls and boys are equally aggressive. When considering this issue, we should also not forget that girls typically score much higher than boys on most variables of social competence and prosocial behavior, variables which tend to correlate negatively with aggressive behavior.

Some Conclusions and Key Messages

In this chapter it has been argued that researchers who want to study/measure “bullying” should use/provide their participants with a clear definition of the phenomenon. Such a definition should include reference to a power imbalance between the individual exposed and his or her perpetrator(s), in addition to intentionality of the behavior and some repetitiveness. Both con-

ceptual arguments and some recent empirical research underscore the importance of differentiating between being bullied according to such a definition (in the context of a power-imbalanced relationship) and being exposed to (recurrent) aggressive acts without such a specification. In particular, bullying is a more serious and hurtful form of peer aggression. Researchers should also be careful not to present results as applying to bullying when they have actually measured “victimization” generally defined as exposure to aggressive acts (without reference to a power imbalance) by one or more other individuals.

A key theme of this chapter has been to point out and exemplify a number of problems and weaknesses of common peer nomination techniques for the measurement of bully/victim (and many other) problems. These weaknesses come into play both with regard to prevalence estimation, the study of change, and measurement of relatively stable, individual differences and, to a somewhat lesser degree, the selection of extreme groups of involved students (e.g., victims only, bullies only, bully-victims, and non-involved students). In this regard, it is also cautioned against uncritical use of statistical or procedural standardization of peer nominations which is likely to remove or considerably reduce meaningful between gender/classroom/grade variance. It is further concluded that prevalence estimates derived from common peer nomination methods do not have a clear meaning, are difficult or impossible to reproduce precisely, and rely on the use of more or less arbitrary cutoff points. Such estimates are poorly designed for comparisons of prevalence estimates across groups and time points.

Another section examines the degree of correlation or correspondence between data on the same individuals derived from peer nominations and self-reports. Although a meta-analysis of 21 studies has reported a relatively respectable average cross-informant correlation of 0.37, the question is raised why the correlation was not larger. It is shown that several of the reasons why the association between self-reports and peer reports is not stronger, are linked to characteristics of the peer nomination method. The common view of peer nominations as the “gold standard” or “ultimate criterion” of the validity of self-reports is rejected. Many of the problems with peer nomination data are escaped when using a well-constructed questionnaire such as the OBQ. It

Table 2.2 Understanding and Researching Bullying: Summary of Implications for Practice

Those who study/measure “bullying” or bully/victim problems should use/provide their participants with a clear definition of the phenomenon. Such a definition should include reference to a power imbalance between the individual exposed and his or her perpetrator(s), in addition to intentionality of the behavior and some repetitiveness. Not including power imbalance in the definition may lead to the unfortunate conclusion that bullies and victims are largely the same students and have similar characteristics.

Common peer nomination techniques have several weaknesses that make them poorly suited for both prevalence estimation, the study of change, and the measurement of relatively stable, individual differences. Use of statistical or procedural (with a fixed number of nominations) standardization within gender/classrooms/schools often complicates matters further. The possible strengths of these methods may lie in the selection of extreme groups of students such as victims only, bullies only, bully-victims, at least with regard to more visible or “public” forms of bullying. However, there is little reason to regard peer nominations as some kind of “gold standard” or “ultimate criterion” for the measurement of bully/victim problems. Much more methodological groundwork is needed to understand if at all, and in which cases how, common peer nomination methods can be meaningfully used for prevalence estimation and the study of change. Several of the problems with peer nomination data can be escaped by using a well-constructed questionnaire.

A final section is focused on the claims made by both Finnish and US researchers that boys and girls are equally aggressive when indirect/relational forms of aggression/bullying are taken into account. Results from a large-scale empirical Norwegian study with the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ) and data covering both direct and indirect/relational forms of bullying/aggression, perpetrator and victim perspectives, and same-gender and cross-gender relationships, clearly do not support a conclusion about no gender difference. Taken together, the data show very convincingly that males are the more aggressive gender.

is generally concluded that there is a strong need for much more methodological groundwork to find out if at all, and in which cases how, common peer nomination methods can be meaningfully used for prevalence estimation and the study of change.

A final section discusses some methodological weaknesses of “early” Finnish and U.S. studies of gender differences which have argued that boys and girls are equally aggressive when indirect/relational forms of aggression/bullying are taken into account. The ways these studies have measured aggressive behavior suggest that they are likely to primarily index typical or preferred modes of anger expression by girls and boys rather than measure how often the various behaviors actually occur in the two genders. The results from a large-scale empirical Norwegian study with the OBQ ($n = 16,380$) with data covering both direct and indirect/relational forms of bullying/aggression, perpetrator and victim perspectives, and same-gender and cross-gender relationships, clearly do not support a conclusion about no gender difference. As an illustration, the total number of male and female victims bullied mainly by girls or by boys was estimated at 1,123 and of them 932 or 83% had been mainly bullied by one or more boys, whereas only 191 or 17% had been mainly bullied by one or more girls. It was also found that boys used indirect/relational forms of aggression to about the same or even greater extent than girls. Taken together, these analyses show very convincingly, that the male gender is the more aggressive gender.

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Comparative and Cross-Cultural Research on School Bullying

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Overview

The comparative and cross-cultural research covered in this chapter spans 10 years of collaborative endeavor initiated in 1996 by the National Institute for Educational and Policy Research (NIER) in Tokyo, Japan. Since 1996, collaborations among researchers across continents have progressively grown, sparked by interest in sharing their own research and practice in order to better understand the relevant contexts in which issues around bullying are investigated in contexts beyond their own.

There is no doubt that school bullying and research into its nature, effects and prevention is now a global endeavor (Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Ohsako, 1997; Smith et al., 1999). This chapter describes the evolving international linkages made over the last decade in the Pacific Rim region regarding the issue of bullying. A considerable amount of research has been initiated in these countries including Australia (Slee, 2005), New Zealand (Sullivan, 2000), Japan (Morita, Soeda, Soeda, & Taki, 1999), Korea (Sim, as cited in Slee, Ma, Sim, Taki, & Sullivan, 2003), China (Ma, as cited in Slee et al., 2003), Canada (Hymel, Rocke Henderson, & Bonanno, 2005; Pepler, Craig, O'Connell, Atlas, & Charach, 2004), and the United States (Swearer & Espelage, 2004).

Interest into research on bullying, and into the development of policy and prevention programs in these countries has generated high levels of national and government funding support, in Japan primarily from NIER and Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Technology (MEXT) and in Australia from the Australian Research Council (ARC).

Early Collaborative Work

In Japan, early research into the phenomenon of *ijime* (bullying) was conducted by Morita and his research group (Morita et al., 1999). In 1996 the Japanese Minister of Education issued a directive to study school bullying primarily as a result of a number of suicides directly linked to bullying. The appeal highlighted that bullying was a significant violation of human rights and was not to be condoned (Yano, 2005).

In Australia the earliest published studies on bullying were conducted by Rigby and Slee (1991, 1993). Not long after, in 1994, an Australian Federal Senate inquiry into school violence

was conducted and the subsequent report “Sticks and Stones” (Commonwealth Government, 1994) identified bullying as a significant school problem.

The independent research being conducted in Japan and Australia, and other countries (The Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States, and Norway, to name a few) came together in 1996 when NIER and MEXT hosted two international research symposia on educational reform to inform the issue of school bullying in Japan. One outcome of the 1996 symposia was a collaborative, longitudinal, Japanese-Australian study. This comparative work was the foundation for the growing interest in conducting cross-cultural research across a number of Pacific-Rim countries.

Conceptual Foundations

The following quote from an adolescent student touches on key personal and relationship aspects of school bullying:

Bullying and harassment is a big issue teachers and parents should do something about it. Lots of kids tell teachers and counselors but a lot of students don't tell anyone. I have been bullied but I haven't told anyone. I've thought about it but haven't got the courage. Teachers and counselors should be more inviting. (13-year-old male)

Shared understanding about issues of mutual concern related to bullying that have emerged through research collaboration is a feature of the work reviewed in this chapter. Although some of the countries are highly similar in terms of social and economic development, there are differences in the manner in which children are socialized and educated. As a result of these social and educational differences, cross-cultural research suggests that bullying is manifested in different ways. As well, there are variations across countries in the extent to which there has been a national focus on assessing and addressing bullying. There are also varying cultural interpretations related to the underlying dynamics of bullying across countries and these will be addressed in the chapter with reference to a number of completed and ongoing studies.

Multiple Perspectives on Bullying

The early Japanese-Australian collaborations focused on investigations that permitted comparisons across these two countries, not only to determine the prevalence of bullying and victimization but also with an interest in examining individual characteristics of bullies and victims, mainly from a psycho-pathological perspective. More recently the shift in research has been towards examining bullying from a social systems perspective—one that takes into account that bullying occurs within a social context and is not merely the manifestation of deviant behavior. A number of researchers (Dixon, Smith, & Jenks, 2006; Pepler et al., 2004; Slee, 2001; Swearer & Doll, 2001) have described the application of systems thinking to the understanding of school bullying.

Bullying Is a Complex Construct

Bullying is a complex phenomenon that needs to be understood as a construct and not merely portrayed as a simple act of aggression or violence. The Japanese-Australian research data, gathered via surveys of over 5,000 Japanese and over 3,000 Australian students in 2001, determined through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) that the bullying survey items, selected as represen-

tations of four different types of bullying behavior, all contributed strongly to that construct. The CFA indices of fit for the Bullying subscale are CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.14, SRMR = 0.05, and WRMR = 3.09 for the Australian data and CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = 0.00, SRMR = 0.01, and WRMR = 0.29 for the Japanese data. The weighted omega coefficients indicate high reliability of the subscales, calculated as 0.88 for Australia and 0.83 for Japan. Thus, bullying is represented, in Japan and Australia by all four behaviors, including not only the most overt (hitting, kicking, pushing) acts that most regularly portray the ‘bully’ in western contexts, but equally, if not more strongly, the more covert and subtle (ignoring, excluding) acts. A similar pattern was found for victimization; that is, our CFA identified all four types of victimization as powerful indicators of victimization. The CFA indices of fit for the Victimization subscale are CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.19, SRMR = 0.07, and WRMR = 4.27 for the Australian data and CFI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.02, SRMR = 0.01, and WRMR = 0.83 for the Japanese data. The weighted omega coefficients indicate high reliability of the subscales, calculated as 0.86 for Australia and 0.84 for Japan.

The complexity of the bullying-victimization relationship is also highlighted through research that identifies their inter-connectedness. Haynie et al. (2001) found that more than half of the bullies in their study also reported being victimized. Ma (2001) also identified a reciprocal relationship between bully and victim. The consistently high correlations between these constructs, revealed in our own research, lends further support to the notion of a “bully-victim” cycle and the danger of presenting stereotypical views of individuals as either bullies or victims.

Description of the Specific Issues

Definitions of Bullying across Cultures

A greater understanding of how different countries define and describe bullying is warranted as it has significant implications for conducting cross-cultural research (Slee et al., 2003). As Smith, Kanetsuna, and Koo (2006) argued, “While some researchers emphasise or even assume the essential commonality of ‘bullying’ across different cultures, others very strongly assert that bullying in England, ijime in Japan and wang-ta in Korea are fundamentally different” (p. 4). Our own research confirms Smith et al.’s observation in a context that also includes China where Ma (as cited in Slee et al., 2003) notes that “Bullying is called ‘qifu’ or ‘qiwu’ in Chinese and it means much the same as in Western culture ... (slap, punch, hit, threaten, extort, isolate, mock, call bad names, and so on) in order to upset or hurt” (pp. 428–429). Maharaj, Tie, and Ryba (2000) contend that bullying is a socio-culturally benign term that contributes to the “perception that violent and intimidatory behaviour amongst school pupils is an individual activity” (p. 9). This, according to Cassidy (2000) defines bullying as a psychological and behavioral construct which fails to recognize the social construction of relationships. Yoneyama and Naito (2003) drew researchers’ attention to the need to investigate bullying within its social context, including “the nature of academic instruction, classroom management and discipline, and the nature of social interaction” (p. 316).

Taki’s (2001) research highlights variations in how bullying is defined. The accepted Western understanding of bullying is that it is a particularly destructive form of aggression, defined as a physical, verbal, or psychological attack or intimidation that is intended to cause fear, distress, or harm to the victim, and where the intimidation involves an imbalance of power in favor of the perpetrator. Distinguishing features of this broadly accepted Western definition are an imbalance of power and repetition over time.

In the Japanese context, Taki (2001) has emphasized that Western and Japanese definitions of bullying differ with Japanese bullying (ijime) regarded as socially manipulative behavior within

a group-interaction process, where persons in a dominant position aim to cause mental and/or physical suffering to another member of the group (see also Smith, Cowie, Olafsson, & Liefooghe, 2002, for a detailed discussion of definitions). Although the defining features of *ijime* appear to be similar in many respects to Western definitions, Taki has identified two significant differences.

First, for the Japanese, bullying incorporates the idea of a dominant position that is determined by an in group-interaction process. This does not infer either a physical power or an asymmetric power relationship. It suggests that the victim interacts with bullies, often in the same group or classroom, and is forced into an unequal power relation with the bullies. The idea of the power imbalance within a relationship is strongly emphasized by Taki who notes that bullying in Japanese schools is done by ordinary [sic] children (Taki, 2001). Second, bullying in Japan emphasizes mental/emotional anguish over and above physical force which arises out of group processes and interactions.

Comparative research to date has highlighted a Western interpretation of bullying as more direct in nature compared to the *ijime* reported by Japanese students (Slee, 2003). Yokoyu (2003) and Trembl (2001) have both noted that *ijime* (as reported amongst secondary school students) is difficult to detect because it is frequently subtle and indirect. Nevertheless, the perpetrators usually intend to inflict harm on the victims mentally even when it does not involve physical means.

Our research (Murray-Harvey, Slee, Saebel, & Taki, 2001) in Australian schools suggests that indirect (e.g., social) bullying is well entrenched and is typically under-reported. Research in non-Western contexts (Maharaj et al., 2000) highlights the need for a shift from conceptualizing bullying as the pathological behavior of deviant individuals towards conceptualizing bullying in socio-cultural terms. This is exemplified in our research where social bullying is now a better understood phenomenon through cross-cultural research.

Example/Application

Application to Policy and Practice

The research collaboration has already produced a number of practical and policy initiatives. One such outcome has been the proliferation of peer support programs in schools. Cowie (2003) notes that "Peer support interventions harness young people's potential to assume a helpful role to tackling interpersonal problems in the peer group" (p. 89). For example, in Australia, Japan and Korea, peer support programs are widespread in schools (Kwak, as cited in Yano, 2005; Taki, 2002). As well, intervention programs to address school bullying have been identified, translated, and evaluated in Japanese schools (Taki, 1997). In Australia, the National SAFE Schools Framework (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA] Student Learning and Support Services Taskforce, 2003) has set in place procedures for providing a safe learning environment. Schools are now being asked to develop anti-bullying policies, grievance procedures, and intervention programs so that students can learn in a safe and positive school environment.

Relevant Research

In early Japanese-Australian research conducted between 2000 and 2001 (see Murray-Harvey et al., 2001), consideration was given to issues of prevalence of bullying and victimization in both countries by surveying students in 18 schools (primary and secondary) in Tokyo ($n = 5518$) and 22 schools (primary and secondary) in Adelaide, Australia ($n = 3145$). To achieve this, Taki's

(2001) survey instrument was collaboratively adapted to include 57 common items. With the assistance of a Japanese interpreter, adjustments were made to the items by back translation to account for the different nuances in meaning between the two languages.

The procedure for administration of the “Your Life at School” surveys was discussed by researchers from the two countries and dates set so that surveys were administered at the same stage in each country’s respective academic years. This involved a research assistant associated with the project in each country visiting the schools and supervising the administration and collection of the questionnaires. The eight bullying and victimization items referred to in this chapter are described in the next section.

In relation to victimization, students were asked to indicate on a 4-point Likert scale which was coded 1 = never; 2 = once or twice; 3 = 2–3 times per month; 4 = more than once a week, whether “this term how often have you been bullied at school by (a) isolated, ignored, called names; (b) picked on by others; (c) pushed, hit, kicked on purpose (jokingly); (d) robbed, kicked, hit harshly (on purpose).” The term “jokingly” is used to capture the subtle difference between bullying that is masked by ambiguous action (e.g., bumping into someone) and bullying that is intentionally hurtful (e.g., a direct push).

The bullying items were similarly constructed with students being asked whether “this term how often have you bullied someone at school by (a) isolating, ignoring, calling them names; (b) picking on others; (c) pushing, hitting, kicking on purpose (jokingly); (d) stealing, kicking, hitting harshly (on purpose).”

Data from both Japanese and Australian surveys were entered into a common data base. Bullying and victimization prevalence data from this initial comparative study are displayed in Table 3.1.

From the prevalence data shown in Table 3.1, it can be seen that in Australia victimization (being pushed, hit, kicked on purpose, jokingly) is a result of more direct and overt actions of others than it is in Japan. With regard to bullying, Japanese students more frequently bully by isolating, ignoring or name-calling than do Australian students whose bullying behavior is characteristically more direct and physical. Consideration was also given to possible gender influences between countries and is presented in Table 3.2. More detailed analyses were undertaken to test for significant differences between countries and between males and females. For these analyses the effect sizes were calculated using the Cramer V statistic.

Table 3.1 Frequency (Percentage) of Self-Reported Victimization and Bullying among Australian and Japanese School Students in Grades 5–10

Survey item	Australia			Japan		
	Often	Sometimes	Never	Often	Sometimes	Never
Victimization						
Isolated, ignored, called names	12.2	32.5	55.3	18.0	27.0	55.0
Picked on by others	10.1	27.0	62.9	7.8	16.7	75.5
Pushed, hit, kicked on purpose (jokingly)	13.2	31.3	55.5	11.5	14.3	74.2
Robbed, kicked, hit harshly (on purpose)	3.4	9.7	86.9	4.0	6.3	89.7
Bullying						
Isolating, ignoring, or calling them names	9.2	36.7	54.1	17.2	32.3	50.5
Picking on others	7.1	27.8	65.1	3.8	10.9	85.3
Pushing, hitting, kicking on purpose (jokingly)	11.6	28.0	60.4	5.6	11.0	83.4
Stealing, kicking, hitting harshly (on purpose)	2.5	5.6	91.9	1.7	3.0	95.3

Table 3.2 Frequency (Percentage) of Self-Reported Victimization and Bullying for Australian and Japanese Male and Female School Students in Grades 5–10

Survey item	Male			Female		
	Often	Sometimes	Never	Often	Sometimes	Never
Victimization:						
Isolated, ignored, called names:						
Australia	13.0	30.8	56.1	11.6	33.8	54.7
Japan	16.6	23.9	59.5	19.5	30.4	50.2
Picked on by others:						
Australia	11.2	27.5	61.3	9.1	26.7	64.2
Japan	10.5	18.5	71.0	4.9	14.8	80.3
Pushed, hit, kicked on purpose (jokingly):						
Australia	16.3	33.1	50.6	10.7	29.9	59.4
Japan	13.9	17.2	68.9	9.0	11.3	79.7
Robbed, kicked, hit harshly (on purpose)						
Australia	4.9	12.9	82.3	2.2	7.2	90.7
Japan	5.3	7.2	87.5	2.6	5.4	92.0
Bullying:						
Isolating, ignoring, or calling them names						
Australia	11.2	39.9	48.9	7.7	34.2	58.1
Japan	14.6	29.1	56.3	20.0	35.6	44.4
Picking on others						
Australia	9.8	31.0	59.3	5.0	25.2	69.8
Japan	6.1	15.2	78.8	1.4	6.5	92.1
Pushing, hitting, kicking on purpose (jokingly)						
Australia	15.3	28.4	56.3	8.8	27.6	63.5
Japan	8.4	15.5	76.1	2.6	6.2	91.2
Stealing, kicking, hitting harshly (on purpose)						
Australia	4.1	8.5	87.3	1.3	3.3	95.5
Japan	2.6	4.2	93.2	0.6	1.8	97.6

Table 3.2 shows that victimization occurs among boys at higher levels in Australia by being pushed, hit, or kicked on purpose (jokingly) than it does in Japan. The pattern of victimization for girls in both countries is similar. Victimization that involves being picked on is more prevalent for Australian girls than it is for Japanese girls. With regard to bullying, Australian students (both boys and girls) overall engage in the most direct form of bullying by pushing, hitting, kicking on purpose (jokingly) compared with Japanese boys and girls, with Japanese girls rarely engaging in this type of bullying and instead using isolating, ignoring or name-calling.

While isolating, ignoring or calling names is more prevalent in Japan ($p < .001$, $ES = .11$), with Japanese females engaging in this type of bullying significantly more than other types ($p < .001$, $ES = .17$), the effect sizes indicate that the differences between countries are not marked. Australian students engage more than Japanese students in the other types of bullying, namely *picking on others* ($p < .001$, $ES = .23$) and *pushing, hitting, kicking* either “lightheartedly” ($p < .001$, $ES = .25$) indicating small effect sizes for these two types of bullying, or “harshly” ($p < .001$, $ES = .25$) indicating medium effect sizes for these two types of bullying.

.001, $ES = .07$); with the low effect size for this type of bullying indicating a trivial difference between countries. The bullying reflected in behaviors involving isolating, ignoring or calling names has become the focus of more recent research (Crick et al., 1999; Owens, Shute, & Slee, 2004; Underwood, 2003).

Following up on the significant findings for isolating, ignoring or name-calling victimization and bullying, (i.e., social bullying) attention was then given to possible developmental patterns by examining prevalence from the school years 5 through 10. The frequency of self-reported victimization by school year across the two countries is shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 illustrates that across year levels 5 to 9, Japanese students report more victimization by being isolated, ignored and called names than Australian students. For Japanese students, the rates are highest in grades 5, 6, and 7. For Australian students the rates are highest in grade 7, which is consistent with research reported by Rigby and Slee (1999). These comparative figures suggest that self-reported victimization is highest in both countries in the upper primary years of school.

In relation to self-reported social bullying, Japanese students report more isolating, ignoring and name-calling behaviors than their Australian counterparts across all year levels. In Japan this type of bullying occurs most in grade 9 (Junior High) and in Australia it occurs most in grade 7 (Upper Primary). Differences among the two countries in relation to developmental trends continues to be an area of research interest and are likely to be an important factor in determining where resources and interventions are distributed.

Although Japan and Australia are highly similar in relation to nationwide levels of social and economic development, the different cultural contexts between the two countries suggests that cross-cultural comparisons will improve understanding of students' overall well-being at school. Spanning the years of research between Japan and Australia, data gathered from the "Your Life at School" survey has also been examined using path analysis (Murray-Harvey & Slee, 2007) to further understand the factors that either have an impact on school bullying, or are impacted on, by bullying.

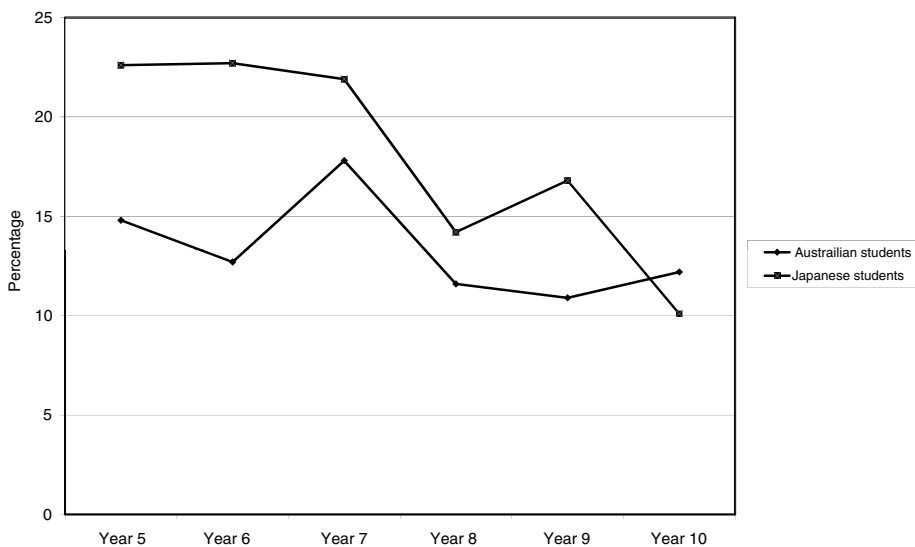


Figure 3.1 Victimization by isolating and ignoring among grade 5–10 school students in Australia and Japan.

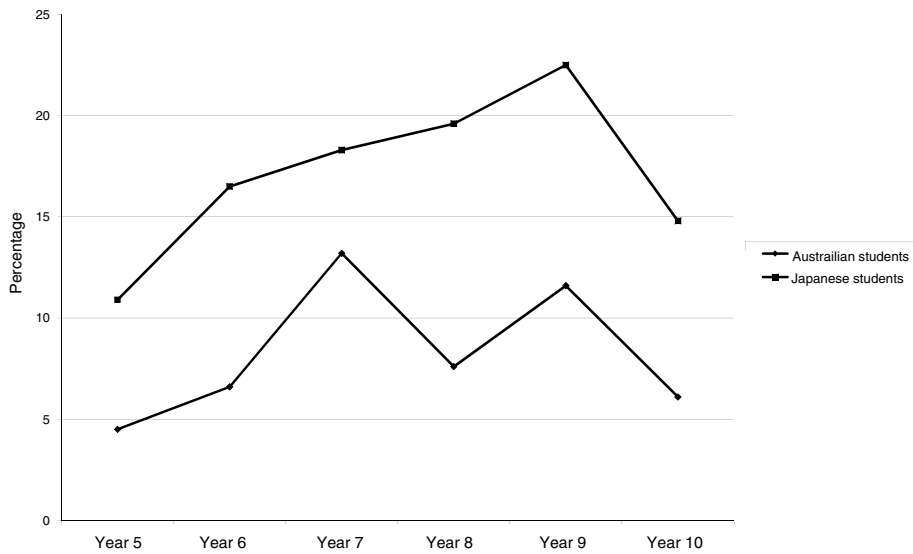


Figure 3.2 Bullying by isolating and ignoring among grade 5–10 school students in Australia and Japan.

Correlations, as presented in Table 3.3, have been found between bullying and a range of variables indicative of (a) students' psychological health (apathy, depression, aggression, and somatic symptoms); (b) sources of stress and support (peers, teachers, parents); (c) academic performance; and (d) feelings of belonging to school (Murray-Harvey & Slee, 2006).

Path analyses have been even more revealing in showing that when parents, teachers, or peers are perceived as stressors in students' lives these stressors are highly predictive of both bullying behavior and feeling victimized. We have become acutely aware, through examining the interrelationships among these variables, of the role played, not only by peers (classmates) as sources of stress (and conversely as sources of support) but also of the role played by teachers and families, either to exacerbate or moderate (through their support), the impact of stresses in students' lives at school (Murray-Harvey & Slee, 2007). Path analysis also revealed a strong association between victimization and students' psychological health (Murray-Harvey & Slee, 2006).

Table 3.3 Correlations between Stressors and Support, Psychological Health, Academic Performance, and Belonging to School

	Stressor	Support	Poor Psychological Health	Academic Performance	School Belonging	Victimization
Stressor						
Support	–365					
Poor Psychological Health	550	–329				
Academic Performance	–482	270	–511			
School Belonging	–377	445	–459	291		
Victimization	481	–132	335	–203	–241	
Bullying	370	–166	270	–219	–209	394

Note. Only correlations > 0.10 reported; decimal points omitted.

Pacific-Rim Research Project

While the survey content varied across the participating countries (Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, and the United States), a common set of core questions regarding student experiences of being victimized and bullying others were included in all surveys. The example of social bullying shown here illustrates a variable for which there was found to be general consensus in relation to defining the phenomenon of bullying among the Pacific Rim research group (Taki et al., 2006).

Trends in reported experiences with social bullying and victimization across a sample of Grade 5 (age 10–11) students in the five countries ($n = \text{approx. } 1500$) are illustrated in Figures 3.3 and 3.4, which show the frequency of bullying and victimization, and Figures 3.5 and 3.6, which depict the frequency in relation to gender. The category “Sometimes” indicates students’ reports that they have been bullied (socially), or engage in bullying (socially) once or twice a month.

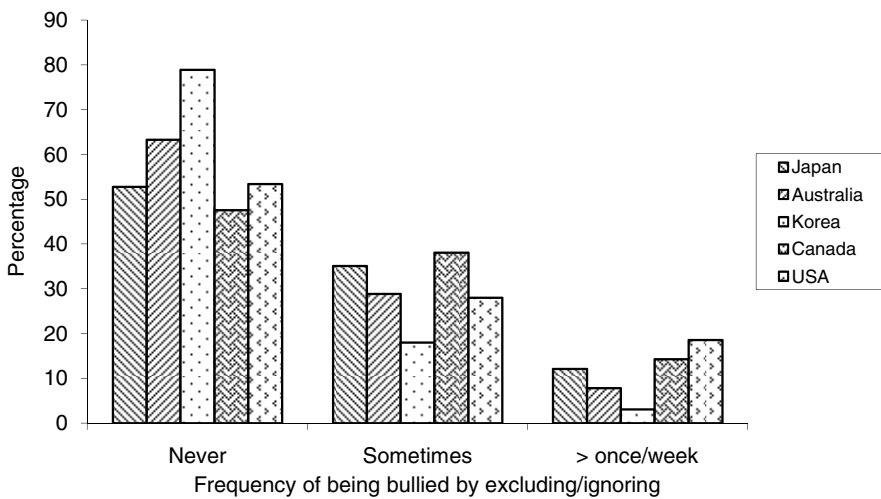


Figure 3.3 Frequency of victimization among Japanese, Australian, Korean, Canadian, and American Grade 5 students.

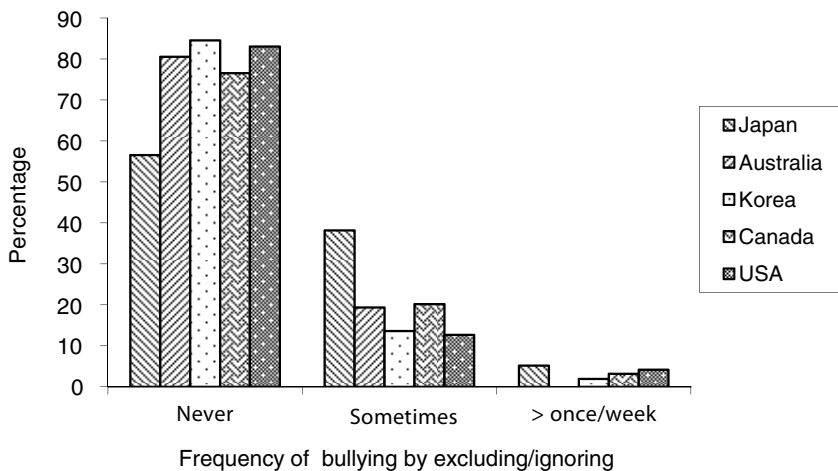


Figure 3.4 Frequency of social bullying among Japanese, Australian, Korean, Canadian, and American Grade 5 students.

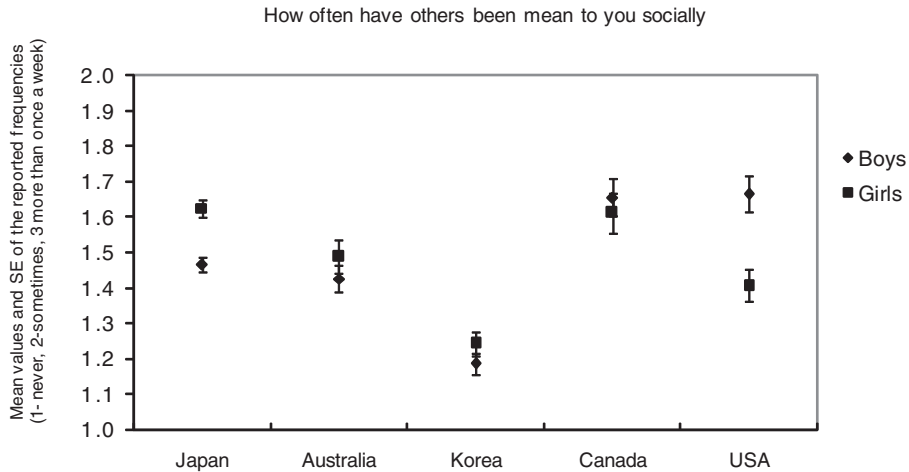


Figure 3.5 Social victimization by exclusion and rumors across five countries.

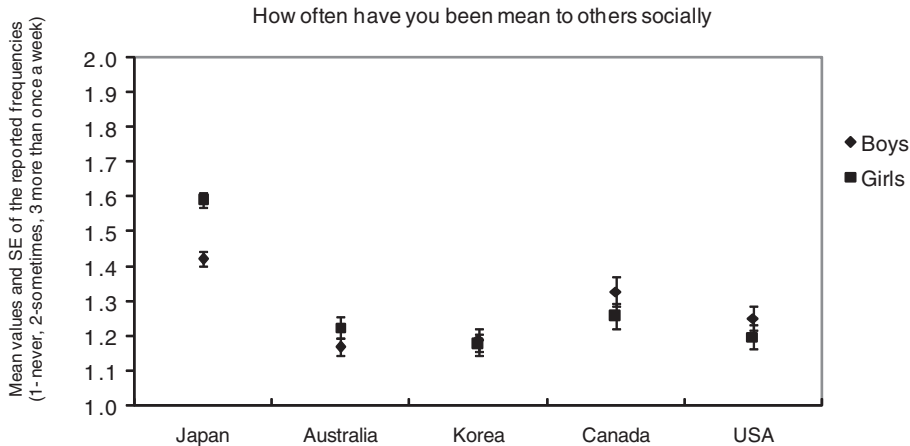


Figure 3.6 Social bullying by exclusion and rumors across five countries.

Across countries, the highest rates of reported bullying through social aggression were reported by students in Japan and the lowest by students in Korea. For boys and girls, rates of social bullying were highest in Japan ($p < .001$, $ES = .14$ for boys and $ES = .22$ for girls) and rates were not markedly different across Australia, Canada and the United States.

For both boys and girls, the lowest rates of social victimization were reported by students in Korea, significantly lower than all other countries ($p < .001$, $ES = .14$ for both boys and girls). For boys, similar, lower rates of social victimization were reported by students in Japan and Australia compared with U.S. and Canadian boys who reported the highest rates of social victimization. For girls, again the lowest rates were reported in Korea and the highest rates reported by girls from Japan and Canada.

Table 3.4 Summary Table of Implications for Practice

Comparative Research	Implications for Practice
Murray-Harvey & Slee (2006)	The harmful effects on student wellbeing of indirect, relational (social) bullying and the need to respond to and not ignore it
Owens, Daly, & Slee (2005)	The need to consider gender in relation to the development of intervention programs because boys and girls bully and bully others in different ways
Rigby & Slee (1999) Alsaker (2004)	Early intervention is warranted based on evidence that high levels of bullying occur in primary schools
Pepler et al., (2004)	A whole-school approach is needed to address bullying. Bullying is more than individual deviant behavior; it requires action on the part of teachers, parents, students, and the school community
Murray-Harvey & Slee (2006)	Clarifying definitions of bullying and victimization has highlighted the different types of bullying to include social as well as physical and verbal bullying
Murray-Harvey & Slee (2006)	Bullying is a relationship issue

Directions for Future Research

As described in this chapter, comparative research involving the Pacific Rim countries has resulted in a deeper appreciation of the efforts such countries have made in understanding and addressing the issue of school bullying. Japan has a long research history associated with the study of bullying and the Pacific Rim collaboration has deepened and enriched knowledge regarding the complexity of the bullying dynamic. In particular, the exchange of research involving Australia, Canada, China, Korea, and the United States has impacted program and policy development.

Opportunities exist to further this collaboration through joint research efforts that more broadly define bullying within its community context, along with research that permits examination of how teachers in classrooms across countries identify and deal with the more indirect types of bullying. A related research issue is the extent to which pre-service teacher education programs can alert teachers to the prevalence and severity of bullying in schools and improve understanding of effective programs and strategies that have been developed to address the issue. No data exist on whether some countries undertake this task more effectively than others and while the success of a program or strategy in one country cannot be assumed to translate into effective practice in another context, there is much to be learned from shared knowledge, through comparative research, of the way bullying is perceived, perpetrated, and managed.

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4

Creating a Positive School Climate and Developing Social Competence

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School bullying is a multifaceted problem. Although all bullying acts have in common the intent to hurt others, behaviors vary widely in severity and type, from demeaning looks to spreading malicious rumors to physically assaulting others. Similarly, the motives for bullying peers are diverse; Dagley (2000), for example, highlighted four motives: attention, revenge, power, or inadequacy. In consequence, the deterrence of school bullying requires a comprehensive model that examines a wide array of school and student characteristics needed to prevent and reduce bullying. Orpinas and Horne (2006) developed the School Social Competence Development and Bullying Prevention Model to provide an organized, comprehensive view of the critical components necessary for bullying prevention. The model has two components (see Figure 4.1). The outer circle reflects the school, and calls attention to eight characteristics that promote a positive school climate. The students are at the center, and the model highlights specific skills and cognitions that the school can focus on at the individual student level. This chapter describes the school and student components of the model. The chapter concludes by examining characteristics of a successful implementation.

School Social Competence Development and Bullying Prevention Model: The School Component

The fundamental component to reduce school bullying is to create a positive school climate that fosters caring behaviors. An environment where people spend a significant amount of their time (e.g., workplace, school) affects their psyche and their behavior. An organization's climate encompasses values, communication and management styles, rules and regulations, ethical practices, reinforcement of caring behaviors, support for academic excellence, and characteristics of the physical environment. A school with a positive climate is inviting, and students and teachers feel energized to perform at their best. Such an environment will increase the sense of connectedness to peers and belonging to the school, and students will perform better academically; thus, reducing the likelihood of aggressive behaviors (Eisenberg, Neumark-Sztainer, & Perry, 2003; Orpinas, Horne, & Staniszewski, 2003; Resnick et al., 1997). Unfortunately, some schools are managed like correctional facilities: a place of fear and threats that lacks caring and respect for

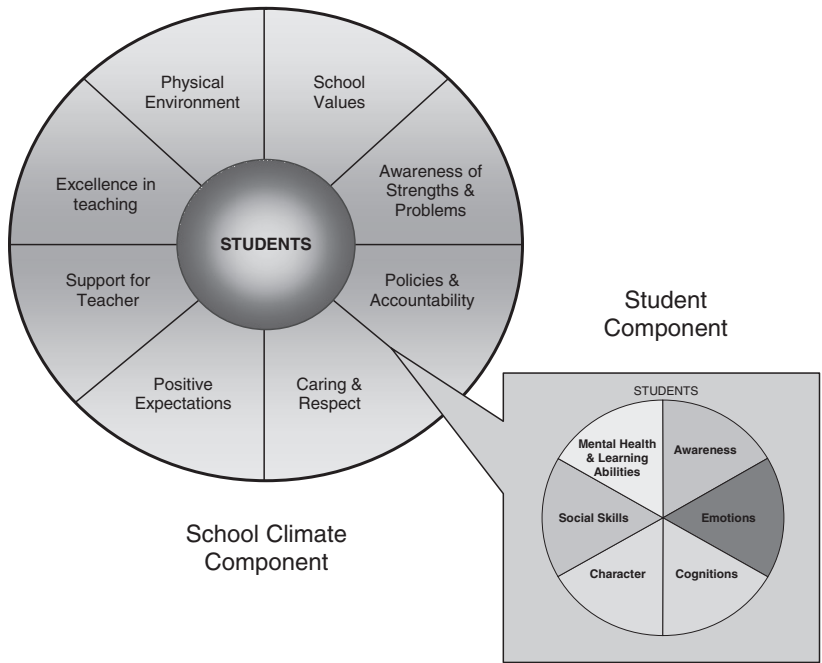


Figure 4.1 School Social Competence Development and Bullying Prevention Model (Orpinas & Horne, 2006).

students. Students would certainly want to avoid such an environment—thus, increasing the dropout rate—and they would learn to respond in kind, that is, by being aggressive.

The school component of the Social Competence Development model highlights eight critical areas for promoting a positive school climate and reducing bullying: (a) excellence in teaching, (b) school values, (c) awareness of strengths and problems, (d) policies and accountability, (e) caring and respect, (f) positive expectations, (g) teacher support, and (h) physical environment characteristics.

Excellence in Teaching

Students' academic performance is the first and most important goal of schools. Strong teaching skills, carefully prepared lessons, and an ability to motivate students will increase academic performance, reduce behavioral problems in the classroom, and promote a positive classroom climate (Hein, 2004; Pianta, 1999; Pierce, 1994). Research supports the need for promoting both positive behavior and academic performance (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000); when students behave in class, more time is allowed for teaching. However, teachers frequently struggle between the demands to cover the academic content of their class and the need to promote social skills.

Excellence in teaching includes mastery of the subject matter, as well as mastery of classroom process and dynamics. Teachers well-trained in the subject matter still have difficulties with classroom learning if they do not master teaching strategies as well. Not only do teachers need to teach with exercising respect and dignity, they must also understand the learning styles of their students and direct the classroom in a manner that facilitates understanding and application, rather than rote learning. For example, cooperative learning groups engage students

with varying levels of knowledge to work together on academic tasks. The cooperative learning approach improves academic achievement and race relations, and promotes positive attitudes toward school, yet this educational strategy is not universally used (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

School Values

The school philosophy provides the framework to develop a positive school climate and prevent bullying (Horne, Orpinas, Newman-Carlson, & Bartolomucci, 2004; Orpinas, Horne, & Multisite Violence Prevention Project, 2004; Sullivan, 2000). The School Social Competence Model highlights three values that apply to educators and students: (a) all children can learn; (b) all people in the school community deserve to be treated with respect and dignity; and (c) violence, aggression, and bullying are not acceptable in school. To generate interest and support for these or other values, teachers and other members of the school community should participate in the process of defining the school's values (Bosworth, 2000; Orpinas et al., 2003). These values are the basis for creating the school's rules and consequences (Curwin & Mendler, 1997). While educators always initially endorse these three values, they may not embrace them in their practice. So it is important that these values are not seen as simply "read and agree" statements, but that the school actually spends time developing an awareness of their importance and provides examples of how easily educators can violate them.

Awareness of Strengths and Problems

No school is perfect, and the awareness of problems to solve and of strengths to capitalize on is the basis for change. Surveys of students, parents, and educators, as well as qualitative assessments (e.g., focus groups, interviews of key persons), can provide the necessary information to identify problems, define solutions, and guide the implementation of those solutions. During this process of examining strengths and areas that need improvement, educators should scrutinize their own attitudes, which may be supporting bullying or, at a minimum, not doing enough to stop it (e.g., "bullying is just a normal part of childhood," "bullies help kids who seem weaker by pushing them to learn to stand up for themselves," or "it is best to ignore bullying incidents"; Orpinas & Horne, 2006). Conducting an evaluation to learn of shortcomings is often an unpopular or threatening experience, particularly for administrators, and is often avoided. Yet without identifying specific areas of difficulty, the school will have great difficulty identifying how to improve.

Policies and Accountability

Policies for the prevention of bullying and other problems, as well as the accountability of the offenders, are essential for maintaining a positive school climate. However, to achieve this positive climate, administrators cannot develop policies through an autocratic process. All members of the school community should participate in the decision-making process for developing policies. In particular, school administrators must support the overall process of enhancing the school climate and solving discipline problems. Teacher input is most valuable in this process, as they have daily contact with students. School staff (e.g., custodians, bus drivers, and lunchroom workers) should also provide their unique perspective on how to achieve those goals. Meetings with parents through school-sponsored gatherings can enhance their understanding and support for school policies and goals. Additionally, policies, rules, and consequences

should be based on the school's values, and should promote responsibility rather than blind obedience.

Curwin and Mendler (1999) compared these two models: responsibility versus obedience. The goal of the obedience model is for students to obey their teacher and follow the rules. In this model, punishments—such as being suspended or writing 100 times “I will not bully others”—are imposed on children, and students learn to avoid the potential punishing teacher or they learn not to be caught. Conversely, the goal of the responsibility model is to make students accountable for their choices. When students make bad decisions, educators help the students learn from the outcome and repair the damage to the victims. Under the responsibility model, a student who is caught bullying others might be asked to apologize to the victims and develop a plan to behave differently in future similar situations. The emphasis of these consequences is to repair the damage, reconnect the bully to peers and school, and solve the problem, rather than simply “paying back” for what was done.

Caring and Respect

Educators who value and actively demonstrate caring, respect, and a positive rapport with students will create an environment in which students behave appropriately because they care about each other, rather than because they fear the consequences (Hein, 2004). Specific strategies that may help to create this environment are:

1. Planning activities that increase connectedness among students and between students and teachers: Teachers can increase connectedness by promoting cooperation rather than competition, emphasizing democratic decision making, and providing opportunities for meaningful decision making.
2. Modeling respect with other teachers and with students: Educators should avoid behaviors that are demeaning such as shouting at students or using sarcastic or patronizing language. Rather, knowing students' names, using a positive language, and complimenting students for their efforts can foster a respectful environment.
3. Mastering positive approaches to discipline: Most teachers are familiar with the subject they teach, but frequently leave the profession because they are not able to handle discipline problems. Mastering strategies to prevent conflict in the classroom can help to create a positive climate, reduce bullying, and increase teaching effectiveness (Lewis, Sugai, & Colvin, 1998).
4. Celebrating classroom diversity: Beyond “tolerating” diversity, schools that create a positive climate “celebrate” diversity and genuinely promote understanding and appreciation for different cultural groups.

Positive Expectations

Whether it is a self-fulfilling prophecy, a perceptual bias, or an accurate perception, educators' expectations of their students may influence their own behavior toward the students and consequently the students' behavior in school (Kolb & Jussim, 1994; Rosenthal, 1994; Trouilloud, Sarrazin, Martinek, & Guillet, 2002). Teachers who believe that certain students will not learn, may spend less time with those students and provide less feedback on their work or teach more simplistic materials, thus, fulfilling their own expectations that the student is not up to par. Conversely, teachers' positive expectations may help to create an encouraging classroom climate that facilitates learning and achievement. The importance of maintaining positive expectations also applies to the relationship between administrators and teachers.